

**THE TEACHING, ASSESSMENT AND TESTING OF  
WRITING : a look at what we have been doing in the last  
five years.**

**BY**

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## INTRODUCTION:

Testing is an important aspect of every teaching and learning experience. Well made and well marked tests can help students in two ways. Firstly, they can help create positive attitudes towards learning. In the interest of motivation and efficient instruction, teachers aim at providing positive class experiences for their students, and testing can contribute by giving students a sense of accomplishment. Secondly, tests can help students learning a language to master that language. The students are helped when they study for tests and again when tests are returned and discussed. A test confirms to the student what he has mastered, and points up those language items that need further attention. But if not well used, tests can have another effect.

On the other hand, teachers are required to account for the results of their instruction. Tests can help teachers find out if they have been effective in their teaching, and the results of tests answer questions that are important to teachers and the teaching process..... questions such as : "Am I teaching some skills effectively and others less effectively ?", "What areas do we need more work on ?" etc. The answers to these questions make teachers examine what they have been doing in their classes, and in turn ask "What's going wrong ?" "Why ?" and "What can we do that is better ?".

This paper aims at looking at what has been going on in the teaching of free writing in the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, University of Alexandria in the last five years, and why, in spite of the use of a revised syllabus based on a needs analysis of the students, has their production in free writing not improved. Suggestions for improvement are made at the end and a way shown to teachers as to how best to redirect their future efforts. There is, of course, no one remedy, no panacea for all teachers in all classrooms. This is only one suggestion.

### Statement of the Problem:

In January and June of every year, results of the mid-year and end of year examinations appear and they have a detrimental effect on both teachers and students alike. The results show a discrepancy in level between students' improvement after instruction in receptive skills versus productive skills. It is a fact that the productive skills like speaking and writing are definitely more difficult to master than the receptive skills

where language learning is concerned. But the writing of students in general seems to improve very little and very slowly in the course of four years of instruction at the undergraduate level; some of the written papers of students of the BA year are very poor indeed. This undermines student motivation and these results have an unhealthy effect on students' attitudes towards essay writing and other subjects on the curriculum that involve any kind of free writing. The general feeling amidst both teachers and students is that students fail some of their literature papers (particularly in the first year) on their inability to express themselves in correct fluent English. As far as the first year is concerned, after a year of instruction in essay writing skills, the results are still unsatisfactory although those of the 'Language' paper, which is mostly receptive in nature, are not. The following table shows a sample of the first year results.

Because of the size of this paper we shall concentrate only on the first year, although it is to be kept in mind that the results on the essay writing paper in the other three undergraduate years are also far from satisfactory.

The total number of students attending the examinations = 71.  
(54 freshmen + 17 doublers)

### SAMPLE OF FIRST YEAR RESULT

SUBJECT	ESSAY	LANGUAGE	ESSAY	BILLS	ORAL	BILLS	POETRY	NOVELS
Number of Students	45	68	67					
Who Passed	45	68	67	48	15	41	48	15 41
Number of Students Who Failed.	26	3	4	23	56	30	56	30

A word about the type of examination that students are required to sit for is appropriate here. In the 'Essay' paper, students are given four topics to choose from. They write about one in 3 hours. The topics are of the following type:

1. The future is definitely better than the present.
2. I like being what I am because .....
3. Gossip is enjoyable whatever people may say.
4. There is nothing called equality of opportunity in any society

The students are free to write as they please. I shall comment on this type of exam later.

The 'Essay Drills' paper (3 hours) is one that includes types of exercises that students have practised in class. (See Appendix I for material for this course and the type of exercise.) A model paragraph is analysed for topic, major and minor support sentences, as well as irrelevant ones if there are any. A paragraph is unscrambled, reorganised and rearranged; a paragraph is written according to specific guidelines. Students are asked to identify good topic sentences and say why. If they are asked to write two or three paragraphs linked together, then they are reminded to use a clear topic sentence in each paragraph.

The 'Language' paper (3 hours) is made up of a long passage for reading, with different types of exercises following. There are six different types :

- (a) a multiple choice type vocabulary exercise where the meaning of the word is identified according to its context in the passage.
- (b) a true/false exercise in which the student must identify detailed points made by the writer.
- (c) a multiple choice type exercise where the student is required to identify the main idea in each paragraph in the passage.
- (d) An exercise where the student is asked to identify the main point of the whole passage and write it out in a paragraph of 10-12 lines.
- (e) an exercise in structure where students are asked to re-word sentences starting with particular words or constructions, but not changing the meaning.
- (f) a cloze test related to the passage (but not part of it) where students supply missing words, i.e. they must decide what is appropriate to the given context.

The exam follows exactly the same format of the units the students work on during their classes.

Obviously the 'Oral Drills' is an oral test that requires correct pronunciation, stress, rhythm, intonation etc, to bring out correct meaning whether in spoken language or reading aloud.

The results are here included to show that the students' oral results are not satisfactory just like their written production, although of course speaking and writing are not identical and there are many differences between them as productive skills.

The 'Novel' and 'Poetry' results are included to show how, when answering literature questions in the written form students can fail. The essay answers to such subjects not only involve content, but students' ideas must be clearly and forcefully expressed, be convincing, in correct grammar and according to rhetorical formulae. The students must know how to compare, contrast, argue, and describe. Their poor command of linguistic rules and the lack of development in their composing processes simply stand in the way of their handling such essay tasks successfully.

The materials for the essay writing course are based on the novel course and its content, and yet lack of skill in written expression stands in the way of success.

The very high failure rate in the poetry paper can be explained. Poetry is a difficult condensed form of literature. Writing about poetry as taught in the mother tongue, Selama (1981) states that at secondary level the choice of poems does not cater for the students' pedagogic and psychological needs. The poems are difficult and in archaic language and are therefore divorced from reality where the students are concerned. The result is that the student is alienated from poetry instead of being driven to appreciation of, understanding and feeling for poetry. To the student, poetry is understood by the initiated few.

Psychologically he therefore rejects poetry and finds it difficult. If this is the case in the mother-tongue situation, then poetry in the foreign language cannot be easy for students. The poetry course in the first year is fairly simple : students explore with the teacher the world of short easy poems, modern or otherwise. They try to identify themes, figures of speech, rhythm; they investigate how, for example, movement is treated by different poets in different words and images and their effect. Yet they are scared, especially in exams, as they are not used to dealing with unseen

texts. Appendix 2 shows a typical first year poetry examination.

Students have to answer questions on an unseen poem in paragraph form. The exam is receptive in that students have to understand and interpret the poem for themselves, and productive in the sense that they have to write about it. A sample poetry answer in Appendix 3 shows that the spelling and grammar mistakes in the paper are enough to fail it, let alone the lack of content and organisation.

It becomes apparent that students of the Department must improve their written production, not only in order to pass their literature papers but so that they can enjoy their four undergraduate years and learn properly. The essay writing course must be improved as it feeds into almost all the other subjects on the curriculum.

Again, the educational case for retaining the essay type of test outweighs the psychometric case for abolishing it as an examination device that is unreliable. Madsen (1983, 101) states,

"Test variety stems from the various applications of writing." In the Department, students are required to write essays in the medium of English. The essay therefore has a useful role to fulfill. Valette (1977, 285) again notes,

"Essay tests require the students to organise their thoughts and to substantiate their interpretation. Since almost all literary criticism is in essay form.....the essay test in literature is a highly valid test form".

The essay allows for freedom of response; the student selects from his own background what he wants to put down and organises the answer and expresses it in his own words. An extended essay gives some scope for evaluation of organisation and promotes emphasis on the whole rather than on parts. This is what is needed in a language and literature department.

To solve our problem we need to investigate the cause of the problem. There are several factors that could be the cause :

1. The students' background where the skill of writing is concerned.
2. The students' attitude towards subjects in the Department and particularly essay writing.

3. The teaching material used in the writing course.
4. The teaching method.
5. How the essay type test is used.
6. The marking of the test.
7. The nature of the writing task under examination conditions.
8. All of the above or some of the above in combination.

An examination of the above factors may lead us to certain conclusions and suggestions for the direction of future efforts where essay writing in the first year is concerned.

#### **The Students :**

The students' average age is 18-19 on entry. They are mixed, with a considerable majority being female, and are mainly from the more privileged sectors of society. Most of them come from non-Arabic medium private 'language' schools. Their study environment is thus fairly favourable both at school and at home; their independent study habits however, are not particularly well developed as they are used to rote learning rather than problem solving and thinking for themselves.

Generally they have had from 8-12 years of study of the English language, even in French and German schools. Their teachers at school have a good command of English. As a result they have more spoken competence than students of public-sector schools and much more experience in reading and writing longer texts. This does not mean that they read and write well. Close examination of the situation shows the following :

- (a) Because their motivation at school (and at university) is intrinsic and directly linked with passing examinations, exams are taken very seriously and worked for with a narrow determination.
- (b) The third secondary 'ordinary level' examination which they all have to pass involves only the writing of a guided paragraph of five sentences, completing a short dialogue, writing a short letter, a cloze test and a translation passage. The few who sit for the 'High level' examination are not required to write consistently for more than 20 lines (Matar, 1986).
- (c) Thus the students' experience of written free production is very limited.

Generally speaking, their competence in English on entry to the Department of English is intermediate to advanced, though frequently with

an over confidently careless attitude towards accuracy of expression (both spoken and written) as well as to logic or depth of thought (Hawkey, 1978).

Private conversation with teachers of Arabic at language schools showed that students are not good at writing essays in their native language and find it difficult (Matter, 1986).

#### **Attitudinal Factors :**

Many students do not seem very highly motivated and are unenthusiastic about the courses, though not in a particularly articulate or searching way.

Their complaints usually boil down to personalised grumbles that a particular factor in a particular course made an exam more difficult to pass. Informal 'research' carried out for clearer information as to attitudes and aims of students produced the following :

1. High ratings for relevance on courses on :  
novel, grammar, translation, drama, composition.
2. Fairly high ratings for relevance on :  
Arabic, poetry, criticism.
3. Minority relevance rating for :  
French, civilisation (Hawkey, 1978)

This lack of enthusiasm makes their written work in both language and literature courses complacently slapdash in thought, language and presentation and their attitudes in lectures and classes "degage" and slightly tittering" (Hawkey, 1978).

The students and their parents seem to be under the misapprehension that because they have been to 'language' schools they speak and write 'very good English'.... a thing they want to capitalise upon for their future careers, and thus they join the Department of English. They do not however, have very clear career specific reasons for this choice; they want to become 'translators' or 'secretaries' in well paid private sector institutions, or perhaps 'teachers' in language schools. Many of them do not know what they want to do after graduation.

#### **The falling level of Language Competence :**

A matter of unanimous agreement amongst staff in the Department of English is the falling level of language competence. Whatever students may think about their competence in English, it is certain that it leaves much to be desired. This decline in language competence necessitated a

change of Department objectives and reforms in syllabus design and implementation, a step that was taken in the late 1970's.

#### **The role of English and Department Objectives :**

It is very difficult to fit English in the Department of English Language & Literature into any real E O P mould, or E A P role where it is studied for the purposes of education in another discipline, unless the other discipline is English literature. Again it is unrealistic to teach entrants to the Department as if they are native speakers embarking on specialist training in English Literature and culture. The Department therefore decided that instead of teaching English through and for literary/cultural purposes as an end in itself to provide students with a liberal oriented training in the verbal arts, it would raise the language competence of students and improve the skills required in order for them to benefit as fully as possible from their specialisation in English. The language skills that are untrained or need remedial attention would be dealt with by materials and methods designed for the purpose. This would not represent a switch from literature to language, since the specific skills for initial training would include some aimed at helping learners towards a target competence enabling them to handle literature properly. It would also include skills aimed at, and even trained through literary/cultural activities. The language programme components would be coordinated in terms of level, content and approach with literary/cultural components.

Ideally after four years this programme would produce a graduate whose English is good and who can deal with any job that requires the handling of the English language.

#### **Syllabus and Communication Need Factors :**

A more sensitive and detailed syllabus specification representing a coordinated needs-based approach to the improvement of skills required replaced the old syllabus in 1979. A description of the new syllabus is found in *The Consultancy Report on Faculty of Arts English Programme, Alexandria University* by Roger Hawkey. The fact that students in the English Department are being trained as specialists in English means that dimensions of size, complexity, range, delicacy, speed and flexibility of texts they are required to handle both receptively and productively are all high. Similarly tolerance of error, stylistic failure, lack of fluency, need to ask for repetition or explanation is relatively low when learners are speaking or writing English. Conversely, as specialists, they would be

expected to be able to cope with errors, stylistic failure, lack of fluency, requests for repetition or explanation when they are on the receiving end.

Among the communicative activities that students are to be trained for, those for writing are :

- (a) Note-taking from lectures.
- (b) Note-taking from readings.
- (c) Writing factually from notes or other previously collected data.
- (d) Writing creatively.
- (e) Writing critically.
- (f) Writing in these ways in report, essay, longer text form.

The topics in connection with writing are language, literature, history, background, education, current affairs etc.

The specific language skills and functions take account of the fact that students' level of competence on entry, though falling, is not low. The syllabus does not include items that they have in fact mastered but still handle carelessly. Most errors are taken to be due to their attitude and their lack of real motivation. Their attitude will not be improved by a full fledged remedial course. The solution is in stretching them out of their complacency by systematic creative training in relevant skills and functions, accompanied by strict 'on the spot' remedial treatment of carelessness. The onus for correction is put on the student not the teacher.

#### **ESSAY WRITING COURSE**

Since we are concentrating on free writing we shall only deal with the language component formerly called "Essay" and now taught under "control level reading/writing skills development".

The Essay component was formerly very much a spur of the moment affair with rather unsystematic selection of titles, perhaps some preliminary discussion, generally thoughtless unplanned and linguistically inaccurate writing from the students, and often painstaking but mainly wasted correction by the teacher; then on to the next title. The following is now being followed :

1. Remedial work based on the commonest errors, viz :
  - (a) concord.
  - (b) prepositions.

(c) sentence structure and punctuation.

**2. Paragraph organisation:**

(a) exercises in recognising the internal order of a paragraph.

(b) sentence connection.

**Material :** **Paragraph Writing**, Chaplen, F., OUP, 1979, (First Impression 1970), Chapters 1-5.

Supplementary exercises from the department

**3. Guided paragraph Writing**

Designed to put into practice the principles learnt in 2 above. Subject matter drawn from novel course and material provided by the department.

**4. Free Paragraph Writing**

Subject matter drawn from novel course. Students are given topic sentences to develop and write about.

**5. Paragraph into Essay**

Exercises in organisation.

Material provided by the department

Subject-matter drawn from novel course.

Appendix 1 shows samples of the materials used covering those five stages. The material was prepared by a British Council K.E.L.T adviser in cooperation with the department and its use outside the department is not authorised. It is copyright of the Council and C.B. Hudson.

The materials in Appendix 1 are taught under 'Essay Drills' for two hours a week to small groups of 12-15 students. As mentioned before, the content of the free and guided paragraph writing and the organisation of paragraphs into essay are based on the novel course where students study the following :

1. **Animal Farm** G. Orwell.
2. **The Chrysalids** J. Whyndam
3. **Brave New World** A. Huxley

This is done firstly to link the literature and language courses, and secondly, so that students do not have the double burden of worrying

about content and correct language.

Another 2 hours a week are devoted to 'Essay'. The whole class of 70 students attend this class together because of the teacher shortage. Here the teacher is supposed to teach students how to write. The teacher uses a step by step breakdown of the writing process derived entirely from an analysis of written products.

First students and teacher choose a topic, restrict that topic then write a thesis sentence. With that single restricted thesis clearly in mind, students write a sentence outline, with Roman and Arabic numerals, capital and lower-case letters all in place. The rest is supposed to follow easily. The students are supposed to write their essay from introduction to conclusion according to the outline, revise it carefully, check that they have avoided grammatical and mechanical errors and hand it in for marking. When students get bad grades they wonder why, when they have followed a pattern, proof-read and have done what was asked for, do they fail?

If we look at the materials we find out why students pass 'Essay Drills' and fail 'Essay'. In the former we have paid careful attention to organisation skills, selected appropriate exercises, taught them and then tested them. The 'Essay Drills' test is therefore valid. In the case of 'Essay' we expect that good writing will arise out of following a set routine. We know that students have already had punctuation and grammar exercises, free paragraph writing etc. and so expect essays to be relatively free of errors. But what we have not taught students is how to 'compose'. Free writing is the ability to write freely what has been taught and not the ability to write anything at all. It means that "the writing which has been practised under control can at last be accomplished without control" (Pincas, 1982). In our case we are not teaching students either what to write or how to write it. We let them plunge in and leave them to sink or swim. Thus the 'Essay' test is invalid. Moreover, producing a piece of writing involves:

1. Syntax (sentence structures....sentence boundaries...).
2. Grammar (rules for verbs, pronouns etc.).
3. Mechanics (punctuation, spelling...).
4. Organization (paragraphs, topic and support...).
5. Word Choice (vocabulary, idiom, tone...).
6. Purpose (the reason for writing).

7. Audience (the reader/s).
8. Content (relevance, clarity...).
9. The Writer's Process (getting ideas, writing drafts, getting started, revising).

As teachers, we have only stressed one or two features of the nine mentioned above, mainly mechanics, grammar and organisation.

The materials and the teaching method emphasise structure, first syntactic and then rhetorical, and implies that if students follow it then they will be able to write fluently in an organised way. Considering the complexity of teaching writing, it is not surprising that we concentrate on the rule governed forms of the foreign language and the mechanics of prose. It is simply because they can be straightforwardly taught. But no matter how many exercises of the type given in the remedial material we use, it does not mean that students are learning to compose. They are merely improving their grammar.

When we deal with paragraphs, we try to be equally straightforward in our tasks. We give paragraphs to be analysed, unscrambled, reorganised and written according to guidelines. We ask students to manipulate prose written by someone else. However patterns and model paragraphs will not teach students how to write.

We assume that students need mastery over the sentence before proceeding to the paragraph and mastery over the paragraph before proceeding to the essay. We then provide controls that make the task easy for us, but is it easier for the students? What happens is they worry about accuracy, spelling and punctuation. They are not concerned with concepts or ideas. By giving students a topic sentence we imprison them in a semantic and rhetorical prison (Raines, 1983, 261). The first sentence restricts them before they have begun to develop their ideas. Again by giving them the content of the novel course to deal with, we do not leave scope for development of their own ideas. Widdowson (1983, 41) says.

"It is worth noting that when we instruct students to draw up a plan of an essay before writing and then to conform to it closely as they write we may be inhibiting the interactive process that generates written discourse".

The result is that students concentrate on what Widdowson calls 'text' rather than discourse and communication of ideas. Perhaps in a foreign language, student problems are textual rather than discursive. If they have already learnt how to write in their mother tongue, then they will have acquired the essential interactive ability underlying discourse enactment and the ability to record it in text. Their problem is how to textualise in the foreign language. But we have already mentioned that students are poor in essay writing in Arabic. They therefore lack experience with the concept of any written paragraph and with the mental processes that are needed to express ideas on paper for a reader. The problem here does not seem to be only one of carelessness and being slapdash in thought and presentation.

### MARKING

The student produces prose that is flat, with a welter of errors, different ones each time he writes. This in turn leaves the teacher little option other than covering the paper in red marks, a process that is most discouraging for teacher and student alike. This is what is called 'negative' marking. All the 'marks' which are the 'response' of the teacher are so overwhelming that they will be probably ignored by the student. To him it means "you have made a large number of errors". He is overcome by the quantities of red marks, does not know how to react and where to begin for improvement to take place.

After that, the fact that students write again at all is a manifestation of ability and perseverance.

The teacher's response is to the finished product given in by the student. He can only judge and evaluate but not influence the piece of writing. Responding to a paper only at the end limits teachers to correcting errors, giving a grade and a comment like "careless" or "needs improvement". In a sense this is futile especially for the student who has worked hard.

He puts the paper away therefore and hopes that next time he will get fewer 'red marks'. For correction of a writing error to be effective there are three conditions:

- (a) the comment should be comprehensible to the reader.
- (b) it should lead to improved performance.
- (c) it should relate to a genuine error, i.e. a recurring error rather than one which is connected with speed or carelessness.

What is suggested for both teaching and marking is a shift in emphasis from product to process in composition writing.

Raines (1983, 260) suggests we respond to the piece of writing as readers and not as item checkers. She also suggests that the teacher can intervene during the process of writing. This transforms the writing task from doing an assignment for the teacher to an interaction between teacher and student.

If teachers and students are to be partners in a joint collaboration over the student's work in progress, then this is better for students' motivation. The suggestions that are given for written work and its presentation in Appendix 4 may, and do work for discipline and getting rid of carelessness; but where the student is concerned, there are too many threats and warnings. The student may do the writing task, but will he take pleasure in expressing his ideas, and will he improve his composing process through interest and motivation? It is doubtful.

The 'Marking Code' suggested is a code for marking written products only. It is a type of marking code that is more fit for testing rather than for assessment on the progress of students' work. There seems to be an essential confusion between testing as a procedure and assessment of students' progress during instruction. This confusion arises mainly because we concentrate on product rather than process of writing. When we assess progress, we adapt our marking to fit what we teach and what we emphasise. We respond to the ideas expressed, how they are expressed and not only to the number of errors on the page. Rather than correct errors in syntax and punctuation etc. we note what problems our students are having, explain in groups through discussion the syntactic points, and then assign exercises that move from recognition to production. It is sometimes better not to correct grammar at all in the students' first two drafts on an essay, rather assign a topic that is likely to generate the topic in question. At the same time praise what has been done correctly on the essay; good beginnings, relevant word choice, lively detail and so on. Warmly praising comments like 'I like this point' or encouraging ones like 'Can you tell me more about this?' are likely to be more beneficial. This type of assessment is different to testing, where students must display visible and measurable progress at crucial points throughout their educational career. There we can mark errors. Let us look at the situation with the essay test.

## TESTING AND ASSESSING

When one watches students writing, one can plainly see that it is a painful experience for them. They cross out sentences and words, write others that are equally wrong, consult their dictionaries and produce flat uninteresting prose that is full of repeated errors. They complain that they do not have ideas to put down or they cannot find the right words. They worry about grammar and spelling and dread essay exams more than literature exams. This is not surprising when one asks what does writing involve? It involves mechanics such as spelling and punctuation, vocabulary, grammar, appropriate content, word selection, rhetorical matters like organisation, cohesion, unity, appropriateness to audience, topic, as well as other concerns such as logic and style. When we think of what the foreign learner has to learn in a new language in order to write fluently and accurately, the mind boggles. Again, all the above is not easy to teach.

Writing on the other hand is not the type of activity that can be tested in the way other subjects that involve content and knowledge can be tested. We are not looking for what a student knows about a subject. We are looking at how he can use the phonology, grammar, vocabulary and syntactical structures of the foreign language, as well as the mechanics of prose of that language. We evaluate his thinking, his ideas and the communicating of these ideas. But what the student chooses to produce under exam conditions may not necessarily be what he is actually capable of producing. If he is constrained by the title of an essay in an exam which does not interest him, he may have very little to say on the subject. If he is constrained by time, which he is under examination conditions, he may again produce very little, especially if he is writing in a foreign language, because he cannot present his ideas in an ordered way in the time available to him. Even a professional writer writing in his own language would be unlikely to produce his best work, given a blank sheet of paper and 2 or 3 hours in which to fill it. It can be argued then that the essay exam is not an indication of what the student can produce but simply of what he chooses to produce at a given time under exam conditions.

Another argument against the essay as a measure of writing skill is from the point of view of the marker. The marker's response to an essay is essentially subjective and therefore unreliable. Reliability can to a certain extent be achieved by using what is generally called 'the mechanical accuracy method'. Here the essay is allocated, for example, 100 marks and

marks are deducted for errors. Often, using this scheme, some errors are deemed to be more serious than others and therefore lose more marks. There can therefore still be disagreement among examiners as to the relative seriousness of errors. This method shows that in spite of its objectivity, essay marking is still subjective, impressionistic and intuitive; the method also has a negative effect as it looks for error in essays rather than help students overcome errors. Heaton (1975) is horrified by this method as it sacrifices validity to reliability, since it completely ignores the communicative function of the essay. The essay is not treated as a piece of discourse and a unit but simply as a string of words which are either correct or incorrect. If the essay is to be used as a method of writing ability, then surely it must be treated as discourse and assessed as such.

It is therefore suggested for writing to be assessed fairly, it should be by continuous assessment of student's work throughout the year. This will show how regularly and how hard students have worked and their rate of development during the academic year. This is something that one essay written under exam conditions cannot show. If an end of year exam is a must, then it should be allocated 25 marks out of 100, and the 75 remaining marks should go to the continuous assessment of year's work.

Gannon (1985, 16) warns that it is dangerous to evaluate a piece of writing out of context, i.e. without knowing the student, his rate of development where writing is concerned, the nature of the task that has been set for him to do, its origins and its purposes. Considering that the examiner marks exam papers at the end of the year without knowing which paper belongs to what student, and considering the unreliability of the essay as a measure of writing ability, this is not fair on the student. The method of assessment I have suggested seems to me more adequate. This method fits in well with the method that is suggested below for teaching.

The marking of essay examinations should also be changed. We cannot go on marking in a totally subjective and intuitive way and we cannot simply use the mechanical accuracy method. What is suggested is the use of a writing assessment scale like the one used by institutions like the British Council for assessing written work on public examinations. This uses 9 bands ranging from expert writer in band 9 to unassessable writer in band 1.

This assesses theme, logicity, clarity, accuracy, intelligibility

appropriateness of style, communication, vocabulary, presentation, variety etc. Band 5 for example states:

"Modest writer : theme can be followed, but logical presentation may be broken and lack clarity or consistency. Several inaccuracies and style not always appropriate to presentation. May lack interest or variety, but the basic message is presented. The reader will have to strain on occasion to comprehend meaning." This type of assessment scale may help the teacher, overburdened with thousands of papers to mark at the end of the year, judge students' written production more fairly and consistently. The most important part that will help improvement in free writing is the shift of emphasis from product to process in teaching. This is the part we shall turn to now.

### Teaching procedures

Thornton (1980, 29), says "One learns to write by writing". It is only by trying to write in response to need that one can explore for oneself the two constraints, namely what the writing system will allow and what our own mastery of the writing system will allow us to do. Free writing is concerned with fluency, content and audience. It must revolve around subjects that students are interested in and these subjects then become the basis for other more focused writing tasks, e.g. literature. One must therefore be very careful in choosing and giving assignments to students. It does not only involve giving a topic but also giving suggestions as to how to go about writing about the topic.

### The Process of Composing

The shift in emphasis should be from focussing on product to focussing on process of composing. Raimes (1983) suggests that the process of writing does not seem to be a linear one with pre-writing, writing and then revising coming in that order. Rather the three activities all go on at the same time. Composing means expressing ideas & conveying meaning and that entails thinking. "The thinking/writing process is also a way of discovering what we know, a way of 'form finding' " (Berthoff, 1978).

Writing therefore helps us find out what we want to say. If this is the nature of the composing process then we have to avoid forcing students into the three types of activities pre-writing-writing-revising- separately. A teaching method that encourages the three activities all together may be the following :

1. Do not draw up a plan of an essay and make them follow it.
2. Put down a list of ideas about the chosen topic and ask students to put down words in a list that the topic suggests to them.
3. Ask students to describe, define, classify objects or actions and concepts in that list.
4. Ask students to write one or two paragraphs, lengthen them, shorten them or even throw them away if they do not like them. Students can work alone, in pairs or in groups.
5. Discuss the content with them and ask them to discuss it among themselves.

In this way the students have time to deal with content, organisation and only at the end with grammar, although grammar will crop up while they are discussing content if it is preventing clear expression. What students must realise is that what they first put down on paper is not necessarily their finished product but just a beginning, a setting out of the first ideas, a draft. They, and the teacher should not expect that the words they put down on paper will be perfect straight away. Students should be given time for the composing process to work, time to try out ideas and have appropriate feedback on the content of what they write in their first draft. The feedback could come from the teacher going around to the several groups, or from the students of other groups. This encourages students to discover new ideas, new words and new sentences as they plan, write once, revise and write again. To explore a topic fully teachers may use activities such as brainstorming, reading, debate and list-making.

The first piece of writing is not corrected or graded. The teacher only looks at the ideas. Then, after showing each other and the teacher drafts and using what they have written to read over, think about and revise, students move on to other new ideas about the same topic. This is a process of discovery of new ideas as well as new language forms to express those ideas. Revision will be important for students if the teacher shows them how important it is, by expecting them to revise. Spending a little time helping students with revision is more important than a whole new assignment. Honest criticism of ideas, praise for what they have done right and encouragement will make students want to revise and improve. It will also help them proof read effectively. The paper they use can have a wide margin left for comments by teacher and other students in other groups. This could also serve for their revision notes. Then they can write

another draft anew. When they feel that they can give in their composition in its final form, they can do so.

### **Choosing the Topic**

If a topic is chosen with care and discussed and students are allowed time to think about it and write, this will improve their syntax. With some topics the teacher can predict the use of certain syntactic structures that are likely to be used with the topic; e.g. if one is talking about a certain moral dilemma, then one is likely to use 'should have' 'could have' 'rather' 'if' etc.. The teacher could review such structures beforehand and stress them again at the reading stage when revising. One however must be careful not to turn a composition class into a grammar class.

The topics chosen must be interesting for young adults. They could keep a journal where they record observations, as has been tried in the mother-tongue situation. This will certainly increase their fluency and help generate ideas. But for academic purposes one needs topics that will help them compare, describe, persuade, argue a point and so on. They could report on an accident after looking at a picture of it. They could compare witty cartoons with famous paintings that deal with the same topic. Discussion will help develop vocabulary structures and ideas. The foreign language that they are trying to use must help them to form concepts and deal with causes.

It is not advisable to give easy topics simply because we feel that students cannot cope with grammar and structures. This only means that good ideas are an impediment to correct writing. Purpose and audience are very important. To make purpose and audience less artificial (i.e. not only writing for the teacher and peers) we could ask them to go and look at public buildings and describe them to a pen-pal abroad and bring in a copy of the actual letter. We could bring in a topic that they can really feel they want to express an opinion about. (A reading exercise that I have once used which contained a quiz on self-defence, articles from newspapers about booby traps set up in houses for self defence) and that went off and killed people brought about very interesting and involved discussions. I then made students write down all the opinions and feelings on the subject).

This leads to writing that unites form, content, ideas and organisation, syntax and meaning, thinking revising and proof-reading. This brings up

the point of teaching exercises through reading which are very useful for writing purposes.

### **Reading for Writing Purposes**

Readings can be used as springboards for discussions and ultimately for writing purposes. Raimes (1983: 268) suggests using close reading for examination of what a writer says and of why and how he says it. This includes determining the writer's intent, extricating and paraphrasing the meaning and asking questions such as 'How is this related to what has gone before and what comes next?' One can also examine words and structures used to produce meaning. In this way students may become aware of what is expected of a writer that writes for a reader. This type of exercise could be used to enhance writing about literature.

In Appendix 1, the last part of the material uses a cloze exercise with words omitted. Most of the omitted words we notice, are function words or linking devices. This makes the exercise mainly one of idiom and correct usage. However, if a reading passage were used as a cloze type exercise with only content words omitted, students could be asked to come up with as many alternatives as possible, discussing each word, its connotations, tone, effect and so on. One could even use a multiple choice type cloze procedure with the actual word used by the author as one of the choices; then one can see who predicts the choice of the author's word, and ask him/her to say why and discuss the effect of this word as opposed to the other choices.

For tone, textual and thematic development and effect one can give either first lines of novels or short stories and ask students to write what they think comes next and how they think the story will develop. One can even ask them to write how they would like the story to develop and what they would like to read as a story. This will enhance their awareness of direction and movement in written texts. Again this exercise feeds into their literature courses.

Some of the exercises, mainly those on essay planning, used in the material in Appendix 1 show an attempt at finding out how ideas are linked logically in paragraphs and short passages and how students can use these, especially in the guided paragraph units. An alternative way can be done by the 'prediction' type procedure. One can give a section of a text and ask

students to predict the subsequent 5-8 sentences and write them. Then, in groups, they explain their predictions. Again, instead of only rearranging the already written sentences of an essay under the appropriate paragraphs as is done in the material in the appendix, the students could be asked to provide the paragraphs themselves. This could be done by giving students the first lines of the paragraphs in a two page essay. They are to predict and write how each paragraph will develop. This makes them write, as well as look at prose as a woven fabric.

Another type of exercise that can be used and can be tied in with culture and the background course is a transposition exercise. Students read a story set in England and they try to transpose it to their own home country. They isolate theme, main events and subsidiary detail and then they divide in groups what major advances would be required for the transposition to be acceptable. They can also transpose a story from city to country, from one viewpoint to another or from one age group to another. The transposition should be from remote to familiar. The class can first consider words and phrases whose meaning relies on cultural values. Then they try to find the equivalent in their own culture. They will consider how language differs or is similar because of the difference in culture. After discussion they can write the passage again. Sometimes they will find out that this cannot be done. This discovery in itself is of great value. Translation is not normally thought of as a composition exercise, but inasmuch as translation from the mother tongue leads to writing of whole pieces of English, it has its place both as a stimulus, a source of ideas and an experience of writing which can indicate to students that there are important similarities and differences between Arabic and English.

The approaches through reading make students explore the complex and delicate relationships that hold between utterances, their contexts and intents, in discourse. Johnson (1983, 253), suggests the use of what he calls 'if' exercises. Students read a passage and the teacher asks them to consider how would the writer have put it if he had wanted to say something slightly different; how the writer would have put it in a different context. This makes students change the intent and context and they see how it affects the utterance. Again rhetorical transformation could be trained by asking students to write, for example, a set of instructions as a description.

The last point concerns grammar in composition writing. If any grammar is to be included in the teaching of composition it is definitely the grammar of cohesion. The internal logic of the ideas is revealed in the surface structure of the ordering of sentences in relationships between sentences and in the grammatical and lexical system. Failure in using cohesion is failure in producing acceptable paragraphs or essays. Reference conjunction, lexical links, substitution, ellipsis and patterning show sentence links and logic. An examination of a passage for these and again producing these links and examining the production gets students to look beyond the sentence. It is a tool for examining how writers get things to work for them. It is part of composing, not just foreign language grammatical structure.

It is hoped that the suggestions made will help to change the essay writing course, its teaching methods, its assessment and the marking and testing of essays. This however, will not be seen until we have tried it out in the coming academic year.

## APPENDIX 1

ESSAY YEAR I

UNIT 2

FACULTY OF ARTS

### I Concord

Select the correct alternative form the words in brackets :

1. The man and his son, who (was) standing outside the hotel, (was) tourists. (were)
2. To study language (is) a useful intellectual (exercise) (are) (exercises)
3. The man, who (were) one of the (footballers) , and ( his ) (was) (footballer) , and (their) friends who (was) trainers (were) congratulating (themselves) (was) (himself ) on the victory.
4. The films showing at the Moulin cinema (is) the same (ones) (are) (one) that (were) showing in Cairo last week. (was)
5. The discovery of the treasures of Tutankhamun's tomb (were) (was ) one of the causes of revived interest in archaeology.
6. He (considers) that he (have) never seen a trainer or horses (consider) (has) who (were) better at understanding animals in general. (was )
7. Of all the things he (discuss) in the essay, the thing which (discusses) (interest ) me most (is ) the ways which psychologists (use ) (interests) (are) (uses)
8. Which of the places he (have) visited (do ) he (thinks) (is) the most interesting ? (has) (does) (think) (are)
9. (Do ) all the sugar (comes) from abroad ? (Does) (come)

10. ( Is ) the questions the policeman (are) asking about you; or  
(Are) (is)  
(does) they (concern) someone else ?  
(do) (concerns)

Essay Year I

Unit 2

## II Preposition Practice

### BY

1. Used to indicate **Manner** in certain expressions.

Exercise : Fill in the blanks with an appropriate word from the list below :

Heart, design, chance, accident, far –

- (a) This is by ..... the most interesting.  
(b) You'll have to learn these instructions by .....  
(c) He dropped it by .....  
(d) We met by ..... in the street.  
(e) It wasn't an accident; it was done by .....

2. Used to mean 'alone' when used with reflexive pronouns.

Exercise: Fill in the blanks with an appropriate word from the list below :

myself, yourself, himself, themselves

- (a) She lives by .....  
(b) He went by .....  
(c) Why did you go by ..... ?  
(d) I hate eating by .....  
(e) They can't manage by .....

3. Used to mean 'by means of'.

Exercise : Fill in the blanks with an appropriate word from the list below :

electricity, expression, miracle, argument, plane

- (a) You'll get there quicker by .....  
(b) Radios work by .....

- (c) I could see by his ..... that he wasn't pleased.  
 (d) You'll never convince him by .....  
 (e) We succeeded by a .....

### To

1. Used after certain nouns :
- |                               |            |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| allusion (mention, reference) | attachment |
| attention                     | attitude   |
| promotion                     | cruelty    |
| reference                     | kindness   |
| resistance                    | similarity |
| loyalty                       | tendency   |
| obligation                    |            |

**Exercise :** From the list of nouns given above, complete the sentences on the next page.

### Essay 1

### Unit 2

- (a) The speaker made several ..... to the new scheme.  
 (b) Why don't you pay more ..... to what you're doing ?  
 (c) John's ..... to manager was a surprise.  
 (d) The people offered vigorous ..... to the invaders.  
 (e) He has never wavered in his ..... to the party.  
 (f) R.S.P.C.A. stands for Royal Society for the Prevention of ..... to animals.  
 (g) Guests have an ..... to their hosts.  
 (h) Some people have a ..... to accidents.  
 (i) Don't you notice the ..... to your own plan ?  
 (j) Some people have a ..... to fatness.

### FOR

1. Often used following a noun :  
 e.g. cure for, reason for, excuse for etc.

**Exercise :** From the list of words given below, complete the sentences which follow :

cure, refill, substitute, use, reason, receipt, toys, classes, time, excuse -

- (a) ..... are for children.
- (b) Have you a ..... for a ballpoint pen ?
- (c) Are there any ..... for beginners ?
- (d) We just have ..... for another drink.
- (e) Is there any ..... for a cold ?
- (f) I didn't buy it, as I had no ..... for it.
- (g) He has an ..... for everything.
- (h) There's no real ..... for wool.
- (i) I don't see any ..... for his attitude.
- (j) Please give me a ..... for the money.

2. Also used to indicate duration of time :  
 e.g. She has been at the university for three years.

Exercise : Match the pairs.

- |   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| (a) Christianity has existed            | (a) for more than a century. |
| (b) France has been a republic          | (b) for about 80 years.      |
| (c) Slavery has been abolished          | (c) for five years.          |
| (d) The motor-car has been in existence | (d) for nearly 2 centuries.  |
| (e) The president is elected            | (e) for nearly 2000 years.   |

**Essay Year 1**

**Unit 2**

**III**

- (a) Select the correct form the alternatives in brackets.
  - (b) Fill in each numbered blank with a suitable preposition from this list : of, with, by, to, for, across, off, in, above, up, down, from
1. When did a man first cross the Channel between England and France (1) ..... air? If you <sup>(asks)</sup><sub>(ask)</sub> somebody that question he will probably <sup>(answer)</sup><sub>(answers)</sub> "(2) ..... 1909". Or he will mention the name (3) ..... Louis Bleriot who flew a small aeroplane (4) ..... France to England (5) ..... that year. That <sup>(were)</sup><sub>(was)</sub> the year (6) ..... which a balloon carried a man (7) ..... the Channel

(8) ..... the first time. Balloons (was) making long  
(were) journeys (9) ..... air a hundred years before the first  
aeroplane left the ground.

Leonardo da Vinci (was) already thinking (10) .....  
(were) flying machines (11) ..... about 1500. But he did not  
think (12) ..... balloons. His machines (was) operated  
(were) (13) ..... wings or propellers. None of them ever got  
(14) ..... the ground. Leonardo understood the reason  
(15) ..... this. He did not have enough power. Man  
(were) not strong enough to lift machines (16) ..... in  
(was) the air and (keeps) them there. Where (was) the power to  
(keep) come (17) ..... ?

#### Essay Year 1

#### Unit 2

2. Later the Montgolfier brothers thought that since hot air  
(rise) , if they (was) to fill a bag (1) ..... hot air,  
(rises) (were)  
the bag would rise. A very large bag (2) ..... hot air might  
lift a man (3) ..... the ground.
- Since the two brothers (was) the sons of a paper maker, it  
(were) not very difficult (4) ..... (them) to make a large  
(was) bag (5) ..... paper and cloth. A crowd gathered (6) .....  
Annonay to watch. ( He ) held the bag (7) ..... a fire.  
(They)  
The bag filled (8) ..... hot air and rose into the air. But  
the brothers did not go (9) ..... in their balloon.
- The aeroplane and not the balloon (has) become man's real  
(have)

flying machines. But a lot of people still <sup>(goes)</sup> up (10) .....  
 balloons. <sup>(He)</sup> <sup>(do)</sup> <sup>(it)</sup> (11) ..... pleasure,  
<sup>(They)</sup> <sup>(does)</sup> <sup>(them)</sup> especially (12) ..... America and Europe. There <sup>(is)</sup>  
<sup>(are)</sup>  
 often balloon races and the balloonists <sup>(travel)</sup> hundreds of  
<sup>(travels)</sup>  
 miles before <sup>(he)</sup> <sup>(come)</sup> (13) .....  
<sup>(they)</sup> <sup>(comes)</sup>

Chaplen, F., Paragraph Writing 6

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ESSAY 1

PARAGRAPH WRITING  
 THE IDEALS OF ANIMAL FARM

TOPIC SENTENCE

"Throughout the story of Animal Farm the principles and ideals of the revolution are betrayed".

**Ma.1 (Comradeship)**

One of the ideals put forward by Major is .....

Mi. 1 a But .....

1 b

1 c

**Ma. 2.a (Attitudes to man) M1 a) dealings with man**

**M1 b) human habits**

Mi.c) Another of the principles is that .....

**Ma. 2 b) But again, both aspects .....**

a)

b)

c)

**Ma. 3 (Equality)**

Finally, the most fundamental principle .....

Mi 3a) But Napoleon and the pigs .....

3b) By the end .....

**Essay Planning**

1. The essay is entitled "Genetic Mutation in the Chrysalids".
2. The headings of your paragraphs are as follows:
  - a) The causes of genetic mutation
  - b) The extent of genetic mutation
  - c) The effect of genetic mutation on religion
  - d) Measures to prevent and control mutation
3. Below you will find the sentences of the essay. But they are not in the right order.

**Exercise 1** Decide whether each sentence belongs in paragraph a), b), c) or d).

**Exercise 2** decide which sentence is the topic sentence of each paragraph.

**Exercise 3** Arrange the sentences in the correct order to form the completed paragraphs.

**The Sentences:**

1. Since the restoration of the norm is a sacred duty for them the people of Labrador have regulations for controlling and preventing deviation in plant, animal or human life.
2. *The Chrysalids* describes the effect of this process on Labrador, which has been affected by atomic bombs dropped on the U.S.A. and therefore suffers from genetic instability.
3. A long time before the book begins, there has been a nuclear war.
4. This means that neither plants, animals nor humans can be relied on to "breed true".
5. The extent of genetic mutation varies from one part of Labrador to another, and from one period to another.
6. Nuclear fall-out, or atomic radiation, is known to have an adverse effect on the breeding of living things.
7. Instead, they tend to produce forms that are abnormal in some way.
8. The effect it has is known as genetic mutation.
9. At certain seasons, there was an increase in the rate of genetic mutation on account of the direction of the wind.
10. By these means the people of Labrador try to restore all forms of life to the norm.
11. These regulations are sent out from the central government in *Ri-o*, and they specify exactly what is normal and what is abnormal.
12. As a result of this belief, the eradication of deviations in vegetable animal or human life is a sacred duty.
13. When there are deviant animals, which they call "Offences" everybody gathers in the yard while they are slaughtered to prevent them breeding further deviations.

14. Between these two were the areas which they called the Wild Country, where there was a 50% chance of "breeding true", and the fringes which was much less stable, and inhabited by exiled mutants.
15. Some areas, thought not completely stable are habitable and a reasonably secure life can be lived there.
16. Other areas are completely uninhabitable because the deviations are so extreme; these are called the Badlands.
17. They also believe that God made man in his own image and that therefore anything which deviates from the "true image" is the work of the devil.
18. Religious people, such as David's father, display texts from this book on the walls of their houses, and all these texts are about the elimination of abnormalities.
19. Human deviations, which they call "Blasphemies", are sterilised and sent to the Fringes.
20. The people of Labrador believe that God sent what they call "Tribulation" on them as a punishment.
21. In the case of vegetables, when there is a deviant crop, it is the duty of the owner to burn the field where it grew to prevent the deviation from spreading.
22. This duty is emphasised in a book called Repentances which alongside the bible, is their sacred book.
23. One of the strange features of Labrador society is that it makes genetics a religious matter.

### Cloze Test

1. Fill in the blanks, one word for each blank :

"Has **The Chrysalids** a message",

Is **The Chrysalids** simply a good story or is it a book with message? The story is certainly exciting and full (1) ..... suspense to the very end. (2) ..... it is a story full of interesting, (3) ..... imaginary, detail; and this information is scientifically (4) ..... credible. But does Wyndham use this story and its details to (5) ..... us something? It (6) ..... that the answer to this question is that (7) ..... are, in the story, certain themes and ideas about (8)

..... Wyndham feels strongly. These themes (9) .....  
..... an important part of the book, but it is not (10) .....  
..... that they add up (11) ..... single message.

The first of these themes (12) ..... the horror of nuclear war;  
we learn that the (13) ..... of nuclear war is disastrous, on the  
land, (14) ..... all living things and on human history. We learn that  
(15) ..... parts of the land have been (16) .....  
destroyed so that nothing will (17) ..... live there again. In other  
parts, all life, (18) ..... vegetable, animal or human is  
(19) ..... to mutation, Life in these unstable (20) ..... is  
very hard; and the attempt to control mutation meets (21) .....  
small success. But it is the effect of modern war (22) ..... human  
history that is the most frightening. (23) ..... most of the globe,  
nearly all human learning and achievement has been lost. Technology is  
very primitive, literacy (24) ..... but there is little to (25)  
..... and there is almost no (26) ..... between  
one inhabited area and another. Only religion has (27) .....  
..... from the "Old World"; and in attempting to deal (28)  
..... the effects of war it has become unrecognisable. These  
terrible (29) ..... are well summed up by the Sealand (30)  
..... she says "There was the power of gods in the hands of  
children., but were they mad children, all of them, quite mad?"

Another theme (31) ..... which Wyndham feels strongly is  
intolerance and the cruelty that goes (32) ..... It and this is shown  
clearly (33) ..... his presentation of three incidents. In the first of  
(34) ..... incidents Sophie and her parents are driven out because she  
has six toes. In his (35) ..... of this incident, Wyndham (36)  
..... the despair of this family, and their goodness, so that we  
sympathise strongly (37) ..... them and criticise the society  
(38) ..... intolerance condemn them. In the same (39) ..... in  
the incident of Aunt Harriet. David's father cruelly refuses (40) .....  
..... help save her deviant baby, and we feel that the religion that (41)  
..... him refuse her is an evil one. Finally we see intolerance (42)  
..... work when society outlaws the group (43) .....  
..... even the excuse of religion. (44) ..... the less, they  
persecute the group because they are afraid of differences which they do  
not understand. Intolerance in all these incidents is (54) ..... as  
something ugly and evil.

There is a connection in *The Chrysalids* (46) ..... this last theme and another near the end of the book (47) ..... the Sealand woman speaks about evolution She points (48) ..... that the Labrador people were wrong to persecute the group, not only because it was cruel and intolerant to do (49) ..... , but because they ignored the principle of (50) ..... change. Life is never static: new forms evolve, develop and then die (51) ..... For this reason the Labrador people were wrong to try to make humans (52) ..... to the "true image" as though no further evolution was (53) ..... In introducing this theme. Wyndham wants us to consider that (54) ..... if man becomes extinct, life itself might (55) ..... go on evolving and improving.

We have seen Wyndham presents each of (56) ..... three themes in a way which stimulates thought and (57) ..... our conventional ideas. We come away (58) ..... the book (thinking how disastrous nuclear war would be, how ugly intolerance (59), ..... , and remembering that life is constantly (60) ..... and changing. In *The Chrysalids* there is some (61) ..... between these themes, in that the Labrador people, by their intolerance of deviation are (62) ..... evolutionary progress. Outside the story, however, the themes are quite (63) ..... if Wyndham's main intention had been to convey a message, it would have been more (64) ..... to have only one theme. But if, on the other hand, the story was his (65) ..... interest, there is no reason why he should not (66) ..... his feelings on various subjects in the (67) ..... of telling his story. And this, it seems, is what he has done: he has primarily, told a story for its own sake, and (68) ..... he has allowed his story to (69) ..... themes in which he has a strong interest.

## APPENDIX 2

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

FACULTY OF ARTS

POETRY

YEAR 1

JANUARY 1986

ONE HOUR

ANSWER THE QUESTIONS ON THE FOLLOWING POEM :

### UNWELCOME

We were young, we were merry, we were very very wise,  
And the door stood open at our feast,  
When there passed us a woman with the West in her eyes,  
And a man with his back to the East.

O, still grew the hearts that were breathing so fast,  
The loudest voice was still.  
The jest died away on our lips as they passed,  
And the rays of July struck chill.

The cups of red wine turn'd pale on the board,  
The white bread black as soot.  
The hound forgot the hand of her lord,  
She fell down at his foot.

Low let me lie, where the dead dog lies,  
Ere I sit me down again at a feast,  
When there passes a woman with the West in her eyes,  
And a man with his back to the East.

Mary Coleridge

1. What kind of poem is this ?
2. Is this meter familiar to you ? Give examples of any poems you have read which are written in the same manner.
3. What do you think of this poem ? Give reasons.

N.B. MARKS WILL BE DEDUCTED FOR CARELESS WRITING.

### APPENDIX 3

2. In the above poem there are different kind of imagery through which the poet tried to clear out his own idea in this poem by choosing the correct imagery and good diction. The first stanza has many imagery in the first line "a field of silver grain it is a personification the poet personify the field to appear an silver". Bells on golden wings it is a metaphore the poet sees the bellos as brids with golden wings and golden wings is personification, he is personifying the fields by gold.

In the second stanza there is many imagery too, "the ghostly sea" the sea appeared to be like a ghost of a dead thing which give us the feeling of frighten and great silence. In the third line "Rises and walks on feet" personification the poet imagin this ghostly sea as a person who winces and walks on his feet when hearing the sound of the falling rain a round him. In the foth line" Shakes the darkness another personification when Faulkner personifys the dark as a person or any object which can be shocked.

3. The rythm illustrate movement in the above poem because the poet used the exact rhythm for his well choisen dictions and this clear in many positions of the poem in the first line of this poem by "Rain rain...a field of silver grain" as we find the first two words a sewzeora in the line which give us the impration of the rain as if it is coming dow and we can hear and see it or in another word it makes us feel the movement of this rain. The way the poet divides his line according to the rhythm show the movement clearly as if we look at "The sleeper sits, and sleepily opens an eye" it give us the felling of somebody hearing the rain and his emotions stared to move during his sleep and sleepily starts to open an eye which make us feel the movement and truth of this imagery. "Bells on golden wings slide slightly down" dividing the feet of this line using the thytlm let us feel as if we are hearing the movement sound of this wing which slide lightly. We might say that through the choisen dictions and this light rythm Faulkner succeeded in translating his emotion to the people, because as an old poet said "Poetry is the correct words in the correct form".
4. I think that Faulkner to a great extent did not succeed as a poet because from my own point of view he choses very simple dictions and very simple imagery, in many lines through the poem he repates the same word I knew sometime he do this to illustrate the meaning but it was

boering sometimes this rhythm is very light and easy but at the end I would like to say that I like this poem very much because nearly I understood most of it, even if I only think so.

1. I would describe the style of the above extract as a balade because of its light rhythm and its free verse. It may sound very nice if using music with it. also because of repotendness of some word it might sound more if it is illustrated by music.

## APPENDIX

### Suggestions for Teaching the Course 1

One of the main purposes of this course is to counteract from the start the lackadaisical approach to written work. A very important part therefore, is discipline in attendance, punctuality, presentation and format. To this end:

1. Students should come equipped with :
  - a) pencil and pen
  - b) a proper lined writing pad
  - c) an exercise book used exclusively for this course, and to be used only at the teacher's discretion, not for notes.
2. Students should be warned that a 100% attendance is essential.
3. Tests may be given at any time without warning.
4. Work will only be marked if handed in at the appropriate time, and decently presented.

Most of us are depressed with the quality of the written work presented for the following reasons:

- a) It is undertaken in a slipshod manner, carelessly presented and is often late, with the result that:
- b) it is full of easily avoidable errors.
- c) the students endlessly repeat these errors. Thus they 'learn their mistakes' instead of learning from their mistakes.

The following system therefore should be applied uniformly.

1. Work should be handed in on paper. Only decent paper and properly presented work (-name, title, margin, proper paragraphing etc.-) should be accepted.
  2. Students should be told in advance that late work will not be accepted, and that if work is missed, their term's mark will be affected.
  3. These papers should be marked as soon as possible according to the code given below. They should then be returned to the student who will write a fair copy in an exercise book used solely for that purpose.
- 
1. These are the actual instructions to the teachers.
  1. The student should hand in his fair copy by a given time, together with

the rough copy. This will then be given a mark. Only fair copies that have been preceded by a rough copy and handed on time, should be given a grade.

#### **Marking Code :**

Underline the word or words, and mark with a letter as follows :

- S – spelling (Encourage use of dictionaries)
  - P – punctuation
  - SS – sentence structure
  - SS – for a long sentence, improperly constructed that should be divided up
  - P – divided up
  - Rr – preposition
  - T – tense
  - L – lexical error, wrong choice of word
  - C – concord – very common yet easily avoidable
  - X – error of fact or judgement
  - X – a whole passage so erroneous that it should not be reproduced.
- No need to correct the grammatical errors there.

This does not pretend to be a comprehensive or watertight system. But it is a workable rough and ready system, comprehensible to students, and corrects the more obvious and accessible of their mistakes.

#### **Use of Remedial Work : (What to do with the three types of exercise)**

##### **I. Concord**

- Explain –
1. What is meant.
  2. That it is a very common mistake and must be eliminated at an early stage in their university career.
  3. Do two or three orally to illustrate concord and check that they know the rules. When this is agreed, impress on them that since they know the rules, only 100% accuracy is acceptable.
  4. Do the rest in full on paper in class.
  5. Swap papers : check results and see who get 100%.

## **II. Prepositions**

1. Do in class as with Concord exercises 1-5.
2. Do in full in exercise books those that were found difficult, but out of class.
3. Impress on students the importance of learning the uses that are unfamiliar, recognising them and noting them in their reading, and practising them themselves.
4. In many cases the best way is to learn the phrase in which the preposition occurs, or the word which it follows, together with the preposition.

## **III. Practice Concord and Preposition**

1. Do part 1 in class, on paper, swap papers and check results.
  2. Part 2 to be written in or out of class in exercise books for marks.
  3. Use part 2 above, i.e. the exercise, to teach format of the paragraph as follows :  
Title  
One line blank  
Indent first line  
Write all other lines up to the end  
Ask them not to write on alternate lines.
- IV. At the end of the remedial phase there will be an unannounced test and the marks for the test will be published on the notice board.**

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