

THE WRITING COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS
DO AT A TRANSFER INSTITUTION

by

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DEDICATION

This manuscript is dedicated to my husband Dan, and to my parents, H. D. and Elsie.

One begins
Again--
Too late
To be at the beginning
But with the expectations
Of a novice.

MJB

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The philosophy of the community college focuses on the student and the community it serves. In striving to meet the needs of the student and community, the community college curriculum emphasizes the useful and practical aspects of education. Courses having value for community college students are those which relate to the fulfillment of personal and vocational needs (Monroe, 1972).

As the community college strives to meet the needs of the community, its programs become increasingly flexible, reflecting a sensitivity to societal changes (Evans and Neagley, 1973). The community college, ideally, lacks a certain brittleness of philosophic purpose. It tends to be people-oriented rather than idea-oriented. The statements of philosophy printed in community college catalogs illustrate this emphasis as the following excerpts chosen from six community colleges located around the country indicate. The following quotations are taken from community colleges located in the states of California, Oregon, Florida, New York, Michigan, and Kansas respectively.

This community college is dedicated to the worth and dignity of each student. Its primary responsibility is to the goals of the student, his needs, desires, and aspirations (Columbia Junior College Catalog, 1971-72, p. 111).

Mt. Hood Community College was founded with a belief that a comprehensive community college should serve the needs of district residents who desire training beyond the high school level. The curriculum should be flexible, should reflect changes and developments in society, should be responsive to emerging educational needs of district residents, and should be balanced with a variety of courses--vocational-technical courses for job entry or for job upgrading, lower division courses for transfer to a four-year college or university, and general education courses for personal improvement (Mt. Hood Community College Catalog, 1972-73, p. 7).

The community junior college is a unique American 20th century institutional contribution to education. Its philosophy is based on recognition of the ever-changing society. A further philosophical basis is the belief that there is need in a democracy for each person to be educated to the limits of his ability if he is to reach his maximum potential for service to self and to society (St. Johns River Junior College Catalogue, 1972-73, p. 6).

As a community college, Dutchess belongs to the citizens who support it and are served by it; its philosophy properly reflects a response to their collective and individual needs. Aware of the complexity and variety of challenges facing the members of a highly industrialized and increasingly urbanized democratic society, the trustees, administration, and faculty have committed the College to an educational program featuring quality, opportunity, diversity, and social responsibility (Dutchess Community College Catalogue, 1971-72, p. 8).

The philosophy of the College is one of attempting to provide programs that speak to the needs of the community (Oakland Community College Catalog, 1972-73, p. 9).

In recognition of the trends in American education, our college has moved and should continue to move toward expansion of its curricular and co-curricular services to more adequately meet the needs of the citizens of the community junior

college district (Kansas City Kansas Community Junior College Catalog, 1970-72, p. 9).

There is not a noticeable variance from state to state in the community college's emphasis on community and student needs.

In accordance with the general philosophic purposes of the community college, the English departments in fulfilling the service role to both students and community offer several kinds of programs. Those programs are most commonly called transfer or college parallel, vocational or terminal, and remedial or developmental. While the present study is related more closely to the transfer English program, it is helpful to look at the total picture of English in the community colleges in order to better understand the nature of the transfer program.

Description of Community College English Programs

Formal research studies neglected the study of the English programs in community colleges until the 1960's when community colleges began their most rapid growth. The national studies attempting to describe the community college English programs have been questionnaire surveys. The first such study was conducted in the early 1960's (Kitzhaber, 1963). Kitzhaber's report, a speech delivered to the executive committee of the National Council of Teachers of English, was based on a survey of 215 community colleges. The survey revealed that nearly all the grammatical

instruction in freshman English courses of the community college appeared to be of the traditional type and that the remedial courses involved mechanical drill, workbook exercises, spelling lists, and punctuation rules. Kitzhaber generally found little in the community college English program to recommend itself and concluded that the regular English classes relied too heavily on the teaching of grammar and that the elective courses were uninteresting. He further concluded that the two-year schools had held too closely to the tradition of the four-year schools.

A later study conducted by Weingarten and Kroeger in 1965 was considered by Worthen (1967) to be the first major publication concerning the community college English program. The study was conducted by means of two questionnaires which were sent to chairmen of English departments and to English teachers in community colleges throughout the United States. It was designed to provide a profile of English instruction in the community college. The profile was given by a description of three different aspects of the English programs: composition courses, remedial and honors courses, and professional qualifications of teachers (Weingarten, 1965).

From the responses to the questionnaires, it appeared that both teachers and chairmen thought that the teaching of traditional grammar would raise the writing

standards of the students. There was an indication that the teachers were not qualified to teach any style of grammar except traditional which many of them had chosen to label as "functional" (Weingarten, 1965, p. 31). About sixty percent of the teachers reported that they taught grammar regularly as part of the composition course. Most of the sixty percent taught traditional grammar entirely (Weingarten, 1965).

The Weingarten study showed that remedial and honors English courses were on the rise with there being more remedial than honors courses. In 1965, fifty-eight percent of the English departments had remedial courses, and ten percent planned to start them the next year. Twenty-eight percent of the colleges reported special courses for the gifted students, and another five percent of the schools stated that they were exploring the possibility of introducing honors courses in the future. The honors courses seemed to stress originality and independent work while the remedial courses emphasized grammar. Ninety-nine percent of the chairmen felt that grammar was important to the remedial course. The remedial courses relied heavily on drill work and the teaching of the basic mechanics of grammar. They also stressed expository writing since the basic freshman composition course typically stressed exposition and the remedial course was based on the assumption that the remedial student was

being prepared for the regular college course (Weingarten, 1965).

This study further revealed that English teachers at the two-year colleges seemed to be most dissatisfied with their preparation for the teaching of composition. They felt that they needed more experience and understanding of language-related subjects, linguistics, history of the language, semantics and logic. They specified an interest in gaining a broad humanities background relating strongly to cultural experiences rather than needing specific classes. Generally, the teachers did not rate the quality of their colleagues very high, and most of them were dissatisfied with their teaching situation.

The most ambitious study yet to be done concerning the community college English program was conducted in 1968-69. This study (Shugrue, 1970) was a joint project of the Modern Language Association, the National Council of Teachers of English, and the American Association of Junior Colleges. The study attempted to provide a description of the community college English instructor and the department in which he taught by involving every junior college English instructor in the United States. Therefore, while attempting basically the same thing as the earlier study done by Weingarten and Kroeger, it had a larger scope.

The Shugrue study was conducted by questionnaire with the largest number of questionnaires being sent to the 8,700

English instructors in two-year colleges. Additional questionnaires were sent to the chairmen of English departments, community college presidents, graduate departments of English, students who had enrolled in community college freshman English, and to 200 English instructors who had been identified by their chairmen as being successful community college English teachers.

The community college English departments in size, organization, and course offerings were highly diverse and showed marked regional differences. Even though there was great variety in the English programs, the authors generalized that about half of the teaching time of the English departments was spent on the college transfer composition course with seventy-five percent of all instructors teaching at least one college transfer composition course and ten percent teaching nothing but composition (Shugrue, 1970).

The importance of composition to the community college instructor can easily be seen by looking at the responses to one question from the questionnaire. The question from the Shugrue questionnaire and the percentage responses he received are presented in Table 1 (Shugrue, 1970, p. 9). Seventy-one percent of the teachers reporting said that improved methods of teaching composition were needed.

Generally, English instruction and English instructors in the community college tended to be traditional in

Table 1

Importance of Writing in Community College English Programs^a

From your knowledge of the teachers and teaching in your department which of the following fifteen items are most needed to improve instruction?

Mark five in order of importance.

Item	Percentage of responses listing item among five most needed	Percentage of responses ranking item first
Techniques in teaching composition	71	34
Variety in teaching tech.	46	4
Defining and measuring relevant course objectives	43	7
Breadth in related academic subjects such as history, sociology, political science, philosophy	41	8
Knowledge of how to teach reading as a basic skill (as contrasted to teaching critical reading or understanding literature)	37	7
Characteristics of the junior college student	31	6
Psychology of interpersonal relations	28	6
Knowledge of psychological learning theory	26	3
Courses in literature	25	5
Curriculum development and articulation	25	3
Techniques of conferring with students	20	1
Mastery of grammatical skills	19	2
Philosophy of the junior college	18	3
Research techniques for instructional purposes	15	1
Platform skills	9	0

^aQuestion and data taken from Shugrue, Michael. The National Study of English in the Junior College, 1972, p. 9.

dealing with experimental methods of curriculum and instruction. More than half of the instructors had not used team teaching, and almost a third had not worked with programmed materials. Classroom discussions received limited use even though sixty-eight percent of the instructors believed it to be an essential element in the teaching of literature. Independent study had been used on only twenty-two percent of the campuses (Shugrue, 1970).

The teaching methods used at the community college level of instruction are probably modeled more on the university than on the high school where experiments in different teaching strategies are quite prevalent. Kroeger (1972) concluded that "The community college is still so oriented toward the four-year college or university that it will deny its own philosophy" (p. 16).

The relationship of the community college English program to the programs of the high school and the university received lengthy discussion at the Tempe Conference held in Tempe, Arizona in 1965. That conference has historical significance since it was the first national conference which was attended by both community college and university English teachers. The conference proceedings were collected and published in Research and the Development of English Programs in the Junior College (Archer and Ferrell, 1965).

While it is difficult to assess changes or to predict trends which might have occurred in a little over a decade,

such speculation is relevant to this study. There may perhaps be a trend in the community college English departments away from the acceptance of the four-year college composition course as a model for the composition course for the community college. Shugrue's study offers some support for this statement. A majority of the instructors who returned questionnaires said that they viewed the composition courses at their colleges not as parallel to that of the four-year college, but as the most effective course which the staff could design in order to meet the needs of the general educational commitments of their institutions, the departmental standards, and the students they served (Shugrue, 1970).

The Teaching of Composition in General

More information concerning the teaching of composition needs to be provided in order to design a more productive and efficient program for students with varying educational experiences, interests, and goals. It has been charged that ninety-five percent of the research concerning written composition has been trivial or inconclusive (Brad-dock, Lloyd-Jones, Schoer, 1963). Although many experienced teachers believe there is a significant relationship between the amount of grammatical information a student has and his ability to write, research studies have not been able to support this general and wide-spread belief (Strom, 1960). In a review of grammar and composition related research studies ranging from 1906 to 1958, Strom concluded that

The research findings show clearly and overwhelmingly that direct methods of instructions, focusing on writing activities and the structuring of ideas, are more efficient in teaching sentence structure, usage, punctuation, and other related factors than are such methods as nomenclature drill, diagramming, and rote memorization of grammatical rules. Research reveals that a knowledge of classificatory grammar has little measurable effect on the ability to express ideas accurately or precisely in writing or speaking (pp. 13-14).

Strom's recommendation was that problems with grammatical structure in student writing be dealt with through individual instruction since grammatical errors are individual matters. Supporting Strom's appraisal was the conclusion drawn by Braddock, et al., 1963, who surveyed the research studies dealing with grammar and its relationship to written composition. Their conclusion was that "instruction in formal grammar has little or no effect on the quality of student composition" (p. 35).

Need for This Study

English teachers in community colleges think that writing can be taught successfully and that it is an important part of the curriculum. Sensitive to the needs of their students who have varying abilities and backgrounds, community college English teachers are interested in new information which will help them to make their composition courses more beneficial to their students (Shugrue, 1970).

Even though several types of writing courses are offered as part of the regular college credit English

program, courses such as technical writing, advanced composition, and creative writing, it is the basic transfer composition course alone which demands on the average half of the total teaching time of the English staff (Shugrue, 1970).

Students entering community colleges may have immediate employment goals but the majority of them do not rule out the possibility of transferring to a four-year school. Sixty-six percent of the community college students state that they plan to transfer to a four-year institution (Gleazer, 1968). Thus, the transfer composition course is of interest to more than half of the teachers and students at the community colleges.

As yet, no study has appeared which has attempted to discover within the framework of a research design just what writing the transfer student is asked to do when he transfers to the university. The information which community college teachers have sought from the university in the past has been concerned with the nature of the basic freshman composition course itself. However, the university does not have the same philosophy as the community college and may not have the same goals for the composition course as the ones which may be desirable for the community college. Within the framework of the community college philosophy with its emphasis on student needs, it seems appropriate to ask

what types of writing the community college transfer student will be asked to do when he transfers to the university.

This study has been designed to provide a different type of information, i.e. the junior level writing required at a university. This type of information may be used by community college English teachers to design a composition course more closely related to the needs and values of the students enrolled.

Purpose of this Study

It is the purpose of this study to describe the writing the community college student will encounter upon transfer to a university. The general emphasis is placed on description of the writing types and the amounts of writing. Some attention is given to the attitude toward writing in a specific context as well. The questions which are to be answered are:

1. What types of writing are required at a university?
2. Are different writing types required by different colleges within the university?
3. How much writing is required?
4. What percentage of the total writing assigned falls in each of the designated categories?
5. What type of examination is given, essay or objective?

6. What general emphasis is given to writing skills?

Selection of Terminology

The term community college has been selected for use in this study since it is the one term which most adequately relates to both the philosophy used in this study and to the Virginia public community colleges from which the students who participated in this study transferred. Nationally, the term community college may include certain two-year colleges and junior colleges when those colleges offer a variety of programs in addition to the two-year college parallel curriculum in order to meet the general needs of a community.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited in both geographic region and type of institution studied. It is further limited to the professor and student perception of the questions used. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University is a land grant university as well as a technical institute and is the product of a certain area of the country as well.

The information which has resulted from this study is limited to the description of a given situation and has not been used by this researcher to prescribe a transfer composition course. This study does not seek to answer the philosophical questions concerning the nature of writing and its relationship to human development.

This study is further restricted by the usual limitations inherent in the survey design in which 100 percent response is seldom anticipated.

Chapter 2

METHOD

The method section is organized into a discussion of the participants in the study, instruments used, methods of collecting data, sources of information, and selection of usable returns.

Subjects

The subjects were from two different groups. One group was 300 faculty members from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University who were teaching 300-numbered courses the quarter the study was conducted. The second group was 315 transfer students who transferred to Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University entering the Fall Quarter, 1972, who had attended Virginia public community colleges. Of the 315 transfer students, only the 207 students enrolled in 300-numbered courses were included in this survey. It was assumed that the 300-level courses were junior level courses and would be the ones that a community college transfer student would most likely encounter upon transfer to this university.

The faculty members and the courses they taught were identified from the Management Report, Fall, 1972, in the Registrar's Office and by calls to individual departments when the Management Report lacked the necessary information.

The Admissions Office furnished a list of the students transferring from the designated two-year colleges. The courses in which the students were enrolled were obtained from the master schedule file located in the Registrar's Office.

Questionnaires

Two questionnaires were constructed for this study. Each was a one page instrument headed by the respondent's name, the course being surveyed, and the department or the community college attended. Each questionnaire was divided into three categories: types and amounts of required writing, type of tests given, and the general importance placed on writing in the specific course taught or taken. Both questionnaires were essentially the same being changed only to suit the audience (See Appendix B).

The questionnaires were developed by a systematic search for the different writing types cited and defined in rhetoric books and writing manuals. For content validation of the questionnaire and acceptability of the definitions by professors from varied fields of study, a pilot study was conducted during the summer of 1972. The pilot study was conducted by personal interview. Participating in the pilot study were twelve professors from the departments of Agriculture, Architecture, Biology, Education, Math, Philosophy, Physics, Psychology, Sociology, and Theatre and Performing Arts at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and Radford College.

In each of the twelve interviews, the participants were asked to complete the questionnaire without reading the definitions but to read the definitions afterwards to see if the definitions were appropriate to the interpretation they had anticipated when filling out the form. It was felt that for practical purposes many of those participating in the actual study would approach answering the questionnaire in this manner. As a result of the pilot study, one definition was modified to provide more acceptability. Also, two new writing categories were added, one in the essay section, and one in the report category. The greatest change, however, was made in the format of the questionnaire itself. The questionnaire form was changed to correspond to the observed anticipated response of the participants and was greatly simplified.

Procedure

First mailing. Three hundred faculty letters were mailed October 30 and 31, 1972, through campus mail seeking information about 557 classes. Each letter addressed to a faculty member contained an individually signed cover letter which explained the nature of the project (See Appendix A), a separate questionnaire for each course and class section taught, a sheet giving the definitions of the types of writing used in the questionnaire (See Appendix C), and an addressed return envelope.

Two hundred and seven student letters were sent out November 6 and 7, 1972. The procedure used was the same as that for the faculty mailing. Questionnaires were sent only to students enrolled in 300-numbered courses, and a questionnaire was sent for each 300-numbered course each student was enrolled in. Five hundred and six 300-level courses were surveyed.

Each letter mailed to the students contained an individually signed cover letter (See Appendix A), a sheet with the definitions of the writing types used in the survey, a stamped addressed return envelope, and a separate questionnaire for each 300-numbered course in which that student was enrolled. Each questionnaire had typed at the top in the appropriate blanks the student number and last name, the course title and number, and the community college from which he had transferred. The students' mailing addresses were obtained from the desk copy of the Student Directory, 1972-73, located in the Registrar's Office.

Procedural Problems. Accurate information about course scheduling and student enrollment was essential to the design of this study. Every questionnaire sent out sought information concerning a specific course taught or taken by a specific person who had to be previously identified. Because of the specificity of the information needed to conduct this study, Fall Quarter was the most difficult

quarter to do this type of study. The course schedule and professorial assignments had been made several months prior to the beginning of Fall Quarter and necessarily had many changes as students actually enrolled. Also, students arriving on campus did not give their new addresses and phone numbers until registration. The student directory was then compiled and printed from that information and was not available until near the end of the quarter. If this study had been conducted another quarter, the printed course schedule would have been more accurate, and the student addresses and phone numbers would have been immediately available. Nevertheless, it was determined that the writing the community college student did Fall Quarter was of the most interest since the students received their initial transfer shock at that time.

Follow-up

Faculty. On November 16 and 17, two weeks after the faculty mailing, a follow-up phone call was made to the professors who had not returned the questionnaires. Eighty professors were reached directly or by message left with a secretary. In the majority of the cases, the professor was reached and a standard speech was given. Only one professor refused politely to participate saying that the questionnaire was too long. The response of the professors was generally apologetic for not having returned the questionnaires, and they agreed to try to do them by the end of the quarter.

Fourteen professors requested a second mailing, and those were completed and mailed by November 20, 1972.

Student. A follow-up mailing as well as follow-up phone calls was made to the student population who had not returned the questionnaires by November 25. On November 27 and 28, 115 follow-up letters were mailed. The mailing procedure and contents of the letters were the same as those of the first mailing. A different cover letter was written and a hand-written note placed at the bottom of each letter (See Appendix A). From November 21 through December 5, phone calls were made to the students whose phone numbers were available. Forty-one students were reached by phone.

Returns

Two hundred faculty letters were returned before the follow-up phone calls were made. By the beginning of winter quarter, 1973, when the return period ended, a total of 241 faculty letters had been received. They represented just over eighty percent of those mailed.

Ninety-two student letters were returned before the follow-up procedure was initiated. Thirteen student letters were returned by the post office marked undeliverable. A total of 147 letters were returned by January 3, 1973, which was seventy-six percent of the questionnaires received by students.

Usable Returns

Two hundred and thirty-eight of the faculty letters

were deemed usable returns, seventy-nine percent of those surveyed. Three returned letters were unusable for various reasons. One faculty member was ill and leaving for rest in Florida, one wrote a letter refusing to participate for professional reasons, and one returned the questionnaires with a letter containing information which was not transferrable to the questionnaire forms.

All of the 147 student questionnaires returned were usable returns. The analyses in the next section are based on the usable returns which include information received on 406 classes taught, and 358 classes taken by transfer students. See Table 2.

Table 2

Summary of Returns

	Letters Mailed	Classes Surveyed	Letters Returned	Classes Reported	Percent Returned
Faculty	300	557	241	406	80
Student	207	506	147	358	76

Chapter 3

RESULTS

The discussion of the results is organized according to the questions originally asked of this study. The information contained in this chapter is the tabulation of the answers to the questionnaires given by professors and students. The data have been organized by colleges except for the College of Arts and Sciences which was divided into the two divisions, Arts, and Sciences. Included in the Arts division are the departments of Art, English, Foreign Languages, History, Philosophy and Religion, Political Science, and Speech and Theatre Arts. The Sciences division includes the departments of Aerospace Studies, Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Geology, Math, Microbiology, Military Science, Physics, Sociology, Psychology, Statistics, and Zoology. The colleges and divisions into which these data have been divided are the College of Agriculture, College of Architecture, Arts division, Sciences division, College of Business, College of Education, College of Engineering, and College of Home Economics.

Judgments were made about answers given to various questions on the questionnaire. Some subjects wrote prose explanations of the courses. If the information provided answered the questions, then those responses were tabulated.

The number of returned questionnaires by colleges and divisions is reported in Table 3. No students returned questionnaires for courses taken in the College of Home Economics; however, the professor response is tabulated for that college.

Since professors and students responding have not necessarily given information about the same classes, the data for these two groups are compared generically and not statistically. Further, the data collected for this study are not independent data since an undetermined number of students may be reporting on the same class and professors may be teaching more than one section of the same class. An example of this multiple type of reporting may be seen by examining the number of student and professor returns for the College of Business. One hundred and seventeen questionnaires were returned by students while professors returned seventy-five questionnaires. Of the 117 questionnaires returned by students, it should be immediately apparent that many students reported the same classes several times, while professors reported on each class individually. Only when the same professor taught several sections of the same class was there an overlapping of reporting since professors usually taught the classes the same way. Therefore, differences in reporting, while real, are somewhat obscured. This point will receive more extensive treatment in the concluding chapter.

Table 3

Number of Questionnaires Returned

College	Professor	Student
Agriculture	17	8
Architecture	18	14
Arts	81	44
Sciences	81	71
Business	75	117
Education	33	32
Engineering	85	72
Home Economics	16	0
Total	406	358

Writing Types

Professor Response

The reports of assignment of various types of writing are presented in Tables 4 and 5, and illustrated in Figure 1. These data are in response to question one of the questionnaire. The most popular assignment was the classification, Report on Material Read, with the Laboratory Report being next preferred. The writing types classified as reports were assigned almost three times as often as the essays. A total of 473 essays were reported assigned by professors during the quarter. Of the 473, seventy-two of them were assigned for the expository writing class taught in the English Department.

Receiving least frequency of assignment were the Narrative Essay, Independent Study, Journalistic Writing, and Creative Writing. Journalistic Writing and Creative Writing were not assigned outside the Arts division, and the Term Paper received its largest number of assignments in the Arts division.

Professors in different colleges indicated a preference for different writing forms. These data are presented in Table 6. Only the Arts division showed a preference for one of the essay categories. The other colleges had preferences for various writing forms classified in the report category.

Table 4

Frequency of Writing Assignments by Type and College as Reported by Professors

College	Essays					Reports					Other Types			
	Expository	Argumentative	Narrative	Descriptive	Thematic	Project	Material Read	Laboratory	Independ. Study	Case Study		Term Paper	Jour. Writing	Crea. Writing
Agriculture	10	0	0	10	0	7	1	61	0	0	4	0	0	0
Architecture	4	7	0	11	2	18	2	7	0	0	1	0	0	2
Arts	110	28	13	17	34	7	188	3	2	0	28	19	10	7
Sciences	27	24	0	6	4	19	21	80	0	1	4	0	0	35
Business	18	22	0	8	3	13	73	19	0	105	12	0	0	24
Education	0	0	0	4	72	20	233	46	8	5	4	0	0	7
Engineering	28	3	1	3	0	8	7	166	5	5	3	0	0	30
Home Economics	0	0	4	0	0	4	39	34	5	2	2	0	0	0
Total	197	84	18	59	115	96	564	416	20	118	58	19	10	105

Table 5

Percentage of Writing Assignments by Type and College as Reported by Professors

College	Essays					Reports						Total			
	Expository	Argumentative	Narrative	Descriptive	Thematic	Project	Material Read	Laboratory	Independ. Study	Case Study	Term Paper		Jour. Writing	Crea. Writing	Other Types
Agriculture	11	0	0	11	0	8	1	66	0	0	4	0	0	0	101.0*
Architecture	7	13	0	20	4	33	4	13	0	0	2	0	0	4	100.0
Arts	24	6	3	4	7	2	40	.6	.4	0	6	4	2	2	101.0*
Sciences	12	11	0	3	2	9	10	36	0	.5	2	0	0	16	101.5*
Business	6	7	0	3	1	4	25	6	0	35	4	0	0	8	99.0*
Education	0	0	0	1	18	5	58	12	2	1	1	0	0	2	100.0
Engineering	11	1.4	1	1	0	3	3	64	2	2	1	0	0	12	100.4*
Home Economics	0	0	4	0	0	4	43	38	6	2	2	0	0	0	99.0*

* Rounding error.

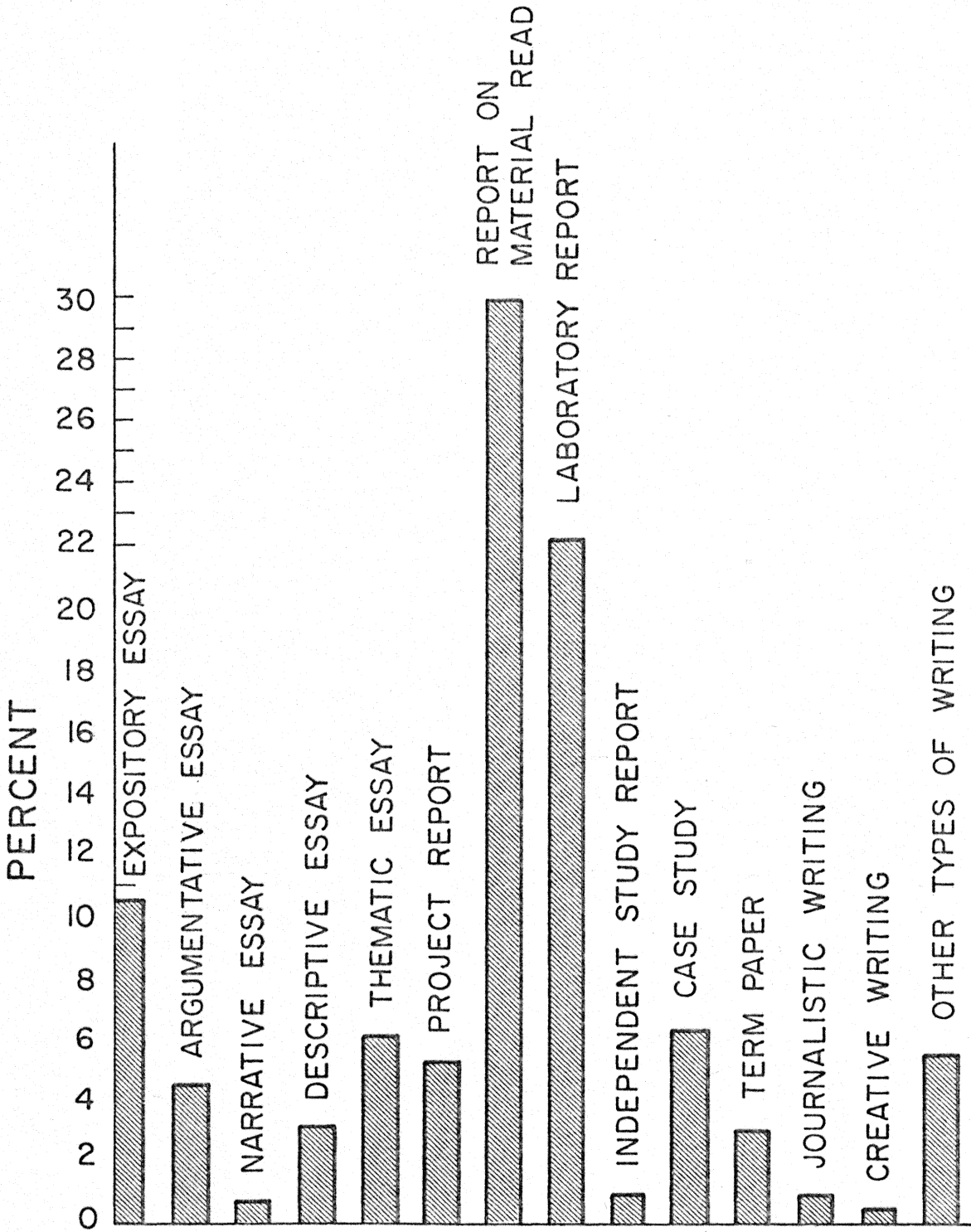


Figure 1

Percentage of Total Writing by Type Reported by Professors

Table 6

Writing Types Most Frequently Required
As Reported by Professors and Students

College	Professor Response	Percentage	Student Response	Percentage
Agriculture	Laboratory Report	65.6	Laboratory Report	72.9
Architecture	Project	33.3	Minimal writing reported	
Arts	Report on Material Read	40.3	Report on Material Read	34.7
Sciences	Laboratory Report	36.2	Laboratory Report	40.7
Business	Case Study	35.4	Expository Essay & Report on Mat. Read	21.0 19.9
Education	Report on Material Read	58.4	Other Types of Writing	36.0
Engineering	Laboratory Report	64.1	Laboratory Report	49.4
Home Economics	Report on Material Read	43.3	- - -	- - -

A large number of writing assignments fell in the category of Other Types of Writing. The writing which was classified as Other Types by the professors seemed to be largely mathematically oriented. Classified in that category were: computer interpretation, design or analysis presentation, homework problems, math related problems and programs, technical writing, solutions to problems, outline of problems, reports on missed test questions, business case analysis, documentation of computer programs, interview, translation, computer program written in fortran, and lesson plans.

Student Response

Students reported doing the majority of their writing in three different types, Report on Material Read, Laboratory Report, and Expository Essay. Following closely in popularity were the Argumentative Essay and the Project Report. The writing types reported by students were more evenly distributed among the essay and report categories than the report given by professors. The results are presented in Table 6. The total number of essays and reports are correspondingly closer in total number reported with essays being written 461 times and reports being completed 616 times during the quarter. Of the 461 essays reported, 116 of them were written in the expository writing class. The writing types are illustrated in Figure 2.

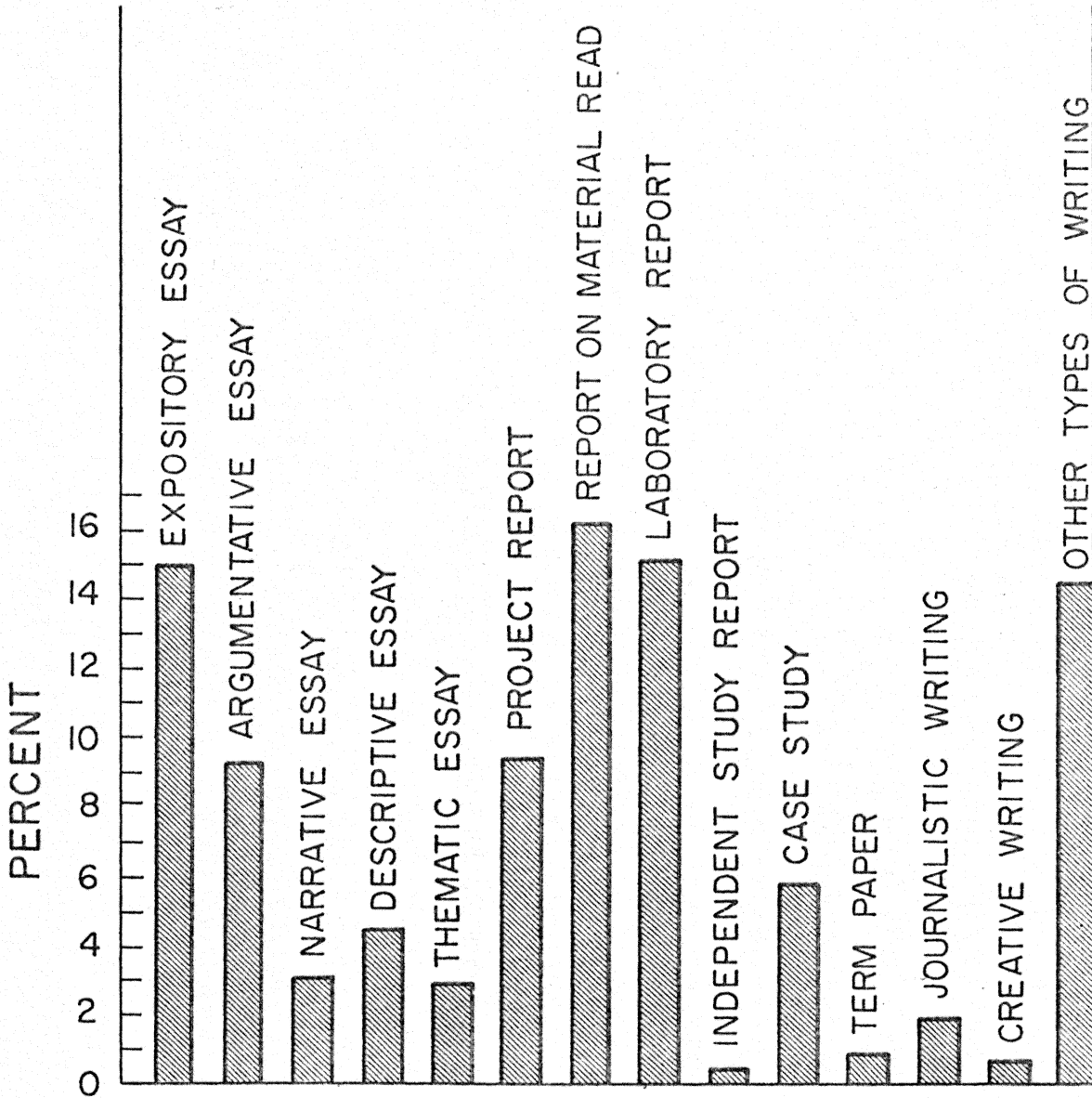


Figure 2

Percentage of Total Writing by Type Reported by Students

Tables 7 and 8 show the writing types by colleges which the students reported doing most frequently. Except for the Colleges of Business and Education, the students reported most often doing the same types of writing that the professors reported assigning most frequently.

Students classified fourteen and a half percent of their writing in the category of Other Types of Writing. The types of writing they included in that category were: short answers for objectives, business letter, calculations, computer programs, descriptive file of games, determination of unknown, discussion, math proofs, problem solving, and reasoning exercise.

Amounts of Writing

The amount of writing required has been tabulated by the number of assignments made and the number of pages assigned per class in which writing assignments were made. The classes requiring no writing assignments were excluded from the calculations.

Professor Response

The amount of writing professors required is presented in Table 9. The College of Engineering reported the largest average length of assignment, six pages, and correspondingly the largest average number of pages per class, twenty-six pages. The average length of assignments ranged from just under two pages to a fraction over six pages with the mean assignment length approximately three and a half

Table 7

Frequency of Writing Assignments by Type and College as Reported by Students

College	Essays					Reports					Other Types			
	Expository	Argumentative	Narrative	Descriptive	Thematic	Project	Material Read	Laboratory	Independ. Study	Case Study		Term Paper	Jour. Writing	Crea. Writing
Agriculture	0	1	0	0	0	7	0	24	0	0	0	1	0	0
Architecture	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Arts	81	11	18	21	9	14	103	0	1	0	4	19	10	6
Sciences	21	5	0	4	2	23	24	57	0	1	0	0	0	3
Business	74	66	22	20	4	23	70	0	3	62	3	1	0	0
Education	12	41	2	6	22	46	16	0	1	12	2	0	0	90
Engineering	9	0	0	9	0	10	0	118	0	1	2	0	0	90
Total	197	124	42	61	37	123	213	199	5	76	11	25	10	190

Table 8

Percentage of Writing Assignments by Type and College as Reported by Students

College	Essays				Reports							Total			
	Expository	Argumentative	Narrative	Descriptive	Thematic	Project	Material Read	Laboratory	Independ. Study	Case Study	Term Paper		Jour. Writing	Crea. Writing	Other Types
Agriculture	0	3	0	0	0	21	0	73	0	0	0	3	0	0	100.0
Architecture	0	0	0	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	100.0
Arts	27	4	6	7	3	6	35	0	.3	0	1	6	3	2	100.3*
Sciences	15	4	0	3	1	16	17	41	0	.7	0	0	0	2	99.7*
Business	21	18	6	5	1	7	20	0	.8	18	.9	1	0	0	98.7*
Education	5	16	.8	2	9	18	6	0	.4	5	.8	0	0	36	99.0*
Engineering	4	0	0	4	0	4	0	49	0	.4	.8	0	0	38	100.2*

* Rounding error.

Table 9

Amount of Writing Reported by Professors

College	Number of Classes Reporting Writing	Number Reporting No Writing	Average Number Pages per Assignment	Average Number Pages per Class	Average Number Assignments per Class	Total Assignments per College
Agriculture	12	5	2.5	19.3	7.8	93
Architecture	12	6	5.4	22.8	4.5	54
Arts	69	12	2.9	19.5	6.8	466
Sciences	51	30	4.0	15.4	4.3	221
Business	48	27	2.8	17.0	6.2	297
Education	32	1	1.8	22.3	12.5	399
Engineering	54	31	6.0	26.0	4.8	259
Home Economics	15	1	2.8	16.7	6.0	90

pages. The professors in the College of Education required on the average the fewest number of pages per assignment, and required on the average the largest number of assignments per class.

The College of Education and the College of Home Economics appeared to be the most uniform in assigning writing as only one class in each college reported requiring no writing. Except for the Arts division and the Colleges of Education and Home Economics, professors teaching approximately one-fourth of the classes in the remaining colleges said they required no writing.

Student Response

The students generally reported a larger number of classes than did the professors in which they did no writing. The results are presented in Table 10. The students reported that forty-six percent of the classes they took in the College of Architecture required no writing. Forty-one percent of the classes in the College of Engineering were perceived by the students to require no writing. Students did no writing in thirty-seven percent of the classes in the Sciences division and thirty-three percent in the College of Business.

The average number of pages written by students per class ranged from two to forty-four, and the average number of assignments ranged from one to eleven. There appears to be more variety in the amount of writing actually done by

Table 10

Amount of Writing Reported by Students

College	Number of Classes Reporting Writing	Number Reporting No Writing	Average Number Pages per Assignment	Average Number Pages per Class	Average Number Assignments per Class	Total Assignments per College
Agriculture	6	2	3.3	12.5	5.5	33
Architecture	2	12	2.0	2.0	1.0	2
Arts	32	12	2.0	18.4	9.3	297
Sciences	29	42	2.1	4.8	4.8	140
Business	58	59	1.5	9.2	6.0	352
Education	29	3	2.3	19.3	8.6	250
Engineering	22	50	4.0	44.0	10.9	239

students than there was reported being required by the professors. Only for the College of Engineering did the students report doing more writing than the professors reported requiring.

Total Writing Classified

Professor Response

A further breakdown of writing types and amounts was requested by asking the respondents to determine the percentage of total writing required that could be classified in the categories of essays, reports, term paper, journalistic writing, creative writing, and test writing. The mean percentages given by colleges are presented in Table 11. The two writing categories with the largest mean percentages were the report and test categories. The smallest mean percentage of assignment was in the creative writing column. Only writing required in the creative writing class was classified in this category by the professors.

Student Response

These data are reported in Table 12. No student returning questionnaires returned one for the creative writing course offered in the English Department; yet, students classified a small percentage of their writing actually done in the creative writing category. Similar to the professors, students classified their writing heavily in the report and test categories. For both student and professor classification, only the Arts division received a mean percentage

Table 11

Mean Percentage of Total Writing Categorized by Professors

College	Essays	Reports	Term Paper	Journalistic Writing	Creative Writing	Test	Other	Number of Classes Reporting
Agriculture	-	22.9	-	-	-	77.1	-	14
Architecture	17.5	54.1	.9	-	-	27.5	-	16
Arts	26.1	8.8	11.4	3.4	1.81	48.0	.5	77
Sciences	13.1	30.2	5.4	-	-	46.9	4.4	68
Business	1.8	26.0	7.1	1.5	-	61.0	2.9	68
Education	37.5	54.5	4.1	-	-	4.0	-	32
Engineering	3.4	44.5	3.4	-	-	46.3	2.4	68
Home Economics	-	46.1	6.3	1.6	-	46.1	-	16

Table 12

Mean Percentage of Total Writing Categorized by Students

College	Essays	Reports	Term Paper	Journalistic Writing	Creative Writing	Test	Other	Number of Classes Reporting
Agriculture	-	50.0	1.4	1.4	-	47.1	-	7
Architecture	-	14.3	-	-	-	76.7	9.0	6
Arts	36.8	6.7	6.0	6.3	2.8	41.2	.3	40
Sciences	3.3	23.9	-	-	-	62.4	10.5	49
Business	2.5	15.5	1.1	-	1.8	69.0	10.0	106
Education	32.1	30.5	5.5	-	-	29.4	2.5	30
Engineering	-	45.8	.8	-	-	28.8	24.6	37

for each of the specified writing types.

Type of Examination

Professor Response

Except for the Arts division, professors seemed to prefer the objective examination to the essay examination. These data have been treated by mean percentages and percentage of 100 percent essay and 100 percent objective examination and are presented in Table 13. The Arts division gave a much lower mean percentage for the objective examination, preferring the essay type of examination at a ratio of three to one. More than half of the examinations given, approximately fifty-five percent, were 100 percent essay type while the 100 percent objective type was used in very few cases, about three percent. The remaining exams were some combination of the essay and objective type.

Professors in the Colleges of Education and Engineering showed a decided preference for the objective examination with well over fifty percent of those given being 100 percent objective in nature.

The professors in the College of Business indicated a preference for the combination essay and objective examination. The mean percentages essay and objective examinations have a difference of less than ten percent. This type of mean percentage could have been derived if nearly half of the examinations given had been 100 percent essay and the other half nearly 100 percent objective. However, the low

Table 13

Type of Examination Reported by Professors

College	Number of Classes Reporting	Number Reporting Exams	Mean		Percent		Percent 100% Objective
			Percent Essay	Percent Objective	Percent Essay	Percent Objective	
Agriculture	17	15	32.0	68.0	13.3	46.7	
Architecture	18	11	21.9	78.1	18.2	36.4	
Arts	81	75	75.7	24.3	54.7	2.7	
Sciences	81	73	31.0	69.0	16.4	35.6	
Business	75	74	43.5	56.5	20.8	18.1	
Education	33	32	16.3	83.8	0	62.5	
Engineering	85	61	13.4	86.6	0	58.3	
Home Economics	16	16	38.8	61.3	0	25.0	

percentages of 100 percent essay and 100 percent objective show that the high mean percentages were the result of a large number of combination essay and objective type of examination.

Generally, professors from the Colleges of Agriculture, Architecture, Sciences division, Education, and Engineering indicated a preference for the 100 percent objective type of examination while only in the Arts division did professors indicate a strong preference for the 100 percent essay type of examination.

Student Response

The data from the student classification of type of examination are reported in Table 14. The students' response to the type of examination they took was similar to the professor response with the students giving a slightly higher percentage of reporting for the objective type of examination. For the colleges that the professors reported a general preference for the 100 percent objective type of examination, the students reported a definite preference. Remarkably close reporting was given by professors and students in the Arts division, and the Colleges of Business and Education.

General Emphasis Given to Writing Skills

Two questions were asked in order to determine how much emphasis writing skills received from both professors and students. The first one asked the respondent to: State

Table 14

Type of Examination Reported by Students

College	Number of Classes Reporting	Number Reporting Exams	Mean		Percent Objective Evaluation	Percent Other	Percent 100% Essay	Percent 100% Objective
			Percent Essay	Percent Objective				
Agriculture	8	4	2.5	97.5	-	-	0	75.0
Architecture	14	14	.7	99.3	-	-	0	92.9
Arts	44	37	72.5	26.2	1.3	48.6	2.7	2.7
Sciences	71	60	18.2	81.8	-	6.7	60.0	60.0
Business	117	116	36.4	62.9	.8	19.0	29.3	29.3
Education	32	32	13.1	86.9	-	0	68.8	68.8
Engineering	71	44	2.0	93.9	4.1	0	93.2	93.2

the degree to which you consider a student's writing skills and ability to be important for completing this class.

(low) _____ 0 _____ 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6.

The second question was stated: How do you place your emphasis when you grade student writing? Give a percentage estimate. _____ content _____ writing skills.

Professor Response

The results of the first question, importance of writing skills, are presented in Table 15 and Figure 3. The scale is slightly skewed to the low numbers even though the most frequently designated rating was number four. In only three of the eight colleges did professors give the rating of six indicating that writing was extremely important. The number six ratings were given by professors in the Arts division, Sciences division, and the College of Business, while professors from those same three colleges plus one professor from the College of Education gave the five rating. Professors from all the other colleges confined their ratings to the categories of zero through four, using the extremely low categories, but not using the two highest categories. On the other hand, in the colleges in which professors rated the importance of writing skills in the fifth and sixth categories, there were also professors who rated in the low categories. There did not appear to be a generally higher emphasis placed on writing in those colleges, merely a wider range of classification. The Arts division, however, did

Table 15

Importance of Writing Skills
Frequency of Response and Means by Colleges
as Reported by Professors

College	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Mean Rating	Number of Classes
Agriculture	3	2	1	4	7	-	-	2.6	17
Architecture	1	7	-	3	7	-	-	2.4	18
Arts	7	3	2	9	33	16	11	3.9	81
Sciences	13	14	11	23	10	8	2	2.4	81
Business	7	10	13	15	12	8	10	3.0	75
Education	6	7	2	13	4	1	-	2.2	33
Engineering	18	20	13	10	17	-	-	1.7	85
Home Economics	1	-	2	3	10	-	-	3.3	16
Total	56	63	44	80	100	39	24	2.8	406

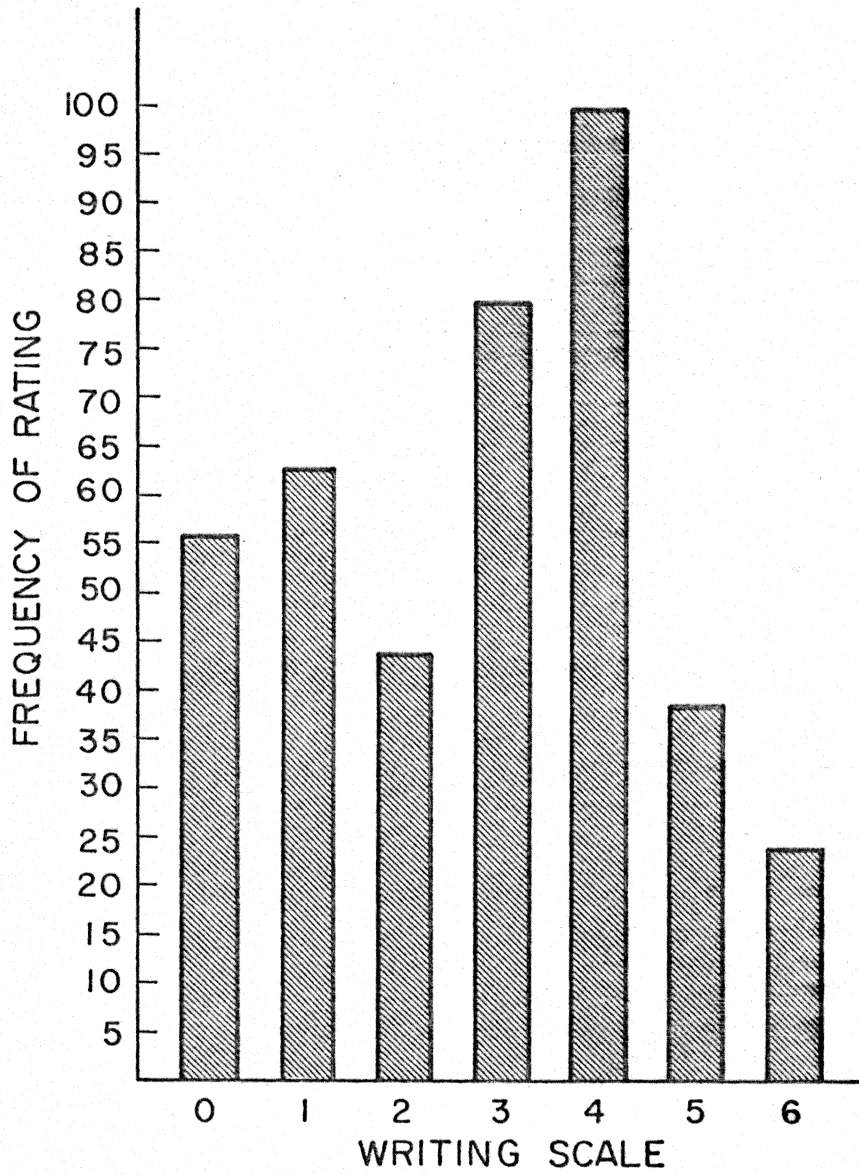


Figure 3

Frequency of Response by Professors
on Importance of Writing Skills

have a greater concentration on the numbers four, five, and six than did the other colleges and their mean rating of 3.9 indicates that writing skills are most important in the Arts division. Professors in the Sciences division seemed to prefer the categories of zero to three even though they had ratings on all numbers. The mean rating for the Sciences division was 2.4 which was slightly lower than the total mean rating given by all the professors. Professors in the College of Business appeared to show no outstanding preference for any category; thus, that college may be considered to be the one with the largest differences on this classification. The College of Home Economics had the second highest mean rating, 3.3, and the professors of that college seemed to give the most consistent ratings with ten of the sixteen classes reported on being classified in the number four category.

The answers given to the second question concerning the grading of student papers are presented in Table 16. Professors seemed to emphasize content more than writing skills. There does not appear to be much difference in the way the professors in the different colleges responded except that in the Arts division they placed a slightly greater emphasis on writing skills than they did in the other colleges. However, even for the Arts division, content received a higher mean percent emphasis than did writing skills.

Table 16

Mean Percentage Emphasis Placed on Grading Student Papers
as Reported by Professors

College	Number Classes Reporting	Content	Writing Skills
Agriculture	13	85.4	14.6
Architecture	17	87.7	12.4
Arts	74	66.9	33.1
Sciences	68	85.4	14.6
Business	68	78.4	21.7
Education	32	86.7	13.3
Engineering	71	83.2	16.8
Home Economics	16	88.1	11.9

Student Response

The data from the student response to the question concerning the importance of writing for their classes are presented in Table 17 and Figure 4. For about a third of the total number of classes the transfer students took, they reported writing to be of zero importance. However, the mean rating by colleges does not show a marked difference from the mean rating given by professors except for the College of Architecture which received a mean of less than 1.0 from the students while the professors mean rating was 2.4.

When the ratings of both professors and students were grouped into three categories of low (zero and one), medium (two, three, and four), and high (five and six), the comparison illustrates some internal differences which are not evident from a comparison of the means (See Figure 5). The percentage of professor and student ratings in the high category was virtually the same. The large differences occurred in the low and medium divisions. The student responses, when grouped, present a flatter distribution than do the grouped responses of professors.

Students perceived that content was more important than writing skills except for the courses they took in the Arts division. These data are presented in Table 18.

Writing Guides

One final question was asked in this study. Students and professors were asked to state whether or not detailed

Table 17

Importance of Writing Skills
Frequency of Response and Means by Colleges
as Reported by Students

College	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Mean Rating	Number of Classes
Agriculture	2	-	1	3	-	2	-	2.6	8
Architecture	10	2	1	1	-	-	-	.5	14
Arts	5	-	-	5	15	7	11	4.1	43*
Sciences	30	8	11	10	8	1	3	1.6	71
Business	17	7	31	24	17	12	9	2.8	117
Education	6	1	1	5	9	8	1	3.2	31*
Engineering	32	6	3	8	13	4	6	2.0	72
Total	102	24	48	56	62	34	30	2.5	356

* One unusable response.

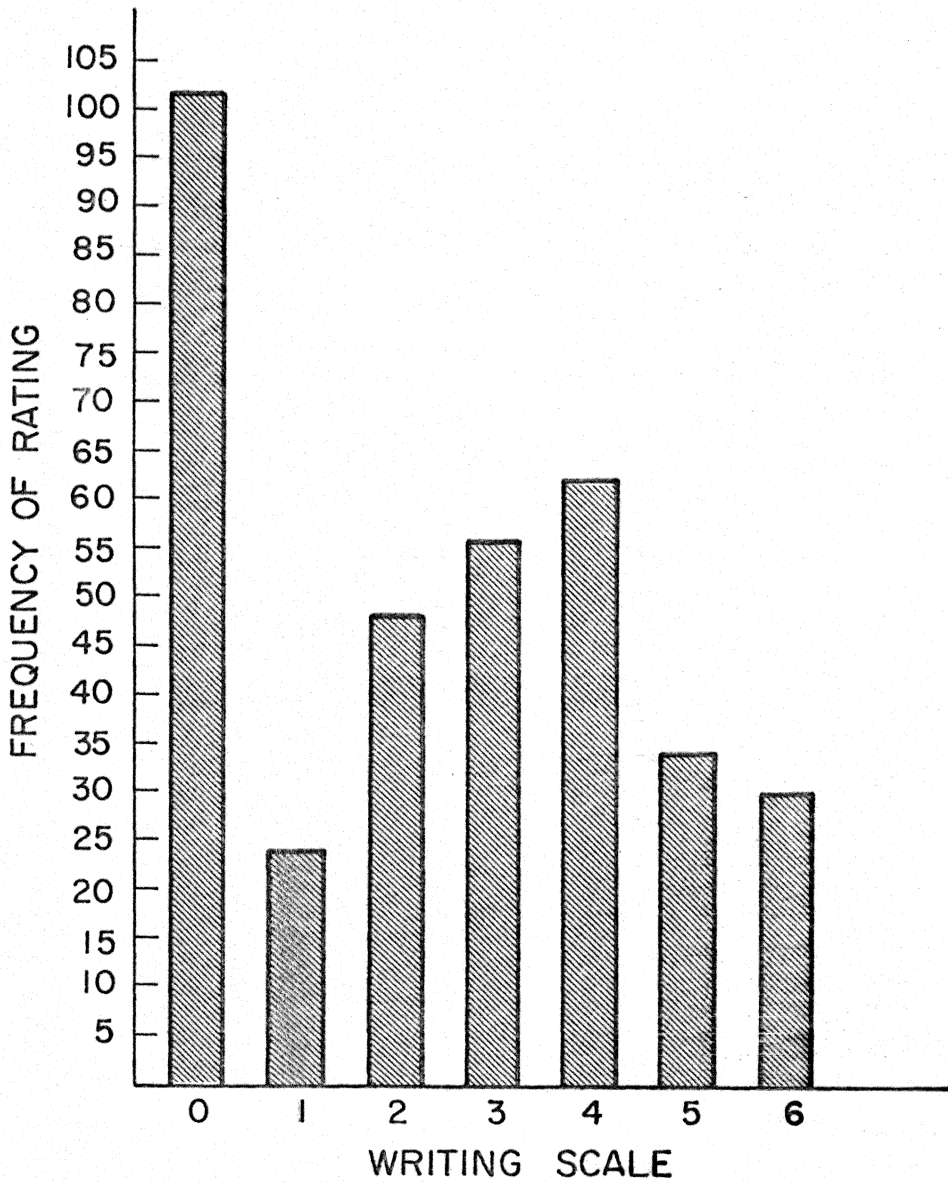


Figure 4

Frequency of Response by Students
on Importance of Writing Skills

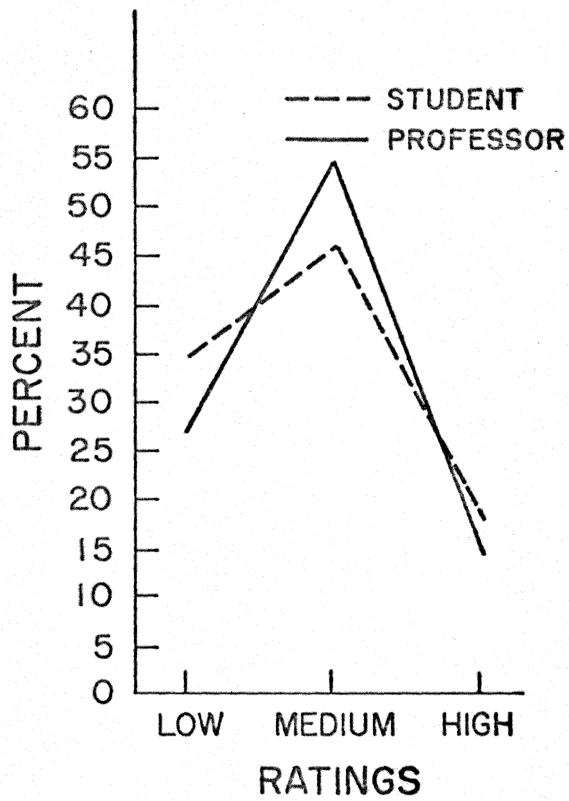


Figure 5

Comparison of Professor and Student Response
For Importance of Writing Skills

Table 18

Mean Percentage Emphasis Placed When Writing Papers as
Reported by Students

College	Number Classes Reported On	Content	Writing Skills
Agriculture	7	89.3	10.7
Architecture	9	96.7	3.3
Arts	40	59.4	40.7
Sciences	49	91.3	8.7
Business	106	91.3	8.8
Education	30	80.3	19.7
Engineering	43	91.3	8.7

guidelines were designated for the writing done in the class being surveyed. These data are presented in Tables 19 and 20.

The overall response to this question seemed to be random. Except in two cases, the Colleges of Agriculture and Business, professors said they provided guidelines for about half of the classes. Professors in the Colleges of Business and Agriculture provided fewer guidelines than did those in the other colleges.

The student response was fairly consistent with that of the professors. They reported an organizational pattern specification for about half of the classes they took. An interesting reversal was reported for the College of Agriculture. Even though the professors felt that they did not give detailed guidelines concerning organization of the writing assigned, for four of the six classes students reported on, they perceived that they had received a detailed organizational guide.

Table 19

Guidelines for Writing
as Reported by Professors

College	Number		Percent		Number		Percent	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Agriculture	-	13	-	100.0	13	100.0	-	100.0
Architecture	7	10	41.2	58.8	10	58.8	41.2	58.8
Arts	33	41	44.6	55.4	41	55.4	44.6	55.4
Sciences	30	43	41.1	58.9	43	58.9	41.1	58.9
Business	15	53	22.1	77.9	53	77.9	22.1	77.9
Education	14	17	45.2	54.8	17	54.8	45.2	54.8
Engineering	29	46	38.7	61.3	46	61.3	38.7	61.3
Home Economics	8	8	50.0	50.0	8	50.0	50.0	50.0

Table 20

Guidelines for Writing
as Reported by Students

College	Number		Percent		Number		Percent	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Agriculture	4		66.7		2		33.3	
Architecture	1		16.7		5		83.3	
Arts	20		48.8		21		51.2	
Sciences	16		40.0		24		60.0	
Business	44		43.6		57		56.4	
Education	16		57.1		12		42.9	
Engineering	21		52.5		19		47.5	

Chapter 4

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

For the 300-level courses taught at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, professors assigned the Report on Material Read and the Laboratory Report most often. In order of frequency of assignment from the most popular to the least popular, the assignments made were: Report on Material Read, Laboratory Report, Expository Essay, Case Study, Thematic Essay, Project Report, Argumentative Essay, Descriptive Essay, Term Paper, Independent Study, Narrative Essay, Journalistic Writing, and Creative Writing.

The courses reported by the professors when taken as a whole had a tendency to balance themselves on a college by college basis to reflect the general writing picture for that college even though that college may not have consciously decided on the writing requirements. The colleges had courses which required several writing assignments, the most was seventy-six short assignments for one class, and also courses which required no writing at all. The colleges, however, did reflect preferences for certain types of writing assignments.

Professors seemed to prefer the short frequent writing assignment to the assignment of one long paper at the end of the course. The average length of assignment was

about three pages.

When professors classified the writing they assigned, six of the eight colleges or divisions had professors who averaged assigning about half of their total writing for test requirements.

The objective type of exam was used more often than the essay type except for the Arts division which had professors who gave the essay exam more than half of the time. However, the most popular type of exam was reported to be a mixture of both types.

Generally, writing skills did not seem to be as highly emphasized as the content of the writing except for the Arts division in which professors reported a higher emphasis placed on writing skills.

Students as a group showed a marked consistency in their answers (except for the courses taken in the College of Engineering) when their answers are related to those given by professors. Compared to the responses given by professors, students tended to write less; do fewer writing assignments; think writing skills less important; classify exams more as objective in character, thereby doing less writing in the testing situation; and concentrate more on content rather than writing skills when they did their writing.

Limitations on Interpretations of Results

Since all of the 300-level courses taken by students were included in this survey, there was some overlapping of

reporting as many transfer students were enrolled in the same class. The College of Engineering would serve as a good example to illustrate how the data may be influenced by the course reporting made by the transfer students. The amount of writing reported by the students for courses taken in that college was considerably more than that reported by the professors. In counting the individual questionnaires returned for the College of Engineering by both faculty and students, it was found that twenty-six percent of the courses returned by students were laboratory courses while only nineteen percent of the faculty returns were laboratory courses. The writing required for courses which have an accompanying laboratory usually is assigned for the laboratory section rather than the lecture section. Since the students returned a higher percentage of courses which were laboratory, it would be expected that they would report that they had done more writing.

In examining the notes written on the questionnaires returned from the College of Engineering, it was found that the writing reported relied heavily on problem solving. The professors may have estimated page length according to the accurate figuring of a problem as it could have been calculated by the most direct and most simple procedure. Student inaccuracy or need for detail in listing steps of a problem may also account for the students' reporting more written

pages per class than did the professors. It may be more difficult to state the number of pages needed to solve a problem than to give the number of pages needed for a report or essay.

An interesting item was reported by the students who took courses in the College of Business and the Arts division. Students reported using creative writing in some classes even though the only writing classified in that category by professors was in the creative writing class taught in the English department. No student returned a questionnaire for the creative writing class. Perhaps the students taking courses in the College of Business and the Arts division found that an ability to be creative in their papers, or having an ability to use their imagination, was helpful. It could be possible that some students satisfied some of their writing assignments by doing some creative writing instead of the assignment which was made or by using creative writing as part of another writing type. Even though the definition of the creative writing which accompanied the questionnaire defined the creative writing category narrowly relating it to literary form, perhaps the students interpreted that category differently. In any case, students reported having done writing in the creative writing category only for courses taken in the Arts division and the College of Business. Students reporting writing in those two colleges evidently perceived the writing they did to be

different in some way than did students reporting writing in the other colleges.

The perceived emphasis of certain types of assignments may have caused differences in the allocation of an assignment to a certain category. For instance, professors in the College of Business assigned the case study frequently. Those professors assigning the case study indicated that it was a report of law cases which the students were assigned to read. Some professors indicated on the questionnaires that it was a case study report. However, students may have perceived the assignments to have had a different focus since they classified the writing they did almost equally in the categories of Expository Essay, Report on Material Read, Argumentative Essay, and Case Study. The professors used both the categories of Case Study and Report on Material Read most frequently. It might be entirely possible to satisfy the requirements of the Case Study report by writing an essay or by making a rather uninterrupted report on the assigned reading. Hard and fast conclusions that professors assigned one writing type and students did another would be difficult to make in this particular case considering the nature of this type of assignment.

The reports obtained from professors and students cannot be considered to be equivalent. The writing reported by the transfer students may be representative of that group

only. Some variables may cause this group to be unlike the non-transfer students who might have responded differently to the questionnaire. Also, the major subject chosen by the transfer students may cause their reporting to be different from that of both the non-transfer students and the professors. The transfer students taking courses in the College of Engineering might be students majoring in Engineering who lacked certain types of courses which the regular student at the university had more evenly scheduled; the laboratory courses may be an example of this type of scheduling. Thus, the report given by the transfer student is to be considered to be indicative of his situation and not to be confused with what might have been the report given by a group of non-transfer university students.

There may have been a tendency on the part of the professors to include their expectations when they answered the questionnaires. One professor wrote in the questionnaire column concerning length of assignment, "I hope for twelve but usually get six pages." To what extent the professors may have included their hopes when they answered the questions can not be determined. Also, it could perhaps be assumed that the professors reported the assignments made which were most generally completed by most students. However, they may have reported the assignments made which in actuality were completed only by the "A" students.

There was a slight tendency for professors who required no writing to fail to return the questionnaires. This tendency was unexpected but was made apparent to the researcher when the follow-up phone calls were made. Several professors indicated that they would like to be helpful but could not because they required no writing. Answering the questionnaire with a statement of no writing assignments may have been interpreted as a negative response.

It should be emphasized that this study has collected information from two different groups of subjects having made no prior assumptions that the perceptions of these two groups would or should be the same.

Implications of This Study

The implications of this study are concerned with the information acquired and how that information may be used by the community colleges in preparing their students for transfer to a university. This study also suggests ideas for other research.

Community college programs. The information about the writing required at a transfer institution and the writing actually done by transfer students should be beneficial to the community colleges who send their students to Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. It may be used by the community colleges according to the needs of their students and the organization of their programs.

This type of information might be used by the

English Departments in designing their composition courses. A large number of community colleges try to make their composition courses similar to those of the major transfer institution in their area (Kroeger, 1972). However, considering the philosophy of the community college and its dedication to the needs of its students, perhaps a different type of composition course would be more appropriate.

The counseling staff might design a transfer orientation course providing different types of information about a transfer institution presenting a picture of academic expectations of that university in certain areas where basic competencies are needed. Students have indicated a general dissatisfaction with counseling and faculty advisement at both the community college and the transfer institution. The university orientation has historically focused on the needs of the entering freshman and has been of little benefit to the transfer student (Knoell and Medsker, 1965). According to its own philosophy in fulfilling the needs of its students, the community college transfer program seeks as one of its primary objectives to prepare its students for academic survival at the transfer institution. Perhaps one way to help the student would be to enlarge the counseling function to include the specific job of providing university orientation.

The most general implication of this study for the community college may also be the most significant. The

implication for attitude toward the responsibility for program design may be the most important idea of this study. Generally, the community college has attempted to prepare the transfer student for the university by trying to make his community college experience as identical as possible to the experience he would have had if he had attended that university. Perhaps by looking at the transfer question from the point of view of the practical skills needed, the community college can become freer in the types of courses it offers the transfer student. Perhaps the English faculties can begin to write courses which will not "deny their own philosophy" (Kroeger, 1972) as they have been accused of doing.

Additional research. This study has suggested some questions for further research. They are:

1. Does the writing required differ at different types of transfer institution?
2. How is an attitude toward writing and writing assignments related to the general characteristics of a transfer college or university?
3. Is the transfer student more successful at the transfer institution where he has fewer writing assignments?
4. Are writing assignments and the way they are graded related to the values of professors?

5. Does the writing done by the transfer student differ from the writing done by the native student?
6. What types of writing are necessary for various types of jobs for which the community college student is trained?
7. Would the chances of success be greater for the transfer student at a transfer institution if he were taught to do a specific type of writing?

More information about different types of transfer institutions could possibly be beneficial to the transfer student as well as to the community colleges themselves in helping them to design programs more suited to the students they serve.

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APPENDIX A



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

Blacksburg, Virginia 24061

DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Dear

This letter is to ask for your cooperation in a dissertation study being conducted in the College of Education and directed by Dr. Lewis R. Fibel. This study seeks to ascertain the types and amounts of writing the community college transfer student is likely to encounter when he transfers to VPI&SU.

As a college professor you are surely concerned with the writing preparation of your students and would be interested in furnishing information which might be used to better prepare students for the writing they do at the university.

Would you please answer the enclosed questionnaire(s) which deals with the writing you require for each 300-numbered class you are currently teaching and return it through campus mail in the enclosed self-addressed envelope. Completion of the form will take less than ten minutes and the information requested will be statistically analyzed identifying no individual responses. Your name appears on the questionnaire only for the purpose of tabulating returns.

This questionnaire is being sent to all professors teaching 300 level courses and the results of this study will be shared with the university community. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Martha J. Johnson



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

Blacksburg, Virginia 24061

DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Dear

I am a graduate student in the College of Education who is interested in better preparing the community college student for his transfer to the university. This study is being done for my dissertation and I hope that you will be able to help me.

Of the 300 numbered courses you are currently taking, I would like to know the types and amounts of writing that you do for the courses specified on the questionnaires. Please answer the enclosed questionnaires for the specified courses that you are taking this quarter. If for some reason you are no longer taking one of the courses, then answer for the ones that you are taking and return them to me through campus mail. There is a self-addressed envelope enclosed for your convenience.

The questionnaires will take less than twenty minutes to answer and the information you provide will be used to draw general rather than specific conclusions. Your name is used only for tabulating the questionnaire returns. All community college transfer students to VPI&SU will receive this questionnaire.

I would appreciate your help since you are better able to describe the writing being done at the university than anyone else.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Martha J. Johnson



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

Blacksburg, Virginia 24061

DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Dear

I need your help in completing this survey dealing with the types and amounts of writing done at VPI&SU. I hope to use the information to better prepare the community college students for the writing they may be asked to do when they transfer to the university.

I hope you will take a few minutes from your busy schedule to designate the writing you are asked to do in your 300 level classes. Your help would be beneficial to me and also to future community college transfer students.

Please return the questionnaire(s) in campus mail or in the stamped envelope enclosed.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Martha J. Johnson
GTA
College of Education

MJJ/bh

APPENDIX B

 Professor

Course title and number

 Department

This questionnaire is divided into three parts. The first part asks for a description of the writing you request your students to do, the second part questions the type of tests you give, and part three is concerned generally with the importance you place on student writing in this particular course. Please answer the questions which are appropriate to the class designated above.

PART ONE

State the types and amounts of writing you assign. (Definitions of the writing types are on the following page.)

1. Essays	Number of times per quarter	Average length in pages
a. Expository	_____	_____
b. Argumentative	_____	_____
c. Narrative	_____	_____
d. Descriptive	_____	_____
e. Thematic	_____	_____
2. Reports		
a. Project report	_____	_____
b. Report on material read	_____	_____
c. Laboratory report	_____	_____
d. Independent study report	_____	_____
3. Case study	_____	_____
4. Term paper	_____	_____
5. Journalistic writing	_____	_____
6. Creative writing in literary form	_____	_____
7. Other types of writing not specified above _____	_____	_____

PART TWO

Please estimate the percentage of your tests which could be classified as essay or objective.

	Percentage of total tests	Weight for final grade
8. Essay tests	_____	_____
9. Objective tests	_____	_____

PART THREE

What percentage of the total writing that you require falls in each of the following categories?

10. a. essays _____	e. journalistic writing _____
b. reports _____	f. creative writing _____
c. case study _____	g. test writing _____
d. term paper _____	

11. State the degree to which you consider a student's writing skills and ability to be important for completing this class.

(low) _____ 0 _____ 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6

12. How do you place your emphasis when you grade student writing? Give a percentage estimate.

_____ content _____ writing skills

13. Do you set down detailed guidelines for the organizational pattern for writing done in this class?

_____ yes _____ no

Name	Course title & number	Community College Attended
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This questionnaire is divided into three parts. The first part asks for a description of the writing you are required to do, the second part questions the type of tests you take, and part three is concerned generally with the importance you feel is placed on the writing you do for the course listed above. Please answer the questions which are appropriate to the class designated above.

PART ONE

State the types and amounts of writing you do. (Definitions of the writing types are on the following page.)

	Number of times per quarter	Average length in pages
1. Essays		
a. Expository	_____	_____
b. Argumentative	_____	_____
c. Narrative	_____	_____
d. Descriptive	_____	_____
e. Thematic	_____	_____
2. Reports		
a. Project report	_____	_____
b. Report on material read	_____	_____
c. Laboratory report	_____	_____
d. Independent study report	_____	_____
3. Case study	_____	_____
4. Term paper	_____	_____
5. Journalistic writing	_____	_____
6. Creative writing in literary form	_____	_____
7. Other types of writing not specified above _____	_____	_____

PART TWO

Please estimate the percentage of the tests you take in this class which could be classified as essay or objective.

	Percentage of total tests	Weight for final grade
8. Essay tests	_____	_____
9. Objective tests	_____	_____

PART THREE

What percentage of the total writing that you do in this class falls in each of the following categories?

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| 10. a. essays _____ | e. journalistic writing _____ |
| b. reports _____ | f. creative writing _____ |
| c. case study _____ | g. test writing _____ |

11. State the degree to which you consider your writing skills and ability to be important for completing this class.

(low) 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

12. What do you concentrate on the most when you write a paper or exam for this class? Give a percentage estimate.

_____ content _____ writing skills

13. Does the professor give you detailed guidelines to use when he makes the writing assignment for this class?

_____ yes _____ no

APPENDIX C

DEFINITIONS

- 1a. Expository essay: This type of essay has as its chief purpose the explanation of the nature of an object, an idea, or a theme.
- 1b. Argumentative essay: It is the type of essay which has the chief purpose of convincing a reader by establishing the truth or falsity of a proposition.
- 1c. Narrative essay: This essay has as its purpose the recounting of an event or series of events.
- 1d. Descriptive essay: This type of essay has as its purpose the picturing of a scene or setting.
- 1e. Thematic essay: This essay focuses student writing on themes such as the individual and society, the mass media, the generation gap, science vs. religion, but tends to be eclectic in that it includes one or more of the above approaches.
- 2a. Project report: This type of writing requires a student to organize and write about some investigation or work he has done.
- 2b. Report on material read: This type of writing requires that the student extract the important ideas and grasp the sequence of events, and may be done in outline or paragraph form.
- 2c. Laboratory report: This type of writing results from the analysis of experimental procedures and an interpretation of results.
- 2d. Independent study report: This type of report differs from the project report mainly in the nature of its scope and depth. It essentially reports the efforts of a student in a project he has designed and conducted.
3. Case study: This type of report relies on the observation of the behavior of a single human subject for its content. The material is biographic in nature and requires astute observation and training on the part of the observer.
4. Term paper: The term paper is an exercise in scholarship. The purpose of scholarly writing is to communicate ideas through an objective, scientifically supported exposition or argumentation on a given topic.

5. Journalistic writing: This type of writing conforms to the style and patterns of various news and journal articles which are read by the general populace.
6. Creative writing: Though all writing may be considered creative, this category refers to the creation of the written literary forms of poetry and prose.
7. Test writing: This type of writing is done in the test situation for the specific purpose of grading a student on the amount of knowledge he can demonstrate about a given subject.

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the scanned document**

THE WRITING COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

DO AT A TRANSFER INSTITUTION

by

Martha Jean Basham Johnson

(ABSTRACT)

Community colleges because of their philosophy have developed programs which are sensitive to the communities and students they serve. Thus, it would appear that data are needed in order to better prepare students for the writing they will do at a transfer institution. The present study was designed to provide such information for students transferring to one institution.

A survey was made with two questionnaires, one sent to professors teaching 300-level courses at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and the second questionnaire sent to the Virginia public community college transfer students who were taking at least one 300-level course in the fall of 1972. Eighty percent return from professors and seventy-six percent from students was obtained. The results were tabulated by colleges: Agriculture, Architecture, Arts and Sciences (divided into two divisions), Business, Education, Engineering, and Home Economics.

Tabulation of writing required by professors ranked from most frequently assigned to least frequently assigned

were: Report on Material Read, Laboratory Report, Expository Essay, Case Study, Thematic Essay, Project Report, Argumentative Essay, Descriptive Essay, Term Paper, Independent Study, Narrative Essay, Journalistic Writing, and Creative Writing.

A wide variance in the amount of writing assigned per class was observed; however, professors seemed to prefer the assignment of frequent short papers of about three pages in length.

Writing assigned for test requirements accounted for about fifty percent of the writing assignments made by professors. A combination of essay and objective examination appeared to be the most popular overall; however, the objective examination was used more often than the essay type except for the Arts division.

In general, students reported doing the same types of writing which professors assigned, but when compared to the responses given by professors, students reported completing fewer writing assignments, doing shorter papers (except for the courses taken in the College of Engineering), and completing examinations which were more objective in character.

Implications for the community colleges and suggestions for additional research were made.