Jeanne Desy

REASONED WRITING FOR BASIC STUDENTS: A COURSE DESIGN

In his classic essay "Examsmanship and the Liberal Arts: a Study in Educational Epistemology,"[1] William G. Perry, Jr. discusses the problem of the theory of knowledge in terms of grading "bull" and what he names "cow." The incident that impelled him to write is interesting.

Briefly, one Mr. Metzger (a pseudonym for a Harvard student, class of '47) rocketed to celebrity/notoriety after impulsively and for no apparent reason taking an exam under the name Smith in a social science course for which he was not registered and which he had never attended. Cheerfully, I gather, he wrote an essay discussing a book he had never read.

The scandal resulted when, because a real Smith was absent, Metzger's essay was graded and returned—with an A−. It is relevant to the resultant controversy that a conscientious friend of Metzger who *had* taken the course received a C+.

Perry rose to the defense of the hapless section leader responsible by examining what he saw as the fundamental purpose of the university: that it "should teach students how to think; not only in their own fields but in fields outside their own. . . .Here then, good bull [such as Metzger had written] appears not as ignorance at all but as an aspect of knowledge." Bull, by Perry's definition, is the "discourse upon the contexts, frames of reference and points of observation which would determine the origin, nature, and meaning of data if one had any." It is, he theorized, better than cow: "data [listed] without awareness of, or comment upon, the contexts,

Jeanne Desy directed the Foundations for College Writing Program at Capital University, Columbus, Ohio, and is presently working in the television industry.

[1]From *Examining in Harvard College: A Collection of Essays by Members of the Harvard Faculty* (n.d.), rpt. in Arthur M. Eastman, ed., *The Norton Reader, Revised* (New York: Norton, 1969), pp. 328-38.

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frames of reference, or points of observation which determine the origin, nature, and meaning of the data." Simplistically, cow is a collection of facts; bull is a collection of generalizations; the ideal essay marries the two.

Perry completed his defense by pointing out that while we should grade cow more toughly than we in fact do (always a C+, he noted) we should respect good bull more than we do, because, although it does not represent command of facts, and is therefore incomplete, it does show *command of the ways of thinking we value.*

The significance of Perry's essay for us is that it asserts the fundamental purpose of the university. This ideal, that the student learn to set knowledge into its framework, to evaluate and rearrange data, is in my opinion as fundamental to the vocational school and the open-admissions state university today as it was to Harvard in 1945. I think most of us assume it as our fundamental purpose. While many courses, and writing is no exception, necessarily teach facts, most of us deplore the accumulation of simple data without sensibility and its resultant regurgitation on the test. And, beyond question, students cannot learn to write that way. In fact, the single most serious impediment to student writing is the lack of command of the modes of thinking.

The Basic Writing Course that is a data course commits all those errors that frighten the student and may well leave him writing a more-or-less grammatical but meaningless prose. Language seen or performed only as language is (when it's not poetry) a meaningless bore. Not only does it bore the student, it bores the reader. Later, the details of grammar once thought so important recede into the distance as the student confronts his paper on comparative political ideologies, or his analysis of lab methodology, somewhere far from the bright white space of the writing class; all that English cow does him no good now, because he is no longer expected just to write; he is expected to think. God help him.*

This fact—that students need to be taught to think—is generally ignored. Students are almost never required to take courses in logic; if they elect to, they will minuet through the elegant patterns of symbolic logic for most of the quarter, having spent only a week or two on the informal fallacies and no time at all on decision-making. It has been possible, and indeed likely, at every school

*Although I am an active feminist, I use "he" rather than "s/he" in formal writing such as this; occasionally style seems as important as politics.

where I have taught (four, in all) for a student to graduate with only the most casual and accidental exposure to the very modes of reasoning the schools wanted the students to master. A little discussion of analogy in English Lit class (while reading Donne), some induction in Sociology, some deduction in Physics, and so on. And yet there can be no serious education, no thorough vocational training, without careful training in the methods of thought.

Given that students *need* to know how to think, that it is the University's purpose to teach them (if only among other things), that they cannot write if they cannot think, and that they are not usually taught to think, two important questions arise.

The first is, Can reasoning be taught to students who are academically and intellectually below average, either in preparation or ability? My experience is that it can. In fact, students already use—there is no way they cannot—the modes of reasoning. Induction: "She stood me up. Women can't be trusted." Deduction: "The Constitution gives us the right to bear arms. Nobody's taking my gun away." Analogy: "Rome fell when they got free love." Causal reasoning: "Why didn't my boyfriend call last night?" They make decisions, or fail to. So the problem isn't that students don't reason or can't; the problem is that most have not been taught to reason *correctly*. So much for that. Rephrasing the question, then, Can these students be taught to reason correctly? Yes. Reasoning, like many another skill, demands first command of a body of concepts and rules, then skills-practice, then practice at synthesis, or using the knowledge to solve new problems. The relative complexity of the concepts will lose the very dullest student—and so will other courses whose substances are equally complex. In all, the process of learning to reason is, however similar to that of learning first conceptually about coherence, and finally, through practice, how to write coherently.

The second important question is, Is it the province of the writing class to teach reason? After all, our given purpose is to teach writing; it is the Philosophy Department (where it exists) that purposes to teach thinking.

The answer, for starters, is that it shouldn't be that way. But before I get to that, let me discuss what writing is.

My thesis is that writing *is* thinking, made plain and given over to someone else for consideration (i.e., communicated). This idea is, I believe, the unrevealed heart of the many texts which currently emphasize purposefulness and pre-writing in the essay. Of

these, James McCrimmon's *Writing With a Purpose* is a well-known example. The hope of such books is that by making the student think before he writes we can loosen his firm grip on the cow. The underlying assumption is that thought is the basis of writing. *Is* writing.

We *do* recognize this in Basic Writing. More and more textbooks include reasoning. But they do so as if logic were a decal to be hauled out at appropriate moments and pasted on a paper: something we might get to (and don't) at the end of the quarter. Most often, students learn from their texts that grammar, convention, and rhetorical forms are the heart of writing, and that logic is somehow applied to these. But where is the paper? The paper is not *in* the comparison/contrast or the prepositional phrase or the transitional marker. The paper, I submit, is in the reasoning process.

If students are to learn to make thought plain on paper, they must be taught to do so in a writing class. A logic class, even one which included writing, would be inadequate, because it would almost certainly consider the line of thought as a line of thought alone, mathematical. But writing is *communicated* reasoning. For the writer, a hundred considerations nibble the heels of the argument. Does it convince? Does the tone support the statements? Are errors in syntax, diction, and convention interfering with the reader's understanding? In fact, all those rules and warnings which occupy writing handbooks become vital. If this begins to sound like any old writing class, repeat: all those things are secondary. The reasoning process itself *is* the paper.

I understand well that my view is not typical. When I began to develop a writing course based on reason, I found myself bringing in materials considered peripheral: semantics, logic. I have wrestled since with the problem of emphasis I see in textbooks, and mentioned above. Perhaps the cause of the problem is the division of disciplines we have inherited, and to which some of us ascribe with reluctance. We have seen this demarcation crossed in many places in the last decade: women's literature blends into sociology and history; history discusses the ethics of Zionism. That we should see writing as distinct from thinking, rather than as one of the activities to which thinking gives rise, is no surprise to the historian. That we should now consider a new focus is equally predictable—and necessary.

I consider the two major objectives of my course in Reasoned Writing to be these: that the student (1) learn to think, and (2) learn to communicate his thought effectively in writing.[2] Since he is not taught elsewhere to think, I begin at the beginning; otherwise I would be tooling the upholstery with no chassis in sight—and no destination, anyway.

From these major objectives grow the following specific objectives. They concentrate on the reasoning process, and, as I hope to show, allow room to work in the principles of effective writing. The objectives are, that each student learn to:

1. know the available sources of knowledge (in a general sense, initially); 2. understand and accept the epistemology of the university and the modern world; 3. distinguish non-statements from statements; 4. perceive the meaning of a statement; 5. perceive the meaning of an essay; 6. perceive the modes of reasoning he already uses; 7. understand the correct use of those modes; 8. collect data; 9. classify data; 10. arrive at generalizations; 11. analyze the correctness of arguments (his own and others'); 12. construct a correct argument; 13. write that argument effectively.

Here I'd like to pause and point out the close relationship of these objectives to the traditional subject matter of the writing course and to the student's needs. Objectives four and five involve the student in paraphrase and summary, and prepare him for reading texts and other nonfiction. Objectives eight and nine stress the gathering of materials in the library. Objective ten presents the Aristotelian systematic thought that readies the student for learning of every kind (and is often taught as "development through classification," or "whole-to-parts development"). Objective eleven prepares him for the critical analysis, a frequently assigned college paper and a skill needed in many jobs, from provost to mechanic. In terms of the service aspect of a writing class, objectives eight through thirteen are especially important; in a survey of the faculty at my own school, I found that *every* paper assigned to students demands the ability to use at least one of the skills these objectives aim to teach.

[2]It may be noteworthy that I do not consider among my objectives the raising of the student's perception or feelings, as advocated by, for instance, Ken Macrorie in *Uptaught* (New York: Hayden, 1970). My most difficult students are those who have taken creative writing courses which distorted free writing theory and asked of them only an outpouring; they are hostile to thinking. How are they ever going to write a department progress report or a bill of lading?

Now I want to discuss these objectives individually and indicate some methods I use to reach them.[3]

Objectives one and two are introduced on the first or second day of class. As I explain, many consider intuition, revelation, authority, and tradition to be valid sources of knowledge. Because the fad among students for Castenada, and the resultant (or causal?) high valuation of the mystical experience is by no means dead, at least not here in the Midwest, I tell the class how in my own life I value revealed and intuitive knowledge (I practice hathayoga, for instance). I speak, too, and not for the last time, of the need to consider audience. My friends, I say, respect my intuitions (or pretend to); the Registrar respects data. I discuss authority and the religious tradition, and point out that if a reader does not believe in the Bible or the Constitution as an ultimate source of Truth, every argument that rests on these documents is without impact. This lecture follows a simple projected transparency which lists:

intuition
revelation
authority
tradition
reason
  based on first-hand experience
  based on second-hand experience (books, etc.)

Most of my students learn these concepts in one class hour. As important as their understanding of the ideas is the fact that they are reassured that I am not defining or dispensing wisdom for them; I am only telling them what is valued in the university and the real [sic] world in this century: reason. Until I learned to stress this last concept, I encountered time and again long-active hostilities that seriously impeded the class's learning. (Incidentally, I find it infinitely helpful to ask that questions and comments be withheld until I have finished this particular lecture.)

Objective three. We discuss briefly the importance of verbal rituals and other forms of communication that are not statements, and, because reason rests on statements, I distinguish the statement from the non-statement. I rely heavily on S. I. Hayakawa's definitions here,[4] showing the varieties of non-statement and explaining

[3]See Appendix I for a brief course outline.

[4]Found in *Language in Thought and Action* (New York: Harcourt, 1964), especially chapters 3, 5, 6, and 7.

that some sentences that don't look like statements really are. ("How long are we going to put up with this, anyway?") I tell the students that the only thing I want them to learn on this day is what a statement is and that classifying non-statements is largely irrelevant to our purpose; however, students are always interested in rituals and non-statements, and many end up learning about them anyway and using this knowledge later in critical analyses, and that can't hurt.

With objectives four and five—perceiving meaning—I begin skills practice with analysis of statements and readings, and begin summary assignments. The first such summary is a section from "Work" by Bertrand Russell (excellent, because Russell organizes transparently and is a model of careful reasoning. He is also interesting—even on work). The final summary will be longer, involving more difficult concepts, and requiring more careful reading from the student.[5]

To begin this unit, which is also an introduction to the thesis sentence, I show the class how to put a complex statement into simple and accurate language, and give the class exercises to do overnight. On the following day the students volunteer (yes!) to write their best reworded statements on the board, and we analyze them. Next I present standards for good summary[6] and explain what organization the students can expect to find in the first article they summarize (topic sentence first, supporting data, conclusion—you know). This takes a day or two of lecture and discussion. I like to use controversial readings for this discussion, because such readings inspire the students to look for evidence. John Aldridge's paperback, *In the Country of the Young*[7], is good, but difficult; students need to hear a paragraph aloud before they can analyze it.

The summary unit occupies several weeks of out-of-class work, as students turn in progressively more difficult assignments, get

[5]The only text I am familiar with that includes a good selection of articles for summary, presented in order of difficulty, is Mary Lou Conlin's *Concepts of Communication: Writing* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975). This book, which includes programmed grammar and spelling exercises, is the text I currently use to supplement my own material.

[6]*Concepts of Communication: Writing* includes a useful list of standards, called summary tasks, on pp. 307-8, to which I have added for my own classes "proportional use of quotation." The standards are numbered to simplify grading; one can simply write 42 in the margin to tell the student that major points are not given in sequence and should be.

[7]New York: Harper, 1971, Perennial Library Edition (still in print).

them back, sometimes revise, and sometimes go on. The first summaries are almost all F's (demonstrating how much students need to be taught this skill), but the students are told *(after* they receive the papers back) that, while the mark has been noted, it will not be counted in the final grade. (I find it invaluable to keep an individual progress sheet for each student, on which I note the assignment, the date, and the most significant errors and virtues of the paper, as well as the grade and any revision requested. This is much more accurate than a simple grade in following students' progress.) After an average of four summaries, a student perceives the meaning of individual statements and the organization of a paragraph and of an essay. He can choose apt quotes and copy them accurately. He knows exactly what plagiarism is. He can now write a good answer on an essay exam or a good book report (or whatever fancy name that antique, ubiquitous assignment is called by), and he can read well when he chooses to—not quickly, but well, which is far more important. My evaluations indicate that students, in retrospect, love this unit for what it has given them; in prospect, they hate it.

Objectives six and seven are fun. Class work on these objectives—perceiving the modes of reasoning and understanding their correct use—takes place while out-of-class work consists primarily of summary-writing.

I first present mimeographed examples of everyday statements which rest on reasoning. Then students give their own examples. "My roommate throws his socks on the floor; he's a slob; I should change roommates." ("No you shouldn't," someone cuts in, and if I'm not careful, we're off.) The next lecture explains classification and is based on the assumption that the student is already perceiving classification in the essays he is summarizing, and has himself classified objects and activities while working on his car, washing the dishes, stereotyping people, etc. The following day I hand out a list of things and activities which can be classified, and we discuss their choices from my list. The chalk boards become covered with ways to classify cars, cats, brands of cigarettes. Students are next assigned overnight a classification of their own (and thus introduced to the most elementary principle of the topic outline), prmarily as a way for me to check that they do understand how to classify according to a consistent principle.[8]

[8]A particularly interesting discussion of classification is contained in Robert M. Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (New York: Bantam, 1974), pp. 69-72 and passim. See also Hayakawa, chapter 12.

Having graded these outlines overnight, I assign the first essay, a paragraph based on the approved outline. These writings are usually a pleasant surprise in terms of their clear organization; moreover, adequate development often happens, as it were, because the student has learned through summary how many supporting data are usually needed for a major point.

The remaining modes of informal reasoning are treated in like manner. I use the following order: causal analysis, induction, deduction,[9] analogy,[10] and decision-making,[11] because my experience is that this is the order of difficulty.(This classification of the modes of informal reasoning is finally my own with reference to my undergraduate minor in Philosophy and to a number of texts from assorted disciplines.) As students learn the rules for each method, they first summarize an article (the shorter, the better, for all concerned) which uses that mode, then write a paragraph (later, a paper) using that mode. (A paragraph is defined in my classes as a unit of writing beginning with a topic sentence, containing between 100 and 200 words, and ending with a restatement. I note frequently and offhandedly that, while newspapers do not, quality magazines and textbooks *do* use this sort of paragraph.)

Many textbooks now include all these modes of reasoning, except decision-making, which exclusion is a mystery to me. Most seem to be written for the student with an SAT of 600, and are virtually useless in the Basic Writing class. Not only that, many are inaccurate. For example, in treating effect-to-cause reasoning, most leave out the essential starting point: define the problem clearly. Other books wrongly include causal fallacies under inductive fallacies; most overemphasize deduction and explain its fallacies in terms ranging from obscure to bizarre. I deal almost exclusively from my own mimeographed material. For others who wish to try this

[9]Deduction is of dubious value; induction is by far a more common mode. Deduction is also the most difficult to teach the Basic Writing student. If you do wish to teach it, the system which uses circles to demonstrate validity [presented, for instance, in William F. Smith and Raymond D. Liedlich, *From Thought to Theme,* 4th ed. (New York: Harcourt, 1974), pp. 137-9] is easier on both student and teacher than the formulaic system.

[10]It is appropriate, when teaching analogy, to teach the forms for comparison/contrast. I *never* ask students to write a paper depending on a central analogy; a good analogy is a rare inspiration. I ask for "a paper that makes significant use of analogy or contrast in developing its thesis."

[11]Because decision-making is not included in any freshman reader or handbook I have examined, I have included my own procedure as Appendix II to this article.

approach and, like me, cannot find The Text, I suggest the following sequence of mimeographed materials:

examples of everyday use of the mode
explanation of the appropriate use of the mode
explanation of the fallacious use of the mode
examples of fallacies (mixed with correct usages) for overnight skills practice and class discussion

This sequence is preceded by a summary of an article using the mode correctly (see Appendix I) and followed by the assignment that the student write a paragraph or paper using the mode to a significant degree.

As we enter objectives eight through thirteen, we work simultaneously on decision-making (see Appendix II) and on the techniques of research, since informed decisions rest on adequate data. My handouts list the library tools I expect the students to use (see Appendix III), and I give a three-day slide presentation showing these tools, their indexes, and so forth, followed immediately by a test. I spend about twenty minutes explaining the techniques of interview, since I request that each student use an interview in the research paper. (Briefly, I suggest beginning by checking the correct spelling of the expert's name, interviewing, if possible, on the telephone, and asking three or four specific questions which cannot be answered simply Yes or No. Students need reassurance that experts are delighted to be asked for their opinions; I often suggest other faculty members.) Wise from experience, I forbid the students to make any surveys; we deal with survey only in terms of analyzing the correctness of method in surveys gathered during research. (To administer a meaningful survey is expensive and time-consuming; the techniques are difficult to teach and not, I think, as important as other research techniques. Students whom I have allowed to undertake surveys in the past have bogged down in them.)

An important assignment before students enter the actual research paper is the factual development paragraph. I give out a sheet with topic sentences to choose from. (Easy: "Space research has led to useful new techniques in medicine." Hard: "Gun control is a controversial issue."[12]) Students are instructed to research in an

[12]A topic is difficult according to how likely it is to arouse in the student emotions which interfere with his perception of fact. This varies, of course, with the student. Students learn something of value from having to revise this assignment when it is their own prejudice that has distorted their data-gathering.

encyclopedia, almanac, or yearbook, and to write a paragraph, using their data and documenting the source in-text, the form for which I teach at this point. In a typical class, about half the students get off the topic and end up proving something else altogether; they are told either to change the topic sentence to fit, or to find new information, depending entirely on my assessment of the individual student's needs and abilities. Most learn at last, by doing this assignment, the exact difference between bull and cow.

I have already indicated some methods for teaching decision-making (in Appendix II). In teaching the research paper, I discuss, among other things, typical professorial standards, definition of purpose and audience, and evaluation of a source's accuracy, relevance, bias, and knowledgeability. I usually return to a previously summarized article and lead the class to discuss it now with these new concepts in mind.

The paper itself I take through a sequence of steps worth giving here, I think, because of the excellent results it produces: (1) narrowed topic; (2) central question and research plan;[13] (3) preliminary bibliography;[14] (4) labeled notes and outline; (5) first draft;[15] (6) final draft with footnote and bibliography pages added. I check every step, assigning grades, and do not permit steps to be done out of sequence or more than one at a time. With each step assigned, I give a mimeographed sheet with detailed instructions and an explanation of grading standards for that assignment. I have found that giving these standards results in superior work. It also makes it possible for my student assistant to grade the work according to my standards.

I find it crucial to confer with each student on his central question and research plan, and to indicate to him the kind of work his topic will demand. At this point most topics get narrowed; many are simplified for the academically handicapped student, or

[13]A research plan is a paragraph detailing in order the indexes and reference works the student plans to consult and the headings he plans to look under. ("Nothing is ever under the most logical heading.")

[14]I assign students to gather approximately four times as many sources as they intend to use. I check these cards and note for the student those that are out-dated or obviously biased, as well as those that will be productive starting-points.

[15]I distinguish between a rough draft and a first draft, which must be legible and generally as good as the student can make it. Not every student will be required to revise this draft; all are required, however, to turn in a final title page, first page, footnote page, and bibliography, so that all learn the correct forms.

changed for the student who has tried to choose a subject to please me and is himself really uninterested in the topic.

In this paper, which is the culmination of the course, and is usually worth a total (counting all steps) of forty percent of the grade, the student will at last consider a contemporary, controversial issue,[16] analyze arguments on both sides, using all the modes of reasoning he is presumed to have learned, and construct a hierarchy of values with which to reach a decision. The student evaluation of this unit I cherish goes as follows: "I now know how to write a paper two ways, the night before, or the right way. If thats what this corse was all about, fine. If not, I don't now what the hell to say." [sic.]

Motivation: my students want to learn how to write research papers, because here at Capital most upperclassmen do so every semester. That isn't true everywhere. But if it were not true here, and if I were not required to teach the research paper, I would still do so, because I believe that education is in part knowing how to find out. Moreover, my own memory is that those issues I know and care most about are the issues I wrote papers on. And, most importantly, I believe in the moral and intellectual virtue of having made at least once an intelligent, informed decision. My students know I believe these things, and many seem to respect these beliefs, although few, at 18, understand them.

Of course, I work myself (and them) to death. I gather my rewards, not financial.

Where in all this is syntax, punctuation, consistent point of view . . . where is "writing"? It is sandwiched in between assignments, given ten minutes here and there at the beginning of class. On blank days and while something is waiting to be graded, I present the good old virtues of the paragraph: unity, completeness, order, and coherence. (If nothing else, my students learn these, since I frequently project a highly artistic home-made transparency which lists them.)

I find time to deal with coherence, for example, on the day I

[16]The issue is contemporary (generally, of concern within the past ten years) because I want the students to use the periodical indexes, and controversial because students do more-or-less know how to write mere reports; it is decision-making that I want them to practice in this assignment.

return the first summary, since even the best of those summaries usually lack transitions altogether (except for the inevitable, "In conclusion"). I find time to deal with sentence formation, using the simple system in which sentences have slots for subject, verb, modifier, complement, and connector.[17] Students approach this system with obvious relief, and together we enthusiastically reject gerunds.

My belief is that any writing teacher who cares enough to read this journal knows how to work with grammar and convention, and can fit these skills into a course design where they are appropriate.

With some students, I assign and go over individual exercises on, perhaps, vague pronoun reference. About fifteen percent of my students I send to the writing clinic, where they are tutored weekly in the specific deficiencies I have diagnosed in their writing.

But frankly, the rationale and sterling virtue of the Reasoned Writing approach is that by imitation and analysis students simply begin to write clear sentences that say what they mean; syntax clears itself up; modifiers and commas hobble to their appropriate places.

The method of Reasoned Writing has worked me almost beyond my capacity—and has worked *for* me beyond my expectations. I once taught grammar and paragraph form. It didn't work. My experience, having taught this course over the years to some twenty sections of 25 students each (while nationwide SATs fell), is that students who don't learn to write a decent, readable paper through this method are the ones who would have learned less through my old, more conventional method. Statistic: about ten percent of my students either don't work much or don't learn fast enough; I ask them to withdraw (or, sadly, they fail) and repeat the course. But then, we have only one 14-week semester at my school in which to do all this, about 50 class hours.

Sometimes, usually around Thanksgiving, I feel myself burning out, about to transform, like Dorian Gray. There is no doubt in my mind that this is the most demanding way to teach writing. It can only be done with patience, aspirin, and the occasional re-

[17]See Marie L. Waddell, Robert M. Esch, and Roberta P. Walker, *The Art of Styling Sentences: 20 Patterns to Success* (New York: Barron's Educational Series, 1972).

reading of Kenneth Koch's "Permanently,"[18] wherein Nouns and Conjunctions and language itself are seen in their ultimate absurdity, and bull and cow alike become ridiculous.

But then class begins again and ends again—and the whole thing works, again.

APPENDIX I

COURSE OUTLINE

(Based on a four-hour class week; includes in- and out-of-class work)

Week 1: basic *epistemology,* distinction of statements from non-statements; analysis of statements; skills practice.

Week 2: introduction to *summary* standards; discussion of readings; summary of an article based on classification; overview of the modes of reasoning the student presently uses.

Week 3: *classification:* lecture, discussion, outline, paragraph; summary of an article based on effect-to-cause reasoning.

Week 4: *causal analysis:* lecture, discussion, skills practice, analysis of reading, paragraph demonstrating use; summary of an article based on induction.

Weeks 5 & 6: *induction:* lectures; skills practice and discussion of fallacies; analysis of readings; paragraph demonstrating use [based on personal experience]; summary of an article based on deductive reasoning.

Week 7: *deduction:* same procedure as week 4; summary of an article based on analogy.

Week 8: *analogy:* same procedure as weeks 4 and 7; see footnote[10] for suggestions regarding the theme assignment; summary of an article which uses a decision-making procedure.

Week 9: *decision-making* and factual development. See Appendix II for discussion of presentation.

Weeks 10-14: data gathering; the research paper; synthesizing the modes of reasoning; conferences. See text and Appendix III for discussion of procedures used in the research paper.

Final exam: (three hours)

I. Summarize a 1000-word article in 200 words or less (article given at that time, of course).

[18]For your pleasure, I will note that "Permanently" appears in Koch's *Thank You and Other Poems* (Grove Press, 1962), which is still in print.

II. Write a theme of adequate length (to be decided by the student) explaining any concept of importance and demonstrating its truth and importance.

NOTE:

Our policy in freshman composition classes at Capital, announced on the first day of class, is that a student who cannot write a final in-class theme which meets the NCTE standards for a C must be failed *if* another member of the department agrees that the paper is inadequate and that the student would profit by repeating the course. We usually urge students whose skills remain dubious to withdraw the last week of class in order to avoid failure.

APPENDIX II

DECISION-MAKING

I see decision-making as properly following these steps:
(1) define the problem clearly
(2) list all possible alternatives
(3) under each alternative, list positive and negative aspects
(4) apply stated values to the choice

After explaining these concepts, I begin with an example relevant to the students' daily lives, using an overhead projector to list their contributions. For instance:
(1) Problem—"My parents and I fight all the time about when I come in at night." The problem redefined more clearly: "I am distressed because. . ."
(2) and (3) Alternatives, positive and negative aspects—

(a) Stop being distressed: can't do it, haven't tried. . .
(b) Come in when they want me to: would still feel distressed, might be better off in health, on the job. . .
(c) Move out: can't afford to, want to, don't want to, would still be distressed. . .
(d) Discuss with them my distress: afraid to, have tried. . .
(e) Get someone's expert advice: counseling center, Aunt Ethel. . .

etc.
(4) Values—family peace, personal independence, financial security, etc. [We spend only ten minutes trying to arrange these in a hierarchy, and conclude that values are personal.]

The next day I give a problem amenable to the same procedure, but academic in nature, and we go through it again. Here one needs to choose a problem the students will know something about through other courses. For instance, "Wealth is not distributed equally in America" is good where I teach, because it is a national problem discussed in the required sociology class.

In teaching decision-making, I stress the usefulness of going to informed sources for data and for advice; I also discuss the ways in which values are shared but finally personal.

APPENDIX III

LIBRARY RESOURCES

One requirement for the research paper I assign is the extensive use of library resources. For the Basic Writing student these include:

The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature
The Wall Street Journal Index
Editorial Research Reports
Editorials on File/Facts on File
Statistical Abstract of the United States
the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* or the *Americana* (no other)
the pamphlet file
the card catalog

My assignment sheet includes the following instructions: "It is permissible to use books, but more than half your references should come from periodicals, reference books, and pamphlets. . . . You *must* be able to produce a source upon request. If you are in doubt about the accessibility of a source, make a copy, because no excuses are acceptable. . . .An interview with someone competent on your subject is recommended. . . .Be sure that *The Reader's Guide* is not the only index you use. . . ."

True, some of the reference works listed above are difficult for the student to learn to use. For this reason, I schedule two mornings in the library, and often spend an hour with one student, going over the indexes and repeating the material in the slide lecture. But all these works are general in nature and valuable, and together give the student adequate data for a paper on any contemporary problem.

For more advanced students, I suggest *The New York Times Index* and *The Index to Social Sciences/Humanities.*