

ABSTRACT

TILLET, TANYA RENEE. A Matter of Degrees: an Evaluation of Instructor Concept of Writing Effectiveness in an Adult Accelerated Degree Completion Program. (Under the direction of Chris M. Anson.)

Most modern theories of responding to student writing typically advocate a meaning-centered, whole text holistic approach (as opposed to an analytic mode of response, which allows for the separate evaluation of different criteria). In a holistic assessment, certain criteria may be considered together on one descriptive scale, which renders a final assessment that allows for broader judgments on the quality of particular writing products. As a result, a holistic assessment is usually not quite as rigid as an analytic assessment. This study examined a non-traditional writing program that was highly traditional in its emphasis on stressing the rules of writing mechanics (an analytic method). It specifically focused on instructor familiarity with the program's required citation format. My research questions: how well would instructors score if given the task of finding deliberately inserted errors? What is instructor perception of format in writing evaluation? And, what, if any, influence does instructor training and experience have on the ability to apply citation format? In addition to being asked to detect 33 deliberately inserted errors in documentation format in a typical student paper, ten instructors at the program, an adult accelerated degree completion program, were also asked to complete a demographic survey. As predicted, except for two notable exceptions, average instructor scores were low (68%). In the follow-up survey, most indicated that they were satisfied with the program's required APA citation format, and finally, neither length of experience nor discipline-specific training proved to be significant factors in the average of the instructors' scores. As part of the project, the

program's director and the two highest scorers (an English instructor and an accounting instructor) were interviewed to gain insight into how writing requirements fit into the program's overall curriculum. The director of the program felt that stressing the importance of documentation format helped provide the students in the program with a solid academic grounding. And, despite my intuitive notion that the English instructor would provide the most insightful views on how to promote better student writing, it was the accounting instructor who provided the most helpful feedback (which included a recommendation for the use of other documentation styles in the program). It is hoped that this study offers implications for more in-depth study of instructor response to actual student writing, and more study of other non-traditional writing programs.

A MATTER OF DEGREES: AN EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTOR CONCEPT OF
WRITING EFFECTIVENESS IN AN ADULT ACCELERATED DEGREE
COMPLETION PROGRAM

by

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BIOGRAPHY

Tanya Tillett was born and raised in Anniston, Alabama. She was born on January 5, 1972 (a cold day, indeed) and lived in Anniston until her eighteenth year, when, after graduating from Anniston High School, she left to attend the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. While at college, she studied advertising and minored in French. In college, she began to develop an affinity for the English discipline, but being heavily invested in an advertising major, she trudged ahead because she wanted to secure a “real” job upon graduation. After four glorious years of semi-adulthood, she emerged into the real world with a Bachelor of Arts degree in communication in 1994. She then moved to Hickory, located in the great state of North Carolina, to pursue a career in retail management. After two years, although she had gained a new respect for the retail industry, her interest had waned, so she moved to Raleigh to work in public relations at a small college. While working in public relations, her enjoyment of writing began to re-emerge, and when campus downsizing affected her position, she knew it was a now or never moment, and thus applied to the English graduate program at NC State University. After a year and a half of rewarding coursework in rhetoric, composition, and English literature, she secured a great job as an editorial assistant at a prominent science journal. But, what of that final program requirement, the thesis? After two and a half years more of blood, sweat, and tears, she finally finished her thesis in the spring of 2003. Her future plans include more work in editing and – perhaps – the teaching of writing.

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I would also like to thank my mother for her many years of support and encouragement, and for her unshakeable certainty that I could do it. Finally, I must also give many thanks to all my family, friends and co-workers, who always provided words of encouragement, even during my “sabbatical” period.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables.....	vi
Chapter 1 The Problem Definition.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Research Questions.....	3
Background and Interests.....	3
The Adult Learner.....	4
Assessing the Adult Learner.....	6
Definition of Terms.....	8
Limitations.....	9
Organization of the Study.....	9
Chapter 2 Review of the Literature.....	11
Introduction: The Individual and the Writing Process.....	11
Beyond the Basics: Instructor Response to Student Writing.....	13
Instructor Expectations.....	13
Analytic versus Holistic.....	19
General versus Task-Specific.....	21
Chapter Summary.....	22
Chapter 3 Methodology.....	23
Sample Population.....	23

Survey Instrument.....	23
Procedures.....	25
Administration	25
Scoring.....	25
Chapter 4 Results.....	26
Demographics of the Sample.....	26
Analysis of Responses.....	30
Chapter 5 Discussion, Implications, and Conclusions.....	36
Works Cited	44
Appendix A.....	47

List of Tables

		Page
Table 1	Demographics of the Sample	27
Table 2	Instructor Scores (Ranked)	31

Chapter 1

The Problem Definition

Introduction

In today's academic environment, there are some who might choose a product-centered approach in which emphasis is placed on mechanics and form (ensuring that a student understands how to connect sentences together to form a paragraph, for example). In some ways, this choice is understandable, maybe because mechanics and form are often the most visible and easily recognizable features of writing. But experienced instructors argue that there has to be an allowance for the generation and feedback of ideas without an immediate judgment on the mechanics of a student's written product. This student-centered approach, unlike the product-centered approach mentioned above, allows for the expression of unique arguments that might otherwise be lost if the student feels pressure only to meet specific mechanics goals.

In the traditional academic environment (a two-year associate or four-year baccalaureate program), the presentation of a final written product for a course—an end-of-semester paper, or a final research paper for example—is usually stressed by instructors as a task that adequately gauges how well a student has learned and internalized specific subject matter. How well the student can present the necessary information in a formal writing assignment is also stressed by instructors. One need only

refer to the many course syllabi collected by a student over the course of his or her academic career to acknowledge the truth of this assertion. It should also be noted that in some cases, there is not only the requirement of a final paper for the student, but also a mid-term or mid-semester writing requirement as well.

Because the term paper requirement is one that an instructor will usually apply to relevant issues in his or her course, it is understandable that content might be seen as an especially important ingredient in a student's formal paper. Perhaps less obvious is the question, how does documentation style fit into an instructor's evaluation of a student's paper? Is the degree of emphasis on documentation based on the instructor's comfort or skill in applying citation format rules, or is it based on the importance of the presentation of subject matter? To help find answers to these questions, instructors who teach in the Gateway Program, an adult accelerated degree completion program located in Raleigh, North Carolina, agreed to participate in a study designed to measure their ability to recognize and apply the program's required citation format in the grading of a given student's term paper. Because emphasis in the composition literature over the last three decades has been on holistic and process-oriented teaching and assessment, it seemed likely that instructors would have difficulty scoring high when asked to focus on only finding errors in APA citation format when evaluating a piece of student writing. My belief was that they would probably score no higher than a "C" score.

Research Questions

Three questions are posed by the investigation, and the research study is designed specifically to answer these questions:

1. How well would instructors score if given the task of finding deliberately inserted formatting errors in a student's paper?
2. What are instructors' perceptions of the importance of a formatting style in evaluating a student's writing assignment when weighed against the content of the assignment?
3. Do weaknesses or strengths in an instructor's ability to apply the specific citation format to a grading exercise reflect a certain amount of instruction experience or are they influenced by training in particular disciplines?

Background and Interests

In May 2000 I approached Anthony Grady, the director of the Gateway Program at St. Augustine's College, Raleigh, North Carolina, regarding the possibility of conducting a study of how instructors assess student writing. He particularly wanted to keep the evaluation grounded solely in the application of the APA citation format. In one of the discussions of how best to design the assessment project, he stated that the adult learners enrolled in the Gateway Program needed to have the parameters of a scholarly

format to refer to, and a large amount of the responsibility for ensuring the students became familiar and comfortable with the APA citation format rested in the hands of the program instructors. The students were not simply taking courses that allowed them to act as passive learners moving easily through a course of study. They were active learners who were engaging in academic conversation. Although their demographics might be considered “non-traditional,” their ultimate goal was undoubtedly traditional: obtaining an undergraduate degree from a fully accredited institution of higher learning. Keeping this important consideration in mind, he felt that it was only logical that emphasis should be placed on instructor familiarity with the program’s required citation format. Although I would have preferred to conduct a more in-depth study of instructor response to student writing, my project therefore centered on an assessment of the instructors’ familiarity with the APA citation format.

The Adult Learner

Who is today’s adult learner? According to Darkenwald and Merriam, an adult learner is “a person married, head of household, or over 21 years of age” (qtd. in Blum). Other sources use the age of 25 as the definitive beginning age of an adult learner. Although there is room for debate over what constitutes the appropriate beginning age of an adult learner, most sources define an adult learner as someone who “returns to study, on a full-time or part-time basis, after a period of time spent in other life activities or pursuits” (Neeley, Niemi and Ehrhard). This return to the pursuit of an education could be for a variety of reasons, including current job requirements, personal desire for

advancement in current job, industry downsizing, or desire for change in career. The U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics reported in its 1999 survey that adult learners are the "fastest-growing segment of today's college population," and account for approximately 46% of the U.S. adult population (U.S. Dept. of Educ.).

Located within this burgeoning non-traditional area of the education spectrum are different kinds of adult learners: those who seek to acquire basic literacy; those who wish to complete a basic education requirement, such as the GED (General Equivalency Diploma); those who take credit-only courses for pleasure or to fulfill job requirements; those who take courses to complete undergraduate degrees begun earlier in life and abandoned; and those seeking to earn post-baccalaureate degrees. The adult learner of interest to this project is the one who would be enrolled in an accelerated degree program like the Gateway Program at St. Augustine's College, and who has at least two solid years of undergraduate courses to their credit, but for a variety of reasons, did not complete his or her undergraduate education.

According to the program's director, the adult learners enrolled in his program reflect the diversity of those individuals who are active members of our country's workforce. The adult learner is usually employed full-time, and in addition to managing a career, also contends with family and community demands on his or her time. All the elements combined create a multi-dimensional student who faces arguably more challenges than the younger, traditional student would face. They also emphasize the necessity of laying a strong foundation of academic standards for the adult learner that can be drawn

upon in a “real world” setting.

Assessing the Adult Learner

Given the challenges facing both the adult learner and the instructor in a learning environment like an accelerated degree program, prioritization of assignments becomes a necessity. Because the curriculum is designed to provide an education that leads to degree completion at an accelerated speed, the instructor course outline and follow-through is usually expected to be well-defined and highly specific in nature (Grady). Generally speaking, all courses offered by the Gateway Program are taught in a seminar setting, with the students and instructors engaging in active conversation, instead of merely participating in a lecture-driven format. Small class sizes facilitate the seminar format; the average class size usually ranges from a minimum of about eight or nine students, to a maximum of about fifteen. At the time of this study, there were about 135 students enrolled in the program. With 13 instructors on the roster, the instructor/student ratio is about one to ten, which supports the ideal seminar setting. In terms of assignments, each course is designed much along the same lines that a traditional undergraduate course would be, with a final End of Module paper weighted 40% of the course grade.

If the average Gateway Program student is “non-traditional” by definition, then who is the instructor guiding or evaluating him? All instructors in the Gateway Program who participated in this research project had a grounding in a traditional academic environment, and provided instruction in their individual disciplines of training. In fact, at the time of this study, most had also taught or were still teaching classes in the traditional

undergraduate curriculum at St. Augustine's College. In assessing the writing of his or her student, the Gateway Program instructor is charged with one of the same basic responsibilities that the instructor of a typical undergraduate course would be charged with: teach the students to converse successfully in an academic environment. Most instructors would acknowledge that teaching students to converse in this manner is a multi-pronged task and that there should be a certain amount of flexibility if the student is to feel comfortable in expressing himself. In other words, using a developmental, process-driven approach to writing instruction would more than likely yield a better student written product than using a mechanics-driven approach. However, this approach to writing instruction and evaluation is somewhat at odds with the writing assignment guidelines for the Gateway Program's End of Module paper. The instructors are provided with a sample paper and instructions on grading all papers using the APA (American Psychological Association) format. They are also required to weight the paper a full 40% of the student's final course grade. There is no argument that the ability to converse in a scholarly written voice is ideal. Most literature suggests that it is reasonable to expect the student to converse on an academic level in a final written product. However, even so, it seems as if there should also be some amount of flexibility in formatting, perhaps having formatting issues be dependent upon the discipline in which the course is housed. In reference to the guidelines for the final research project paper required in all Gateway Program courses, it would seem logical to expect the papers in each course to follow the recommended documentation styles of their respective fields, but this is not the case. Even though different academic fields are represented, in the

matter of the program requirement for an end-of-term paper for each course, the APA method of style usage is required for all student End of Module papers; course titles vary from English to Managerial Marketing to Biblical Perspectives, but all require the End of Module research paper to be formatted in APA citation style.

This combination of diverse discipline representation and the requirement for only one formal style usage for formal papers provides an intriguing sample to assess instructor skill in evaluating student papers based on APA documentation style. What are the average Gateway Program instructor's thoughts on what constitutes effective writing? What do instructors in this program look for when evaluating student writing? Is there significant weighting of content over formatting and style or vice versa?

Definition of Terms

Several terms and designations will be unique to the study. These are defined generally and operationally as follows:

Documentation Style: In the case of this research project, the terms “documentation style” or “citation format” are used interchangeably to describe specific formatting based on a published citation guide, such as Modern Language Association (MLA). In the case of this study, however, the term refers specifically to the use of American Psychological Association (APA) format.

Instructors' Perceptions: In general, this designation refers to the viewpoints of teachers and professors with respect to assessing writing skills and abilities of students. In the case of the present study, this term is operationally defined by responses to the

survey instrument that is used to assess instructors' views and knowledge of APA format. This instrument is comprised of two sections and is described in more detail in the methodology chapter.

Limitations

The study is limited to instructors teaching in an adult accelerated degree completion program. The sample population of the proposed study was limited to ten of 13 instructors in the program.

The study conclusions are limited by the amount of information and data discovered in the documents, reports, studies, and other related materials comprising the literature review and the data collected from administration of survey questionnaires. It is important to note that inherent limitations also exist in the utilization of a small population to provide evidence. But this is true regardless of the type of study or the methodology employed (Babbie, 1998; Rea & Parker, 1997).

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 introduces the present study. It discusses the topic of concern, and the background and significance of the problem. It also provides research questions, limitations, and definitions of terms unique to the study.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature relevant to the theoretical foundation. The review includes examination of studies assessing teacher response to student writing.

Chapter 3 details the methodology of the research. Included is an explanation of the approach and method, sample population, data collection procedures, survey instrument, and procedures.

Chapter 4 analyzes the data that derives from administration of the questionnaire instrument and compares results to the findings from the literature review. Tables are provided and results noted, followed by answers to research questions.

Chapter 5 concludes the study. It includes a discussion of findings, followed by conclusions, implications, and recommendations.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Because my research project only focused on instructor application of APA citation format, instructors were not given the option of grading the sample student paper in a global, holistic manner that would have allowed for feedback and response. It would seem in any instance that a narrow evaluation process like the one used in the study would not allow for the successful exchange of ideas between teacher and student, and as the following review of the literature reveals, adequate teacher response is integral to the development of a student's writing voice.

Introduction: The Individual and the Writing Process

In the 1970s, the idea that all individuals had a written voice that could be heard seemed to be shared by many who were leaders in the field of composition theory. In her important and influential essay "Writing as a Mode of Learning" published in 1977, Janet Emig discussed the idea of accessibility of strong writing skills for all by presenting the argument that "because writing is often our representation of the world made visible, embodying both process and product, writing is more readily a form and source of learning than talking" (91). If the process of writing could be seen as an even more effective teaching tool than talking, one could reasonably conclude that since we all eventually learn to talk by engaging in speech, there is every reason to believe that we

could also learn to write better by engaging in writing exercises. Using Emig's interpretation, the writing "knack" became de-mystified, and the idea of any person, regardless of any believed natural talent, successfully completing a given written assignment became highly possible, if not a foregone conclusion.

This idea that any individual can become a skilled writer if given a chance was also shared by others in composition theory. In his classic book *Writing Without Teachers*, Peter Elbow pointed out that "most people's relationship to the process of writing is one of helplessness" (12). In his argument that the idea of understanding writing ability is something that is regarded as "mysterious" by most people, even those considered to be accomplished writers, he seemed to argue that writing ability is something that can be learned, and is not a random gift of nature. This underlying message in his book, which was published in 1973, still seems a valid one when applied to today's diverse world of writing assignments. By presenting the writing task as a process that can be navigated by most, if not all, both Emig and Elbow present an idea that is still useful today as a model for approaching writing assignments, both academic and professional. These ideas were influential in my choice of instructors in the Gateway Program as study subjects. These instructors are charged with the task of encouraging the development of writing skills in a non-traditional undergraduate population (adult learners) which might possess a writing voice that is distinct and different from the traditional undergraduate's.

In addition to the acknowledgement that each individual writer had a voice, there was also the need for fair and reasonable assessment of his work. In *Teaching and Assessing Writing*, Edward M. White acknowledged and discussed the importance of

grading student writing on a holistic basis. Although he admitted that there is a line of leniency that should not be crossed – ignoring the repeated stylistic or structural mistakes of a particular student’s writing over time for example – he also stated that integrating holistic scoring into your methods of instruction is “important for reasons beyond measurement, for reasons that return us to the nature of writing itself.” He went on to argue that we see our thoughts in our writing, and therefore ask our students to write “so that they can think more clearly” (*Teaching and Assessing Writing* 32) In this statement, White seems to argue that it would certainly benefit the student’s long-term writing development if the writing teacher focused on a broader instruction process that did not over-emphasize specific writing mechanics rules. In other words, there will be plenty of time to focus on mechanics and stylistic issues once the student has completely captured his thoughts on paper. If a student writer is guaranteed a “brainstorming” or “freewrite” stage, his confidence in his writing at later stages might be greater.

Beyond the Basics: Instructor Response to Student Writing

Instructor Expectations

Responding to student writing is probably the most challenging part of teaching writing. It not only takes a tremendous amount of time and demands a great deal of intellectual activity, it also affects to a large extent how students feel about their ability to write. It becomes increasingly obvious that teachers may become less pressured and more effective in dealing with response only as they are able to redefine their role from that of

an examiner who must spend enormous amounts of time grading every paper to that of a facilitator who helps students recognize and work on their own strengths and weaknesses (Grant-Davie and Shapiro).

In his essay “The Student, the Text, and the Classroom Context: a Case Study of Teacher Response,” Richard Straub discusses the influence of teacher response on student writing. In particular, he presents a case study of one instructor’s response (his own) to one student’s writing over the course of several writing assignments. In his recommendations to would-be instructors to leave control of the writing in the hands of the students, and to evaluate in a more global, holistic manner, he presents a clear, well-defined argument for weighting content over style in grading of student papers. In addition, he discusses his own motivation of being “less interested in the overall quality of . . . individual essays as written products, than . . . in the development of [the students’] writing, and in turn, in their development as writers” (Part 1).

It can be argued that a teacher who marks only grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, citation format, and spelling errors does not prompt better student writing. Rather, comments on the logic and structure of an argument may be more helpful. This may be more easily said than done, however; as Anson has noted, “For many teachers, the domain of error remains untheorized and without . . . reflection. Response to error—how much to identify, what to say about it, where it fits in the larger cycles of instruction and production of text—comes from inherited practices, local conditions . . . or beliefs about the expectations of other faculty or future employers” (4).

Sometimes, we inadvertently give students conflicting messages. In "Responding to Student Writing", Nancy Sommers reviews the purposes and effects of teachers' comments on papers. She provides examples of actual instructor comments. In each instance, the instructors have taken a lot of time and effort to show their students how to edit sentences with interlinear comments, but then the instructors also make marginal comments that ask students to expand paragraphs to make them more interesting to a reader. The interlinear comments and the marginal comments represent two different tasks. The interlinear comments focus on the text as a finished piece in need of editing. The marginal notes suggest that this text is a work in progress and that the student may need to do some further research to develop the meaning. The student is being asked, in other words, to edit and develop at the same time--a task that most writers would find difficult to do simultaneously. These two sets of comments (interlinear and marginal) make it hard for the student to sort out whether content or style deserves priority for revision and may create the impression that stylistic details need to be attended to before the meaning. These two sets of comments seem to confuse product and process: the student is forced to consider all elements of the paper in one draft. A more successful, student-centered approach would probably entail at least two separate drafts in which the instructor could focus on ideas and content first, and mechanics issues next. Indeed, Sommers notes that correcting details such as grammar gives students the mistaken idea that early drafts should be as correct as the final product.

To emphasize that writing is a process, Erika Lindemann has a chapter on responding to student writing in her book *A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers* in which she

advises instructors to identify a priority for each draft and to correct that draft only for that priority. For example, the priority for the first draft would be to establish organization and specific examples, and the instructor's responses to the draft should be to those two aspects of the writing only. She observes that as students master the tasks established for each draft, details such as proper vocabulary and spelling take care of themselves. In general, she argues that for students to learn to write, they must correct their own writing many times and that instructor response should focus on what students are doing well and help them build on that.

Noting that research has shown teacher comment has little effect on the quality of student writing, Grant-Davie and Shapiro suggest teachers should view comments as rhetorical acts, think about their purpose for writing them, and teach students to become their own best readers. To achieve this goal, teachers should respond to student drafts with fewer judgments and directives and more questions and suggestions. In focusing heavily on the required citation format, the program in my research study seems to limit the instructors' ability to respond to students' writing in this manner. The focus on ensuring that use of the required citation format is ingrained in the students seems too narrow to allow for a broader interpretation of the curriculum by individual instructors.

In *Assigning, Responding, Evaluating*, White encourages instructors to look for opportunities to give meaningful praise when responding to student work. Generic, vague compliments can have a negative effect, however, since they are viewed as being passed out freely to all. White (*Assigning*) encourages instructors to mark the clearest and most inventive sentence in the essay. When commenting on essays, he points out that

questions often work better than statements since the latter can be interpreted as authoritative dictates. Questions are more apt to inspire students to think about what they know and are learning about writing. Instructor responses should also encourage risk-taking in early drafts. Trying out an idea or an argument that is new, different, or unusual can be exciting for beginning writers. The position statement developed by the CCCC Committee on Assessment stresses the importance of instructors realizing that student language is a result of their individual social context. As difficult as it may be, instructors must fairly interpret and assess student writing within a framework of knowledge about that social community. It is not appropriate to judge student writing strictly on a basis of comparison to other student writers, but, instead, teachers of composition must see the value of student writing as related to the social structures and cultural boundaries of each student author.

These instruments all support the main idea that fuels this study, that an assessment which focuses solely on formatting and mechanical issues does not allow for a completely accurate assessment of writing skill, because content is de-emphasized. In addition to these instruments, various teacher/writers in the field share the following strategies they have developed for measuring writing quality.

Krest provides helpful techniques of a general nature to show teachers how to give students credit for all their work and how to spend less time doing it. These techniques involve using holistic scoring, using a somewhat similar technique of general comments, and using the portfolio. Harmon suggests that teachers should withhold measuring

students' progress until a suitable period of time has elapsed which allows for measurable growth, and then measure the quality of selected pieces of writing at periodic intervals.

Cooper and Odell suggest that teachers can eliminate much of the uncertainty and frustration of measuring the quality of these samples if they will identify limited types of discourse and create exercises which stimulate writing in the appropriate range but not beyond it. In their model, they present explanatory, persuasive, and expressive extremes as represented by the angles of the triangle. Each point is associated with a characteristic of language related to a goal of writing, with assignments and the resulting measure of quality focused on that particular goal. Writing teachers are moving increasingly toward this type of assessment of writing quality.

Krest also presents an interesting modification of the writing response process by measuring the quality of students' papers with the following levels of concerns in mind: (HOCs) high order concerns: focus, details, and organization; (MOCs) middle order concerns: style and sentence order; and (LOCs) lower order concerns: mechanics and spelling. In considering my study of the Gateway Program, I think that APA format could probably be classified as all three (although mostly as LOCs). It seems to qualify as an LOC in the sense that improperly formatted citations would not change the meaning or focus of an argument. However, incorrect citation style could possibly weaken an argument if it is untraceable, or it could slow down reader comprehension of an argument (which would seem to place it somewhat in both the HOC and LOC categories).

Just as we discover and determine what to do in the classroom to respond to student writing, it is equally important that writing instructors consider what not to do. A habit White (*Assigning*) encourages the writing instructor to break is marking every error. Students often view this saturation of ink as justification for the grade that is assigned and not really as a way to help them improve the quality of their writing. Because of this perception, students feel frustration and inadequacy and may eventually give up trying to improve their writing at all. White also encourages instructors to avoid responding with puzzling abbreviations which, although familiar to the teacher, might as well represent another language to the student who only sees the uninterpretable message, “you made a mistake.”

However much writing may be conceptualized as a process, the time eventually comes for the process to come to an end and for the final product to be submitted for assessment. At that point, instructors can choose among several methods of arriving at a final score or grade for a paper. In general, the approaches include analytic versus holistic scoring methods and between task-specific and general scoring methods. Based on my observation of the Gateway Program, the emphasis seems to be placed on an analytic method of evaluation. Because of the program’s emphasis on an analytical method of evaluation, it seems especially relevant to discuss it in relation to the more flexible holistic method of evaluation.

Analytic versus Holistic

In the initial phases of developing a scoring method, the instructor determines the evaluation criteria. For example, two factors that may be considered in the evaluation of a

piece of writing are whether appropriate grammar is used and the extent to which the given argument is persuasive. An analytic scoring method allows for the separate evaluation of each factor. Each criterion is scored on a different descriptive scale (Brookhart).

The method can be extended to include a separate set of criteria for assessing the persuasiveness of the argument. This would result in an analytic scoring system with two factors, quality of written expression and persuasiveness of the argument, each of which would receive a separate score. Numerical weights can be assigned to the evaluation of each criterion. The benefit of using a scoring system rather than weighted scores is that scoring systems provide a description of what is expected at each score level. Students may use this information to improve their future performance.

It may not be possible to separate an evaluation into independent factors. When there is an overlap between the criteria set for the evaluation of the different factors, a holistic scoring approach may be preferable to an analytic one. In a holistic scoring approach, the criteria are considered together on a single descriptive scale (Brookhart). Holistic scoring approaches support broader judgments concerning the quality of the process or product than do analytic approaches.

However, using an analytic scoring approach does not eliminate the possibility of a holistic factor. A holistic assessment may be built into an analytic scoring system as one of the score categories. One difficulty with this approach is that overlap between the criteria set for the holistic judgment and the other evaluated factors cannot be avoided. This means that certain criteria may be weighted more than was originally intended. In

other words, the instructor needs to be careful that the student is not unintentionally penalized severely for a given mistake. Although there is this danger involved in a combination of both methods, I feel the Gateway Program does need to move towards a more holistic approach, if not at the program curriculum level, then at the individual instructor level.

General versus Task-Specific

A variation of analytical versus holistic scoring is general versus task specific. Scoring methods may be designed to evaluate a specific task or to evaluate a broader category of tasks. If the purpose of a given course is to develop a student's ability to use a given documentation style, for example, a general scoring method may be developed and used to evaluate each of the references given by that student in a preliminary draft. This approach would allow the students to use the feedback they acquired from the draft to improve their performance on the final essay.

Scoring systems may also be designed to contain both general and task specific components. If the purpose of a paper is to evaluate the students' documentation skills and their ability to develop and present their research, then an analytic method could be used that contains both a general component and a task-specific component. In such a case, the documentation component of the method may consist of a general set of criteria developed for the evaluation of references and in-text citations. The task-specific component of the system, on the other hand, may contain a set of criteria developed with specific structural and argumentative skills in mind, such as proper paragraph development, or connection of argument throughout the paper.

Chapter Summary

As can be seen from this review, recent theory about writing instruction has tended to emphasize process in the service of product. That is, instructors have been encouraged to teach writing as a process of revision that leads, ultimately, to an acceptable product, one that is both mechanically correct, well organized and content-rich. Once a writing product has gone through a multi-draft process and is considered ready for evaluation, instructors can choose to either focus on mechanics and style issues only, or can choose to evaluate more generally and holistically (which would include mechanics, style, and content in the assessment).

Chapter 3

Methodology

Previous chapters have introduced the focus of the study and have reviewed the literature pertinent to the topic of instructor response to student writing. The purpose of the present chapter is to describe the methodology used to conduct the quantitative portion of the study.

Sample Population

The sample used in the investigation consisted of ten of the 13 instructors then currently teaching in the Gateway Program. The three who did not participate were not available at the time of the study.

Survey Instrument

The survey instrument used to assess instructors' knowledge of APA format requires approximately 15 minutes or less to complete, and is comprised of two sections (Appendix A). The first portion solicits demographic data relating to years of teaching experience, age, gender, and educational level. It also provides data on how the instructors weigh documentation concerns when grading, and their perceptions of whether they evaluate APA format consistently. The second section consists of a student paper of average length and subject matter for the program requirement containing 33 deliberately inserted errors. Each error involves formatting, not content or style.

The evaluation assignment was followed by a structured interview of two of the instructors and consisted of the following seven questions:

1. Is APA format the best format for the course(s) you teach, or is there another?
2. Do you consider yourself to be more of a global, holistic evaluator of student writing projects, or is correct formatting and style more important to you?
3. Do you have different expectations for your adult learners in comparison to younger, traditional undergraduate students that you have taught, or are presently teaching?
4. In your experience, are there any marked differences in the way adult learners and traditional undergraduate students present their final written products?
5. Since the students in the program are classified as “adult learners,” are there any particular characteristics that they possess that would influence the way you evaluate their writing products? For example, more leniently or more stringently than traditional undergraduates? Would they be evaluated exactly the same? If so, why? If not, why not?
6. Did the paper seem like the average student paper that you would encounter in terms of quality and/or content?
7. Do you think your score on this evaluation project accurately reflects your view of the importance of applying the correct citation format? Why or why not?

Procedures

Administration

Each instructor was required to evaluate the paper at one sitting, in the offices of the Gateway Program. Each instructor was assigned a number to maintain confidentiality. A follow-up survey was given to the instructors to obtain demographic data and gather their opinions on how writing fits into their own and the program's general curriculum. In addition, interviews were conducted with two of the instructors after their "assignment" was evaluated.

Scoring

In the evaluation of each instructor's graded paper, more errors than those that were deliberately inserted became apparent. To maintain the integrity of the project's evaluation goals, instructors were given credit for those formatting errors that they found, but were still evaluated with 33 errors as the target number to be found. Errors that were not found did not count against the final score; they simply were of course not added in.

Chapter 4

Results

Previous chapters of the research introduced the problem of concern and reviewed the literature pertinent to the important variables of the present study. The purpose of this chapter is to present and analyze the data collected through administration of a survey questionnaire.

Demographics of the Sample

- All of the instructors who participated in this project taught courses that were housed within their given disciplines of training (see Table 1).
- Half of those who participated were trained in and also currently instructing in business or business-related courses.
- 40% of those who participated had been teaching 20 years or more.
- 40% had been teaching 0-4 years.
- 20% had been teaching 5-9 years.

Table 1. Demographics of the Sample

Instructor #	Score	Discipline(s) Primarily Trained Trained in	Teaching Experience (in Years)	Publishing Experience
1	17/33	Political Science/ Business/Health	20 years or more	4 authored books, 7 edited books
2	11/33	History	20 years or more	none
3	26/33	Religion/ Counseling	20 years or more	6 recently published works

(Table 1 continued)

4	23/33	English/Linguistics	20 years or more	several works published
5	30/33	Accounting/Business	0-4 years	1 work
6	26/33	Nursing/Health Administration	0-4 years	none
7	26/33	Business Admin./ Management/ Marketing	5-9 years	none
8	18/33	Business	0-4 years	none
9	36/33	Education/English	0-4 years	2 works published

(Table 1 continued)

10	14/33	Political Science/	5-9 years	2 works published
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- 3 of the 4 who stated that they had been teaching for 20+ years had work published an average of 5 different times (Instructor #1 raised this average considerably, with a total of 11 times published).
- The highest scorer (Instructor #9) had been teaching 0-4 years, while the second highest scorer (Instructor #5) had also been teaching 0-4 years.
- The lowest scorer (Instructor #2) had been teaching 20+ years.

Analysis of Responses

Table 2 summarizes scores for each instructor. The following provides a summary of responses to the survey instrument:

- 8 of the 10 instructors found half or more of the stated 33 errors.
- The average score for all instructors was 22.6 of 33 correct, or 68.6%.
- Instructors 5 and 9 scored the highest.
- Instructors 2 and 10 scored the lowest and had been teaching for 20+ years and 5 – 9 years, respectively
- Instructor 3 was particularly perceptive in noticing the error pattern (pagination errors in particular)
- Instructor 7 provided responses that addressed content (even though all instructors were told not to consider content)
- Instructor 10 scored low in the formatting area (what she was assessing) but provided content responses.

Table 2. Instructor Scores (Ranked)

Instructor #	Score
9	36/33 (100%)
5	30/33 (91%)
7	26/33 (79%)
6	26/33 (79%)
3	26/33 (79%)
4	23/33 (70%)
8	18/33 (54%)
1	17/33 (51%)
10	14/33 (42%)
2	11/33 (33%)

The median score for the sample was 23, or 69%. This corresponds closely to the mean score for the sample (22.6 or 68%). These findings confirmed the primary hypothesis, that instructors would score at or below the “C” level on a test of ability to detect errors in APA format. However, two of the ten instructors scored exceptionally well (an “A” average or better).

In the follow-up survey to the evaluation assignment, 50% of the instructors stated that APA style usage in student research papers was equally important in comparison to content, and 50% also felt that consistently incorrect formatting throughout a content-rich paper would very much affect the paper’s grade. In addition, all the instructors felt that they had been grading student papers in accordance with citation guidelines set forth in their program guide. Most also stated that they were satisfied with the APA citation format requirement. At the end of the survey, an open-ended question asked for their views on APA citation format, and on the program’s requirements, but most of the instructors left the answer field for this question blank.

Although instructors had not been expected to score especially high in the evaluation project, there were two notable exceptions, Instructor #5 and Instructor #9. Instructor #5 noted 30 of 33 errors, while Instructor #9 also found a large number of errors (36 of 33). In the general survey questions, both instructors stated that they had been instructing between 0-4 years. In fact, they both scored noticeably higher than those instructors who stated that they had been instructing for as many as 20 years or more. It was obvious in a comparison of scores in this project that more experience did not

necessarily lead to higher scores. Neither did publishing experience, with Instructor #5 only having one work published, and Instructor #9 only having two works published. Also, given the two instructors' markedly different areas of academic training (Accounting/Finance and Education/English), I thought it would be helpful to interview them to discover if they had differing or similar philosophies on student writing instruction and assessment. I asked the following questions of each instructor:

1. Is APA format the best format for the course(s) you teach, or if there another?

Although Instructor #9 (Education/English) seemed to feel that APA was the best possible format to evaluate student research papers, Instructor #5 (Accounting) did not. She felt that there should be an allowance for other kinds of evaluation tools, although she admitted to adhering faithfully to the APA citation guidelines when evaluating student papers.

2. Do you consider yourself to be more of a global, holistic evaluator of student writing projects, or is correct formatting and style more important to you?

Both instructors stated that they considered themselves to be more holistic than format-specific in their grading process.

3. Do you have different expectations for your adult learners in comparison to younger, traditional undergraduate students that you have taught, or are presently teaching?

Instructor #9 stated that his expectations were exactly the same for both traditional undergraduates and adult learners. Instructor #5 stated that she had initially expected a higher level of conscientiousness among the adult learners when she first began

instructing in the Gateway Program, but has often found that as much as about 40% of the time, adult learners provide just as much difficulty in the areas of attitude and determination or desire to succeed than do their traditional counterparts who have less responsibilities in their daily lives.

4. In your experience, are there any marked differences in the way adult learners and traditional undergraduate students present their final written products?

Both instructors agreed that the adult learners seem to follow directions better than their more traditional undergraduate counterparts in reference to citation format and in overall final written products. However, overall writing savvy of the average adult learner seems to be no better than the traditional undergraduate.

5. Since the students in the program are classified as “adult learners,” are there any particular characteristics that they possess that would influence the way you evaluate their writing products? For example, more leniently or more stringently than traditional undergraduates? Would they be evaluated exactly the same? If so, why? If not, why not?

Instructor #9 stated that he evaluates all students the same, regardless of demographics. Instructor #5 stated that she also applies the same grading guidelines to all students, but the adult learners seem to demand more leniency in consideration of the extra responsibilities in their lives (family, community, career, etc.).

6. Did the paper seem like the average student paper that you would encounter in terms of quality and/or content?

Instructor #9 felt that the paper was average in terms of the number of formatting errors, while Instructor #5 felt that the error pattern was too high and did not accurately reflect the average student's paper. Both agreed to seeing this type of paper from at least two students per term in every class they teach (the average class size from the program ranges from about nine to about 15 students).

7. Do you think your score on this evaluation project accurately reflects your view of the importance of applying the correct citation format? Why or why not?

Instructor #9 felt that his score on the project did accurately reflect his views on the importance of citation format, while Instructor #5 felt that since she does have misgivings about the format, her score could be somewhat misleading.

Contrary to the intuitive notion that the English professor would have more insightful views about the writing effectiveness of the adult students, the Accounting instructor proved to be much more expressive. Although both instructors scored high on the evaluation project, their answers provide somewhat differing views on assessing the adult learner's writing effectiveness. Even though both appear to assess the adult learner the same as the traditional undergraduate, Instructor #5 seemed to present a greater awareness of the need to incorporate instructor techniques that better encompass the unique needs of the adult learner. Her comments seemed to allow for the idea that there has to be a smoother blending of the "real world" experience that each adult learner inherently brings into the classroom, and the necessarily structured academic environment in the program to create a written product that is of the highest possible quality.

Chapter 5

Discussion, Implications, and Conclusions*Discussion*

A superficial interpretation of the opinions expressed by all ten instructors who participated in the project would perhaps lead one to believe that most of them would have scored fairly high in the measurement of their ability to recognize and apply the APA citation format. As noted in the results section, at least half of the instructors felt that format and style were equally as important as content in the evaluation of student writing. When specifically asked in the survey if they were satisfied with the use of APA as the citation format for their students' papers, most said that they were. However, most did not score very high in finding citation errors. In fact, the average score for error-detection was determined as a ratio of 22.6/33, which represents a 68% score. Also noted in the results section, weaknesses or strengths in an instructor's ability to apply the APA format to the grading exercise did not reflect a longer amount of experience or training in any particular discipline.

An interesting side effect in the instructors' assessment of the instrument appeared to occur. Most of the early comments were strictly format-driven (wrong margin settings and faulty page numbering for example). However, by the end of the paper, the average instructor had begun to provide more insightful and constructive comments, despite being instructed to grade only the paper's formatting technique. For

example, one instructor began his evaluation by pointing out proper margin settings for the paper, yet notes near the end the need for the student author to ensure that he concludes the paper by emphasizing the points presented in the introduction and body of the paper.

Interestingly, most of the margin comments of the instructors did argue for the instructors' familiarity with the citation format, although their final scores might not have adequately reflected it. In other words, there might have been several key comments made, for example – “all paragraphs must be indented,” “no extra spaces needed,” “cite page number” -- but not enough to meet the error goal. (This could perhaps be used as a somewhat unique argument for the need to grade holistically as well as stylistically).

Finally, although the average score of the instructors in this evaluation project seems to suggest that they are not familiar enough with the APA citation format to adequately assess student writing effectiveness in that area, a closer look at the grading patterns on some of the papers indicates that they are aware of how well an individual student might be expressing himself. For example, while pointing out the necessity to include a publication date in a particular citation, one instructor also prompted the student writer to ensure that the meaning of the thesis statement be “complete.” In another instance, in addition to pointing out to the student writer the correct format for the paper outline, one instructor also asked that a particular section heading in the paper be more clear and direct.

This finding demonstrates that they are able to offer guidance in better written self-expression. An underlying lesson that might be gained from these observations is that simply applying a specific, one-dimensional method of analyzing student writing does not allow for the rewards that could be reaped if a more global, holistic method of evaluation was utilized. This thus becomes one of the recommendations of the present investigative study.

Also of interest was that even though a variety of disciplines were represented by the instructors (as evidenced by the demographic data collected in the survey), when given the opportunity to recommend a citation format that might be considered more appropriate for their respective fields, most did not recommend one. It was difficult to determine from the information gathered whether or not the instructors genuinely did not have a more appropriate format in mind, or if they were simply withholding comment. As a result, another recommendation of this study is to ensure that there is always adequate instructor feedback in the design of course content and requirements (this might allow for the implementation of heuristics and assignments that address issues specific to a particular course).

The main argument drawn from the study – and the literature – is that writing should be taught as a process, not product, and should be assessed in a global, holistic manner in which mechanics issues are important, but are not as important as content and the strength of an individual's writing voice.

Implications and Conclusions

It has been the purpose of this thesis to examine the ways in which instructors respond to student errors, in this case, errors in documentation format. A review of the research literature shows how theories of writing pedagogy have developed over the years. This includes an emphasis on the accessibility of a competent written voice and the teacher's need to find a fair and reasonable means of assessing the student's work. The main dilemma that arose from the latter was the question of how both the assessment of surface errors and the assessment of higher-level content issues should each be weighted. The literature suggests that instructors tend to de-emphasize error detection in the assessment process in favor of holistic scoring that takes into account organization and logic as well as the mechanics of writing.

Modern researchers seem to advocate the teaching of writing as a process instead of as a product with the assumption that a suitable process will lead to a suitable product. Nevertheless, student writing is ultimately assessed as a product, often in the form of a final paper. To gain an understanding of instructors' perceptions of what constitutes writing effectiveness, I studied an adult accelerated degree completion program. The program seemed to offer an intriguing blend of the traditional and non-traditional. It seemed traditional in the sense that all students enrolled were actively pursuing an accredited undergraduate degree; non-traditional in the sense that most of the students enrolled were usually older adults (at least 25 years old) who had other commitments such as careers, families, and communities competing for their attention. Also, although

the program offered courses in a diverse array of disciplines, only one citation format for all research papers (regardless of course content) was used. Because of emphasis over the last three decades on holistic and process-oriented teaching and assessment, it seemed likely that instructors would have difficulty scoring high when asked to focus on only finding errors in APA citation format when evaluating a piece of student writing. Not surprisingly, aside from two exceptions, the instructors' average score was 22.6/33 (68%).

Based on this study, there are a number of problems with such a narrow method of writing evaluation (focusing only on citation format errors). As the literature suggests, a mechanics-driven approach to writing evaluation could cause students to believe that mechanics should take precedence over proper content focus. Of course, mechanics do have a rightful place in the writing process, but the literature seems to support the idea that it should be given attention only after the writer has adequately formulated his main argument in a particular writing assignment, which would suggest that multiple drafts should be written.

Another problem with APA citation format specific to the Gateway Program is the fact that it is the only format used in a program that offers courses in a number of different disciplines. Would APA format be the best choice for a science paper or an English paper? (As opposed to a psychology or sociology paper, whose style would lend itself to the APA format)? A scientist or an English scholar might not think so. Although it can be argued that having only one citation format in the program provides an academic

grounding that all of the students enrolled in the program can refer to, it must also be noted that only stressing this one particular citation style does not allow for the students in the Gateway Program to easily converse on an academic level in various disciplines outside of the program.

Finally, would a heavily mechanics-driven or format-driven evaluation allow for a particular student's entire argument to be distinctively heard, and would it take into account the student's personal writing style or subject matter environment? Hopefully, this study has demonstrated that the answer is more than likely, no. As evidenced by the literature, error perception is socially constructed. Anson states the following:

we must begin to see teacher response to error in the context of what is – and what is thought to be – the existing “code” of language rules and norms of correctness. . . an uninformed and unreflective stance in the classroom ignores [the] often fascinating indeterminacy [of mechanical correctness] in favor of teaching “correctness” as if it has a basis in the essence of a language and not in a shifting, constantly modified and revised code of language conventions (3).

The instructor who allows himself to be weighed down in the evaluation of mechanics is likely to miss new and engaging ideas and arguments that might be offered by his students. The literature therefore seems to argue for the need of instructors to encourage student writer self-expression by engaging in a written conversation in their assessment instead of “grading for errors,” because only evaluating a written product for

format errors does not allow for a truly accurate view of what a writer might be expressing.

If it were possible to return to the beginning of this project, one of the main actions I would take would be to design the study so that actual instructor response to unmanipulated student writing could be evaluated. As I mentioned earlier, the main appeal of the Gateway Program to me was its unique student population: adult learners who brought with them into the classroom experiences from outside influences (family, career, community), that might have shaped their writing in unknown ways. In that context, it would have been interesting to see how the instructors responded to the adult learners' writing in comparison to the writing of more traditional undergraduates. Would there be no difference in response (as Instructors #5 and #9 suggest), or would response be harsher or more lenient? I believe that this is a legitimate question that could be researched further. Another important component to consider is the program director's motivation to assess instructor skill specifically in APA citation format. Why was this in particular so important to him? Beyond his justification that the adult learners in the program needed the parameters of a scholarly format to refer to, were there other more intangible issues at stake, like the desire to present the best possible public image of the program, or the need to comply with the rules of college administrators? Issues such as these could serve as background in a study that evaluated how they affect curriculum design, and the subsequent impact on instructor/student communications.

This also leads to the area of instructor feedback on the survey that was included with the student paper in my study. Because I feel that that there was some reticence in their responses to the survey questions regarding APA format, especially the open-ended question at the end of the survey, in hindsight, I think it would have helped to truly impress upon the instructors that all feedback provided in their surveys would remain strictly confidential. Although the director was aware of the instructors' final scores, he was never shown the follow-up surveys. I feel as if there were valuable opinions and suggestions that were not given because the instructors might not have wanted to appear to be stating opinions that were in opposition to the current curriculum design.

Most of all, it is hoped that this study adequately demonstrates a need for more research to be conducted in the area of instructor response to student writing in non-traditional academic environments ("English as a Second Language" courses for example). Like my study of the Gateway Program, it is possible that studies in these other non-traditional environments would show the same parallels in teacher-student feedback that seem to emerge in traditional academic environments, namely, that students deliver a better written product when they are guided through a multiple draft and response process by the instructor. This could strengthen the argument even more for a de-emphasis on the evaluation of mechanics use, and an emphasis on a process-driven, holistic method.

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Appendix A

Note to Faculty:

This exercise is composed of two parts: (1) a general survey/questionnaire, and (2) a student paper that should be graded using APA citation format criteria.

Please note that on the survey there is an area that allows for general comments, in particular comments that address any concerns/issues regarding the APA citation format in relation to your current course requirements. The survey is for statistical purposes only, and is not used to evaluate anyone in any particular way.

Instructor Survey/Questionnaire

1. Gender
 - a. Male
 - b. Female

2. Ethnicity
 - a. African American
 - b. American Indian/Alaska Native
 - c. Asian-American/Pacific Islander
 - d. Caucasian
 - e. Hispanic
 - f. Other

3. Age
 - a. 29 years or less
 - b. 30-39 years
 - c. 40-49 years
 - d. 50-59 years
 - e. 60 or more years

4. Highest level of education
 - a. Doctoral degree
 - b. Master's degree
 - c. Bachelor's degree
 - d. Associate's degree
 - e. High school diploma
 - f. Other

5. How long have you worked at this institution?
 - a. 0-4 years
 - b. 5-9 years
 - c. 10-14 years
 - d. 15-19 years
 - e. 20 years or more

6. How long have you served in your current or similar position(s) ?
 - a. 0-4 years
 - b. 5-9 years
 - c. 10-14 years
 - d. 15-19 years
 - e. 20 years or more
7. What discipline are you primarily trained in?
8. What discipline(s) do you instruct in?
9. Has any of your work been published? (journals, books, etc.)
10. How many different times has your work been published? (alone or in collaboration with others)
11. In your evaluation of student papers, how important is APA style usage in comparison to content?
 - a. More important
 - b. Equally important
 - c. A little less important
 - d. Not important at all
12. In your grading process, how much would consistently incorrect formatting affect a content-rich paper's grade?
 - a. Very much
 - b. Some
 - c. Not very much
 - d. Not at all

13. Have you been evaluating consistently to the APA format in accordance to the criteria set in the Essay and End of Module Paper Format and Evaluation Guide?
- a. Consistent
 - b. Somewhat consistent
 - c. Not very consistent
 - d. Not at all
14. How satisfied are you with the APA citation format?
- a. Very satisfied
 - b. Mostly satisfied
 - c. Not very satisfied
 - d. Not at all satisfied

General comments:

Foundational Emergence of the Systems Approach

By

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Work Number: (000) 000-0000 Home Number: (000) 000-0000

Module Four, Orgd 435

For

Dr. Anthony Grady

February 21, 2001

Outline

Thesis statement: This paper discusses communication networks, single individual to the universal whole, situational factors and effective leadership.

- I. Introduction
- II. Communication Networks
- III. Single Individual to the Universal Whole
 - A. Ideology of the subsystems theory
 - B. One Body, Many Members
 - C. Holism vs. Elementarism
- IV. Situational Factors
 - A. Organizational Context of Behavior
 - B. hygiene factors
 - C. Motivators
- V. Effective Leadership
 - A. Discovery Process
 - B. Leading Others to Lead Themselves
- VI. Conclusion
- VII. Work Cited

The emerging view of systems management is perceived to be a new theory as it relates to organizational change. Kast and Rosenzweig (1985) as cited in Greeno (1997) assert that “the whole is not just the sum of the parts, but the system itself can be explained only as a totality” (p. 24). Traditional management theory places strong emphasis on the total system as the focal point of control. It views subsystems interdependently, combining the parts together to make a whole (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1985).

Evidence has shown that closer and more intimate relationships are formed among workers within smaller organizations. Their closeness to one another on a daily basis makes this analysis feasible, and encourages the formation of informal communication networks in the workplace. Larger organizations have come to recognize this need, yet, they realize that operating on the same scale as smaller organizations is impossible. To effectuate this process, they have developed such formal communication networks as the organizational chart. This approach was intended to ensure that a direct and steady flow of communication exists in the workplace, thereby increasing productivity among workers (Adler & Elmhorst). It would also allow larger organizations to maintain structure and retain internal control systematically.

Greeno (1997) and his colleagues believe their theory of the systems approach to be the foundational emergence of the 1990s. God, in his omniscience, foresaw the necessity for the systems theory before the ideology of systems theories were ever

realized or adopted. The first strategy was implemented using galaxial, geophysical, and molecular subsystems to formulate the universe. Next, God interconnected the digestive, circulatory, respiratory, nervous and other subsystems to formulate the human body (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1985). Each subsystem is interdependent within itself. Each also performs a different function, yet serves as an integral component to the overall function of the other.

In the State of the Union Address (January 27, 2000), President William J. Clinton commented on the scientific theory that suggests all humanity is genetically 99.9% the same. President Clinton lauded this theory and conveyed to the audience that in the next 10 years there will be no majority in the State of California; in 50 years there will be no majority in America. He concluded by saying, most of you may not agree with this analogy, but challenged the nation to realize America's strength is undergirded by the diversity of racial, ethnic, and religious groups that exist within this country.

President Clinton's analogy is in perfect agreement with how God distinguishes the

individual in the Bible. He refers to the individual as members or parts of a larger whole. The Bible continues to illustrate that no one is important within themselves. Romans 12:4 teaches, "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Felder, p. 1643). Everyone has certain gifts and talents to fulfill a specific purpose that most will not likely be

envisioned completely or understood clearly. It would be ideal if God would allow the individual to use these gifts and talents for personal gain. The reality is that the gifts are not intended for personal use but for the benefit of others. It is of utmost importance to recognize the significance of the systems approach and how the interconnectedness of a single individual is fitly joined to the universal whole (Greeno, 1997).

Greeno (1997) establishes similar distinctive traits by distinguishing holism (physical, biological or social) as a composition of interrelated subsystems and elementarism which views the whole as the sum of its individual parts. An example of this would be that employees are generally hired based on skill level and/or experience. It would be impossible for an employee to send only the part of the body required to perform the duties for which he or she was hired. "It is the 'whole' person who comes to work, and with them they bring feelings, attitudes, and emotion that cultivate the environment in the workplace" (Schein, 1980, p. 32).

What might typically work for one employee may have an adverse effect on another. What drives one employee to be productive may be intimidating or discouraging to another. Schein (1980) identified several misconceptions employers have in attempting to read their employees. It boggles the mind to offer incentives as motivators that retrospectively trigger a negative response. The organization is then forced to diagnose the situation and attempt to develop ways to fix it. The earlier a diagnosis is made, the sooner it can be cured. Schein (1980) resolves

“ One of the major situational factors that determine patterns of motivation the organizational context of behavior. How the organizations we work belong to treat us, the kinds of norms and values that operate in them, the kinds of authority and power exercised, all will powerfully affect our actions and the kinds of motives from which we act.” (p. 44

Most often, an employer will focus more on an individual's level of skill and qualifications than needs, attitude, and perception of the organization. The ability to analyze one's behavior requires a level of skill that most managers usually do not have. This makes it more difficult to match the right person with the right job. Anyone can make themselves look good on paper. Matching the wrong person with the wrong job cultivates a culture that is not conducive to achieving organizational goals and objectives. The process can be tenuous and inevitably creates a tremendous burden for the organization.

Herzberg, as cited in Hershey, Blanchard and Johnson (1996), makes the assertion that “people have two categories of needs - hygiene factors and motivators.” He explains that hygiene factors are monitored by the organization's internal climate. If employees are made to feel they are an asset to the organization, they are more likely to show positive signs of attaining job satisfaction. This will encourage increased productivity and will ultimately lead to longevity with the organization. On the contrary, action deemed unfavorable by an employee will trigger a negative response. The impact reflects a noticeable change in attitude and generate a constant decline in work performance. In this instance, there is a dire need to develop strong and influential motivators.

Motivators involve "feelings of achievement, professional growth, and recognition" (Herzberg, 1959). They are geared more toward rewarding employees for positive performance and increased productivity. Motivators offer the necessary ingredients to produce well-rounded workers and effective leaders. An employee who is motivated welcomes the challenges associated with his or her new growth and development. In turn, they will embrace the organizational mission and diligently seek to make it their own.

According to Manz and Sims (1989) as cited in Pierce and Newstrom (1996), "many organizations do not seem to understand how to go about bringing out the wealth of talent that each employee possesses" (page 195). It is critical that managers be as precise as possible when matching the right person to the right job. An underqualified employee will soon become overwhelmed in his or her position, whereas boredom will immediately set in on the overqualified employee. The assurance of job dissatisfaction and a high turnover ratio is eminent. An organization which can identify the wealth of talent and ability of its employees is representative of a good leader.

According to Manz and Sims (1989), a good leader is one who can lead others to lead themselves. They must be willing to project a positive image for the employee to follow. Teaching others is not an easy task. It takes time. It is a process. It may require a needs assessment in an effort to discover skills that went unnoticed during the initial hiring stage. This may cause the organization to deviate from its normal processes during the development phase. If an employee does not currently possess a diversity of skills, the organization should strongly encourage professional development of their employees. Professional development prepares the

employee for cross training and opens a pathway for perpetual growth of the individual and the organization.

Hygiene, maintenance, and motivators are situational factors that set the stage for the environmental climate in the workplace. These factors should not be taken lightly. As managers become more aware of the need and better understand the impact of how subsystems interact and affect each other, they will make better decisions. A display of interest and concern for the overall well-being of the employee is a step in the right direction. Further, the organization will gain the respect of the employee and ensure the organizational mission is protected and achieved.

Self-reliance and self-sufficiency are essential elements that represent an individual's overall growth and development. "Give people a fish, and they will be fed for a day; teach them to fish, and they will be fed for a lifetime" (Manz & Sims, 1989). An organization that invests in its employees can expect to receive a high return on their investment.

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