

DELIGHTFUL, DISCIPLINED DESCRIPTION

A TEACHING UNIT

by

Renita Kathleen Pohl Ubel

B.S., Kansas State University, 1967

9589

---

A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas

1972

Approved by:

Jim Scheer

Major Professor

LD  
2668  
R4  
1972  
u2  
c.2

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITION OF TERMS USED . . . . .	1
The Problem . . . . .	1
Statement of the problem . . . . .	1
Importance of the study . . . . .	1
Definitions of Terms Used . . . . .	2
Description . . . . .	2
Teaching unit . . . . .	2
Intermediate grades . . . . .	2
Organization of Remainder of Report . . . . .	2
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE . . . . .	3
Characteristics of the Intermediate Grade Writer . . . . .	3
Writing Environment . . . . .	4
Frequency of Writing . . . . .	7
Sequence of Writing Skills . . . . .	9
Grammar . . . . .	10
Teaching Strategies . . . . .	12
Evaluation . . . . .	14
Summary . . . . .	16
III. "DELIGHTFUL, DISCIPLINED DESCRIPTION" A TEACHING UNIT . . . . .	18
IV. RESEARCH PROCEDURES AND RESULTS . . . . .	30
Presentation of the Unit . . . . .	30

CHAPTER	PAGE
The class . . . . .	30
The teacher . . . . .	30
The unit . . . . .	30
Evaluation of Written Samples . . . . .	31
Preparation of samples for evaluation . . . . .	31
Ratings by readers . . . . .	31
Frequency counts . . . . .	32
Results . . . . .	33
Readers' ratings . . . . .	33
Frequency counts . . . . .	35
Interpretation of Results . . . . .	36
Evaluative Comments on the Study . . . . .	37
Unit . . . . .	37
Lessons . . . . .	37
Readers . . . . .	38
Summary . . . . .	39
FOOTNOTES . . . . .	40
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	45

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
I. Mean of Readers' Ratings for Girls, Boys, and Total Class . . . . .	33
II. Mean Ratings of Individual Quality Criteria and Percentage Gains . . . . .	34
III. Mean Number of Words Per Sentence . . . . .	35
IV. Mean Number of Complete, Incomplete, and Run-on Sentences Per Paragraph . . . . .	35

## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

The following comments resulted from a brief "teachers' lounge encounter session" recently.

"I think writing is important but I don't do enough with it. I don't follow it up. There needs to be some kind of sequential study or method of improving."

"Writing should be emphasized more as a communication skill."

"We need to do MORE writing--EARLIER."

"Writing should be a building process."

These teachers, all teaching in the intermediate grades, were discussing the present state of written composition in the Wamego Elementary School. Each had his own ideas and pet theories but no one had THE answer. Even in the most sophisticated circles there is little agreement as to the best way of improving student writing (1).

#### I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purposes of this study are: (a) to review selected aspects of written composition; (b) to outline a sequential teaching unit on the descriptive paragraph; (c) to formulate appropriate research procedures for determining some relationships between the quality of written composition and the types of language used.

Importance of the study. Written composition is important to persons at all ages and in all walks of life. Fluent writing is

an asset that will serve a person well and increase in value with use.

During the past few years, businessmen, government officials, college professors, and others who employ or teach the products of the public schools have complained about the inability of young people to express themselves clearly and eloquently (2).

Teachers readily admit they are failing and laboring in vain; they know they aren't getting the results they should (3). We are living in an age in which the written word is of primary importance in the conduct of education, business, and cultural affairs; therefore, it is imperative that teachers know how to write and know how to teach others to write (4).

## II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Description. The use of concrete words, selecting detail to support a single impression, and accurate use of language (5).

Teaching unit. A series of specified lessons related to a certain topic.

Intermediate grades. The fourth, fifth, and sixth grades.

## III. ORGANIZATION OF REMAINDER OF REPORT

Chapter II enumerates much of the current thinking about written composition. Current trends can be studied and applied to the "real world". Chapter III consists of a teaching unit on the descriptive paragraph. The last chapter of this report is devoted to the research procedure, presentation, and discussion of results.