

EVALUATING INFORMATION STRUCTURE  
IN THE INTRODUCTORY EXPOSITORY  
PARAGRAPHS OF FOUR  
BASIC WRITERS

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Since the 1960s, English departments in American colleges and universities have faced a swelling population of basic writing students. Composition teachers may readily identify basic writers by their writing performance--marked underdevelopment of content and a proliferation of surface errors (the latter being outside the scope of this study). Thomas Wheeler briefly summarized the response of the academic community to this influx: "Finding entering freshman unable to write clearly and coherently, colleges teach grammar and development of thought in a salvage operation called Remedial Writing" (9). Research about basic writing and basic writers reflects a number of issues that plague public education and that reveal the complexities of the writing process. I shall review the research about basic writers that attempts to explain the marked underdevelopment and that proposes pedagogical solutions.

I propose that one branch of linguistics, known as discourse or text linguistics, may add to current knowledge about the limited syntactic fluency and the marked underdevelopment of content exhibited by basic writers. Two

criteria guided my choice of methods. First, the method must be one that deals with an existing text as it is and that examines textual features and information structure. Second, the terminology must be understandable to a nonlinguist, i.e., a composition teacher, with few modifications. The method of Liisa Lautamatti, who is known for her work in applied linguistics at the University of Jyvaskyla, Finland, meets both requirements. In her influential study, "Observations on the Development of the Topic in Simplified Discourse," Lautamatti analyzes the information structure of a professionally written introductory expository passage, and she compares the information structure of the original with four revisions that were made for second language learners of English. The key concept in her analysis is the topical subject, which is the lexical item in a sentence that relates to the discourse topic. Lautamatti provides detailed information about the way that professional writers and English teachers use topical subjects or, in other words, the way that fluent writers use topical subjects. I intend to show that basic writers use topical subjects differently. (I am indebted to Stephen Witte, who first introduced Lautamatti's work to composition teachers in the United States in his article, "Topical Structure and Revision: An Exploratory Study," CCC, October 1983.)

Using Lautamatti's methodology, I analyzed the introductory expository paragraphs of four basic writers.



The sample paragraphs came from essays these students wrote while they were enrolled in the one-semester basic writing course at Oklahoma State University from Fall 1987 through Summer 1989. Two of the participants were eighteen-year-old college freshman, male and female, and two were older, returning students, male and female. Each student submitted five essays. I analyzed the first paragraph of each student's shortest, middle-length, and longest papers.

From using Lautamatti's method, I discovered how these basic writers create information structure in the introductory paragraphs of their expository essays. They not only have difficulty choosing topical subjects but they also lack knowledge about where to place them. The basic writers prefer patterns of development that are less skillful versions of those used by the professional writers and English teachers. These patterns reflect, I believe, their inexperience with the written word and directly contribute to their limited fluency.

To conclude this study, I have related my results to prior research about the limited fluency of basic writers.

In view of my research and classroom experience, I have also made recommendations for classroom instruction.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Many basic writing students who endured high school education without an interest in anything considered academic, especially reading and writing, find themselves ill-prepared for college. Composition teachers must not only deal with excessive surface errors but also with the marked underdevelopment of students' papers. The 1977 publication of Mina Shaughnessy's classic text, Errors and Expectations, spurred teachers and researchers to describe basic writers from several perspectives. Among these is a need to locate the causes for the poor writing performance of these students, particularly limited fluency. English teachers and researchers rarely define limited fluency in specific terms. Limited fluency is a broad, catch-all term that encompasses prose that lacks, in more than one way, direction, syntactic maturity, and coherence. Research about basic writers may generally locate the sources of their problems in the failures of public education, particularly secondary education, and in the complex interrelationship between reading and writing, or it may borrow from psychology to locate the sources of limited fluency in evidence of poor self-esteem and limited

reasoning abilities. The limited fluency of basic writers not only reflects the marked underdevelopment of their writing but also their syntactic difficulties. Pedagogical solutions concern the students' needs to experience success in writing and to become familiar with the writing requirements of the academic community.

#### Secondary Education and the Two Rs

Regardless of the cause, basic writers have not been successful in the public schools in learning to write; they therefore lack the information and the skills necessary to write adequately. Some researchers focus on the educational system and the problems that are caused both by accepted teaching practices and by anti-academic social attitudes. From his experiences as a teacher of basic writers in the New York City college system, Wheeler is convinced that many students are poorly prepared for college writing because of inappropriate teaching practices. He blames the over-emphasis on objectivity, found in standardized or multiple choice tests, for many writing problems:

A student who hasn't had to write in school, who has suffered objective education or just neglect, must first discover, however unconsciously, an identity. He must act on that identity through language . . . . The student may not be aware that his own mind is the source of expression--in school he has stopped using it. To learn to

write, students have to recover from the fear of the written word that education has left them with. (48)

In condemning the overuse of objectivity both in national standardized tests and by classroom teachers in the public schools, Wheeler does not address the problems created by society at large. Clifton Fadiman and James Howard more broadly locate the causes of reading and writing problems in the "family and community, the peer group, the media, the available modes, and the culture in general" (23). Society tends to be anti-academic. While these observations are undeniably true, they do little to assist the classroom teacher or to define the complexities of the problem.

Within the context of writing and reading, two researchers have observed the skills of basic writers in general. Shaughnessy, observing that basic writers do not know how writers behave (Errors 79), explains that they usually perceive "writing as a single act, a gamble with words, rather than a deliberate process whereby meaning is crafted, stage by stage" (81). Even Shaughnessy's simplified version of the writing process--"getting the thought," "getting the thought down," and "readying the statement for other eyes" (81-82)--is unknown to these students.

Along with writing failure, basic writers frequently have parallel problems with other skills such as reading and comprehension. Andrea Lunsford, in "What We Know--and Don't

Know--About Remedial Writing," outlines what she learned about basic writers from a pilot program in remedial English at Ohio State University. Of the ninety-two students selected for Lunsford's study, the average reading rate on the McGraw-Hill Basic Skills Series was 162.4 words per minute (48). This average is significant because the test guidelines suggest that students reading at below 200 words per minute will probably have comprehension problems. In analyzing the basic writing program at Ohio State, Lunsford found specifically that all the language disabilities she studied were interrelated: poor reading comprehension is related to a low level of syntactic maturity, which is, in turn, related to a delay in developing abstract cognitive power ("Remedial Writing" 51). In particular, this combination of language disabilities creates the conditions for nonfluency in complex writing tasks. Certainly many factors affect basic writers' essays, and it is important to remember that the research findings about basic writers reveal a network of interrelated causes.

#### Self-Esteem and Reasoning Abilities

To further identify basic writers as a special group of students, a number of researchers have borrowed from the field of psychology. Studies show that poor self-images frequently characterize basic writers. For example, Marie Jean Lederman analyzed the results of an essay that asked students to write about what form of life they would like to

come back as if they were reborn tomorrow. She found that basic writing students most often chose to come back as something smaller and less powerful than a human being (685) and that these students concentrated for the most part on what they want to "escape from" (687). They seem to suffer from feelings of powerlessness, a trait that may appear in their lack of control over the written form even when they are fluent orally.

Often researchers who borrow from psychology to investigate the problems of basic writers use the concepts of cognitive development. In "Cognitive Development and the Basic Writer," Lunsford deduces from the "strategies, processes and products" of basic writers "that they have not attained that level of cognitive development which would allow them to form abstractions or conceptions" or "to practice analysis and synthesis" (257). She relates the results of her work with basic writers to the cognitive theories of Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky who, in Thought and Language, identifies three phases of concept formation: the "syncretic" stage (59-60), the "thinking-in-complexes" stage (61), and the "true-concept formation" stage (79). Although basic writers function adequately in analyzing problems at the everyday level, they seem to be unaware of what processes they are using and seem to be unable to infer from their own experiences because they are operating at Vygotsky's second level of concept formation. To explain the concept of cognitive development, Lunsford

also uses Jean Piaget's four stages of mental development. She relates these four stages--sensori-motor, pre-operation, concrete operations, and formal operations--to the problems of basic writers: "As the [average] child moves through the stages of cognitive development, he goes through what Piaget calls the process of 'de-centering'" ("Cognitive Development" 259); that is, the child grows from learning at a sensory, concrete, and egocentric level to an imaginative, abstract, and detached level. From the content of basic writers' essays, it is reasonable to conclude that they have not "de-centered" as much as more capable writers. Thus, teachers must face the effects of this inability to analyze and synthesize in students' writing.

In another article, Lunsford presents the results of analyzing a sample of five-hundred entrance essays for clues to the students' levels of cognitive development. Basic writers showed marked differences from skilled writers in attitudes and approaches to the five examination topics ("Content" 279), and they tended to merge with the topic at a very personal level. Because of her sample, Lunsford states that basic writers "seem to represent the egocentric stage of cognitive development and the conventional stage of moral development, to conceptualize and generalize with great difficulty, and, most of all, to lack confidence" ("Content" 284).

Similarly, Linda Flower describes writing content produced by writers at an egocentric stage of cognitive

development as "Writer-Based" prose, in which the writer is writing to himself or herself:

The symptoms can range from a mere missing referent or an underdeveloped idea to an unfocused and apparently pointless discussion. The symptoms are diverse but the source can often be traced to the writer's underlying strategy for composing and to his or her failure to transform private thought into public, reader-based expression. (268-69)

Flower approaches the relationship between cognitive development and writing differently from Lunsford because she relates Writer-Based prose to Vygotsky's and Piaget's "complexes of egocentric speech" (171). Thus, in analyzing examples of Writer-Based and Reader-Based prose, she identifies three characteristics of Writer-Based prose that easily fit an egocentric stage of cognitive development: a "narrative framework," "a grammatical focus on the writers' thoughts and actions rather than issues," and an "idea structure" that "simply copies the structure of the perceived information" (276-77). Her analysis specifically identifies problems with focus and point-of-view inherent, among others, in the writing of basic writers. While she further states that Writer-Based prose is a logical, not random, attempt by the writer to deal with the writing situation, Flower seems to have identified a prose style more common to freshmen rather than basic writers. Many



freshman fit an egocentric stage of development in their approach to writing. It is the egocentric stage plus limited fluency that frequently distinguishes the basic writer. Flower does suggest that a Writer-Based prose style may be responsible for the absent psychological subject in the prose of basic writers (283).

### Syntax

While Shaughnessy was the first to focus on the syntactic problems of basic writers, other researchers have also examined these difficulties. The syntactic problems of basic writers, Valerie Krishna points out, escape "neat categories and defy analysis" (43); that is, the syntactic errors of basic writers are quite different from proofreading errors. However, many of the sentences of basic writers are really classifiable by what she terms "a weak structural core" or "habitual wasting of the subject-verb position" (45). Students need to learn to put the logical subject of the sentence in the position of the grammatical subject. David Carkeet approaches these syntactic problems differently and identifies two kinds of syntactic errors: faults in retention of syntactic patterns from one sentence to the next (682) and blends of two different structures within the same sentence (685). Regardless of how we define syntactic problems, strengthening the subject-verb position is an essential revision tool.

## Writing Instruction

Regardless of the sources of the basic writers' problems, composition teachers must not only simplify writing instruction in the basic writing classroom but also make that instruction relevant to the writing that these students will do in college. To maintain this relevancy, David Schwalm believes that expository assignments are best. He has worked with writing assignments that have varying degrees of difficulty and has concluded that descriptive and narrative writing demand less linguistically than expository writing. His research shows that many skills developed from writing descriptions and narratives do not transfer to exposition. As a result, he has largely abandoned personal experience writing.

Introducing rhetoric, used very loosely to mean a sense of occasion and audience, in prewriting activities is another way for basic writing instruction to maintain the connection between activities in the basic writing classroom and students' future writing needs in college. Dean Baldwin regularly uses a prewriting sheet to introduce elementary rhetoric to basic writers. He requires that students respond to these questions: "What is the occasion for this paragraph? Who is the audience for this paragraph? What exactly are you trying to accomplish in this paragraph?" (393). Through this exercise, Baldwin is trying to expand the writers' perceptions beyond the generic audience or, at the other extreme, themselves.

Much remains to be learned about the writing process, basic writing, and remedial writing programs. The multidisciplinary nature of composition will continue to complicate research in this field. The sources of limited fluency have been fairly well documented, except for research using discourse linguistics. Commenting about composition research, Richard Lloyd-Jones boldly challenges basic writing teachers:

For a seriously disabled user of the language . . . errors are a symptom of problems, and to suppress the symptoms without discovering the underlying problems is to trifle with learning. Reading the causes is the challenge to the competent teacher. (219)

This present study is one attempt to rise to this research challenge. Instead of assuming what limited fluency is, I am analyzing the information structure of the introductory paragraphs of four basic writers to define limited fluency in terms of discourse linguistics.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Participants

The participants were selected from more than 100 students who enrolled in and completed the single-semester basic writing course offered by the English Department at Oklahoma State University from Fall, 1987, through Summer, 1989. The four participants in this study were chosen on the basis of age, sex, and limited writing fluency. Two of the participants were eighteen-year-old college freshmen: Jeff (male) and Lesley (female). Two of the participants were much older, returning students: Ray (male) and Pat (female). All four students wrote a total of five papers each. Three of the students, Jeff, Lesley, and Ray wrote papers ranging from 150 to 450 words, each of which was written and revised during a three-week period. Only Pat's papers, which ranged from 400 to 1500 words, fell outside this range. However, in spite of the length of the papers themselves, the introductory paragraphs that she wrote resemble those of the other student writers. No other information was collected about the participants.

In the analyses that follow, I have not edited grammar, spelling, or punctuation except for the addition of closing

periods because this study focuses on sentences and on their grouping into paragraphs. I have also indicated my rationale for one paragraphing change.

### Writing Assignments

Although the term essays was not included in the student syllabus, the writing assignments themselves represent five essay assignments, as shown in Table I.

TABLE I  
WRITING ASSIGNMENTS FOR ENGLISH 0123

Assignment	Description
1	Write at least five or six paragraphs warning someone about something that is dangerous or unwise.
2	Choose a restaurant or fast food place and evaluate it.
3	Describe an object or group of objects that has special value for you and explain what value it has and why it has that value.
4	Explain to someone how to do something or how something is done.
5	Select an item or event which you think has been given too much publicity or the wrong kind of publicity recently. Describe briefly the item or event. Explain the way that it has been given publicity and why it has been so treated. Then explain why you think the publicity was too great or why you think it was the wrong kind of publicity.

The students were required to submit five papers after they had completed appropriate worksheets and several

drafts. Of the four students, Jeff, the eighteen-year-old male, wrote the shortest first paper, approximately 150 words. His papers continued to increase in length from the first to the last. For the last paper, he wrote approximately 450 words. None of the other students in this study made this kind of progress. I shall analyze the information structure of three introductory paragraphs from Jeff's shortest, middle-length, and longest papers in the sample analysis at the end of this chapter.

## Method

### Original Method

In her article entitled "Observations on the Development of the Topic in Simplified Discourse," Liisa Lautamatti explains her method for evaluating the information structure of expository paragraphs. She uses four important terms: discourse topic, topical subject, grammatical subject, and subtopic. The discourse topic is the subject of an entire passage, chapter, or paper. The topical subject is a lexical item--usually a noun, pronoun, or noun phrase--related to the discourse topic. The term grammatical subject is my choice of terms (Lautamatti uses mood subject), but it always indicates the grammatical subject of an independent clause. The topical subject acquires a subtopic number during the analysis of a particular passage; the subtopic number serves to group all of the synonyms of a particular topical subject.

Lautamatti begins with an analysis of two paragraphs from Language and Community by Anne and Peter Doughty. These paragraphs represent the core of Lautamatti's study, and she justifies her selection: all of the "sentences contain a noun in the subject position representing the discourse topic" (79). This feature particularly interests me because the discourse topic coincides with the grammatical subject of the sentence or dependent clause. I am also interested in this selection because the passage is introductory, expository, and professional. In her three-part method, Lautamatti identifies the topical subjects in a paragraph sequence, describes the topical depth and number of subtopics, and analyzes the relationships of three sentence elements: the initial sentence element (ISE), the mood subject (really the grammatical subject), and the topical subject. In this passage from Language and Community, Lautamatti identifies the topical subjects, lexical items that directly relate to the discourse topic, which is that "Language is learnt from others" (Doughty and Doughty 13):

[1] When a human infant is born into any language community in any part of the world, it has two things in common with every other infant, provided neither of them has been damaged in any way either before or during birth. [2] Firstly, and most obviously, new born children are completely helpless. [3] Apart from a powerful capacity to draw attention to their helplessness by using sound there is nothing the new born child can do to ensure his own survival. [4] Without care from some other human being or beings, be it a other, grandmother, sister, nurse, or human group, a child is very unlikely to survive. [5] This helplessness of human infants is in marked

contrast with the capacity of many new born animals to get to their feet within minutes of birth and run with the herd within a few hours. [6] Although young animals are certainly at risk, sometimes for weeks or even months after birth, compared with the human infant they very quickly develop the capacity to fend for themselves. [7] It would seem that this long period of vulnerability is the price that the human species has to pay for the very long learning period which fits man for survival as a species.

[8] It is during this very long period in which the human infant is totally dependent on others that it reveals the second feature which it shares with all other undamaged human infants, a capacity to learn language. [9] For this reason, biologists now suggest that language is 'species specific' to the human race, that is to say, they consider the human infant to be genetically programmed in such a way that it can acquire language. [10] This suggestion implies that just as human beings are designed to see three-dimensionally and in colour, and just as they are designed to stand upright rather than to move on all fours, so they are designed to learn and use language as part of their normal development as well-formed human beings. (Lautamatti 78)

Because her reason for selecting topical subjects is to examine the context of the sentence (77), she assigns to synonyms the same subtopic number. The topical subject is directly related to similar terms used by other researchers, such as "local topic" (Garrod and Sanford 274) and "sentence topic" (Witte 318). However, I believe that the term topical subject expresses more explicitly the relationship of subtopics to discourse topics. The topical subject is the basis for two more discourse features, topical depth and subtopic number, that appear in Table II. Identical subtopic numbers clearly indicate which topical subjects are synonymous. The topical depth describes the number of the different subtopics in one series of a passage. Frequently,



the topical depth and subtopic number coincide. The only variation occurs for Sentence 9, in which the topical depth is two and the subtopic number is five. (I have changed Lautamatti's placement of topical depth in Table II, placing it beside the subtopic number to more clearly present their relationship.)

TABLE II  
TOPICAL DEPTH AND NUMBER OF SUBTOPICS IN THE PASSAGE  
FROM LANGUAGE AND COMMUNITY  
(Lautamatti 87)

Sentence No.	Topical Subject	Topical Depth	Subtopic No.
1	a human infant	1	1
2	new born children	1	1
3	a child	1	1
4	the new born child --	1	1
5	this helplessness --	2	2
6	young animals --	3	3
7	this long period of vulnerability	4	4
8	it --	1	1
9	learning language	2	5
10	human beings	1	1

Lautamatti also groups subtopics into types of progressions. Sentences 1 through 4 represent a parallel progression, where the subtopic is alike from sentence to sentence. Sentences 4, 5, 6, and 7 represent a sequential progression, where the subtopic departs from the first. The entire passage is an extended progression, combining both parallel and sequential progressions.

Lautamatti further analyzes the relationship between topical subject and syntax to show how the placement of the topical subject varies in professional writing. She analyzes the coincidence or separation of the ISE, the mood subject, and the topical subject. The ISE is whatever lexical item or group of words begins the sentence, excluding articles and adjectives. The mood subject is the grammatical subject of an independent clause (I am using the familiar term grammatical subject). The topical subject is a lexical item related to the discourse topic. The five possible combinations of the three sentence elements appear in Table III (based on Lautamatti, pp. 79-81, passim). In discussing these examples from the Doughty and Doughty text, Lautamatti observes that the grammatical subject may consist of either topical or nontopical material (81). She further observes that, if the topical subject does not appear in the grammatical subject, it will usually appear in a subclause that precedes or follows the main clause (82). The topical subjects are underlined in Table III, and all the examples are from the passage by Doughty and Doughty. This analysis of sentence or syntax types describes additional aspects of the information structure of a particular passage or paragraph.

In her final analysis, Lautamatti compares the topical progressions and syntactic features of four simplified versions with the original by Doughty and Doughty. These simplified versions represent the efforts of experienced

TABLE III  
LAUTAMATTI'S FIVE COMBINATIONS OF SYNTACTIC FEATURES

Type	Description
1	ISE = grammatical subject = topical subject Ex. <u>This helplessness of human infants</u> is in marked contrast . . . . (Sentence 5)
2	ISE $\neq$ grammatical subject = topical subject Ex. Without care from some other human being or beings . . . a <u>child</u> is very unlikely to survive. (Sentence 4)
3	ISE = grammatical subject $\neq$ topical subject Ex. This suggestion implies that just as <u>human beings</u> are designed . . . so <u>they</u> are designed . . . . (Sentence 10)
4	ISE = topical subject $\neq$ grammatical subject Ex. Although <u>young animals</u> are at risk . . . they very quickly develop . . . . (Sentence 6)
5	ISE $\neq$ grammatical subject $\neq$ topical subject Ex. For this reason, biologists now suggest that <u>language</u> is . . . . (Sentence 9)

language teachers and applied linguists to make the original more readable to second language students of English.

Several changes occur in the revised texts. The number of topical subjects in the original is five, while the revised texts more often have three or four. Parallel progressions occur more frequently than sequential in the original and in the revised texts, but all remain extended progressions.

The percentage of sentence types also changes; the number of

Type 1 sentences increases by forty percent. From her study, I have concluded that the two most important features in an expository paragraph are the number of subtopics and their placement within the sentence.

### Revised Method

However, Lautamatti analyzes the writing of professionals even in the simplified versions, and I have adapted her method to the paragraphs of basic writers. The most important decision that I had to make in applying Lautamatti's method for analyzing information structure was which paragraphs to choose from the student papers. I decided to analyze only the introductory paragraph because Lautamatti analyzes only an introductory passage and also because the first paragraph establishes the discourse subject and focus of the entire paper. I applied Lautamatti's three-part method: identifying the topical subjects in the student paragraphs, describing the topical depth and number of subtopics, and analyzing the relationships of three syntactic features--the initial sentence element (ISE), the grammatical subject, and the topical subject. Lautamatti groups synonyms at the same subtopic level, and I continued that practice. Using the topical subject, she also separates topical depth and subtopic number. For this study, I combined topical depth and subtopic number (TD/SN) because they consistently coincided. However, I did encounter several unforeseen

problems in applying Lautamatti's method. Some of the students wrote sentences either in the imperative mood or as questions. I analyzed sentences written in the imperative mood as if the understood you were present, and I analyzed questions after I converted them to declarative statements.

### Sample Analysis

Because Jeff's papers (Appendix A) became longer as the term progressed, I shall focus my analysis of the information structure on three introductory paragraphs from assignments 1, 3, and 5. For his first paper, Jeff responded to the assignment to warn someone about something by focusing on the subject of the dangers of swimming. In a broad sense, this subject is also the discourse subject although Jeff does not write a title or a thesis statement that more clearly identifies that discourse topic. He wrote a three-sentence introductory paragraph:

[1] Swimming is one of the funnest things a person can do but it is also one of the most dangerous. [2] A person swimming alone has more of a chance of drowning than others. [3] A number of things could happen if a person swims alone.

I found that determining the topical subjects in a paragraph without a title (the announcement of some type of a discourse topic) challenging, almost as challenging as determining inferred topical subjects. I found that vocal intonation worked when other methods for determining the

topical subject failed. The topical depth and number of subtopics appears in Table IV.

TABLE IV  
TOPICAL DEPTH AND SUBTOPIC NUMBER IN THE FIRST  
PARAGRAPH OF JEFF'S SHORTEST PAPER

Sentence No.	Topical Subject	TD/SN
1	swimming --	1
2	person --	2
3	things	3

The coincidence of the topical depth and the number of subtopics creates a three-level sequential progression. In addition, Jeff places the first two topical subjects in Type 1 sentences (ISE, grammatical subject, and topical subject coincide) and the third in a Type 3 (ISE and grammatical subject coincide but are separate from the topical subject).

The discourse topic for assignment 3 is clearly stated in the title: "The Values of My Car." Here, Jeff also wrote a three-sentence introductory paragraph.

[1] I have a 1977 Cutlass Supreme. [2] It really has alot of value to me. [3] People may think since it's an older car that they can trash it but they learn that I like to keep it clean.

From the topical depth and number of subtopics, Jeff creates a parallel progression, as seen in Table V.

TABLE V  
TOPICAL DEPTH AND SUBTOPIC NUMBER IN THE FIRST PARAGRAPH OF  
JEFF'S MIDDLE-LENGTH PAPER

Sentence No.	Topical Subject	TD/SN
1	a 1977 Cutlass Supreme	1
2	it	1
3	it's	1

While the progression remains at one level, Jeff accidentally varies the placement of the topical subject by locating it either at the end of a sentence or in a subordinate clause. He includes one Type 1 sentence (ISE, grammatical subject, and topical subject coincide [Sentence 2]) and two Type 3 sentences (ISE and grammatical subject coincide but not with the topical subject [Sentences 1 and 3]).

For his longest paper, Jeff expands to a five-sentence introductory paragraph about a group of teenage boys who are known as the "Sub Crew":

[1] The Sub Crew is a group of guys who support Edmond sports and put spirit into the crowds. [2] We participated in all the school pep assemblies. [3] We would run on the field or courts during halftime and make pyramids and stuff

like that. [4] The coaches said we were like the twelfth man and we really made a difference at the games. [5] We drank and had a good time but we never had an accident do to the drinking.

Here, Jeff uses only one subtopic, creating a parallel progression with four Type 1 sentences (ISE, grammatical subject, and topical subject all coincide) interrupted by a Type 3 (ISE and grammatical subject coincide but not with the topical subject) in Sentence 4.

#### Discussion

A summary of the results of this analysis of the information structure of the three introductory paragraphs in order from shortest to longest papers appears in Table VI. This table provides some information about how Jeff creates information structure.

TABLE VI

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION STRUCTURE BY ASSIGNMENT  
FOR THREE OF JEFF'S INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPHS

Essay	TD/SN	Number of Sentences	Frequency of Syntax Types
1	3	3	2(Type 1), 1(3)
3	1	3	1(1), 2(3),
5	1	5	4(1), 1(3)



Of the five sentence types that Lautamatti identifies, Jeff uses only two: Type 1 (in which the ISE, grammatical subject, and topical subject coincide) and Type 3 (in which the ISE coincides with the grammatical subject but not with the topical subject). From the eleven sentences that I analyzed, Jeff favors Type 1 for 64 percent of the sentences that he writes and Type 3 for 36 percent. Because Jeff favors the parallel progression in addition to the Type 1 sentence, he appears to be imitating, in a very limited way, the English teachers in Lautamatti's study, who revised the original to contain more parallel progressions and Type 1 sentences. But there are also some significant differences. Lautamatti's study shows that all of the sentence types were still being used and that these revisions were extended progressions. Jeff has a limited knowledge of how to form sentences, and he does not know how to use sentence structure to emphasize one topical subject or to introduce new ones in the same paragraph. I further discuss Jeff's writing in Chapters IV and V.

## CHAPTER IV

### CASE STUDIES AND DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

Using the method that I introduced in Chapter III, I analyzed the opening paragraphs of the shortest, middle-length, and longest papers for Lesley, Ray, and Pat (Appendices B, C, and D, respectively). Lesley wrote her longest paper for the first assignment, approximately 320 words. During the remainder of the semester, she submitted papers that were shorter than the first but that remained in the vicinity of 300 words each. I analyzed the information structure of the introductory paragraphs written for assignments 4, 3, and 1, respectively. Ray submitted papers that ranged from approximately 200 to 300 words in length. He wrote the shortest papers for assignments 2 and 3 and the longest for 1 and 4. I analyzed the information structure of the introductory paragraphs from papers 3, 5, and 4, respectively. Pat submitted the longest papers that I shall analyze in this study. Her papers range from approximately 400 to 1500 words. She submitted the shortest for assignment 3 and the longest for assignment 4. I analyzed the information structure of these introductory paragraphs, as well as the introductory paragraph for the middle-length

paper written for assignment 2. In analyzing the information structure of these paragraphs, I discuss the topical depth/subtopic number, topical progression, and syntactic placement of the topical subject. I also attempt to relate paper length and paragraph length to the topical progression and syntactic placement.

#### Lesley's Paragraphs

Lesley, who wrote her shortest paper for assignment 4, selected the discourse topic of teaching art to children, which she introduces in a three-sentence paragraph:

[1] Art can be such a fun and exciting experience for the adult teaching and the child learning. [2] The teaching process will help the child to learn to like art and develop an understanding associated with creating art. [3] It is important to see if the child is talented and if they enjoy what they are doing.

Notice how Lesley introduces three subtopics, creating a sequential progression. The topical subject is the very broad art, which changes to teaching process in the second sentence. By the third sentence, Lesley changes the topical subject again to child. This pattern is presented in Table VII. In creating a sequential progression, Lesley leaves the impression of incompleteness about the actual direction of the paragraph and subsequently the paper. She uses two Type 1 sentences (the ISE, grammatical subject, and topical

subject all coincide [Sentences 1 and 2]) and one Type 3 (ISE coincides with the grammatical subject, but the topical subject is separate [Sentence 3]).

TABLE VII  
TOPICAL DEPTH AND SUBTOPIC NUMBER IN THE FIRST  
PARAGRAPH OF LESLEY'S SHORTEST PAPER

Sentence No.	Topical Subject	TD/SN
1	art --	1
2	teaching process --	2
3	child	3

The discourse subject for Lesley's middle-length paper, written for assignment 3, is a cupid doll. This introductory paragraph also contains three sentences:

[1] I have had a very special object that has great value to me, a Cupid Doll. [2] It may not seem to other people as a big thing, but it is important to me. [3] The reason it is so valuable to me is that for one it was handed down to me from my mother.

Here, Lesley uses only one subtopic, creating a parallel progression. She varies the placement of the topical subject cupid doll, using two Type 3 sentences (ISE and grammatical subject coincide, but the topical subject is separate [Sentences 1 and 3]) interrupted by a Type 1 (ISE,

grammatical subject, and topical subject coincide [Sentence 2]).

In contrast to the paper about the doll, Lesley's longest paper, written for assignment one, tells a story and the introduction establishes the context. While the title is "Beware of Drunk Drivers," Lesley's discourse topic is one accident caused by a drunk driver.

[1] I have a true story to tell about drunk drivers. [2] I was part of an accident, luckily I didn't get hurt. [3] But as for a close friend of mine, he did [get hurt in the accident]. [4] It all happened so fast, but I remember it exactly as it happened yesterday.

In addition to being the discourse topic, accident is also the topical subject, implied or stated, in all four sentences. The single topical depth creates a parallel progression, as seen in Table VIII.

TABLE VIII

TOPICAL DEPTH AND NUMBER OF SUBTOPICS IN THE FIRST PARAGRAPH OF LESLEY'S LONGEST PAPER

Sentence No.	Topical Subject	TD/SN
1	story [about an accident]	1
2	accident --	1
3	[accident]	1
4	it	1

She has written one Type 1 sentence (ISE, grammatical subject, and topical subject coincide [Sentence 4]), two Type 3 (ISE and grammatical subject coincide, but not with the topical subject [Sentences 1 and 2]), and one Type 5 (ISE, grammatical subject, and topical subject are separate [Sentence 3]). The number and placement of implied topical subjects suggest that Lesley struggles for control of the narrative structure.

A summary of the information structure of Lesley's introductory paragraphs appears in Table IX.

TABLE IX  
SUMMARY OF INFORMATION STRUCTURE BY ASSIGNMENT  
FOR LESLEY'S INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPHS

Essay	TD/SN	Number of Sentences	Frequency of Syntax Types
4	3	3	2(1) 1(3)
3	1	3	1(1) 2(3)
1	1	4	1(1) 2(3) 1(5)

The sentence variety for essay 1 results more from my placement of the implied topical subject than Lesley's syntactic skills.

#### Ray's Paragraphs

Ray's shortest paper is one long paragraph of about 200 words written about a gold ring, the discourse topic. I

have divided this paragraph in two at a topical shift (and I exclude the text following my division).

[1] It is a gold wedding band with a few small dents and scratches on it and a wedge shaped dent on the side. [2] The flaws have been smoothed over and polished with handleing over the past 200 years. [3] Although it is small in size it seems larger and heavier than a women's wedding band should be. [4] It is roughley hewened and rounded off at the top from one edge to the other. [5] It is almost a half inch wide. [6] It was probably in style with the wedding bands of the era.

This passage has a topical depth of two, as seen in Table X.

TABLE X  
TOPICAL DEPTH AND SUBTOPIC NUMBER IN THE FIRST  
PARAGRAPH OF RAY'S SHORTEST PAPER

Sentence No.	Topical Subject	TD/SN
1	wedding band --	1
2	flaws --	2
3	it	1
4	it	1
5	it	1
6	it	1

Ray has written four Type 1 sentences (ISE, grammatical subject, and topical subject coincide [Sentences 2, 4, 5, and 6]), one Type 4 (ISE coincides with the topical subject, but not with the grammatical subject [Sentence 3]), and one Type 5 (ISE, grammatical subject, and topical subject are separate [Sentence 1]).

The discourse subject of Ray's middle-length paper is "Dangerous Toys." The first paragraph is an unusually short one of only two sentences:

[1] One of the ways of celebrating Christmas is bying toys for children. [2] Both parents and children celebrate in this way.

Here, Ray writes a parallel progression with two Type 3 sentences in which the ISE and the grammatical subject coincide but not with the topical subject. This particular paragraph represents an extreme example of limited fluency because the topical subject seems to be far away from the sentence focus.

Ray's longest paper, approximately 300 words, was written about the proper method for firing an M1 rifle in a prone position, the discourse topic. The first paragraph introduces the instructions.

[1] Knowing and useing the proper method of fireing an M1 rifle at a long range target is essential to the function of a Marine rifle squad. [2] As a member of a rifle squad, it is neccsary for you to know and practice the



method. [3] I have illustrated the precedures for you here, according to the Fleet Marine Force Manuel.

Here, Ray uses one level of topical depth, a parallel progression, using method and its synonym procedures as the topical subjects. Additionally, he writes one Type 1 sentence (ISE, grammatical subject, and topical subject coincide [Sentence 1]), one Type 3 (ISE coincides with the grammatical subject, but not with the topical subject [Sentence 3]), and one Type 5 (ISE, grammatical subject, and topical subject are separate [Sentence 2]).

A summary of the results of the analysis of the information structure in three of Ray's introductory paragraphs appears in Table XI.

TABLE XI

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION STRUCTURE BY ASSIGNMENT  
FOR THREE OF RAY'S INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPHS

Essay	TD/SN	Number of Sentences	Frequency of Syntax Types
3	2	6	4(1) 1(4) 1(5)
5	1	2	2(3)
2	1	3	1(1) 1(3) 1(5)

The length of the first paragraph in essay 3 is not a result of Ray's skill in paragraphing but rather the result of my dividing a one-paragraph paper.

## Pat's Paragraphs

Pat also wrote her shortest paper for assignment 3 (describe an object that has special value for you and explain what value it has and why it has that value) and her longest for assignment 4 (explain to someone how to do something). However, she wrote her middle-length paper for assignment 2 (choose a restaurant and evaluate it). Her shortest paper is around 400 words, while the longest is around 1500. In her shortest paper for assignment 3, Pat wrote also wrote about a family heirloom:

[1] A spoon can hold memories more wonderful than a delicious bite of food. [2] A spoon can have such a special meaning in the place setting of one's heart. [3] My special tablespoon is not made of sterling silver but it holds more value than gold to me. [4] How could a United States Navy stainless steel tablespoon mean so much to me?

There is only one level of topical depth in this paragraph, making it a parallel progression. She has written all Type 1 sentences (ISE, grammatical subject, and topical subject all coincide).

For her middle-length paper written for assignment 2 about "The Late Show," a local restaurant, Pat has an even longer introduction.

[1] [You] Take a step back in time to the 1940's. [2] [You] listen to music on a Kimbale

Grand piano played by Laura Davis Cooper. [3] She plays Broadway musicals mixed with boogie woogie. [4] The first thing to greet you at the door is a life size protrait of John Wayne. [5] The Late Show five miles east of town on Hwy 51 is my favorite place to eat. [6] You can not see the building from the raod, but will see a large blue sign on the left side of the road.

In analyzing this paragraph, I again encountered the problem of identifying the topical subject. Because she wrote in the imperative mood, the implied topical subject in the first two sentences is you. While the implied topical subjects complicate this analysis, Pat is able to create suspense in her opening paragraph, unlike any of the other participants. The topical depth appears in Table XII.

TABLE XII

TOPICAL DEPTH AND SUBTOPIC NUMBER IN THE FIRST PARAGRAPH OF PAT'S MIDDLE-LENGTH PAPER

Sentence No.	Topical Subject	TD/SN
1	[You]	1
2	[You] --	1
3	she --	2
4	thing --	3
5	The Late Show	4
6	building	4

Here, Pat writes five Type 1 sentences (ISE, grammatical subject, and topical subject coincide [Sentences 1 through 5]), and one Type 3 sentence (ISE and grammatical subject coincide but not with the topical subject [Sentence 6]). This sequence of topical depth creates a variation of the extended progression.

In contrast to the six-sentence introductory paragraph that Pat writes for her middle-length paper, she has written a three-sentence introductory paragraph for her longest paper. The discourse topic is planning an airline trip.

[1] Have you always wanted to fly, but are afraid to? [2] Do you feel intimidated by airports or because you are not sure how to make reservations for a trip? [4] Well let me take you by the hand and show you how to go through the process\_of\_planning a trip to anywhere.

The topical subject is the pronoun you. The topical depth and number of subtopics appear in Table XIII.

TABLE XIII

TOPICAL DEPTH AND SUBTOPIC NUMBER IN THE FIRST PARAGRAPH OF PAT'S LONGEST PAPER

Sentence No.	Topical Subject	TN/SN
1	you	1
2	you	1
3	you	1

This paragraph represents one level of topical depth and subtopic number, making it a parallel progression. Pat has written two Type 1 sentences (ISE, grammatical subject, and topical subject all coincide [Sentences 1 and 2] and one Type 5 sentence (ISE, grammatical subject, and topical subject are separate [Sentence 3]).

A summary of the information structure in Pat's introductory paragraphs appears in Table XIV.

TABLE XIV  
SUMMARY OF INFORMATION STRUCTURE FOR THREE OF  
PAT'S INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPHS

Essay	TD/SN	Number of Sentences	Frequency of Syntax Types
3	1	4	4(1)
2	4	6	5(1) 1(3)
4	1	3	2(1) 1(5)

Pat wrote the longest introductory paragraph in this study for essay 2.

#### Discussion

Tables XV and XVI present an analysis of the topical progressions and placement of the topical subject for all four students, including Jeff's paragraphs, which were analyzed in the preceding chapter.

TABLE XV  
 FREQUENCY OF TOPICAL DEPTH (SUBTOPIC NUMBER) BY STUDENT

Student	Parallel	Two-Level	Three-Level	Four-Level
Jeff	2		1	
Lesley	2		1	
Ray	2	1		
Pat	2			1

All four students wrote at least two introductory paragraphs that have a topical depth of only one, creating parallel progressions. The maximum topical depth and subtopic number were four, regardless of the length of the paragraph. From this limited sample, it appears that Ray struggled the most creating subtopic levels, and Pat, the least.

TABLE XVI  
 FREQUENCY OF SENTENCE TYPES

Student	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4	Type 5
Jeff	7		4		1
Lesley	4		5		1
Ray	5		3	1	2
Pat	11		1		1

In the placement of the topical subject, all four students overwhelmingly preferred Type 1 syntax (the ISE, the grammatical subject, and the topical subject all coincide). Type 2 (the ISE is separate from the grammatical subject and the topical subject, which coincide) was totally ignored, and Type 4 (the ISE coincides with the topical subject but not with the grammatical subject) was used once. The next most popular syntax was Type 3 (the ISE coincides with the grammatical subject but not with the topical subject). Here, the topical subject appears as part of the predicate or a subsequent noun clause. In the next chapter, I continue my discussion of the information in this chapter, relate it to scholarship about basic writers, and make recommendations for teaching basic writing.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the analysis thus far, I have identified as accurately as possible the topical subject in the introductory paragraphs of four basic writers, the types of syntactic structures that they use, and the types of topical progressions that are evident. In this chapter, I want to address several concerns related to the topical subject, the topical progresions, types of syntactic structures, and paper and paragraph length. In particular, I shall suggest some teaching techniques that may help basic writers become more proficient in creating topical subjects and progresions and in placing the topical subject within the sentence.

#### Topical Subjects

The basic writers in this study do not select topical subjects that compare with those in Lautamatti's study. The topical subjects in the original text are human infant and its synonyms, as well as this helplessness, young animals, this long period of vulnerability, and learning language. In contrast, Pat wrote the following topical subjects for her middle-length paper: you, you, she, thing, The Late Show, and building. The three personal pronouns and the



global collective noun thing are ineffective choices in terms of the needs of academic writing.

Another difference in the topical subjects of the basic writers is that some are implied. Lautamatti never considers implied topical subjects either in the original text or in the simplified versions. However, Lesley wrote sentences with implied topical subjects in the introduction to her longest paper for assignment 1. The topical subject accident is implied twice, stated once, and referred to by the pronoun it. Here, part of the problem with selection of the topical subject may be related to what Flower terms writer-based prose. The topical subjects may be reflecting the dialogue that Lesley has with herself about the accident. Even after three revisions, Lesley still focuses on herself.

To deal with inadequate topical subjects or implied topical subjects, classroom teachers may work with students to build vocabulary, conference with them, or refer them to a writing center to work specifically on vocabulary. Teachers may also work with students to revise their prose for an intended audience by making them aware of private language and by requiring that they clearly state the topic of a paragraph.

#### Topical Progressions

In the simplified versions of the Doughty and Doughty original, the linguists and English teachers in Lautamatti's

study increased the parallel progression of topical subjects. However, all the revisers retained the pattern of a parallel progression interrupted by a sequential, the unit becoming an extended progression including from three to ten subtopics. None of the basic writers were able to produce an extended progression in the opening paragraph of their papers. All four participants wrote strictly parallel or strictly sequential progressions, eight and four out of twelve paragraphs, respectively. This inability to write an extended progression seems to reflect a combination of problems.

Perhaps the most crucial problem is the choice of topical subject. This choice may be a key factor in the development of a subtopic or the introduction of a new one. Inaccurate or implied topical subjects may make the progression either primer-like in its simplicity, as in a poor parallel progression, or without a clear focus, as in a poor sequential one. Again, Lesley's paragraphs provide examples. In her middle-length paper for assignment 3, Lesley writes about a cupid doll, using a parallel progression. The primer-like quality is again the possible result of her poor analytical skills and egocentricism. In her shortest paper, written for assignment 4, Lesley writes a sequential progression that progresses from art to teaching process to child. The lack of focus in this sequential progression occurs partly because of Lesley's choices of topical subjects. The inability to write an

extended progression seems to be consistent with what researchers know about basic writers and their inexperience with the written word, particularly, the lack of focus and the inability to balance several ideas simultaneously during the writing process.

To help basic writers grow in their writing from parallel and sequential progressions to extended progressions, writing teachers may create a variety of paragraph exercises that focus on topical subjects and topical progressions. One type of exercise could ask students to supply missing topical subjects; another could ask students to order the sentences of a paragraph according to the identified topical subject. In workshop activities, students could exchange second drafts, without the introductory paragraph or paragraphs, and try to write introductions for each other from the remaining information, focusing on identifying and stating the discourse topic and the topical subjects that point to it.

#### Syntax Types

The linguists and experienced English teachers also wrote more Type 1 and Type 3 sentences (ISE, grammatical subject, and topical subject coincide; and ISE and grammatical subject coincide but not with the topical subject, respectively) in their revisions of the Doughty and Doughty original. Their uses of Types 4 and 5 were reduced (ISE and topical subject coincide but not with the

grammatical subject; and ISE, grammatical subject, and topical subject are all separate, respectively). However, Type 2 (ISE is separate from the grammatical subject and topical subject which coincide) retained "more or less its relative frequency" in both the original text and the simplified versions (Lautamatti 84). Of the four writers in this study, the overwhelming preference was for Type 1 sentences, as shown in Table XVII. However, their second, third, and fourth choices were for Types 3, 5, and 4, respectively.

TABLE XVII  
PERCENTAGE OF SYNTAX TYPES

Type	Basic Writers	Simplified Text	Original Text
1	54%	41%	10%
2	0	19	20
3	30	21.7	10
4	4	0.6	20
5	11	0.6	20

(The figures for sentence types from the original and the simplified texts are from Lautamatti, p. 84.)

None of the students wrote a Type 2 sentence, and their use of the Type 4 sentence is also very limited. This result suggests that the students in this study do not know how to vary sentence beginnings. Also, the students used more Type 5 sentences than the authors of the simplified text but less

than the authors of the original text. Both Types 3 and 5 may indicate that the students have wasted the subject-verb position. Because the students also use inappropriate or implied topical subjects, which I discussed earlier, this conclusion is a reasonable one.

Of course, one way to deal with the lack of sentence variety is to have students practice different ways of beginning a sentence and of combining sentences.

I also sought a connection between topical progression and paper length as well as paragraph length. There were no connections.

The results of this study must be applied with caution because of the extremely limited number of participants. Only limited information about the relationship of the extended progression to academic writing is available. The relationship of Lautamatti's analysis to methods of discourse analysis that build on given-new structures could provide additional information about the extended progression and its place in academic writing.

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## APPENDICES



## APPENDIX A

### ESSAYS BY JEFF

#### Assignment 1

Swimming is one of the funnest things a person can do but it is also one of the most dangerous. A person swimming alone has more of a chance of drowning than others. A number of things could happen if a person swims alone.

There are a number of reasons a person swims alone. People just jump in if they get to hot. If a person is laying out in the sun they might jump in to cool off. Swimming for the exercise is another good reason.

A friend got a cramp in his leg while swimming in the ocean. This is a dangerous place when there are no walls to wim to and your in fifteen feet of water. When this happens people panic and it just adds to the effect.

When swimming in a pool you should always know what part of the pool your in. My dad jumped in the shallow part and cut his head open. There were people there to help him out or he could have drowned.

A lot of people try to do more than their capable of. If your in a pool this might not be to bad because you could probably get to the side but if your in a lake or the ocean this could be very hazardous.

If a person wants to swim they should always have someone around. Everyone should know where all lifesaving equipment is and see all the signs. If in a lake or ocean stay where you can touch.

#### Assignment 2 - Western Sizzlin Selection

A place I really like and enjoy to eat at is Western Sizzlin. They have good service and great food. A person can get their food quick and not have the cost shock you to death. It is a very clean place and the atmosphere is nice. This is a place for a nice date or even for the family.

They have a variety of steaks and side orders. A person can have a sirloin steak, rib-eye or T-bone. They have a salad and dessert bar, both which is all you can eat. Everything you have ever wanted on a salad are here. The dessert bar has all the ice creams, toppings, etc.

Western Sizzlin makes you feel welcome and right at home. They're always kind and are there if you need them. They won't be trying to hurry you. They always give you time to eat and enjoy everything.

The place is very clean. You want to be sitting in anything from the people before you eating. It is very organized and well kept up.

It is in a very convenient location. It's right on the edge of town so you don't have to drive 20 miles. There is a big cow on a sign out front. Inside it has a real cowboy

setting. There are ropes and pictures of old western things on the walls.

It won't cost you an arm and a leg to eat here either. A person will get their money's worth and a little more. A person with a family and on a budget will love this place.

If your looking for a great place to eat Western Sizzlin is it. I can't recommend any one plate because they're all so good. Everyone is welcome so come on down and join the family.

### Assignment 3 - The Values of My Car

I have a 1977 Cutlass Supreme. It really has alot of value to me. People may thing since it's any older car that they can trash it but they learn that I like to keep it clean.

My parents gave it to me when I got my liscense. I have had some pretty wild times in it. I am always cleaning it especially after one of those wild nights. My parents know I keep it clean and they respect that. Now when I ask to borrow theirs they don't ming letting me borrow it.

It has never really had any rust on it or any scratches. It looks great and now even better since I got it painted. The windows are tinted dark black and you can't even hardly see in them. Everyone thinks it looks great.

My parents never really drove it that much. I got it when it only had 57,000 miles on it. It only has 80,000

miles on it now. Cars that are 1982 or 1983 model have a lot more miles than that.

There are always people complementing me on how good it looks. I always have people wanting to buy it. I'm not going to sell it right now because I really don't need a new car for college.

We have all made up nicknames for it. It just depends on where we are and how rowdy we are the night we name it. The car really grows on you. All of my firends like to ride in it. It has a very smooth ride and it is also comfortable. The cranking stereo helps the ride too. Everyone likes to take rood trips in it to Six Flags and other places. I guess I will enjoy it while I have it.

#### Assignment 4 - Don't Get Stranded

Ladies get stranded so many times because of a simple flat tire. If you would just learn how to change one it would save alot of money. The only tools and materials you will need are: a lug wrench, jack, spare tire, and maybe a couple of bricks.

The first step is to get the jack out which is usually located in the trunk of any standard car. Depending on which tire is flat, front or rear, get the jack situated in the right place. Jack the car up slowly until the flat tire is off the ground a few inches.

Place a brick under one or both of the back tires. This is to make sure the car doesn't roll or fall on you. This is just a safety precaution.

Pop off the hubcap if your car has one and loosen the nuts on the flat tire. When they are all loose go ahead and take them the rest of the way off. Hold the tire securely and slide it off but be careful because it is not as light as you might think. Move it to the side once it's off.

Take your spare tire from the trunk and line it up with the screws which the lug nuts go on. Slide it straight on and put the lug nuts on about hand tight. Take your lug wrench and start tightening them up. Stagger the order in which you tighten them. Let the car down slowly and once it's on the ground check the nuts again to make sure they're tight.

Put your flat tire and all the other tools back in the trunk. Take the bricks from under the back tire and do whatever you want with them. A flat tire is very frustrating so take the time to learn and save yourself a lot of anger.

#### Assignment 5 - The Days of the Crew

The Sub Crew is a group of guys who support Edmond sports and put spirit into the crowds. We participated in all the school pep assemblies. We would run on the field or court during halftime and make pyramids and stuff like that. The coaches said we were like the twelfth man and we really

made a difference at the games. We drank and had a good time but we never had an accident do to the drinking.

The Sub Crew got started in 1985 by a group of senior guys who wanted to show some spirit towards the school. They got the word "sub" from traveling in a suburban to the games and "crew" from being a crew of guys. The seniors from the year before would pick who they wanted in it the next year. We always got trashed before the games but we always had a dedicated driver who didn't drink. People always acted like us in their skits. The teachers even had a skit about us. They wore our shirts and had beer bottles and they did a bunch of dumb stuff. Everyone loved it and I think the teachers even had a little fun. As you can see the drinking was never discussed or even a factor.

They abandoned the Sub Crew this year. They said it was because they got caught drinking. They have been cracking down on a lot of things in Edmond so I think this was just an opportunity to get rid of the Crew. Most students drink in high school and I don't think it will ever change. It seems like they would want to get rid of the drugs or something that was really causing a problem.

Everything we did was on our own and on our own time. We were not a school sponsored activity and we never received anything from them so I don't think they have the right to abandon the Sub Crew. They could keep us out of the skits and off the field but that's about it. We did a lot of stuff for the school. We decorated the gym for the

state football game last year and some of the bridges on the way to Stillwater. We had alot of pride in our school and did everything we could to show it.

We have a reunion every year just to keep the unity and meet the poeple who are keeping the Sub Crew on its feet. We're going to talk to some school officials to try to get the Sub Crew reinstated. We are going to see if we can go on probation or something like that. Maybe they will keep us off the field and out of the assemblies for a year as punishment. The parents and most of the faculty liked us and they thought we were doing a great job. A lot of people looked up to us. A few people who didn't get voted in the Sub Crew didn't like us but they were just a little jealous. We got a lot of publicity from the newspaper and our school yearbook. This elite group of 15 guys brought a lot of pride to Edmond High School and one day it will be together again.

## APPENDIX B

### ESSAYS BY LESLEY

#### Assignment 1 - Beware of Drunk Drivers

I have a true story to tell about drunk drivers. I was part of an accident, luckily I didn't get hurt. But as for a close freind of mine, he did. It all happened so fast, but I remember it exactly as it happened yesterday.

As a group of friends and I were walking home from a movie, something terrible was about to happen. Holly, Michael, Scott and I were walking towards traffic and close to the raod because there weren't any sidewalks to walk on. Anyhow as we passed by the cars proceeding in single file towards home (which was about a half of mile away, I saw this car approach us. See I guess you could say I saw the whole accident as it came towards us and then past us. Well, the person driving the car was obviously very drunk, since the car was swirving left to right and going faster than the speed limit. Well, the car came and Scott and I got out of the way. As for Holly and Michael they didn't realize what was about to happen, neither did we. The car hit Michael's right leg and it threw him into Holly as they both were thrown onto the gravel. The car kept going, the person driving never stopped. Later, the person got away,



he was never caught or anything. We had to file reports with the police, but since it was dark and at night, we never had a complete description of the car and license plate. Anyhow Holly was alright with a few scratches, but Michael was hurt bad. All we knew at the time was that we had to get to the police fast and a hospital. Finally some people came by, and we were rushed downtown to the hospital. Michael had surgery on his ligaments twice, he was a soccer player - but not anymore.

Not only should you not drive while intoxicated, but be prepared to deal with people who do. My story is one of the many terrible tragedies that occur due to drunk drivers. This is endangering my life and yours. This is even dangerous to pedestrians who sometimes have to walk on the streets when there are no sidewalks.

#### Assignment 2 - Chi-Chi's Restaurant

The restaurant of my choice to write about and critic would have to be Chi-Chi's. I really like eating at Chi-Chi's and my parents do to. I think Chi-Chi's apply mainly to adults and teenagers. The restaurant has a bar for older people that serves cocktails and mixed drinks. It also has T.V.'s and machine games for younger people.

What I like most about the restaurant is the food. Food is the most important thing in restaurants today. The Mexican food is fabulous and very hot. If you're a person who enjoys hot food, you'll love Chi-Chi's. I really love the

hot enchilada dishes. I would say that attracts me the most to Chi-Chis.

Of course the atmosphere and friendliness of employees is very important too. I think Chi-Chis fits these standards quite well. It has a homely feeling, and waiters and waitresses that are extremely friendly. They wear Mexican dresses and clothing, it really sets off the feeling of being in Mexico. The music is even Mexican too. At each table there is a candle in a glass setting, that gives us the feeling that Chi-Chi's would be a great place for a romantic dinner. The hanging plants and artistic Mexican pictures make the restaurant an enjoyable place to be.

Chi-Chi's is a very large restaurant inside and outside. That is one quality I like that appeals to me very much. I always know that the wait for a table shouldn't be too long, unless of course the restaurant is packed. When this happens, you can only think good thoughts, like how good the food must be. Then the wait to you is worth your time. I really enjoy the restaurant, and I would recommend it for any special occasion.

### Assignment 3 - My Cupid Doll

I have a very special object that has great value to me, a Cupid Doll. It may seem to other people as not so big a thing, but it is important to me. The reason it is so valuable to me is that for one it was handed down to me from my mother.

When my mom was a child she used to play mother figure to it. She has had the doll since she was real young, and about forty years. Just the imagination that it has been preserved all these years, and even the thought that this doll is what my mother used to play with, that really fascinates me.

The doll is made of wood and the eyes, nose, hair and face features are painted on. All the legs move, it is in top condition. It has on a real old dress, too.

I have just recently found out it existed. I never had the chance to play with it because my mom had it stored away. It is probably a good idea that she did, or I would of ruined it. Well after she handed it down to me, I could see how fragile and old it was. I am very careful when holding and handling it. I hope to someday pass it down to my children. All I know is that I will keep it stored away someplace safe so that I can preserve it and have it as long as my mother did. I guess you could say by the sounds of things that it really means alot to me. To most people they might not thing twice about this doll, but when I think about it, I feel it is very precious to me.

#### Assignment 4 - Teaching Art to Children

Art can be such a fun and exciting experience for the adult teaching and the child learning. The teaching process will hep the child to learn to like art and develop an understanding associated with creating art. It is important

to see if the child is talented and if they enjoy what they are doing.

Art in the world today is a very important culture of everyday life and we must teach our children to be creative and artistic. Most youngsters are excited with working with art, I think they associate it with playing, and that is a good aspect of it at that age.

There are many steps in teaching art to children. Such are examples and steps as to begin with appropriate materials for the child to work with. These materials may be pudding as a finger paint for young, and for the older students crayons and safety tested water paint. The teacher must always watch the children carefully with the materials they use, and they should give advice on helping the child create. At the young age of eight, children are not ready to create, they still want to experiment with colors. It is important to be realistic to their thoughts and ideas while teaching them to draw definite things. It is also a wise idea to help further a child's talent in Art by perhaps having them participate in a program outside of class.

Children are very eager to learn and we must help to cultivate their talents along with their likes and dislikes associated with Art. Young adults and children can be encouraged to appreciate art, but it requires alot of teaching, learning and understanding first.

APPENDIX C

ESSAYS BY RAY

Assignment 1

Dear Tracey

Joe called me today and told me you were going up into the mountains alone for three or four days

The sierra nevada's are pretty this time of year. Many people go up there to hunt or go camping. There are spring fed ponds that have been seen by only a very few people and there are probably some that have only been seen by the animals that drink from them. They are hidden by cliffs and trees and you can't see them till you get right up to them. The mountains are vast and you could go for weeks and probably not see another person. After a while all the peaks and valleys and rocks start to look the same. It very easy to become lost. Even experienced campers don't go up there alone. The animals don't useually bother people but if they decide to they can be very dangerous. Do you remember hearing about the campers who were attacked by the bear in yellowstone. I don't know how many bears go as far south as the range you are going to but I am sure there are some. When I was up there one time I tracked a cougar about

five miles in the snow, so I know there are some big cats up there

Why don't you wait till you can get two or three of your firends to go with you. Its not that much fater down to Yosimite. It probably would be better to go down there. You could stay on the trails. They have camp sites and there are guides there to help you.

Sincerely

Ray

#### Assignment 2

When I take a friend out to dinner it is important to me to choose a nice place that is clean and has a considerate atmosphere. A place where the decor is pleasing to the eye, the employees work at their jobs, are considerate and the food is good. These standards allow us to enjoy our time out and to enjoy our meal. Mazzio's meets these standards very well. It's a good place to take a friend out to dinner. The main thing they serve is pizza, but in case you want something defferent they also have a nice salad bar and very good pasta with garlic bread. Also you have a chance to save about a \$1.50 for two people if you have a mazzio cup. With a mazzio cup your drinks and refills are free. They are open late on weekends which makes it convienent to come in after a late movie. They also have lunch specials everyday on pasta. Even though its not their main item it is my favorite. They serve four

defferent kinds of pasta and they are all very good. Mazzio's is a nice place to go and it meets all the standards that I have for a restaurant.

### Assignment 3

It is a gold wedding band with a few small dents and scratches on it and a wedge shaped dent on the side. The flaws have been smoothed over and polished with handling over the past 200 years. It belonged to my great great grandmother, who lived in South Carolina during the American Revolution. Although it is small in size it seems larger and heavier than a women's wedding band should be. It is roughley hewened and rounded off at the top from one edge to the other. It is almost a half inch wide. It was probably in style in with the wedding bands of the era. After my great great grandmother's death, her husband kept the ring. Eventually it was passed from one son or daughter until it got to my grandmother, then to my aunt. My aunt gave me the ring shortley before her death in 1986. I had not known any thing about it until that time and my aunt was unable to tell me why it had been kept for so long. I decided to place my own values on it and they are, first because it is a symbol of honor that my Aunt would give it to me and secondly because it is of great historical value.

Assignment 4 - How to shoot an M1 rifle from  
a prone position at a 20" bulleye  
500 yards away

Knowing and using the proper method of fireing an M1 rifle at a long range target is essential to the function of a Marine rifle squad. As a member of a rifle squad, it is necessary for you to know and practice the method. I have illustrated the procedures for you here, according to the Fleet Marine Force Manuel.

First get into a prone position. Make sure you are pointing your weapon in the direction of the target. Spread your legs 45 [degrees] apart with your right leg in line with your weapon and your target. With your left hand supporting the forward stock and your right hand on the grip place your elbows apart to serve as a tripod with the rest of your body. Place the butt of your weapon firmly against your right shoulder and place your right cheek gently on the side of the stock just behind your right hand. Make sure that you are balanced so that you can relax. Now that you are in position, make sure you have control of the rifle with your left hond; do not let it go from side to side Get the target in your sights and let the rifle move up and down with your breathing. It is important to relax and slow down your breathing. Make sure your sight is on a line with the center of your target. Squeese the slack out of the trigger and hold it there As your sight is moving up and down through the target, remember to squeese the round off



down through the target, remember to squeeze the round off as the sight rises up to meet the target. Now that you have mastered the essential skill of a Marine rifle squad member, you are ready to go on with your Marine corps career. Good Luck, and always remember; Semper Fi.

#### Assignment 5 - Dangerous Toys

One of the ways of celebrating Christmas is bying toys for children. Both parents and children celebrate in this way

Toy campanies focus most of their marketing on the christmas season, some of the marketing is directing toward the parents and some of it is directed toward the children. In either case, many dangerous toys are finding their way under the Christmas tree, despite the efforts of consumer protection groups.

However, the publicity about dangerous toys is so little compared to the marketing compaignes of the toy makers that many parents are not aware of what toys are dangerous and what toys are not. Although warning labels are required by law to be put on dangerous toys, it should be noted that many adults in America can not read.

Evan so, when toys are bought for the proper age group, such as 12 years old and up, there are sometimes smaller children within the family that have access to the same toys

The big toy darts are one example of a dangeruos toy that could be bought for older children and wind up being

played with by younger child. There are many liability cases in court now, however these cases receive little or no publicity. The only publicity directed at the public are little public interest slots on the news advising people about dangerous toys. However this seems to put all the responsibility on the parents

It seems that publicity should point out that companies should share in the responsibility that children have safe toys to play with.

## APPENDIX D

### ESSAYS BY PAT

#### Assignment 1 - Dangers of a Weed Eater

Seven thousand revolutions per minute, thats what our weed eater cutting edge does. At this speed the cutting edge can not even be seen in operation. Its a great help in your yard work but it can injure, maim or cuase damage instantly. There are two power sources, the electric or the gas. The electric weed eater and gas weed eater have basically the same operating proceedures, the only differences being the electric requires 110 AC power and a long heavy duty extension cord. The gas requires a gas and oil mixture of 8oz. oil to one gallon of gas. Its personal preference as to which type you had rather use. Each type has its particular types of danger. The electric weed eater can cause electrical shock and must never be used in wet weather. The operater must use extreme caution not to cut the cord. With the gas weed eater you have to use caution in storing the gas because of danger of fire or explosion around your home. The electric is a lighter tool to use compared to the extra weight of the gas in a gas weed eater. But the cord of the electric weed eater must be carried

around the yard and is very cumbersome. The electric weed eater costs less than the gas to purchase.

The weed eater saves hours of time in keeping a lawn. It is used for trimming the grass and weeds around fences, tree's, hedges and all the places you can not get to with your lawn mower. They are inexpensive to buy and operate compared to the work they do.

In my personal experience I have learned how quickly a weed eater can hurt you. It happened when I was trying to start mine. I had waited for a perfect day to work. The weather was beautiful but my weed eater was being contrary, it did not want to start. I became impatient and got my foot to close to the cutting edge. When the engine finally kicked in at full speed it cut my foot. The engine must be started with the throttle on choke and then moved to half speed but I had accidentally put it on full speed.

Another time I was trimming around the edge of a small pine tree and nicked it several times with the line, not knowing at the time it would cause damage. After a couple of weeks I noticed the tree was turning brown. Since it was a tree my husband had personally bought and planted with tender loving care outside the kitchen window so he could watch it grow while having breakfast every morning, I started to panic. Wouldn't you know the tree died, a victim of weed eateritis. The point is weed eaters can damage plants as well as people.

On another occasion my husband was using the weed eater and hit a loose object that flew back in his eye. The rapidly moving line causes objects to be thrown violently and to a distance of 30 feet or more. He was trimming shrubbery in the rock garden and hit a stone with the line causing it to fly back in his eye. Fortunately he was wearing sunglasses and no serious damage occurred. So be sure and inspect the area to be cut before each use. Remove objects (rocks, broken glass, nails, wire, string, etc.) which can be thrown or become entangled in the trimmer head.

Look out for the weed eaters hot engine. It takes only about 10 minutes for the engine to get really hot. Holding it too close to the body can cause burns.

We have been lucky that we have not been seriously hurt. We have learned to respect the weed eater. We wear heavy long pants, boots and gloves. Sunglasses to protect our eyes. Because we have a gas engine we never start the trimmer inside a closed building because exhaust fumes can kill.

Be sure and read your owners manual before attempting to use your weed eater. Enjoy the convenience but do not become a victim of your weed eater.

#### Assignment 2 - The Late Show

Take a step back in time to the 1940's. Listen to music on a Kimbale Grand piano played by Laura Davis Cooper. She plays Broadway musicals mixed with boogie woogie. The

first thing to greet you at the door is a lifesize protrait of John Wayne. The Late Show five miles east of town on Hwy 51 is my favorite place to eat. You can not see the building from the road, but will see a large blue sign on the left side of the road.

Step into the lounge for a cocktail. The walls are done in blue pastel with nostalgia murals of Laurel and Hardy, Humphey Bogart, Clark Gable, Mae West and Charlie Chaplin. Movie posters promote old movies like "Pleasure of Your Company" with Fred Astaire and "The Bishops Wife" with Cary Grant. Palm tree's in the corner are moved by gentle breezes from the ceiling fans. The floor is black and white large checkered tile. You sit overlooking a sunken dinning room with old theatre spotlights highlighting the piano and dance floor. Your cocktail waitress is dressed in black pants, white shirt with a wide silk tie. Enjoy drinks by Nick, the blind bartender, as he is called, because he closes his eye's when he pours the liquor. From 5:30p.m. till 7p.m. they serve 99 [cent] hamburgers with fries.

After drinks and hordoeuvres in the lounge, the manager Chuck Grace, escorts you to your table. From the checkered tile in the lounge, you walk onto maroon carpet. You have your choice of either semi private alcove booths or tables. The lights are dim throughout the restaurant and lounge. The table cloths are maroon with cloth napkins. The salt and pepper shakers and sugar bowl are made of old style cut glass. Your place mat is your menu with thirteen main

courses, soup, appetizers, and also a childrens menu. My favorite item and the main reason I go the The Late Show is for the fried shrimp. I lived most of my life on the gulf coast where fresh seafood is abundant and have eaten all over the United States from New York to Alaska and have never tasted better shrimp. I have even been in their kitchen trying to get the recipe, but they keep it a trade secret. It is fantailed then breaded in a special batter and fried to a gold brown. When you bite into it, it is crispy on the outside and so tender in the middle. No greasy taste like a lot of fried foods are. The ocean flavor of shrimp is blended perfectly with just the right spices. Shrimp is what I always order, but other people who have gone with me have tried the various other items from several choices of Steak, Marinated Charbroiled Chicken Breast, golden fried Sea Scallops, B.B.Q. Ribs, King Crab Legs, Lobster, Steak and Lobster or Steak and Shrimp. Everyone says it is all good, but I love the shrimp so much I hate to switch. All of the entree's are served with salad bar, dinner rolls, baked potatoe and a wide range of desserts.

The service is excellent at The Late Show. The waiters watch to see just the right time to take your order. Their always smiling and friendly. About half of the employee's are college students working their way through school. On a good night, I am told they can make one hundred dollars or more in tips. Their dressed in 1940's style all the way

down to the spat shoes and piedmont hats. After taking your order you go the salad bar, which is in the shell of a grand piano. The salad bar is excellent. You make your own salad from a wide choice of fresh vegetables, fruits, herbs and spices.

As you dine you have more posters in the dinning area of James Dean, Marilyn Monroe and Jean Harlow.

The prices range from \$26.50 for Steak and Lobster to \$7.95 for the Chicken Breast. Credit cards are welcome and maybe essential.

Most of their customers are regulars in the middle age group to older. But on prom night and other special occassions you will see a wide age range of customers and reservations are definitely necessary.

When you leave The Late Show and reutrnr to the reality of today you feel you have taken an enjoyable step back in time.

### Assignment 3 - Stainless Steel Spoon

A spoon can hold memories more wonderful than a delicious bite of food. A spoon can have such a speical meaning in the place setting of one's heart. My special tablespoon is not made of sterling silver but it holds more value than gold to me. How could a United States Navy stainless steel tablespoon mean so much to me?

It is just a standard size stainless steel tablespoon. You certainly would not use it if company were coming to



dinner. It has turned light grey with age. U.S.N. is stamped on the handle. It is at least forty five years old and made by Barton and Reed Company who are probably no longer in business. My Father brought it back with him from World Warr 11 as a souvenir. He was stationed at Camp Wallace in Corpus Christy Texas at the time. I can remember the family using it at mealtime when I was very young. When I left home my mother gave me serveral items to help set up housekeeping among them was the tablespoon. When she gave it to me she did not realize how special it would be to me in later years.

I keep the tablespoon in my kitchen drawer with my other everyday stainless steel utensils. Sometimes when I open the drawer and see the spoon I wonder where all the spoon has been and how many Navy men have used it. I wonder if the Captain of the ship used it or if some of the men who used it in the past died as hero's. What sea's did it sail, the Atlantic or the Pacific? Since my Father did not tell me I wonder what his reason was for bringing it home as a souvenir.

My Father was a great outdoorsman. He loved to hunt and fish. He took the old spoon and me with him on many a camping trip. We ate a lot of fresh fried fish and canned pork and beans with the old spoon. The memory of these occasions and the spoon are in my mind forever. My Father was killed in a car wreck when I was thirteen, a traumatic experience for a young girl who was so close to her Father.

The spoon is so special to me today because it is the only thing I have left that he touched.

Sometimes when I eat alone I use the spoon. I think of the past and how much I love my Father and of the special memories I have of him. When I use the spoon I do not have the heart to put it in the dishwasher. I tenderly wash it by hand and put it back in its place in the drawer.

#### Assignment 4 - Planning an Airline Trip

Have you always wanted to fly, but are afraid to? Do you feel intimidated by airports or because you are not sure how to make reservations for a trip? Well let me take you by the hand and show you how to go through the process of planning a trip to anywhere.

The first steps in planning a trip will be for you to decide where you are going, how many people are going, how many days and nights will you be gone? What day of the week do you want to leave and what day do you want to return? This is very important because your air fare will be based on what day you leave. Weekdays having the lower fare and week-ends costing more.

The time of day you wish to leave and return will be asked, so have this planned out. And, if you can not get the days or time of day you want from one airline check the other one's.

So, we have our trip planned in our mind. Lets go to the next step of making reservations with the airline of

your choice. You could go through a travel agency and let them find the best fares for you, but then I would not have anything to write about, so lets do it my way.

Also, there have been times when I could get a better price than the travel agency could get for me by checking on my own. I will explain this later.

Get your phone book out and let your finger walk in the yellow pages under Airline Companies. There are ten airlines listed in the Stillwater yellow pages, all with toll free numbers.

Not all the airlines will be going to your destination, so you will have to call several to find out which ones can accomodate your needs. But you want to do this anyway to get the best rates available. Have pen and paper ready to record each airlines rates to compare later.

When you call the airlines they will want to know all the information we talked about earlier. Have a credit card handy, becuae to make advance reservations you must have a credit card number.

The price of the fares will vary according to where you are going and when you leave. The best priced fares are the ones made at least two weeks in advance. Fares are almost one-half priced when pruchased in advance. Children fly for 1/2 price of adult prices and under 2 years of age, fly free. But with these lower prices also come the no cancellation-no refundable clause. In other words, if for

some reason you can not go on the trip, and the tickets will have to be paid for in advance, you will lose your money.

The fares are guaranteed only after the ticket has been purchased. Be sure you have your game plan ready before buying your ticket, because if you need to change times or dates there is an extra charge.

Sometimes, if you are willing to take the chance, you can get some really low fares by waiting the night before you want to leave to make reservations.

One time I decided I wanted to go to Houston for the week-in. I called on a Friday night about midnight to leave the next morning. I purchased a round trip ticket to Houston for only \$29.50. The cost is usually \$149.50. The reason I got such a great deal is because the flight was not full, so they were selling the tickets cheap. This happens a lot, but to be able to take advantage of this you must travel on the spur of the moment.

You can request certain seat selection on the advance notice reservation, if you know where you would like to sit on the plane. I recommend either the front or the back of the plane. The middle section sits on the wing and engine. It's a lot noisier.

The airlines will also provide you with an escort if you have small children that need to travel alone. Arrangements can be made for the handicapped or the elderly too. Wheel chairs are provided at the airport at no charge.

Just let the airlines know in advance if you need these services.

Your reservations will be mailed to you within two days or you can pick them up at the airport on departure day. If you are not there thirty minutes early the airline has the option to resale your tickets and no refund for you. This is to insure a full plane.

With our reservations made and ticket in hand lets go to the airport. Speaking of ticket in hand, be sure you do not lose your ticket, or any of the three parts of the ticket. If you do lose it you will have to purchase a new ticket at full price.

The airport has parking available at \$10.00 per day, if you plan to be gone for several days, this could get expensive. I would recommend parking at one of the off airport parking lots. These run about \$3.00 a day and they provide shuttle bus service to and from the airport.

If you received your ticket by mail all that is necessary for you to do is check in your luggage. This can be done by porter at the front entrance of the airline ticket counter. No waiting in long lines this way. Again I stress check in early, late bags miss flights!

Be sure you have your name and address inside and outside on bags. There have been times the outside tag has broken off and there is no way to identify the owner of the luggage without a name inside.

All airlines have complimentary name tags, so it is not really necessary for you to purchase expensive ones. They will also have suit bags for you at no cost if you ask for them. The suit bags are made of a sturdy cardboard and are really nice. I have used them on several flights.

Your personal luggage needs to be very sturdy and secure. One of the biggest complaints from travelers is the way the luggage is treated on commercial airlines. It is thrown, tossed, stacked, misused and abused several times on a flight. What may have started out as brand new luggage, will look like it has been around the world after just one flight. So by all means hunt for bargains on luggage.

Do not carry anything breakable in your check-in luggage, because I promise you it will get broken. Invest in some plastic containers and then you are guaranteed it will make it in perfect condition.

You are allowed one carry-on bag with dimensions of 9Hx13Wx17L or smaller. Damage to or loss of baggage must be reported to the airlines within 24 hours. They are really good about finding your luggage, but sometimes it may take several days. Once my bags were lost, but I did receive them in about three days by U.P.S. at the airlines expense. So just in case take a change of clothes in your carry-on.

Your luggage is insured at a rate of \$9.07 per pound for checked baggage and \$1250.00 for carry-on bags. If you

want higher insurance on your bags you must declare this when you check in, but for higher insurance you pay more.

Certain items are not insured at all such as currency, jewelry, documents, electronic, photographic, and computer equipment, art objects, antiques, commercial effects, furs, and silverware.

Federal regulations restrict carriage of items classified as hazardous material. Acid, matches, lighter fluid, explosives, poisons, compressed gases, etc., and must not be carried in baggage.

Your carry-on and purse will be checked through a x-ray machine as you enter the terminal, so be prepared to open your carry-on if necessary. Pockets will have to be emptied, so be aware of anything that might set the alarms off.

Most people think firearms are not allowed, but they are. Only if they are in the checked luggage. They must be unloaded and declared at check in.

With our luggage checked in and we have passed the inspection at the entrance to the terminal, let's find our loading gate.

Your ticket will have all the information you need to find your gate. On the ticket will be the gate number, flight number, seat number, time of departure, destination, layovers if any, and time of arrival. It will also tell you if a full meal or just a snack is being served on the plane.

You are allowed to carry food on the plane and there are plenty of chances to purchase food. There are restaurants and quick food cafe's all over the terminal. But the prices are at least double at the airport. So you would be better off buying your items before you get to the airport. Soft drinks are served on the plane, so you won't need to bring liquids.

You have found your gate. Give your ticket to the airline attendant at the loading ramp. Walk the ramp to the airplane. There will be another attendant waiting to help you at the entrance of the plane. If you are not sure where your seat is located now is the time to ask.

As you enter the plane look to your left. The cockpit is in this area and it is very interesting to see. Usually the Pilot and crew are in the cockpit and they welcome, even enjoy having passengers look inside. Take time to stop and ask questions, they love it. Besides he's got your life in this hands for the next several hours, wouldn't it be nice to know his name?

After visiting the cockpit, find your seat number, place your carry-on in it's proper place under the front seat, buckle up and sit back and relax for a pleasant trip to anywhere.

#### Assignment 5 - An Autopsy

Dead at the age of six months. It lived a full, if not exciting, life on the front pages of The Stillwater



Newspress. The deceased was The Newspress' coverage of Multimedia Cablevisions request to the Stillwater City Commission for a five year extension of it's permit to operate.

As a background; Multimedia bought the cable system approximately five years ago. When they bought the system it was seventeen years old and in need of many repairs. The original owners were the Bellatti's who also owned The Newspress.

They had sold part interest to American Telecommucations. An employee of the previous owners testified at one hearing of The City Commisssion that there were a lot of customer complaints because of bad pictures and service interruptions. The cable that had been laid originally was worn out with age. The equipment was outdated. The cable that was originally laid only had the capacity to carry a limited number of channels. There were not enough satellite recievers to carry sufficent channels.

When Multimedia bought the system, they began adding proper equipment and making repairs. The repairs were like trying to repair an old car. A lot of repairs and a lot of breakdowns. Multimedia management decided the only thing to do was completely rebuild. The rebuild would insure up to date equipment and add 20 more channels.

Before Multimedia would make the investment of nearly one-half million dollars, they wanted an extension of their permit from 1995 to 2000 to cover the investment.

They went to the City Commission with the request and this is when The Newspress' baby was born. For six months we read over and over, front page headlines, how bad Multimedia was.

The Newspress reported on individual customer complaints, from a small number of customers, but never on how much better the system was now compared to five years ago. Out of 10,500 cable customers they chose to report on the 20 that complained.

One customer complained because without advance notice to customers FNN was dropped. He was an investor and watched this station to play the future's market. He claims he lost \$750.00 because the channel was dropped without notice. The Newspress reported this on the front page, but failed to mention that Multimedia had reimbursed the man the \$750.00.

The Newspress reported about a customer being charged for the Disney Channel after she had given notice to cancel it. The Newspress did not report that her cancellation notice was just written at the bottom of a check in small print. They failed to mention that she was given full credit on her bill.

The Chairman of The Stillwater Chamber of Commerce Retail Committee came forward, voluntarily, to say what a great job Multimedia had done in giving free publicity. The Newspress never reported this.

Multimedia pays the city 5% of its gross revenues. This amounted to \$161,011 in 1988.

One issue of The Newspress carried front page headlines, "DISTRUST IS SHOWN, CITY WILL SEEK AUDIT OF CABLE." This headline was designed to lead the public to believe Multimedia was a dishonest corporation. But, in fact, Multimedia has always had it's books available to the City to be audited at any time.

In my opinion, there are two reasons for the unfair, biased, and over reporting of Multimedia's request for a permit extension. Both reasons have to do with the financial interests of the Bellatti's, owners of The Newspress.

I think they are sorry they sold the cable system after seeing the success of a professional operation like Multimedia.

Second reason is: It is a well known fact that Multimedia entered in television advertising in 1987. Best estimates are that the company sold about one-quarter of a million dollars in advertising in 1988. A great part of this revnue was taken away from The Newspress.

I feel that the Bellanti's because of their financial interests have a hostile attitude toward Multimedia. They let this attitude influence their reporting. Which, I feel no responsible newspaper should do, for any reason.

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