

# A Study of Teachers' Evaluation of English Composition in Secondary Schools in Jordan

★ Mufeeq Doushaq

★★ Khalaf Al-Makhzoomy

. Ph.D. In Applied Linguistics, University of Essex , England, 1983

Assistant Professor, Language Centre, Yarmouk University. Irbid-Jordan

\*\* Ph.D. In Education, New York, State University at Sunny Albani, 1981.  
Assistant Professor of Education (TEFL, TESOL),  
Yarmouk University, Irbid - Jordan.

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the criteria used by Jordanian teachers of English for evaluating secondary school students' compositions in order to find out to what extent these criteria are consistent, systematic and comprehensive. Two instruments were used in this study: a questionnaire and a practical workshop where actual evaluating procedures were investigated.

The research showed that there is a considerable gap between the teachers' theoretical background and their actual practice. Moreover, it confirmed that there is no common ground among teachers concerning the methods and criteria of evaluation. The research also showed that most teachers were inconsistent in their evaluation procedures. Finally, it was realized that those teachers need special training in evaluation. Therefore it has been recommended that intensive in-service training courses be organized in different places in Jordan to give special emphasis to composition evaluation and testing.

---

## 1. Introduction.

Evaluation is an important phase of the educational process. It helps the teacher to determine the extent to which the actual learning outcomes match the intended learning outcomes. The main purpose of evaluation is to improve teaching. The teacher may use the results of evaluation to diagnose and improve any shortcomings in the course and / or any weaknesses in the students' performance. According to Finder (1976:60), evaluation should occur at least three times during any course of instruction: "at the beginning, to diagnose the students' strengths and weaknesses; toward the middle, to assess progress and to make needed adjustments; and at the end, to evaluate the program as a whole".

The evaluation of a piece of writing implies determining to what extent its purposes are likely to be achieved. A successful piece of writing is one whose writer has properly used the skills of writing, and a weak composition is that whose writer has misused those skills. The skills of writing used as criteria for evaluating written compositions vary from one evaluator to another. Finder (1976: 117) lists the following criteria for evaluating written compositions: purpose, form, nonverbal parts, and verbal parts or language. Judine (1975: 23) says that a statement on evaluating freshman composition, prepared by departments of English in four Indiana Colleges, mentions five criteria: content, organization, sentence structure, diction, and mechanics. Levine (in Judine, 1975: 48) classifies the criteria for evaluating students' composition into two main categories: the first includes content, organization, and logic; and the second includes such techniques as spelling, punctuation, capitalization, word usage, sentence structure, and expressions. Peterson (in Judine, 1975: 73) suggests a system of eight criteria for evaluating composition: intention, content, reasoning, language, vigour, manuscript (handwriting), effort, and accuracy. Lamar (in Judine, 1975: 96) evaluated ninth graders' compositions using a scale of eleven points: content, originality of treatment, unity, Coherence, emphasis, paragraphing, diction, grammatical usage, sentence structure, spelling, and punctuation. Hunting et al (in Judine, 1975: 104), however, considered intention, organization, development, expression, and appearance, as criteria for evaluating ninth graders' compositions. The California Essay Scale, published by the National Council of Teachers of English in Judine (1975: 149) includes four criteria: content, organization, style, and mechanics. The composition Rating Scale, used in Cleveland Heights-University (in Judine 1975: 159), includes three main criteria: content, style, and conventions.

Valette (1977) takes into consideration three main simple items:

organization, clarity of expression and breadth of vocabulary (P. 256). These criteria have been adopted by Scollan (1981) who also suggested that both form and content of composition must be taken into consideration. According to Scollan, form includes: tenses, word order and spelling. Content, on the other hand, includes: vocabulary, subject matter and clarity of expression (pp 10-11).

Cavanaugh (1981) suggests two stages for composition grading using different criteria in each stage. Criteria for the first stage include: topic sentence, conclusion, coherence, organization and unity. Criteria for the second stage include spelling, grammar, punctuation, vocabulary level and variety of structures used (pp 21 - 22).

Since educators do not use the same criteria for evaluating their students' compositions, the researchers find it necessary to study the criteria used by Jordanian teachers of English at the secondary stage in evaluating their students' compositions (1).

The purpose of this study is to investigate the criteria used by Jordanian teachers for evaluating secondary students' compositions. The researchers want to find out to what extent these criteria are consistent, systematic, and comprehensive.

In compliance with this purpose, the researchers conducted this study on all secondary school teachers of English in seven districts in Irbid Governorate. Ninety-five teachers representing all seven districts served as a sample of the study. 30 teachers of this sample were selected to practically evaluate a randomly selected sample of students' compositions.

About 75% of the sample hold B.A. in English. About 65% have a range of 1-5 years of experience. About 62% teach 20 class hours per week. About 56% have no duties or responsibilities other than teaching English. About 71% have received preservice training in teaching English. About 65% have received inservice training in teaching English: 58% were trained locally, 5% in Arab countries, and 2% in foreign countries.

## **2. Data Collection**

Two instruments were used in the study. The first was a questionnaire of 21 questions on demographic information of the evaluators of compositions and the procedures they followed in teaching and evaluating compositions. Among the **21 items** included in the questionnaire, there were some items intentionally included to find out the

---

teachers' own ideas about grading procedures and criteria. In addition, there were some items which combined **teaching** and **evaluating**. These items were designed especially to investigate the correlation between teachers' practice in the classroom and their criteria for grading and evaluating their students' compositions. The second instrument was a test of composition in which students were asked to write about an interesting place they visited in Jordan. Students were given ideas to help them write the compositions. Thirty teachers were chosen to evaluate a random sample of these compositions.

The researchers administered the test on writing composition to second secondary class students of 8 public schools in the city of Irbid, 4 schools for boys and 4 for girls. Thirty of these compositions were randomly chosen for evaluation. Ninety-five teachers representing seven school districts in Irbid Governorate were asked to answer a questionnaire of 21 questions about demographic information and evaluation criteria they use. Thirty of these ninety-five teachers were chosen to evaluate the 30 compositions, i.e. each one of these 30 compositions was evaluated by each of the thirty teachers. This produced 900 grades (30x30). Having graded the compositions, the evaluators were also asked to answer a questionnaire about the criteria they used in evaluating these compositions.

### 3. Data Analysis

3. 1. **The Questionnaire:** As can be seen from Table 1, the majority of English teachers (about 75%) often or always focus on spelling; more than 87% focus on grammar; about 60% focus on stylistic devices; about 73% concentrate on conventional devices (2) and about 82% concentrate on the content. These are the areas which teachers often or always concentrate on when teaching.

**Table 1**  
**Areas of Concentration When Teaching Composition**  
**As Detected from Teachers' Responses to Section D in the Questionnaire**

| Area of concentration    | Never  | Rarely | Sometimes | Often    | Always   | No Answer |
|--------------------------|--------|--------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
|                          | F %    | F %    | F %       | F %      | F %      | F %       |
| 1. Spelling              | X X    | 5 5.26 | 16 16.84  | 27 28.42 | 46 46.42 | 1 1.50    |
| 2. Grammar               | X X    | 1 1.50 | 9 9.47    | 24 25.26 | 59 62.10 | 2 2.10    |
| 3. Stylistic devices     | 2 2.10 | 4 4.21 | 31 32.63  | 35 36.84 | 22 23.15 | 1 1.50    |
| 4. Conventional devices★ | 2 2.10 | 7 7.36 | 16 16.84  | 36 37.84 | 34 35.78 | 1 1.50    |
| 5. Content               | 3 3.15 | 1 1.50 | 8 8.42    | 28 29.47 | 50 52.63 | 5 5.26    |

★ See note 2.

However, when **correcting and grading** the situation is different. As Table 2 shows, only 13.7% of the teachers concerned gave considerable weight to stylistic devices and these differed considerably with reference to the grade they allotted for these stylistic devices and the difference ranged from 10% - 55%.

Moreover, the teachers' answers to Section C of the questionnaire showed that there is a lack of consistency concerning the terminology they used. For example, some teachers used the general term "grammar" while others used "grammar" and / or "structure" and / or tenses etc. Another example is the vague use of conventional devices. Some used punctuation and / or capitalization. An important observation concerning Table 2 is about the weight given to the different items considered when evaluating. This is related to the great differences which can be seen concerning the percentage of the total grade given for each item by each teacher. This can be seen in the last two columns of Table 2. For example some teachers allotted only 5% for spelling while others allotted 30%. This difference is more obvious in the case of other items. For instance, the weight allotted to the content ranged from 10% - 60% and that for stylistic devices from 10% - 55% and for conventional devices from 5% - 50% and finally for grammar from 10% - 40%.

**Table 2**  
**Areas of Concentration When Correcting Composition**  
**As Detected from Teachers' Response to Section C in the Questionnaire**

| Area of Concentration    | Number of Teachers |      | Percentage Given to Them |         |
|--------------------------|--------------------|------|--------------------------|---------|
|                          | F                  | %    | Lowest                   | Highest |
| 1. Spelling              | 59                 | 62.5 | 5%                       | 30%     |
| 2. Grammar               | 80                 | 83.4 | 10%                      | 40%     |
| 3. Stylistic devices     | 13                 | 13.7 | 10%                      | 55%     |
| 4. Conventional devices★ | 77                 | 80   | 5%                       | 50%     |
| 5. Content               | 68                 | 70   | 10%                      | 60%     |

★ See Note 2.

Concerning teachers' method of correcting their students' compositions, Table 3 shows great differences among teachers. The following are examples of the most apparent differences. While about 44% often or always vary the aims of their correcting method, about 20% never or rarely do so. Concerning the correction of errors, while 46% often or always correct all the errors, more than 28% never or rarely do so. Finally, an average of about 20% of the teachers were not consistent in

their method of correcting and this appears from the relatively high percentage of the teachers who selected the choice "sometimes".

**Table 3**  
**Teachers' Method of Evaluation as Stated in the Questionnaire**

| Kind of method                                | Never    | Rarely   | Sometimes | Often    | Always   | No Answer |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
|                                               | F %      | F %      | F %       | F %;     | F %      | F %       |
| Varying the aims and methods                  | 7 7.36   | 12 12.63 | 32 33.68  | 25 26.30 | 17 17.89 | 2 2.10    |
| Correcting part of errors                     | 16 16.84 | 27 28.42 | 22 23.15  | 25 26.31 | 20 20.05 | 6 6.31    |
| Correcting all the errors                     | 9 9.47   | 18 18.94 | 17 17.89  | 25 26.31 | 20 20.05 | 6 6.31    |
| Indicating errors only                        | 20 21.05 | 38 40    | 23 24.21  | 9 9.47   | 4 4.21   | 1 1.05    |
| Indicating errors and supplying corrections   | 2 2.10   | 8 8.42   | 24 25.26  | 29 30.52 | 27 28.42 | 5 5.26    |
| Giving grades without comments                | 30 31.57 | 35 36.84 | 19 20.0   | 8 8.42   | 2 2.10   | 1 1.05    |
| Commenting without marks                      | 34 35.78 | 31 32.63 | 17 17.89  | 6 6.31   | 4 4.21   | 3 3.15    |
| Marking the composition for content only      | 36 37.84 | 36 37.84 | 17 17.89  | 4 4.21   | 1 1.05   | 1 1.05    |
| Correcting language only                      | 34 35.78 | 25 26.31 | 19 20     | 10 10.52 | 6 6.31   | 1 1.05    |
| Correcting language and content               | 2 2.10   | 2 2.10   | 14 14.73  | 36 37.89 | 41 43.15 | X X       |
| Asking students to mark each other's work     | 21 22.10 | 22 23.15 | 32 33.68  | 12 12.63 | 5 5.26   | 3 3.15    |
| Pointing out the ways successful or defective | X X      | 6 6.31   | 33 43.73  | 27 28.42 | 26 27.36 | 3 3.15    |

### 3.2 Evaluation of Students' Compositions

As has been mentioned before, thirty teachers (about 1/3 of the sample) were asked to participate in evaluating 30 compositions each. These thirty compositions were selected randomly from the corpus and were the same for each teacher. The purpose of using this practical tool is to investigate the following:

1. Whether or not the teachers have specified criteria for grading.
2. Whether or not they are consistent in methods of evaluation.
3. Whether or not the set of criteria used is generally acceptable.
4. Whether or not there is a gap between the theoretical (ideal) background of the teachers (as shown to some extent in tool one: the questionnaire) and their actual evaluating practice.

The practical evaluation consisted of three main components:

(a) An evaluation sheet which includes all the grades given by all teachers for each composition. This gives us a total of 900 grades. The aim of this component is to enable the researchers to point out the lowest and the highest grade given to any single composition which was, of course, graded by the thirty teachers concerned. From this sheet the researchers made Table 4. Which shows the range between the lowest and the highest grades given to each paper.

**Table 4**  
**Lowest and Highest Grades Given to**  
**Each Composition by Evaluators**

| Comp. No. | Lowest Grade | Highest Grade | Comp. No. | Lowest Grade | Highest Grade |
|-----------|--------------|---------------|-----------|--------------|---------------|
| 1         | 12           | 56            | 16        | 75           | 96            |
| 2         | 64           | 100           | 17        | 40           | 88            |
| 3         | 64           | 92            | 18        | 20           | 65            |
| 4         | 48           | 96            | 19        | 55           | 96            |
| 5         | 8            | 60            | 20        | 30           | 68            |
| 6         | 15           | 60            | 21        | 40           | 92            |
| 7         | 15           | 69            | 22        | 12           | 80            |
| 8         | 5            | 76            | 23        | 22           | 72            |
| 9         | 28           | 72            | 24        | 8            | 64            |
| 10        | 20           | 76            | 25        | 25           | 88            |
| 11        | 12           | 80            | 26        | 48           | 95            |
| 12        | 32           | 84            | 27        | 8            | 58            |
| 13        | 32           | 76            | 28        | 32           | 85            |
| 14        | 30           | 80            | 29        | 40           | 78            |
| 15        | 60           | 96            | 30        | 36           | 72            |

To illustrate the significance of Table 4, let us look at this example: composition number one which was graded by the thirty teachers concerned was given thirty considerably different grades. The lowest grade was 12/100 given by evaluator number 28 and the highest grade was 56 / 100 given by evaluator number 25. The grades of all other evaluators were within this range (12-56). By examining Table 4, it can be noticed that in all cases the range was wide and in some cases very wide.

(b) The second component of the practical evaluation is the teachers' evaluation method. Unlike the similar previously described component given in the questionnaire (see p. 4 and Table 3), the teachers' methods here are described by the researchers as they observed them through the

actual grading of the compositions and not as stated by the teachers in the questionnaire to find out if there is a correspondence between what the teachers say they would do and what they actually do when evaluating compositions. As can be seen from Table 5, teachers differ in the way of indicating students' errors: some of them used symbols e.g. "P": Punctuation etc., although some of them were not consistent. They did not use such symbols in all the compositions they corrected. Other teachers indicated errors by circling or underlining them. These also were not consistent. Only about half of the teachers (53.3%) supplied their students with corrections, but again not in all cases. Moreover Table 5 reveals that the teachers attention is concentrated on linguistic matters more than on content and stylistic problems. This table shows that 86.66% of the errors indicated were linguistic errors. Only 23.33% of the teachers gave some consideration to the content and a minority (only 13.33%) gave some importance to stylistic errors. Concerning teachers' comments on students' compositions it can also be seen that only 26.66% of them provided students with some short comments while the majority (73.33%) did not. As for the comments themselves, they were mostly of the most general type and some of them were self-contradictory. For example, evaluator number 9 wrote, "Ideas good, sp. poor, punctuation good, the idea is not developed".

**Table 5**  
**Actual Evaluating Methods Followed by Teachers**  
**Who Participated in Grading the Compositions**

| Method                            | No. of teachers | %     |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|-------|
| 1. Indicating errors              |                 |       |
| a. by using symbols               | 15              | 50    |
| b. by underlining or Circling     | 20              | 66.6  |
| 2. Supplying corrections          | 16              | 53.3  |
| 3. Types of errors indicated      |                 |       |
| a. linguistic errors              | 26              | 86.66 |
| b. content errors                 | 7               | 23.33 |
| c. stylistic errors               | 4               | 13.33 |
| 4. Giving grades with comments    | 22              | 73.33 |
| 5. Giving grades without comments | 8               | 26.66 |

(c) Evaluation criteria and weighting. This component also differs from the similar one given in the questionnaire in that the teachers were asked to provide the information required after they had graded the compositions while the similar item in the questionnaire was filled in before grading the compositions. In this respect teachers were asked to write down the set of

criteria each of them followed in grading compositions and the weighting of each item.

Table 6 shows that teachers are still neglecting the stylistic matters when grading students' compositions. Only 13.33% of the evaluators give some weight to stylistic devices and this ranges from 5% - 10% only. Table 6 also shows that almost all teachers give considerable weight to content (ideas) but they differ considerably with reference to the percentage of the total grade they allot to this item. This percentage ranges from 15% - 60% which is quite large. Moreover, Table 6 shows that the majority of teachers (83.33%) give reasonable weight to spelling. This ranges from 5% - 20%. They also give weight to grammar but they differ considerably in this respect as the range (10% - 40%) shows in Table 6.

**Table 6**  
**Criteria and Weighting of Evaluating Composition Provided**  
**by Teachers After Having Graded the Compositions**

| Items                    | Number of Teachers<br>Who Considered This Item |       | Weighting in % |         |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------|----------------|---------|
|                          | F                                              | %     | Lowest         | Highest |
| 1. Spelling              | 25                                             | 83.33 | 5%             | 20%     |
| 2. Grammar               | 25                                             | 83.33 | 10%            | 40%     |
| 3. Stylistic devices     | 14                                             | 13.33 | 5%             | 10%     |
| 4. Conventional devices★ | 27                                             | 90    | 5%             | 20%     |
| 5. Content (ideas)       | 29                                             | 96.66 | 15%            | 60%     |

★ See Note 2.

#### 4. Discussion of Results

Discussion of results will concentrate on two dimensions: the first is the discussion of the results obtained from each instrument used in this study separately and the second is a cross-instrument examination. The latter type of discussion aims at supporting or refuting the results obtained from the first type and most importantly measuring the gap between the theoretical background of the teachers as it has been obtained from Instrument One (the questionnaire) and their practical behaviour as detected by the researchers through Instrument Two (the actual grading of the compositions).

The questionnaire showed that the majority (76%) of the teachers <sup>(3)</sup> focused on spelling as the most important element in composition. But when grading was concerned, only 62.5% said they would give weight to

spelling and this ranged from 5% - 30% (see Table 2). However, in the actual evaluating situation, as detected through Instrument Two, the percentage of teachers giving weight to spelling increased up to 83.33% but the range of the weight decreased to 5% - 20% (See Table 6).

Concerning grammar, the questionnaire showed that about 87% would focus on grammar when teaching composition (See 3.1 above). This remained relatively the same with respect to evaluation because about 83% said they would give weight to grammar but they differed considerably with regard to the percentage given and the range was from 10% - 40% (See Table 2). Concerning the actual grading behaviour, the percentage of teachers giving weight to grammar remained the same (83.33%) and the range also remained the same (See Table 6).

In all cases, stylistics received the least attention. Although about 60% said they would focus on style as an important element when teaching composition (See 3.1 above) only 13.7% said they would consider stylistic devices when grading but the range was very large (10% - 55%) (See Table 2). When it came to actual grading, the percentage of teachers giving weight to stylistics remained the same (13.33%) but the range was much narrower (5% - 10%) (See Table 6).

Concerning the conventional devices, about 73% said they would focus on these devices when teaching composition (See 3.1 above.) Moreover, about 80% said they would consider them when grading but the range of weighting was very wide (from 5%-50%) see Table 2. In the actual grading situation, 90% gave weight to conventional devices but the range was narrower (5% - 20%) (See Table 6). And finally 82% of the teachers said that they would focus on content when teaching composition (See 3.1 above), but only 70% said they would give the content some weight when grading, but they differed widely and the range was from 10% - 60% (See Table 2). In actual grading almost all teachers (96.66%) gave weight to the content, but the range remained very large (from 15% - 60%) (See Table 6).

## 5. Conclusions

From the previous descriptions and discussions given in sections 3 and 4, the following conclusions can be arrived at. First of all, the research showed that there is a considerable gap between the teachers' theoretical background, which is not very solid, and their actual practice. In other words, what they actually do when teaching and evaluating compositions is different from what they think they should do (or would

like to do). Secondly, the research confirmed that there is no common ground among secondary school teachers concerning the methods and criteria of evaluating students' compositions. The absence of this common agreement among teachers appeared clearly in the wide differences among teachers regarding the items they usually consider and the grades (points) allotted for each item. The clearest evidence regarding teachers' lack of agreement and their unfamiliarity with evaluation criteria was detected from the large range of discrepancies recorded when teachers were put in an actual evaluating situation. Thirdly, the results of the present research have shown that the majority of secondary school teachers of English need adequate training in evaluation methods with special concentration on composition. The results of related items of the questionnaire also support this conclusion. About 42% of the teachers of this study reported that they had never attended any inservice training courses of any kind. Those who attended some courses (mostly one or two) reported that they never attended special training courses related to the evaluation of composition. Fourthly, the research also showed that many teachers are considerably inconsistent in their methods of evaluation. This is due to the teachers' lack of specifying their aims and objectives of composition evaluation. Fifthly, this research showed that some teachers have a confused knowledge of linguistic and pedagogical terminology related to teaching and evaluation in general and evaluating compositions in particular. For example, when listing down the most important items of evaluation criteria some teachers listed grammar, structures, and / or tenses as separate items.

## **6. Recommendations**

In the light of the results of the present research together with the researchers' practical experience of the teaching situation in Jordanian schools, the researchers recommend that: (1) Special inservice training courses on the teaching and evaluation of composition must be started as soon as possible. Regarding the framework and content of such courses, the researchers would suggest the following: The main objectives of such courses must be to familiarize teachers of English in secondary schools (and other schools) with the most recent trends in the field of applied linguistics and foreign language teaching, and evaluation of students' composition. They must also aim at providing teachers with a common background and specified outlines of evaluation procedures and methodology. Moreover, they should supply teachers with a unified set of terminology regarding this topic.

---

These courses can be given in all educational centres all over Jordan as intensive courses lasting for two days during weekends or mid-term holidays.

Courses should include presentation of some theoretical insights and practical evaluation of compositions through workshops followed by discussions.

(2) In the meantime, as an expedient solution, a special working paper including suggested methods and criteria of evaluation can be distributed to teachers and discussed with them by the supervisors of English in all districts.

## Appendix A

### **A Questionnaire on the Evaluation of English Composition in Jordanian Secondary Schools.**

Dear Colleague,

The purpose of this questionnaire is to investigate the methods of evaluating English composition in the secondary stage. You are highly requested to answer the questionnaire and return it to the researchers. The information you give will be used for research only.

A. Please choose one answer and circle the appropriate number:

1. Qualifications (the highest qualification)

- |            |            |                       |            |
|------------|------------|-----------------------|------------|
| 1. GSSC    | 2. TTC Dip | 3. BA(Eng)            | 4. MA(Eng) |
| 5. Dip ELT | 6. Dip Ed  | 7. BA (other subject) |            |

2. Experience (in Years)

- |        |         |          |                  |
|--------|---------|----------|------------------|
| 1. 1-5 | 2. 5-10 | 3. 10-15 | 4. more than 15. |
|--------|---------|----------|------------------|

3. How many hours per week do you teach?

- |       |       |       |       |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. 24 | 2. 20 | 3. 15 | 4. 10 |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|

4. What other duties do you perform?

- |         |                  |               |            |
|---------|------------------|---------------|------------|
| 1. None | 2. Senior master | 3. monitoring | 4. Typing. |
|---------|------------------|---------------|------------|

5. Were you trained to be a teacher of EFL before you started?

- |        |       |
|--------|-------|
| 1. Yes | 2. No |
|--------|-------|

6. I have attended in - service training as follows:

|                            |   |   |   |   |           |
|----------------------------|---|---|---|---|-----------|
| a. Locally                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (times) |
| b. In other Arab countries | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5         |
| c. Abroad (England, USA)   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5         |

7. I have attended inservice training courses on the teaching and evaluation of compositions as follows:

once    twice    three times    4 times

8. How much time do you spend on correcting students' compositions per week.

|                   |          |        |           |        |
|-------------------|----------|--------|-----------|--------|
| a. In class:      | 1/2 hour | 1 hour | 1 1/2 hrs | 2 hrs. |
| b. Outside class: | 1/2 hour | 1 hour | 1 1/2 hrs | 2 hrs. |

B. When I correct my students' composition:

|                                                                                     | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|--------|-----------|-------|--------|
| 9. I vary my aims and methods of: correction.                                       | 1     | 2      | 3         | 4     | 5      |
| 10. I correct all of my students' errors                                            | 1     | 2      | 3         | 4     | 5      |
| 11. I just indicate the error without supplying the correction                      | 1     | 2      | 3         | 4     | 5      |
| 12. I indicate the error and supply the correction.                                 | 1     | 2      | 3         | 4     | 5      |
| 13. I give a mark for the composition without any comments.                         | 1     | 2      | 3         | 4     | 5      |
| 14. I comment on the composition without any mark.                                  | 1     | 2      | 3         | 4     | 5      |
| 15. I mark the composition for content only.                                        | 1     | 2      | 3         | 4     | 5      |
| 16. I mark the composition for language only.                                       | 1     | 2      | 3         | 4     | 5      |
| 17. I mark the composition for both content and language.                           | 1     | 2      | 3         | 4     | 5      |
| 18. I ask students to mark each other's work.                                       | 1     | 2      | 3         | 4     | 5      |
| 19. I point out the ways in which a composition is Successful as well as defective. | 1     | 2      | 3         | 4     | 5      |

C. What are the most important items you take into consideration when correcting your students' compositions? What percentage do you give for each item?

d. When teaching composition, I concentrate on:

|                         | <b>Never</b> | <b>Rarely</b> | <b>Sometimes</b> | <b>Often</b> | <b>Always</b> |
|-------------------------|--------------|---------------|------------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1. Spelling             | 1            | 2             | 3                | 4            | 5             |
| 2. Grammar              | 1            | 2             | 3                | 4            | 5             |
| 3. Stylistic Devices    | 1            | 2             | 3                | 4            | 5             |
| 4. Conventional Devices | 1            | 2             | 3                | 4            | 5             |
| 5. Content              | 1            | 2             | 3                | 4            | 5             |

### **Appendix B** **Writing in the Secondary Stage:** **Aims and Objectives:**

Connected Paragraphs:

At the level of the Secondary Course the number of connected paragraphs should be limited to three major and one or two minor paragraphs.

In writing connected paragraphs students should be trained to organize their paragraphs around one central idea which lends itself to development through narration, description, exposition or argument.

The principal aim of this activity is to achieve coherence of ideas and structures through:

- a. Choice of method of development.
- b. Clarity of expression.
- c. Balance and parallelism through proper attention to transitionals, sentence sequence, sequence of tenses, logical progression of ideas, and tone.

Extracted from Secondary Stage Syllabus, p. 20, published by The ministry of Education, 1982 Amman, Jordan.

## Notes

1. The compositions used in this study were written by students in the second secondary class (Grade 11), which is equivalent to the third secondary class in Kuwait. Students in this class are usually asked to write free compositions as stated in the English syllabus for the secondary stage. (See Appendix B).
2. Conventional devices include punctuation, indentation, organization and layout.
3. The teachers concerned here are those who responded to the questionnaire before they were asked to grade the sample compositions.

## Bibliography

- |                  |                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cavanaugh, Bob   | "Teaching Writing, or who to wright, good" in <b>Team</b> No. 39, English Language Centre, University of Petroleum and Minerals, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. 1981 |
| Finder, M.       | <b>Reason &amp; Art in Teaching Secondary - School English.</b> Philadelphia: Temple University Press. 1976                                                  |
| Judine, M. (ed.) | <b>A Guide For Evaluating Student Composition.</b> Urbana Illinois: NCTE. 1975                                                                               |
| Scollan, R       | "Evaluating Students' Compositions at UPM" in <b>Team</b> , No. 40, English Language Centre. UPM, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. 1981                                |
| Valette, R. M.   | <b>Modern Language Testing</b> , 2nd edition, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc. N. Y. 1977.                                                                     |
-