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The Factor Structure of Direct,
Objective Writing Indices for
Students in Compensatory and
Special Education Programs

Richard Parker
Gerald Tindal

University of Oregon, Division of Teacher Education, Special Education Area,
Eugene, Oregon, 97403-1215

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Staff

Gerald Tindal, Program Director
Katie Essick, Editor
Clarice Skeen
Denise Styer
Mark Baldwin

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THE FACTOR STRUCTURE OF DIRECT, OBJECTIVE WRITING INDICES FOR STUDENTS IN COMPENSATORY AND SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Richard Parker
Gerald Tindal

Abstract

For this study, eight methods were used to objectively score 6-minute writing samples from students in compensatory and specialized educational programs. Each sample also was evaluated subjectively by four trained judges who used a holistic judgment of "communicative effectiveness." Direct counts were made of the number of words (a) written, (b) written legibly, (c) spelled correctly, (d) written in correct sequence, and (e) written in continuous correct sequences (averaged over sequences). Secondary calculations produced the percentage of words (a) written legibly, (b) spelled correctly, and (c) written in correct sequence. In both a cluster analysis and factor analysis of the eight measures, two factors were identified, with the first four measures clustering together (representing a production-dependent factor) and the latter four measures clustering together (reflecting a production-independent factor). Regression of holistic ratings on objective scores produced moderately strong results for two production-independent indices—percent of words correctly spelled and percent of words correctly sequenced. The production-independent factor scores were much stronger predictors of holistic ratings than were production factor scores but were weaker than each of the two strongest individual predictors.

WRITTEN EXPRESSION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

Written expression involves a complex array of curricular skills ranging from handwriting and spelling to mood and tone. All of these skills, when combined, have a common aim: "Essentially the concern is . . . effective communication" (Polloway, Patton, & Cohen, 1981, p. 2). Research on the assessment of written expression reflects the diversity of skills needed. The two most common research concerns, however, are (a) whether the assessment is direct or indirect (employs actual writing samples or not) and (b) how samples of writing should be scored (Isaacson, 1985; Stiggins, 1982).

Direct, Objective Scoring and Holistic Judgments of Writing

Direct assessment of writing typically possesses much stronger content validity than published tests, which employ indirect methods such as objective multiple-choice, cloze, or sentence-combining test formats. Indirect measures have been criticized for not resembling typical classroom writing tasks in either response format or content (Charney, 1984; Cooper & Odell, 1977; Diederich, 1974; Greenberg, Wiener, & Donovan, 1986; Moran, 1987; Spandel & Stiggins, 1981).

When writing samples are assessed directly, two scoring approaches are possible: objective

and subjective. Objective scoring involves tallies of countable features, while subjective scoring includes judgments of quality. A number of dimensions can be counted, including total words written, unique words, and infrequent words (see Grobe, 1981 for a list of 24 countable indices).

Three types of subjective assessments have appeared in the professional literature. If the subjective judgment is brief and represents a general impression, it is referred to as *holistic*. If several characteristics of writing are analyzed separately, the judgment is referred to as *analytical*. If the judgment is how well a particular audience has been addressed or a purpose has been accomplished, it is referred to as *primary trait* (Mullis, 1984; Spandel, 1981). Most of the research investigating relationships with objective measures has focused on holistic subjective judgments.

Objective and Subjective Measures of Written Expression

Occasionally, the focus of research has been on the relationship between objective and subjective direct scoring methods, involving the prediction of holistic judgments through features such as spelling errors and length of essay (Hiller, Marcotte, & Martin, 1969; Moss, Cole, & Khampalikit, 1982; Nold & Freedman, 1977; Page, 1968; Slotnick & Knapp, 1971). Most of these studies have produced moderate correlations for samples of regular education students across several grade levels. For example, Stewart and Grobe (1979) found that teachers were influenced more by composition length and mechanical errors than by syntax. The former two variables accounted for about 25% of the variance in teacher quality ratings. Grobe (1981) corroborated these findings: The total number of words written accounted for the most variance (23% to 29% across three grade levels) in teacher ratings. But when several other vocabulary variables were added to the prediction equation, the total number of words written accounted for much less variance; teachers perceived "good" narrative writing as closely associated with vocabulary characteristics, syntax, and mechanics.

Subjective evaluations involving both analytical judgments of specific features and holistic judgments of overall quality also have been compared for the same writing samples, focusing on readability and surface appearance as influential factors in judgments of quality (Chase, 1966; Klein & Hart, 1968; Marshall & Powers, 1969; McColly & Remstad, 1965; Remondino, 1959).

Embedded in much of this research has been

the attempt to define a measure that is both reliable (can produce consistent results, either across time, setting, or judges) and valid (includes relevant and critical behavior sampling and scoring techniques). Subjective measures, although they possess more "apparent" (face) validity, often have poor reliability, while those measures with higher reliability (i.e., objective, countable indices) have been seriously questioned in terms of validity. McColly (1970) has commented on this irony: The same features that allow high interrater agreement may also reduce the validity of the same ratings "because handwriting ability and writing ability are not the same thing" (pp. 153-154).

Although moderate relationships may exist between subjective holistic judgments of writing quality and objective measures of the same samples, few studies have investigated these relationships with students in compensatory or specialized programs. In fact, all of the research addressed above was completed on students in regular programs. Furthermore, in all of these studies, objective measures were investigated as separate variables, with no attention given to their interrelationships.

Assessment Procedures for Students in Specialized Programs

Although "communicative effectiveness" has been used widely to define good writing in regular education (Poteet, 1980), the term may need to be redefined at a more basic, literal level for students in special education and compensatory programs. For these students, McColly's comment that "handwriting ability and writing ability are not the same thing" may not be applicable. In writing samples produced by such students, handwriting, spelling, punctuation, and word sequencing skills may be so deficient as to impede the reader's basic, literal understanding at the word, phrase, and sentence level. "Communicative effectiveness" may be determined largely by one or more objective, countable indices for students in specialized programs.

While accurate assessment is needed for those who teach students with severe writing deficiencies, few assessment tools are available for measuring status or growth in communicative effectiveness (Phelps-Gunn & Phelps-Terasaki, 1982). As noted earlier, indirect measures have been criticized for their lack of content validity (Charney, 1984; Cooper & Odell, 1977; Diederich, 1974; Greenberg, Wiener, & Donovan, 1986; Moran,

1987; Spandel & Stiggins, 1981). Teachers usually rely instead on the two types of direct writing assessment: (a) a global qualitative judgment, which often is reflected in a single letter grade or score, and/or (b) feedback on several specific errors (e.g., handwriting, mechanics, word usage, spelling, and syntactic features).

The relationship between these two types of feedback is usually not clear, however. Unless a teacher has devised and validated a scheme for equating them, neither teacher nor student probably is aware of the extent to which the holistic judgment of quality and the identification of more specific errors are equivalent or even related. This relationship is important for classroom practice. Even though teachers' holistic judgments may be a valid indicator of a composition's communicative adequacy, remedial or special education instruction most often focuses on correction of specific, objectively identifiable errors.

A second problem faced by classroom teachers is the need to gauge instructional effectiveness, which is one of the three major purposes of special education assessment outlined by Moran (1987). Proponents of Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM) (Deno, Marston, & Mirkin, 1982) have set forth direct, objective scoring methods as the most promising tools for regular monitoring of student progress.

An important research question is: Which and how many objectively scorable features of writing samples will make a difference in teachers' holistic ratings of the communicative effectiveness of the written product? For this study, writing skill assessment of students identified as learning disabled or low achieving and enrolled in special education and compensatory programs was investigated. The focus is on (a) the interrelationships among objective measures and (b) the relationships between the objective measures of writing and holistic judgments of "communicative effectiveness."

Objective Measures for Investigation

For this study, objectively scorable writing features were operationalized that could potentially discriminate among the compositions and stories of students with serious writing problems. Five of eight indices were selected to loosely represent a skill development sequence. First, as a prerequisite to written communication, students must produce a sufficient number of words or letter groupings ("Total Words": Tot.Wd). Second,

letters must be identifiable, and letter groupings must approximate known words ("Legible Words": Leg.Wd). Third, for improved readability, words should be not only legible but spelled correctly ("Correctly Spelled Words": CSWd). Fourth, for further improvements in communicative effectiveness, the correctly spelled words must be sequenced in a sensible manner ("Correct Word Sequences": CWSeq). Fifth, longer strings of syntactically correct word pairs should be produced to approximate clauses and sentences. The average or mean length of all clause-like, continuous strings of CWSeq is represented by "Mean Length of Correct Word Sequences": ML/CWSeq.

The last three indices—%Leg.Wd, %CSWd, and %CWSeq—are referred to as "production-independent." They were selected to measure legibility, spelling, and word sequencing, respectively, independent of the amount written. These measures are arithmetically derived from three of the measures already defined. Dividing both Leg.Wd and CSWd by Tot.Wd, and CWSeq by the total number of word sequences (including incorrect sequences), three proportions were produced that are mathematically independent of the length of a writing sample. Their counterparts (Leg.Wd, CSWd, and CWSeq), on the other hand, are directly influenced by the overall length of the composition. One of the five indices first discussed, ML/CWSeq, is also "production-independent." The distinction between production and production-independent is considered relevant, given the timed nature of the writing task.

To date, little research has been conducted on any of these measures. Stewart and Grobe (1979) and Grobe (1981) established a substantial relationship of (a) total number of words written and (b) number of correctly spelled words with holistic judgments of quality. Three of the eight indices used in this study were researched at the University of Minnesota's Institute for Research in Learning Disabilities; a number of the studies performed there supported the reliability and certain limited forms of validity for CWSeq, as well as Tot.Wd and CSWd (Deno et al., 1982; Marston & Deno, 1981; Marston, Lowry, Deno, & Mirkin, 1981; Videen, Deno, & Marston, 1982). Within these studies, Tot.Wd and CSWd have not, however, been validated by teachers' holistic judgments. CWSeq has been validated by teachers' holistic judgments, but has not been applied to writing samples from a special education population. None of the three measures has been applied to the writing of middle school students.

The ML/CWSeq index was developed by the authors specifically for students with serious writing deficiencies as an analogue to Hunt's widely used and validated "T-unit" length (Isaacson, 1985). A T-unit is an independent clause, plus any subordinate dependent clause (Hunt, 1970). The T-unit length index depends, however, upon identification of syntactically correct clauses. Many of the writing samples gathered for this study did not contain intact clauses. The more fine-grained measure, ML/CWSeq, discriminated better among these lower level samples because it allowed credit for strings of correct sequences of words that fell short of intact clauses.

METHOD

Student Participants

Students who contributed writing samples to this study were enrolled in four middle schools (Grades 6-8) in a West Coast, suburban school district of approximately 9,000 students. The school district serves a largely middle and lower-middle socio-economic class community and has a minority representation of less than 10%. Average performance across grade levels is usually within the upper 35% on national norms on the California Achievement Tests, Form E (CTB/McGraw Hill, 1985).

The four schools in this study were chosen because special education and remedial teachers in those buildings volunteered to participate. Each school offered remedial (Chapter I compensatory) and special education ("Learning Disabled" under PL 94-142) programs in language arts. In the remedial programs, supplemental pull-out assistance was offered for five 45-minute blocks per week, while complete language arts programs—from 5 to 10 blocks per week—were offered in special education programs for students on active IEPs.

Both programs focused on reading instruction. Less time was devoted to spelling, literature, study skills, reference skills, handwriting, sentence analysis, word usage, and written expression. (Although spelling instruction was prominent in several of the classrooms, none offered intensive instruction in written expression. Predictably, written expression was not the primary focus of any IEPs; if referenced at all, it was within the general category of language arts, a finding generally consistent with Schenck's [1981] survey of IEPs.)

The two programs offered similar instructional activities and used similar instructional

materials. The single most pronounced difference between the two programs was that only the special education classes contained students with severe writing disabilities. These students produced samples that would not compare favorably to the writing of most students in the primary grades. Samples of student writing are included in Appendix A.

Students selected for this study were all of those in attendance on the day selected for written assessment. No attempt was made to test absentees later. From the four schools, 172 students—30 in special education and 142 in remedial programs—were selected. This total included 118 males and 54 females from Grades 6 ($n=53$), 7 ($n=73$), and 8 ($n=46$).

California Achievement Test, Form E (CTB/McGraw Hill, 1985) subtest percentile scores were available only for students in the special education programs. The relevant mean scores ($n=30$) were Vocabulary, 7.9 ($SD=10.8$); Spelling, 6.5 ($SD=8.8$); Language Mechanics, 9.5 ($SD=8.9$); Language Expression, 12 ($SD=14.3$); and Total Language, 9.5 ($SD=10.2$). Individual CAT scores were not available for students in remedial programs, but district policy dictates that students scoring within the third and fourth stanines on national norms in reading and language arts skills receive priority for Chapter I placement.

Assessment Administration Procedures

The following story starter was administered to students: "I went up to the old, deserted house. The door was open, so I walked in. Suddenly . . ." Administration instructions were scripted following the procedures outlined by Marston et al. (1981) and Videen et al. (1983):

I want you to write a story. I am going to read the beginning of a story to you first. Then I want you to write a story about what happens. You will have 30 seconds to plan what you will write. Use that time to decide what will happen in your story. You will have 6 minutes to write it. At the end of 3 minutes, I will say "Time." Right then, I want you to make a slash mark on your paper after the last word you wrote. [Demonstrate on the board.] Then you may continue writing. After 3 more minutes, I will again say "Time" and you will make a second slash. Then you will have a few more minutes to finish up your story. Start the story with your own words. Do not write the words that I read to you. You don't need to write a title. Are there any questions?

Objective Indices

The stories were analyzed both subjectively, through holistic judgments, and objectively, using five primary indices. Arithmetic operations on these five produced an additional three summary metrics, for a total of eight. Following are definitions for each of the eight indices:

1. Total Words Written (Tot.Wd). The sum of all word-like units containing letters physically grouped together; correct spelling, usage, and syntax were disregarded. Symbols and numbers were not counted as words.

2. Correctly Spelled Words (CSWd). The sum of all words spelled correctly; homonyms had to be spelled according to the usage in the sentence.

3. Correct Word Sequences (CWSeq) (Videon et al., 1982). The sum of all immediately adjacent, correctly spelled word pairs that make sense together, given the context of the sentence. Correct beginning and ending punctuation replaced correctly spelled words for scoring word sequences at the start and end of sentences.

4. Legible Words (Leg.Wd). The sum of all words that are recognizable as particular, real English words. The composition was read from the *end* to the *beginning*, with only one word presented at a time through a mask window, for word selection. Legible words did not have to be spelled correctly.

5. Mean Length of Correct Word Sequence Strings (ML/CWSeq). The number of CWSeq in a continuous string, summed over all strings and divided by the number of different strings.

6. Percentage of Correctly Spelled Words (%CSWd). The ratio of the number of words spelled correctly (CSWd) to the total number of words written in the composition (Tot.Wd).

7. Percentage of Correct Word Sequences (%CWSeq). The number of correct word sequences (CWSeq) divided by the total number of words written.

8. Percentage of Legible Words (%Leg.Wd). The number of legible words (Leg.Wd) divided by the total number of words written.

It should be noted that several interdependencies exist among the eight indices because they all were performed on the same writing sample. The five "number of" indices are related through the overall length of the writing sample. In addition, CWSeq and ML/CWSeq include only correctly spelled words (CSWd), and CSWd requires legibility (Leg.Wd) as a prerequisite. These interdepend-

encies should be considered in interpreting the factor analysis results.

Scoring Procedures

Two graduate students were trained in a 2-hour session to apply the first five assessment methods (Tot.Wd, CSWd, CWSeq, Leg.Wd, ML/CWSeq) to 28 separately solicited writing samples. The remaining three indices (%CSWd, %CWSeq, %Leg.Wd) were produced by arithmetic operations on a computer. The following coefficients of agreement between the two raters were calculated: Tot.Wd, .99; CSWd, .98; CWSeq, .87; Leg.Wd, .95; ML/CWSeq, .83; %CSWd, .98; %CWSeq, .87; and %Leg.Wd, .92.

Initially, each writing sample required approximately 15 minutes for marking. With practice, the markers reduced this time to approximately 8 minutes per paper for all five primary indices. For both objective scoring and holistic judgments, the raters were blind to student names, schools, grade levels, and program placements. More complete scoring procedures are provided in Appendix B.

Holistic Judgments

Writing samples were rated holistically according to their communicative effectiveness, scaled from 1 (very poor) to 7 (very effective), with no intermediate descriptors. Protocols that had been rated previously by 16 experienced special education and remedial teachers served as range finders. Three of those protocols were selected for each of the 7 points on the holistic rating scale. Range finders were chosen on the basis of their average ratings and by low variability of ratings among the 16 raters. Sample range finders are included in Appendix C.

Raters also were assisted by the following definition of good writing, produced by a team of four practicing special education teachers after reading through and discussing a representative set of writing samples:

Good writing clearly communicates to the reader the ideas/story of the writer. Good writing requires legible handwriting or printing, as well as distinguishable words, phrases, and sentences. Coherent linking of ideas from one sentence to the next also contributes to good writing. (Hasbrouck, 1987, p. 2)

After they had been given the definition and the range finders, four judges were trained to (a)

read each paper in its entirety and judge how well the writer had communicated his/her story or ideas through writing and (b) holistically rate the paper (1 to 7). Prior to assessing the 172 writing samples, all judges were trained in a 40-minute session on a set of 28 separately solicited protocols. An inter-judge agreement check after training yielded average Pearson correlations of $r = .87, .83, .82, .78, .75,$ and $.74$ (.79 average). The holistic ratings used in analyses were the averages from the four judges.

Data Analysis

Four analyses were completed for this study. First, descriptive statistics were computed separately for students in remedial and special education programs, and t tests were conducted to determine significant differences in writing scores between special education and remedial program subsamples. Second, the eight objective indices were intercorrelated across the entire sample, followed by hierarchical cluster analysis of the matrix to identify clusters of indices. Third, a principal axes factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted on the eight objective scoring variables. Finally, the holistic ratings were re-

gressed on (a) the eight individual objective scoring indices and (b) factor scores from the principal axis analysis.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics for the sample are reported in Table 1, along with independent t tests for differences between the special education and remedial programs. Highly significant differences between the two samples were obtained in holistic ratings, with remedial students receiving nearly double the scores of special education students. Significant differences between the two groups also existed on three production-independent indices: percent of correct word sequences (%CWSeq), percent of correctly spelled words (%CSWd), and mean length of correct word sequences (ML/CWSeq). No significant differences between the two groups were found on the production counterparts to these three indices.

Given a larger special education sub-sample, these significant differences would have provided a rationale for conducting separate factor analyses for data from the two sub-samples: special education and remedial. Besides the limited sample-size, there are other rationales for aggregating the two

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Comparisons Between Students Enrolled in Special Education ($n=30$) and Remedial Programs ($n=142$) on Holistic Ratings and Eight Objective Indices of Writing Quality

Index	Special Ed. Program		Remedial Program		t test	p value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Tot.Wd	47.50	18.90	46.30	17.10	.35	.720
Leg.Wd	39.70	16.50	38.80	14.60	.33	.740
CSWd	38.30	17.40	41.60	15.60	1.05	.290
CWSeq	28.20	14.70	33.00	13.60	1.76	.080
ML/CWSeq	3.90	2.10	4.90	1.90	2.61	.009
%Leg.Wd	.84	.09	.84	.11	.23	.820
%CSWd	.79	.12	.89	.09	5.88	<.0001
%CWSeq	.64	.19	.81	.15	5.57	<.0001
Holistic Ratings	2.19	.92	4.02	1.47	6.71	<.0001

Tot.Wd = Total number of words written.

Leg.Wd = Number of legible words.

CSWd = Number of correctly spelled words.

CWSeq = Number of correct word sequences.

ML/CWSeq = Mean length of continuous strings of correct word sequences.

%Leg.Wd = Percentage of all words that are legible.

%CSWd = Percentage of all words that are correctly spelled.

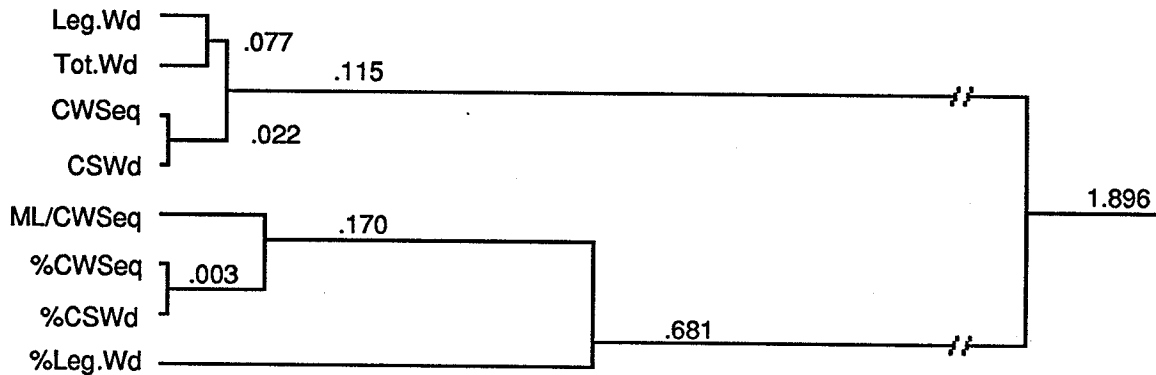
%CWSeq = Percentage of all possible contiguous pairs of words that are correctly sequenced.

Table 2: Correlations Among Eight Direct, Objective Measures of Written Expression, with Supplemental Cluster Analysis (N=172)

Index	Leg.Wd	CSWd	CWSeq	ML/CWSeq	%Leg.Wd	%CSWd	%CWSeq
Tot.Wd	.924	.950	.845	.121	-.051	.074	.064
Leg.Wd		.944	.894	.27	.309	.255	.255
CSWd			.963	.333	.113	.358	.341
CWSeq				.511	.231	.523	.530
ML/CWSeq					.398	.701	.737
%Leg.Wd						.517	.538
%CSWd							.963

Note: All correlations above .20 are significant at the .01 level.

Hierarchical Cluster analysis*, with standardized joining distances:



*Using Complete Linkage method.

- Tot.Wd = Total number of words written.
- Leg.Wd = Number of legible words.
- CSWd = Number of correctly spelled words.
- CWSeq = Number of correct word sequences.
- ML/CWSeq = Mean length of continuous strings of correct word sequences.
- %Leg.Wd = Percentage of all words that are legible.
- %CSWd = Percentage of all words that are correctly spelled.
- %CWSeq = Percentage of all possible contiguous pairs of words that are correctly sequenced.

sub-groups in factor analysis. First, the special and remedial populations were defined by a combination of the CAT tests and local, curriculum-based assessments, plus teacher judgment. Second, the existing instructional programs for both types of students were similar in use of instructional time and in their opportunities for improving instruction.

The third rationale for aggregating groups is that at this stage in writing research, we are seeking potentially important differences between special and/or remedial populations and the broader school population. The research base on students enrolled in the regular program is substantial, and we perceive a danger in overgeneral-

izing those results to students enrolled in both special and remedial programs.

The correlation matrix for the eight indices is presented in Table 2. All but one coefficient was positive, and most were moderate to strong. The supplemental cluster analysis of the matrix reflects two main groupings: production versus production-independent indices. The production indices are tightly clustered, as indicated by their short linkage distances. The production-independent indices are clustered more loosely into three sub-groups: (a) ML/CWSeq, (b) %CWSeq and %CSWd, and (c) %Leg.Wd. Interestingly, correlations between production measures and their production-independent counterparts were only

low to moderate in strength (CSWd & %CSWd: .358; CWSeq & %CWSeq: .53; Leg.Wd & %Leg.Wd: .309; CWSeq & ML/CWSeq: .511).

In the third analysis, the eight objective scores were factor analyzed using principal axis factor extraction with varimax rotation. Relatively clear, simple structure was found; two major factors accounted for 83% of the matrix variance. Four production variables (number of words written, spelled correctly, written in correct sequence, and written legibly) loaded highly on the first factor and negligibly on the second. The first factor accounted for 55.6% of the matrix variance. The second factor, accounting for 27.2% of the matrix variance, represented the average number of words per sequence and three percentage variables: words spelled correctly, words in correct sequence, and words legibly written. The loadings of these variables on Factor 2 ranged from .54 to .99, while their loadings on Factor 1 were all less than .20.

The fourth set of analyses investigated the relationship between the eight objective measures and holistic judgments of communicative effectiveness. Holistic judgments were regressed on each of the eight objective indices separately, as well as on factor scores for Factor I and II. The two

production-independent variables, %CWSeq and %CSWd, produced moderately strong coefficients (.75, .73) with holistic ratings, followed by ML/CWSeq (.59). The lowest coefficients were produced by three production variables: Tot.Wd, .10; Leg.Wd, .24; and CSWd, .31.

The eight variables were entered stepwise into a regression formula, with holistic judgments as the criterion. Five analyses were completed—one for each judge, and one for the judges' combined (average) judgments. Only the latter is displayed in Table 4. For Judges 1, 2, and 4 as well as for the average of all four judges, only one variable, %CWSeq, was stepped into the equation at $p = .05$ entry level. Standardized regression weights for Judges 1, 2, 4, and the average of all four judges were .74, .70, .68, and .76, respectively. For Judge 3, three variables made significant contributions, in the following order of importance: %CWSeq, ML/CWSeq, and CSWd. The multiple R for these three variables was .7, somewhat lower than the coefficients produced for the other judges by the lone predictor, percentage of words in correct sequences. Holistic judgments were regressed next on factor scores from the two-factor orthogonal solution. The largest contribution to holistic judgments came from the second factor, with a stan-

Table 3: Rotated Two-Factor Solution for Principal Axis Analysis of Eight, Direct, Objective Measures of Writing

Factor	Eigenvalue	Matrix Variance Accounted for by Eigenvalues	
		Percent	Cum. Percent
I	4.45	55.6	55.6
II	2.17	27.2	82.8

Factor Structure Following Varimax Rotation:

Variable	Factor I	Factor II
Total words written (Tot.Wd)	.99	-.09
Number of legible words (Leg.Wd)	.95	.16
Number of correctly spelled words (CSWd)	.98	.19
Number of correct word sequences (CWSeq)	.90	.40
Mean length of continuous CWSeq (ML/CWSeq)	.19	.81
Percentage of words which are legible (%Leg.Wd)	.02	.69
Percentage of words correctly spelled (%CSWd)	.16	.93
Percentage of words correctly sequenced (%CWSeq)	.15	.95

Table 4: Prediction of Holistic Ratings from Individual Indices of Written Expression and from Factor Scores Derived from these Indices

Predictors	Pearson <i>r</i>	<i>p</i> value
Total words written (Tot.Wd)	.10	.20
Number of legible words (Leg.Wd)	.24	.001
Number of correctly spelled words (CSWd)	.31	<.0001
Number of correct word sequences (CWSeq)	.45	<.0001
Mean length of continuous CWSeq (ML/CWSeq)	.59	<.0001
Percentage of words that are legible (%Leg.Wd)	.42	<.0001
Percentage of words correctly spelled (%CSWd)	.73	<.0001
Percentage of words correctly sequenced (%CWSeq)	.75	<.0001

Orthogonal Factors:

Multiple R	Factor I <i>b</i>	<i>p</i> value	Factor II	<i>p</i> value
.72	.24	<.001	.69	<.001

standardized regression (β) weight of .69. The β weight of the first factor, representing the four production variables, was significant but small: $\beta = .24$.

DISCUSSION

For this study, eight direct scoring indices of written expression were intercorrelated, factor analyzed, and used to predict holistic judgments of the same writing samples. The indices were selected to loosely represent a skill development sequence of increasing complexity. Cluster analysis of a correlation matrix defined two clusters: (a) production variables ("number of" indices), and (b) production-independent variables ("percent of" and "mean length" indices). This dichotomy also was supported by a principal axis factor analyses, in which clear simple structure was obtained. Two orthogonal factors emerged. The first was interpreted as a production factor since all variables loading on it related to the amount written (i.e., number of words in total, spelled correctly, or in correct sequence). The second factor was production-free since it loaded only with "average" and "percent" variables (percentage of words spelled correctly, in correct sequence, or legibly written; average number of words in correct sequence), all of which are mathematically independent of sample length. Together, the two factors accounted to a large degree for student writing performance. Furthermore, when holistic judgments were regressed on these factors, 49% of the subjective judgment variance was accounted for.

Within the loose skill development sequence

hypothesized for the eight indices by the authors, the three production variables were weakly related to holistic ratings. In contrast, two production-independent variables, percentage of words spelled correctly and written in correct sequence, were highly related to judgments of "communicative effectiveness." Regression of holistic ratings on objective scoring indices resulted in moderately large coefficients (.59 to .75) for three production-independent indices: %CWSeq, %CSWd, and ML/CWSeq (in decreasing order). This finding may in part be due to the dependency between these variables since correct sequencing includes an element of spelling correctness.

An interesting finding was the discrepancy between the matrix variance accounted for by the two factors and their relative strength as predictors of holistic judgments. Factor 1, comprised of four production variables, explained double the variance (56%) among the objective performance measures that the production-free Factor 2 explained. Yet when holistic judgment was regressed on the two factors, Factor 2 had a *b* value nearly 3 times the size of that for Factor 1. Furthermore, when raw holistic scores were regressed on factor scores, the multiple R was smaller than two of the largest individual coefficients (%CSWd and %CWSeq). Within the multiple regression, the production-independent factor explained most of the variance, primarily due to the influence of one variable.

It appears that a production-independent factor, including words legibly written, spelled correctly, and sequenced correctly, is a moderate-to-

strong predictor of teacher judgments of the communicative effectiveness of student writing. Students are spread out easily on a distribution by counting the number of words (a) written, (b) spelled correctly, (c) in correct sequence, and (d) written legibly within their writing samples. Furthermore, these production variables are highly related to each other, so that students with higher scores on one variable also have higher scores on other variables within this cluster. But when compositions are evaluated for their communicative merit, judges are not swayed by length of the composition, unless most of those words are legible, spelled correctly, sequenced correctly, and in longer continuous correct sequences.

Stewart and Grobe (1979) and Grobe (1981) also found that production variables initially accounted for most of the variance but became less influential when analyzed in conjunction with a number of vocabulary variables. Apparently, although production variables allow easy discrimination among students, they are not of major importance if compositions are judged as a whole, when the focus is on "communicative effectiveness."

The results of this study generally are consistent with literature on the relationship between objective and holistic written expression assessment within regular education (Chase, 1966; Grobe, 1981; Hiller et al., 1969; McColly, 1970; Nold & Freedman, 1977; Page, 1968; Slotnick & Knapp, 1971; Veal & Hudson, 1983). For a special and remedial education sample of 172 students, this study demonstrated correlations for about half of the eight indices in the low to low-moderate range. Three objective indices, however, indicated predictive strength much larger than found in most of the above studies. A probable explanation for this fact is twofold: (a) In this study, communicative effectiveness was clearly targeted and defined for the holistic scorers, and (b) in special and remedial education, communicative effectiveness is more strongly determined by errors in objectively scorable features of writing than is the case in regular education with students who have stronger writing skills. It is possible that these results would not be obtained for separate special education and remedial writing samples. With only 30 special education samples, however, the authors did not pursue separate analyses.

Generalizations beyond this sample should be limited because the present study differs from

other studies in two major respects. First, most other studies have focused on regular education students, while we examined only the writing of low-achieving students and those served in special education. Second, while most studies have focused on holistic or primary trait judgments of higher order composition skills (Mullis, 1980), judges in this study attended only to the simple ability to communicate.

In summary, two direct scoring indices each can explain more than half of the variance in holistic judgments by experienced special education and remedial teachers of the "communicative effectiveness" of their students' 6-minute creative writing samples. These two indices—percent of words correctly sequenced (%CWSeq) and percent of correctly spelled words (%CSWd)—both are independent of the total number of words written, as is the third strongest predictor, the mean length of correct word sequences (ML/CWSeq). They are quite efficient together, requiring 30 minutes for initial training of scorers, and then only about 5 minutes to score each paper. The strongest of these predictors, %CWSeq, is the more complex, including both spelling and correctly sequencing individual words. The second strongest predictor, %CSWd, reflects spelling only. Both indices gauge accuracy in applying specific, teachable skills to a natural classroom task. The classroom writing sample, as a terminal performance, can be used repeatedly over time, and may be useful for progress monitoring.

Charney's statement that it is disconcerting to find holistic scores, which are supposed to be a qualitative measure, so directly predictable by such mundane quantitative measures as the length of the sample, the number of errors and the number of unusual vocabulary items (1984, p. 75) may miss an important point. For low-achieving students such as those receiving special education, these "mundane" features may be the minimum essentials for simple, literal communicative effectiveness.

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APPENDIX A
STUDENT WRITING SAMPLES

Special Education Writing Samples

- ① saddy - I herd a noise and it made me want to go back but I didn't I went a bed
 then I heard another noise it sounded like someone was playing a piano
 then I went up the stairs then I fell through and got out of the pit then ~~me~~ I got going again
 I was back down the stairs and went to the kitchen and the toaster was on and then suddenly the facet came on
 it freaked me out I was freaked out I went to the bathroom the the facet was on in there and the toilet was flushing by itself. I got scared again I ~~did~~ didn't know what to do / so I came out off the kitchen and I went to the door the front door and I got out the door home and my mom said
 well well you are all density how come because I was in the weird house.

suddenly a gaster bag walked toward me
 and I went through her later of times
 and a skatten appeared and a flying
 desk with knife on it

There it was it was
 a big monster but he ran
 away from me. He went
 into a hallway of doors.
 He went in one of the door
 but I was not stop what
 he had went in no.
 So I started down the hall
 way. At the doors I see one
 of them but there was
 nothing there but a chair
 but it was moving. A girl
 who was there but no one
 said a thing. So I went down
 the hall away of door and
 open a nothing one open and there
 was a big monster he was
 about 7 feet tall and he ran
 a girl from me but I don't
 know what happen to the
 animal when he took off
 I could hear strange noise
 from time to time but
 they were just the house
 the thank

a cat jumped out of a closet and scared the living staff out of me. I waded up the old rote steps. Kreted with every step I took up the steps. There was a moslik. leviru was ther I looked into one room. The door kret opend. Copweds) wer all over the place I woted out of the door and a jix was hangin over the stres with blod dripon out of his moth. I skrimed and ran down the ters and half way I fell in the one of the steps I skrimed agan and my littl drothe mark wand out and graded my hand and pled the somthing sim. ed to fall on me under the flowr. It took me and my littl drothe ondr. It was a littl remment. Mis hamaw. Freds he was lookin rats.

a gost jumped out and
 Sad you can not go into the
 hose, I can go in there if I want
 to no bute is going to stop me. the
 gost sad I can stop you if you want
 me to. NO you can not tutch me
 be cause you are a gost why cant
 I go in the hose becaus it
 is hanted, I will go in the hose
 and I find out someone lives
 there I can not tell you his name
 ok ok I

A gost popt out of no wer
 and I ran under a taball.
 The gost bid not see me then I
 locket behind me and I saw a dead
 man. then the gost spoted me and
 came after me then I went in to a
 nother room and ther was a hall
 group of gosts they were around the
~~table~~ table they were eating and talking
 to ech other and then I stood on
 a chear and I so a gost coming
 from behind It posht me of the ~~hear~~
 chare and all of the gost herd
 me they came after me and I fell
 boun in to a ~~bot~~^{hall} the hall had no
 botum.

They sees a fat man and he
 said com in please. he said wost your
 name my name is Scott. Scott said
 want your name my name is
 bill. bill said do you want to
 her to night. Scott said yes.
 bill said y are you up her.
 Scott said was in a car bill
 said to Scott com over yeme.
 Scott said yes I will com over som
 time in the sommer.

the door shut and it was pitch dark
 in there and then I feal in a hole
 and then I knew I was trap.
 at frist I was scard and then
 a person jump out and scard
 me and the he grap me and
 took me with him. I was scard
 and frighend I didnt know want
 fo do so I still walk with him
 then he nocked me out and
 the and put handcuff on my
 hand, my foot so I couldn't
 move then I woke up and then
 I seen a axe in his hand
 and he drop the ax and let
 me fare and I ask him why
 did you do that then.

I saw a big man. that man
 was vere big he was so big he hit
 his head on the rif. and I ran to
 The back urb to hid from That
 man he got up to gume extreme
 he had a msete he was goen
 to kill me. alast I lost he I herd
 he screm I ran to my car it
 was smast I sol, a neth car
 so I ran to it it must hav be tow
 mills at best. the car was a
 911 porshu. I got in sid ur

I jest got hit with a bat and I did not fate
 wint I jest got hit by a knifi mine he bid
 he did not bive hee esch his sene nsen
 I jest got bier wid doyo wot me to gent
 he did not lich I ned the hours to
 live in the old draw hours seneh seneh
 live there gooy car.

sunly something grabed me
 and sed zzzz and grabd my
 hand and I put my fenger in a
 pemsle sharper and grined it to the
 done. I did not now that my brother
 waf following me and the the thing grade
 my brother in the pencil sharpen
 and grinded his face

Chapter I Writing Samples

..... I heard a noise. It was a crash from the back room. A few seconds later I heard another. It was even louder. I slowly walked closer to the door of the room in which the sound was coming from. Slowly, step by step, I got closer. It seemed like it was very far away because I was walking so slow. As I walked, the boards under my feet creaked. I got to the door and put my hand on the door knob. It was ice cold. I slowly turned it and as the door opened, a light breeze came through. I continued opening it and the breeze got stronger. I opened the door and realized it was the wind opening and closing the shutter on the window.

The door slammed shut behind me and I jumped. I heard somebody ~~playing~~ playing a piano upstairs so I started to walk. When I got to the top of the stairs there was a door off ~~to~~ the right of me. And it sounded like the music was in the room. So I opened the door. And the back of the piano was facing me. So I went up to it and it was playing by itself. I thought that it was one of those pianos that play by itself. But it stopped and the bedroom door shut. Then I heard a funny laugh. I got scared and went to open the door and it would not open so I took the chair that was by the piano and through it

A great big hairy creature jumped out and grabbed me. As I was being pulled into the house by the hairy creature, I took out my Rambo knife and cut him into creature steak.

That night we all had creature steak, but nobody knew what kind of steak it was!

A huge dead body fell at me. I was scared at first but then I went in. There was a floating sign that said beware of the ghost who lives here/any trespassers will be eliminated. I kept on going suddenly ahhhh. I fell in a pit of bones. The trap door was open so I piled the bones and got out. I went a little farther and saw a ghost! It was me so I ran and never went to that house again.

... Suddenly the door closed. I couldn't open so I went back and walked up the stairs. When I got to the top of the stairs, there were three doors. I picked the first door and went in. The room had furniture and a table. There was a closet in the room so I moved closer to it. I reached for the knob so I could open it. When I opened it a skeleton fell out and landed on me. I screamed and ran out of the room and down the stairs.

After I got my senses back, I went into the kitchen. I was looking for a knife, so I could pick the lock and get out of here, but there was no knife only a toothpick and a pair of sun glasses. I started to pick the lock with the toothpick when I heard a click and the door opened and I was free.

I was going to an haunted house, when suddenly I heard a scream, it was scary. I went into the house to see what was the matter. When the door slammed, I was spooked, and scared. Then I saw a lady in rags run up the stairs. I chased her, then she through her eye-balls at me. I ran down the stairs. Then I saw a giant snake. I found a shot gun then I shot it. But in the morning I knew it was just a dream.

I fell to the floor the door slammed shut. I got up and looked around nobody was there. I started walking up stairs there were ten doors 5 on one side and 5 on the other. I decided to take the last door on the left side. It was locked. Then I tried the fifth door on the right side it was locked. Then I tried the first door on the left side. It opened inside was a operation on the bed suddenly it started moving. It said come in have a seat. I sat down and suddenly chains rop me to the chair. It said, no escape death to you and the next thing I know I'm out front of the house the door is closed. I never did go back to that house again.

The Door suddenly slammed behind me. It would not open. All the windows were boarded up and I could not knock the boards out. I began looking for another Exit. I went upstairs there was now way out there so I tried the Basement. I remember seeing on a door to the basement even I was outside. I found the door it was shut tight I could not get it open. I began looking around the basement and I found an old home. I went up stairs and knocked the boards on the windows out. That's the last time I go there.

There was a big flash of light! Then a flash light dropped from the ceiling. I let out a horrible scream! I flew toward the door at amazing speeds, suddenly! The door slammed shut, that's when I hit it. Man did that hurt. When I woke up I had a horrible headache. I got up wondering where I was, when this guy came up to me. He look whiter than a very clean sheet. He said, "did you see my flashlight?" I said "flashlight"? "OH yea here it is" I said. He said thank you and went on his way. Well me/I ran out the door and never came back.

the door slams behind
 you. Now try to get out you can't.
 so you ask if any bodies hear.
 then you start to walk up stairs.
 you fall in a trap door and go to
 the basement of the house. you look
 for a light switch. you found it
 then someone grabs you, you scream.
 it turns out to be a old yescer.

I went in and the screeched open. It was very scary and I was scared. The house was deserted. After I went in I heard some noises in a room. I went into the room and there was an old lady. The old lady was very eerie and she had spiders crawling all over her. At the time I thought that she was dead, but then she moved closer and closer toward me. I started to run up the stairs and the stairs disappeared right in front of me. I run into another room and it had lot of people in it. But the people were dead she had sucked ~~all~~ all of their blood out. They were white with lots of holes ~~be~~ in their bodies. I run out of the room into the yard. My car was were it was hard to see it but I managed to get to it and I got in it and drove away.

I fell through the floor; all of a sudden every thing went black, I reached into my pocket I got out a match. But the match was wet. I must have had an accident when I went through the floor. I heard funny & weird noises coming from all around me. Then the next thing I knew something fuzzy took my hand. I have to be dreaming I told myself. This creature wanted me to go with it so I did, then I thought that I heard water. But I thought that I was dreaming. The next thing I knew, I was going down a water slide. When I woke up from dream, I was taking a nice hot bath!

APPENDIX B
SCORING PROCEDURES

Scoring Writing Samples

Score each sample from *after* the title, if one was written, up to the star on the student's paper. The scoring procedures must be used in the order presented. Note that while these scoring procedures are called "objective," teacher judgment and interpretation will sometimes be required. Scorers in initial pilot studies achieved interrater reliabilities of .92 calculating the percent of illegible words and .83 for mean length of correct word sequences after a one hour training session (Parker & Tindal, 1988). The scoring procedures presented here are condensed for space considerations from a complete scoring manual (Hasbrouck, 1988).

The last page of this document contains the results of these scoring procedures applied to the writing samples of two middle school students with learning disabilities. The markings used allow students to later edit and correct their work. The objective scoring procedures described below are demonstrated using these samples as guides.

Number of Legible Words (used to calculate the Percent of Legible Words)

The number of legible words must be counted first, since the scorer judges each word **OUTSIDE OF ITS CONTEXT**, and that judgment must be made before the sample is read.

For writing to communicate, it must first be legible. To determine legibility in an objective manner, teachers first count the number of illegible words. An illegible word is defined as a group of letters that cannot be recognized as a single, particular word outside of the context of the phrase or sentence.

Scorers should mask the surrounding words using a card with a small slot cut out, or block out adjacent words with their fingers. Either way, be certain to examine only one word or group of letters, in isolation, at a time. Begin with the *last* word written before the star and proceed *backward* one word at a time until the first word of the story is reached. You must be able to *clearly* identify the word at *first glance*. If not, mark it as illegible with a wavy line beneath the word. (See Lines 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, & 10 of scoring sheet).

Total Number of Words Written (used to calculate the Percent of Legible Words)

A word is defined as a group of letters which have at least a reasonable resemblance to real words and/or are separated on the line by spaces to the left and right. Both legible and illegible words are counted. Abbreviations are counted as words, but numerals are ignored for this scoring. Compound words written incorrectly as two separate words are counted as one word (see Lines 10 & 11 in scoring sheet).

Percent of Legible Words

Calculate the percent of legible words first, subtracting the number of illegible words from the total number of words and then dividing by the total number of words.

Correctly Spelled Words (used to score Correct Word Sequences)

Correct spelling plays an important role in the ability of writing to communicate to a reader. Circle all the words which are spelled correctly, given the context of the sentence. Numerals are ignored for this scoring. Known slang words can be considered correctly spelled if the student used a reasonably close phonetic spelling. Words written in the incorrect tense for the context of the sentence are considered misspelled (see Lines 8 & 10: "seen"). Ignore capitalization and

punctuation errors and minor grammatical errors where *me/I* or *a/an* are misused (for example: "He gave the letter to I." or "She ate a apple.")

The number of correctly spelled is not calculated as one of the scores in this procedure. It is simply one step taken in the process of identifying the mean length of correct word sequences, below.

Number of Correct Word Sequences (used to calculate Mean Length of Correct Word Sequences)

After legibility and correct spelling have been assessed, the next aspects of writing to consider are (a) whether the words have been accurately used to convey meaning (semantics) and (b) whether words have been accurately combined using grammatical structures (syntax). This is measured objectively by counting the correct sequences of words.

A correct word sequence is defined as a sequence of two adjacent correctly spelled words which is acceptable within the context of the larger phrase/sentence to a native speaker of the English language. The term "acceptable" means that the scorer judges the word sequence as syntactically and semantically correct and appropriate (Videen, Deno, & Marston, 1982). A caret mark (^) is used to indicate each correct word sequence. A carat is placed above and between the two words. (See scoring sheet). Each correct word sequence is marked by one caret, and may continue in an unbroken sequence of carets as far as the end of the sentence. Sequences stop at the end of sentences, before an incorrect conjunction (see below), or whenever two adjacent words are not correctly spelled, and both syntactically and semantically correct. One caret is marked over the 3-minute star *if* the word on other side of the star is both correctly spelled *and* part of a correct word sequence (see Lines 7 & 12).

Poor writers frequently write run-on sentences where conjunctions such as *and*, *but*, *so*, or *then* are used incorrectly to link too many clauses together. If a conjunction is used improperly to link 3 or more clauses, then the scorer must judge which pair of clauses fit best together, if any. The incorrect conjunction will be considered an error, even if it is correctly spelled. It may be crossed out to make scoring easier. Correct sequences will end at this "extraneous conjunction." (See Lines 9 & 12).

Mean Length of Correct Word Sequences

A widely accepted goal for written expression is for students to use expanded sentences to increase syntactic maturity (Isaacson, 1985). To score this aspect of students' writing, go back over the passage and put parentheses around each unbroken string of adjacent carets marking correct word sequences. (See scoring sheet). Count how many carets marking *unbroken sequences* are within each set of parentheses and add those numbers together. Divide the sum by the total number of sets for the "mean length of correct word sequences."

APPENDIX C
SAMPLE RANGE FINDERS

I like 7th grade because I have Tom, friends and
 I have a grid friend named Kim and she is nice
 and she is a 7th grad and she is 13 and she
 has a sister named Shira, she is 7th grade and
 she is 11 and she is old and she is nice and

I like being in the 6th (or 7th) grade because ...

①

is funny to I
 take with Scott and Jim & Mike
 I like seventh grade better than the
 sixth grade, it is a better period for

I like being in the 6th (or 7th) grade because ...

①

I like being in the 6th (or 7th) grade because ...

①

I like it is fun to be in this 6th grade we fun to be to my friend if fun to take to she is nice to be with her name is Lisa she said that me and her is friend to be with. We have fun she past stuff for me and I bet for some stuff to she gave

I like being in the 6th (or 7th) grade because ...

①

I have a friend
his name is Jeff
he has a brother named
Ray he is gay and I
don't lick him that Ray
I lick the scoole but
it don't lick me
it hates me if I am
in trouble becos I didn't
show for a meeting I
want to go to Saturday
and I don't lick it

If I won the Lottery...

②

I have to be a happy man and I
 would have a \$160,000, I have
 in my taxes and I would buy a house
 a car a horse a field for
 my horse a truck a minie
 a car and a cat and a
 dog and some food to eat
 and I will find a wife to marry
 and I would have some
 children to and I have two
 boys and 3 girls to and I
 would be a happy father

I like being in the 6th (or 7th) grade because ...

②

I like being in 6th grade
 because I like the teacher.
 And I like the fun thing they
 give us and I like doing homework
 because it is neat to do and
 I like doing brake* And the
 teachers are nice and stuff

If I won the Lottery, ...

②

I would get a new Raider and I would get my B. Smith & a new Raider and a watch and a Babe gun and I would talk to my Mom and Dee would see like to go to a movie and then I would go to California and see my grandma and then I would go and

If I won the Lottery, ...

③

if I won the lottery I would buy a Z28 and a T.V for my room and some close and then I would take a trip to Cal. for a year or so and spend some money on Jimmy Hultbert by here some close and come home and help get us a better house get my mom a Z28 my dad a A. 4X4 truck and my sister a

③

If I won the Lottery, ...

If I won the lottery this week I would buy me a horses and a farm and work there or I would go back to Idaho and visit my best, best friend. I would graduate from High school & that would be fun + so would ~~own~~ a ~~horse~~ horse

I went up to the old deserted house. The door was open so I walked in. Suddenly...

③

The Old Wall's house.
The door shut I screamed then I walked down three flights of stairs, and on the right was a door I walked up to it and it was a dungeon and people were hanging around as if hanging from the ceiling then I went in another door + Mr. Doran was cut in to wires like a mouse.

③

If I won the Lottery, ...

Buy a new house and I also would buy me a new jet. ~~and~~ then I would buy me a mansion. I also would buy me a ticket to go to Hong Kong then I will go and stay there and have a good time. I would come back when my trip is over I would come home and sit down and I would rest from my vacation. ~~then~~ I would go ~~home~~

I went up to the old deserted house. The door was open so I walked in. Suddenly...

④

Suddenly the door shut. Things started flying around the room. The lights went off. I screamed. Then I heard moans. The lights still haven't come on yet ~~and~~ I found a candle burning. I thought someone had been here recently. But I guess I was wrong because ~~no~~

I went up to the old deserted house. The door was open so I walked in.
Suddenly...

I heard a noise (4)
and I went to see
what was causing it.
Then I saw a big blue
room I went in it.
Then the door shut behind
me and I was scared.
Someone pulled me over
onto the bed then...
I tried to get up but
I was sinking down on
the bed. Then I was
pulled in and it took
to a chocolate factory and

I went up to the old deserted house. The door was open so I walked in.
Suddenly...

(4)
I heard something crash
inside the old house. So I crept
slowly up the porch steps. I
walked up to the door and waited.
Then I pushed the door and it
opened. I walked in and I saw

I went up to the old deserted house. The door was open so I walked in.
Suddenly...

⑤

Suddenly the door slammed. I jumped. I tried to get out but the door was locked. I walked into the kitchen and there was blood everywhere. After that I was getting ready to walk up the stairs when the steps turned into sticky / marshmallows, then I finally got up the stairs.

I went up to the old deserted house. The door was open so I walked in.
Suddenly...

⑤

Suddenly an man walked out from behind the door I couldn't see his face. But I could see what he was wearing he had a big knife in his hand. I started running away from the house. I came back the next day the door was

I went up to the old deserted house. The door was open so I walked in.
Suddenly...

(6)

An eerie feeling came over me. It was pitch black. I reached inside my pocket I brought with me. I flicked the lighter once and it sparked. I did this as I walked down the hall the lighter lit / in it did a man was on the floor shot in the head. I ran out just as did someone shot at me.

I went up to the old deserted house. The door was open so I walked in.
Suddenly...

(6)

I heard a noise it was coming from upstairs. I went to investigate. I went in a room it had chairs with old dusty sheets on them. I looked in the closet not knowing if I could or but it was too late now I already had opened it. As I turned because

I went up to the old deserted house. The door was open so I walked in.
Suddenly...

6

I fell through the porch! and
as I tried to climb out the broken boards
that I had fell through mended themselves.
I tried to bust out but it was no use.
As I was sitting for about 5 minutes a
light was glaring ahead of me, I tried crawling
toward it, finally, I reached the light. And

I went up to the old deserted house. The door was open so I walked in.
Suddenly...

7

No title

He walked in and saw an empty chair and
radio, he searched through all of the rooms.
In the last room he saw a man on the
floor, now the kid was worried. He ran to
the police station without a break. When/
he got there he was out of breath.
The police there asked him, "what is

I went up to the old deserted house. The door was open so I walked in.
Suddenly...

7

An old man came out from behind a stack of boxes. He yelled. It scared me so bad I couldn't even scream. "What are you doing here?" he asked. His voice was rough and deep. "I didn't think anyone lived here." I stammered, surprised that I could even talk. "Well I do, now. You're trespassing on my property."

I went up to the old deserted house. The door was open so I walked in.
Suddenly...

7

A old man jumped out at me and said "what are you doing in my house?". I said "I was just looking around and saw the house's door was open and so I went in." I said "if I knew you were living here I wouldn't of come in" so he said "that's ok." I'm sorry I scared you, and I'm sorry I yelled at you. He told me to take off my coat and stay awhile. / so I stayed he told