

Prepared For

The Senate Writing Committee

Writing Problems at Memorial University of Newfoundland:

The Proposed Solutions

Prepared By

Ron Loder

Acknowledgements:

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Background:

This report was prepared for the Senate Writing Committee whose mandate was "to determine whether faculty members and/or students perceived that there were problems with students' writing and, if so, to recommend policies for remediation." This report measures students' perceptions of writing problems and their recommendations for improving the quality of writing at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Sample Selection:

The survey selected 1342 students of Memorial University of Newfoundland. With an anticipated response rate of 60 percent, it was expected that 800 questionnaires would be returned. The sample was divided as follows:

Undergraduate Students as defined by the university calendar

Category of Students Definition of Students

100 first year students (Students who have earned fewer than six credits. 0-5)

100 second year students (Students who have earned not fewer than six credits. 6-15)

100 third year students (Students who have earned not fewer than 16 credits. 16-25)

100 fourth year students (Students who have earned not fewer than 26 credits. 26+)

Graduating Students

A sample of 200 students who received a degree or diploma from Memorial University of Newfoundland in 1995.

Graduate Students

A sample of 100 graduate students who obtained their undergraduate degree at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

A sample of 100 graduate students who obtained their undergraduate degree at another educational institution.

In cases where 100 respondents were desired it was necessary to obtain 168, and where 200 were required 334 were selected. This was based on an anticipated response rate of 60 percent. Using a stratified random sample, the respondents were selected according to their **student number** by Mr. Mervin Goodyear of the Register's Office. The sampling was conducted in such a way that an initial random number was selected. Then the sampling frame, the list of student numbers in a particular year, was divided by the

number of respondents and this number was continually added to the initial random number. For instance, if the random number selected is seven and the list of first year students contains 2016 respondents then the following respondents are selected: the 7th, 19, 31, 43.

From all first year students at Memorial, 168 were randomly selected by Mr. Goodyear. This procedure was repeated for each of the seven categories until a total of 1342 students were selected.

In its aim to ensure the representativeness of the sample it was requested by the Senate Writing Committee that all schools and faculties be represented, in the sample, according to their proportion of the university population. Within each category (first year, second year, etc) it was proposed that the sample be divided in half so that students in the Arts, (including Fine Arts, and the School of Music), Science and Education Faculties represent 50 percent of the sample while the professional schools (Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Physical Education, Engineering, Business Administration, and Social Work) also represent 50 percent of the sample.

However, it was decided that this detailed sampling was unnecessary. As the respondents were randomly selected they would be representative of the student population.

The home addresses of the respondents were provided on two sets of mailing labels so that the mail-out packages could be sent to them.

Questionnaire:

A questionnaire was prepared by the Senate Writing Committee to measure students perceptions of writing problems and to collect their input as to how any existing problems might be addressed. The questionnaire contained a number of closed-ended questions as well as one open-ended question and several Likert Scale items (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, etc...)

A total of 1342 questionnaires were printed for the first mail-out which occurred on December 27, 1995. Appendix A contains a copy of the questionnaire. Each mail-out also contained an explanation letter and a postage-paid return envelope as shown in Appendix B, and D.

December 27, 1995 was selected, as the date for the first mail-out, because term marks would be distributed the following day and students would be expecting mail from Memorial.

The return envelopes were numbered so that the students who returned their questionnaires would not receive the second mail-out package. Of the 1342 questionnaires distributed, 424 were returned for a response rate of 31.6 percent.

The second wave of questionnaires was mailed on February 7, 1996. The second mail-out occurred when it was certain that no further questionnaires from the first mail-out would return. Of the 918 questionnaires distributed in the second mail-out, a total of 303 were returned for a response rate of 33.0 percent.

The total number of questionnaires returned was 727, for a total response rate of 54.2 percent. The questionnaires were accepted until Monday April 8, 1996. No more questionnaires were accepted as two months passed since the second-wave of questionnaires were mailed and it was necessary to analyze the data collected.

Confidence Level of the Survey:

The information obtained from this survey is accurate to plus or minus 3.8 percentage points 19 times out of 20.

Coding and Entry of Data:

When the questionnaires were returned it was necessary to code the responses and enter them into the computer so that the information could be analyzed. Coding refers to the assignment of numbers to responses so that the data can be entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). See Appendix A for an example of a coded questionnaire.

The twenty-nine coding categories are shown in Table 11. Usually, only the ten most frequent responses are recorded but it was decided that all unique responses would be recorded as this maximized the number of proposed solutions.

Representativeness of the Sample:

Table 1: The academic status of the respondents in the survey. [\(1\)](#)

Student Status	Number of respondents	Response rate	Percent of Sample
Undergraduate	340	50.6 %	47.3 %
Graduated (1995)	147	44.0	20.4
Graduate (Unspecified)	22	* 69.0	3.1
Graduate (MUN)	128	* 69.0	17.8
Graduate (Elsewhere)	82	* 69.0	11.4

Total **719** 100.0 %

Table 1 illustrates that the sample included enough members of each group for analysis. The response rate is also given for each group. * All graduate students had a response rate of 69.0 percent but is not possible to calculate the response rate for each particular group. This stems from some graduate students not specifying which group they belong to.

Table 2: The undergraduate respondents' year in university as defined by the university calendar.

Undergraduate year in University	Percent of MUN student Population	Percent of Sample
First	27.3 %	18.7 %
Second	24.6	24.5
Third	18.7	25.9
Fourth or Higher	29.4	30.9
Total	100.0 % (N=12,025)	100.0 % (N=363)

The 364 missing responses to this question are explained by the fact that graduate students were not required to answer this question. This sample closely resembles the undergraduate population of Memorial.

Table 3 A: The school or faculty of the respondents.

School or Faculty	Memorial's Student Population		Sample Population	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
General Studies	0	0.0 %	3	0.5 %
Arts	4925	32.1	134	20.5
Fine Arts	116	0.8	3	0.5
Pre-Business	*	0.0	7	1.1
Business	838	5.5	125	19.1
Education	1163	7.6	87	13.3

Pre-Engineering	*		3	0.5
Engineering	476	3.1	66	10.1
Medicine	275	1.8	22	3.4
Music	105	0.7	4	0.6
Nursing	313	2.0	29	4.4
Pharmacy	78	0.5	9	1.4
Physical Education	121	0.8	12	1.8
Pre-Social Work	*		4	0.6
Social Work	159	1.0	33	5.1
Science	4143	27.0	107	16.4
Undecided/Not Declared	2616	17.1	5	0.8
Unspecified				
Total	15,328	100.0 %	653	100.0 %

There are 74 missing responses. This includes the "No Response" and the uncodeable responses, which occurred when more than one response was provided.

* Memorial University classifies the pre-Business, pre-Engineering, and pre-Social Work students as Arts Students. This has the effect of artificially increasing the number of Arts Students.

Although the respondents' distribution is shown according to their faculty the small sample size does not, in most cases, allow for statistically significant comparisons on the basis of faculty or school. [\(2\)](#)

Table 3 A.1 Table of university faculties and schools which were under-represented in this survey.

Faculty or School	Percentage Difference
Arts	- 11.6 %
Fine Arts	- 0.3
Music	- 0.1
Science	- 10.6
Unspecified	- 16.3

Table 3 A.2 Table of the university faculties and schools which were over-represented in this survey.

Faculty or School	Percentage Difference
Business Administration	+ 13.6 %
Education	+ 5.7
Engineering	+ 7.0
Medicine	+ 1.6
Nursing	+ 2.4
Pharmacy	+ 0.9
Physical Education	+ 1.0
Social Work	+ 4.1

An analysis of Tables 3 A.1 and 3 A.2 indicates that many of the faculties and schools are over-represented while others are underrepresented. One possible explanation is that the respondents may have stated their faculty or school as the "desired" or "future" school or faculty instead of their present status. Alternatively, it may be that the sample selected more students in the professional schools than in the Arts and Sciences. It may also be that students in the faculties or professional schools were more likely to return the questionnaire than those students in the Arts and Science Faculties.

Question 3 B:

It is not possible to draw comparisons on the basis of the respondents' department or major. A total of 406 respondents answered this question and sixty-six different departments or majors were listed. Most often, fewer than ten respondents were in each category and such small numbers do not permit generalizations to be made to the university population on the basis of "department" or "major."

Table 3 B.1: Table of the respondents' department or major.

Department or Major	Frequency	Percent
ARTS:		
Anthropology	4	1.0 %
Classics	1	0.2
Economics	6	1.5
English	29	7.2
Folklore	5	1.2
French	12	3.0
Geography	10	2.5
German	1	0.2
History	22	5.5
Linguistics	5	1.2
Philosophy	6	1.5
Political Science	8	2.0
Psychology	5	1.2
Religion	2	0.5
Russian	2	0.5
Sociology	26	6.5
Women's Studies	1	0.2
Fine Arts:		
Visual	2	0.5
Theatre	1	0.2
Business Administration:		
Accounting	15	3.7
Marketing	6	1.5
Business Diploma Program	1	0.2
Human Resource Management	2	0.5

Education:

Administration	7	1.7
Curriculum and Instruction	3	0.7
Educational Psychology	12	3.0
Elementary	4	1.0
Leadership	3	0.7
Learning Resources	5	1.2
Native and Northern	1	0.2
Primary	8	2.0
Primary French Immersion	1	0.2
School Counselling	1	0.2
School Services	1	0.2
Secondary	5	1.2
Second Language Acquisition	1	0.2
Special Education	2	0.5
Teaching and Learning	6	1.5
Vocational Education	2	0.5

Engineering :

Civil	17	4.2
Electrical	8	2.0
Environmental and Applied	3	0.7
Mechanical	15	3.7
Naval Architecture	4	1.0

Medicine :

Community	1	0.2
Clinical Epidemiology	1	0.2
Immunity	2	0.5
Surgery	1	0.2

Nursing :

Community Health	2	0.5
Post Registered Nursing	3	0.7

Physical Education:

Education	1	0.2
Recreation	2	0.5

Science:

Biochemistry	7	1.7
Biology	30	7.5
Biopsychology	4	1.0

Chemistry	13	3.2
Computer Science	10	2.5
Earth Science	5	1.2
Geography	9	2.2
Math	7	1.7
Oceanography	1	0.2
Physics	4	1.0
Psychology	14	3.5
Food Science	1	0.2
Pharmacy:		
Pharmaceutics	1	0.2
Other:		
Continuing Studies	1	0.2
Total	401	100.0 %

Table 4: The respondents' cumulative grade average.

Respondent's Cumulative Grade Average	Frequency	Percent
Below 50 Percent	6	0.9 %
50 - 54 Percent	3	0.4
55 - 64 Percent	77	11.0
65 - 79 Percent	408	58.4
80 - 100 Percent	205	29.3
Total	699	100.0 %

The majority of respondents have averages from 65 to 79 percent, while a smaller percentage have averages of 80 to 100 or 55 to 64 percent. Only 1.3 percent of the respondents have averages below 55 percent.

Table 5: The age of the participants in the survey.

Age (Years)	Frequency	Percent
17-21	215	29.6 %
22-25	243	33.5
26+	268	36.9
Total	726	100.0 %

Nearly equal percentages of respondents are found in each age category. No comparison was made to the university population as the 1995 MUN Fact Book uses different categories for age.

Table 6: The gender of the respondents.

Gender	Memorial's Student	Population	Sample Population	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Female	9020	58.0 %	428	59.1 %
Male	6542	42.0	296	40.9
Total	15562	100.0 %	724	100.0 %

The sample was very reflective of the proportion of males and females at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Table 6.1: The gender of the participants and their school or faculty.

School or Faculty	FEMALES	MALES
Arts	29.9 %	21.0 %
Business	25.7	22.3
Education	21.9	9.6
Engineering	5.6	21.8
Science	17.0	25.3
Total	100.0 % N=288	100.0 % N=229

The Arts, Business and Education Faculties contain a higher percentage of female respondents than do the Engineering or Science Faculties.

Table 6.1: The gender of the respondents and their cumulative grade average.

Cumulative Grade Average	Females	Males
Below 55 Percent	1.7 %	0.7 %
55-64 Percent	9.7	12.9
65-79 Percent	58.2	58.7
80-100 Percent	30.4	27.6
Total	100.0 % N=411	100.0 % N=286

Overall, there is little difference in the cumulative grade averages of the two gender groups. However, females compose a higher percentage of the respondents in the highest and lowest categories.

Table 7 A: Self-assessment of one's writing ability based on the use of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

How well do you write	Frequency	Percent
based on grammar, spelling and punctuation ?		
Very poorly	1	0.1 %
Poorly	26	3.6
Adequately	171	23.6
Well	302	41.6
Very well	226	31.1
Total	726	100.0 %

The majority of participants, 72.7 percent, believe that they "Write Well" or "Very well." Only 3.7 percent of the respondents think that they write "Poorly" or "Very poorly."

When the data from Table 7A is examined according to the status of the respondents, it becomes apparent that those individuals with the higher levels of education feel the most confident about their writing ability.

Table 7 A.1: The student status of the respondents and their writing ability as judged by their use of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Ability to use grammar, spelling and punctuation correctly	Under-graduate	Graduated	Graduate (MUN)	Graduate (Elsewhere)
Poorly or Very Poorly	6.5 %	0.7 %	1.6 %	1.2 %
Adequately	29.8	19.0	16.4	17.1
Well or Very Well	63.7	80.3	82.0	81.7
Total	100.0 % N=339	100.0 % N=147	100.0 % N=128	100.0 % N=82

The percentage of respondents who believe that they can use grammar, spelling and punctuation "Poorly" or "Very poorly" decreases as the education level of the respondents increases. The increase in the percentage of respondents in the "Well" or "Very Well" cohort also indicates that the ability to use spelling, punctuation and grammar correctly increases as the education level of the respondents increases.

Among undergraduate students, the percentage who believe that their writing ability based on the use of spelling, punctuation and grammar is "Poor," "Very poor," or "Adequate" decreases as their year in university increases. Conversely, the percentage of respondents who believe that they can use spelling, grammar and punctuation "Well" or "Very Well" increases as they attend university for longer periods of time.

Table 7 A.2: The writing ability of undergraduate students, with different amounts of a university education, based on their use of spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Ability to use grammar,	First	Second	Third	Fourth
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spelling and punctuation correctly

Poorly, Very Poorly or Adequately	41.2 %	35.3 %	34.1 %	33.1 %
Well or Very Well	58.8	64.7	65.9	67.0
Total	100.0 % N=68	100.0 %	100.0 % N=94	100.0 % N=112

N= 88

When the respondents writing ability is compared according to their school or faculty it is apparent that some differences exist within the different faculties. Among the students in the Education Faculty, 81.6 percent feel that they can use grammar, punctuation and spelling "Well" or "Very Well." This compares to 77.6 percent of students in the Business Faculty, and 72.8 percent in the Engineering Faculty. However, as Table 7 A.3 illustrates only 71.7 percent of students in the Arts Faculty and 66.0 percent of those in the Science Faculty express a similar opinion.

Table 7 A.3: The participants' faculty and their writing ability as judged by their use of grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Ability to use spelling, grammar and punctuation correctly	Arts	Business	Education	Engineering	Science
Poorly or Very Poorly	3.7 %	3.2 %	1.1 %	0.0 %	6.6
Adequately	24.6	19.2	17.2	27.3	27.4
Well or Very Well	71.7	77.6	81.6	72.8	66.0
Total	100.0 N=134	100.0 % N=125	100.0 % N=87	100.0 % N=66	100.0 N=106

Table 7 A.3 reveals that the students in the Arts and Science Faculties exhibit the lowest level of confidence in their ability to use spelling, grammar and punctuation correctly while the professional schools demonstrate higher levels of confidence in these areas.

Table 7 A.4 reveals that the respondents' cumulative grade average is correlated with their perceived ability to use grammar, spelling and punctuation correctly. The data presented in Table 7 A.4 illustrates that the percentage of respondents who believe that they can use grammar, spelling and punctuation correctly increases as their cumulative grade average increases. Conversely, the percentage of students who believe that they have a "Poor," "Very Poor," or "Adequate" grasp of these concepts decreases as the cumulative grade average increases. The results for participants with cumulative averages below 55 percent are omitted from the analysis as there are too few respondents in these categories.

Table 7 A.4: The respondents' cumulative grade average and their ability to use grammar, spelling and punctuation correctly.

Ability to use grammar, spelling and punctuation correctly	Below 50 Percent	50-54 Percent	55-64 Percent	65-79 Percent	80-100 Percent
Poorly or Very Poorly		66.7 %	6.5 %	4.1 %	1.0 %
Adequately	50.0 %		42.9	25.3	12.2
Well or Very Well	50.0	33.3	50.7	70.6	86.9
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
	N=6	N=3	N=77	N=407	N=205

When the respondents' writing ability is compared on the basis of their age, as in Table 7 A.5, a pattern similar to that found in Table 7 A.4 is observed. Younger participants demonstrate the greatest level of dissatisfaction with their ability to use grammar, spelling and punctuation correctly while older respondents exhibit higher levels of confidence in these skills. The percentage of respondents who cited "Poor," "Very Poor,"

and "Adequate" as a response decreases the age of the respondents increases.

Table 7 A.5: The different age groups of the respondents and their ability to use grammar, spelling and punctuation correctly.

Ability to use grammar, spelling and punctuation correctly	17-21	22-25	26 +
Poorly or Very Poorly	5.6 %	3.3 %	2.6 %
Adequately	28.5	24.3	19.0
Well or Very Well	65.9	72.5	78.3
Total	100.0 % N=214	100.0 % N=243	100.0 % N=268

Table 7 B: Self-assessment of one's writing ability based on logic, organization and concept development.

How well do you write? Based on logic, organization and concept development.	Frequency	Percent
Very poorly	0	0.0 %
Poorly	18	2.5
Adequately	158	21.8
Well	332	45.8
Very well	217	29.9
Total	725	100.0 %

Just over 75 percent of the students think that they write "Very well" or "Well." Only 2.5 percent of respondents believe that write "Poorly."

Table 7 B.1: The participants' student status and their writing ability based on skill in logic, organization and concept development.

Ability to use logic, organization and concept development	Under-graduate	Graduated	Graduate (MUN)	Graduate (Elsewhere)
Poorly or Very Poorly	4.1 %	1.4 %	0.8 %	1.2 %
Adequately	29.8	15.1	13.3	19.5
Well or Very Well	66.1	83.6	85.9	79.3
Total	100.0 % N=339	100.0 % N=146	100.0 % N=128	100.0 % N=82

Table 7.B 1 illustrates that the only significant difference among the participants is found between undergraduate students and all other groups. The former group of students express a much lower level of confidence in their ability to use logic, organization and concept development than do students in other groups.

Table 7 B.2: The students' faculty and their writing ability based on skill in logic, organization and concept development.

Ability to use logic, organization and concept development	Arts	Business	Education	Engineer.	Science
Poorly or Very Poorly	5.2 %	1.6 %	2.3 %	3.0 %	0.9 %
Adequately	22.4	13.6	15.1	21.2	34.9
Well or Very Well	72.4	84.8	82.5	75.7	64.2
Total	100.0 % N=134	100.0 % N=125	100.0 % N=86	100.0 % N=66	100.0 % N=106

According to the above table, students in the Arts and Science Faculties have the lowest level of confidence in their writing abilities based on their skill in logic, organization and concept development. In contrast, participants from the Business and Education Faculties exhibit much more confidence in their writing abilities.

Table 7 B.3: The cumulative grade average of MUN students and their writing ability based on their skill in logic, organization and concept development.

Ability to use logic, organization and concept development	Below 50 Percent	50-54 Percent	55-64 Percent	65-79 Percent	80-100 Percent
Poorly or Very Poorly			6.5 %	2.7 %	1.0 %
Adequately	66.7 %	100.0 %	50.6	21.9	8.3
Well or Very Well	33.3		42.9	75.3	90.8
Total	100.0 % N=6	100.0 % N=3	100.0 % N=77	100.0 % N=406	100.0 % N=205

Table 7 B.3 reveals that the respondents' writing ability is positively correlated with their cumulative grade average. The percentage of students who believe that they can write "Well" or "Very Well" increases as the cumulative grade average increases. Conversely, the percentage of respondents who believe that they write "Poor," "Very Poor," or "Adequately" decreases as the cumulative grade average increases. The results for participants with cumulative averages below 55 percent are not reliable as there are too few respondents in these columns.

Table 7 B.4: A comparison of the writing ability among students of different age groups based their skill in logic, organization and concept development.

Ability to use logic, organization and concept development	17-21	22-25	26 +
Poorly or Very Poorly	2.8 %	2.9 %	1.9 %
Adequately	30.4	21.4	15.4
Well or Very Well	66.9	75.7	82.8
Total	100.0 % N=214	100.0 % N=243	100.0 % N=267

The respondents' confidence in their writing ability increases as their age increases.

The following tables are based on seven Likert Scale items. These questions asked the respondent if they: "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Disagree," "Strongly Disagree" or have "No Opinion" on a particular question. Each table lists the question asked in the survey.

Table 8 A: The participants' opinions as to whether they believe that it is necessary to be able to write well in order to be successful in life.

To be successful in life it is necessary to be able to write well.	Frequency	Percent	With	Opinion
Strongly Agree	270	37.1 %	270	37.8 %
Agree	389	53.5	389	54.4
Disagree	50	6.9	50	7.0
Strongly Disagree	6	0.8	6	0.8
No Opinion	12	1.7		
Total	727	100.0 %	715	100.0 %

Just over 90 percent of the respondents "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" with the question. Only 7.7 percent "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" that it is necessary to be able to write well in order to be successful in life. Furthermore, 1.7 percent of the respondents had "No Opinion."

However, among decided respondents 92.2 percent "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" with the question while 7.8 percent "Disagree" or " Strongly Disagree."

This question was analyzed along numerous characteristics but many cross-tabulations failed to produce any significant results.

Table 8 A.1: The students of different faculties and the perceived importance of writing to their personal success.

It is necessary to be able to write well.	Arts	Business	Education	Engineering	Science
Agree or Strongly Agree	89.1 %	93.6 %	93.1 %	97.0 %	91.5 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	10.9	6.4	6.9	3.0	8.6
Total	100.0 % N=128	100.0 % N=125	100.0 % N=87	100.0 % N=65	100.0 % N=95

Only the faculties with a large number of respondents represented in the survey are included so that the results can be generalized to these faculties. Table 8 A.1 illustrates that a large majority of the students in all faculties "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that one must write well in order to be successful in life.

However, approximately 10.0 percent of the respondents in the Arts and Science Faculties "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" that being able to write well is important for one's success in life. This indicates that writing is perceived as less important in these two faculties than in the professional schools.

Table 8 A.2: The gender of the respondents and the perceived importance of writing to their personal success.

It is necessary to be able to write well.	Female	Male
Agree or Strongly Agree	93.2 %	91.0 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	6.8	9.0
Total	100.0 % N=423	100.0 % N=289

The data presented in Table 8 A.2 indicates that females perceive writing to be more important to their success in life than do their male counterparts. Although there is only a slight difference in the two groups of respondents this is the beginning of a pattern which is consistent throughout this report.

Question 8 B: The students' opinions as to how well they wrote when they first came to university.

I wrote well when I first came to university.	Frequency	Percent	With	Opinion
Strongly Agree	64	8.8 %	64	9.0 %
Agree	417	57.4	417	58.9
Disagree	184	25.3	184	26.0
Strongly Disagree	43	5.9	43	6.1
No Opinion	19	2.6		
Total	727	100.0 %	708	100.0 %

Approximately two-thirds of the respondents "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" with the question. However, 31.2 percent "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" while 2.6 percent failed to provide an opinion.

The percentages only increase slightly to 67.9 and 32.1 percent when the respondents with "No Opinion" are excluded.

Table 8 B.1: How well the students from different faculties wrote when they first came to university.

I wrote well when I first came to university	Arts	Business	Education	Engineer.	Science
Agree or Strongly Agree	69.5 %	72.1 %	64.0 %	64.1 %	68.6 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	30.5	27.9	36.0	36.0	31.4
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
	N=131	N=122	N=86	N=64	N=105

The students in the Education and Engineering Faculties indicate the lowest level of confidence in their writing ability when they arrived at university. Conversely, students in the Science, Arts and Business Faculties report higher levels of writing when they arrived at MUN.

Table 8 B.2: The perceived writing abilities of the two gender groups upon their arrival at Memorial.

I wrote well when I first came to university	Female	Male
Agree or Strongly Agree	72.8 %	61.5 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	27.3	38.4
Total	100.0 % N=419	100.0 % N=286

The responses to this question indicate that females wrote better than males when they arrived at MUN.

Table 8 C: The participants' opinions as to whether or not their writing skills improved during their studies at MUN.

My writing skills have improved during my studies at MUN	Frequency	Percent	With	Opinion
Strongly Agree	175	24.1 %	175	25.1 %
Agree	393	54.1	393	56.3
Disagree	108	14.9	108	15.5
Strongly Disagree	22	3.0	22	3.2
No Opinion	29	4.0		
Total	727	100.0 %	698	100.0 %

Among the respondents, 78.2 percent "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that their writing skills improved during their studies at MUN. In contrast, 17.9 percent "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" with this statement while 4.0 percent voiced "No Opinion."

The percentages increase slightly to 81.4 and 18.7 percent when the "No Opinion" responses are excluded.

Table 8 C.1: The respondents' opinions as to whether they do a lot of writing outside of their course work and if their writing skills improved during their studies at MUN

My writing skills have improved during my studies at MUN	I DO A LOT OF WRITING OUTSIDE OF MY COURSES	
	Agree or Strongly Agree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
Agree or Strongly Agree	83.3 %	79.8 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	16.7	20.2
Total	100.0 %	100.0 % N=362
	N=318	

Of the students who agree that they do a lot of writing outside of their regular course work 83.3 percent perceive that their writing skills improved during their studies at MUN. Also, among respondents who "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" that they do a lot of writing outside of their course work 79.8 percent felt that their writing skills improved while at MUN. This table indicates that the amount of writing done outside of courses is positively correlated with the improvement in an individuals writing ability.

Table 8 C.2: The students' thoughts as to whether or not they received a lot of help to improve their writing skills according to if their writing skills improved during their studies at MUN.

My writing skills have improved	I HAVE RECEIVED A LOT OF HELP WHICH IMPROVED MY WRITING SKILLS	
	Agree or Strongly	Disagree or Strongly

during my studies at MUN	Agree	Disagree
Agree or Strongly Agree	95.5 %	74.7 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	4.5	25.3
Total	100.0 % N=200	100.0 % N=446

Nearly 96 percent of the students who "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that they received a lot of help which improved their writing skills thought that their writing skills improved while at MUN. In addition, almost three-quarters of those who "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" that the help that they received improved their writing skills still felt that their writing skills improved during their studies at MUN. This table indicates that the amount of assistance a person receives is positively correlated with the amount of improvement in their writing ability.

Table 8 C.3: The participants's thoughts as to whether or not they do a lot of writing as part of their course work and if their writing skills improved during their studies at MUN.

My writing skills have improved during my studies at MUN	I DO A LOT OF WRITING IN MY COURSES	
	Agree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree or Strongly Agree
Agree or Strongly Agree	85.2 %	66.2 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	14.8	33.8
Total	100.0 %	100.0 % N=142
	N=542	

Among the respondents who "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that they do a lot of writing as part of their course work 85.2 percent felt that their writing skills improved while at MUN. However, of the respondents who "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" that they did a lot of writing as part of their course work only 66.2 percent felt that their writing improved while at MUN. This is a difference of 19.0 percent and suggests that writing

skills increase with the amount of writing done.

Table 8 C.4: The faculty of the respondents' and their opinions as to whether their writing skills improved during their studies at MUN.

My writing skills improved during my studies at MUN	Arts	Business	Education	Engineering	Science
Agree or Strongly Agree	82.8 %	84.6 %	85.9 %	71.9 %	80.2 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	17.2	15.4	14.1	28.1	19.8
Total	100.0 % N=128	100.0 % N=117	100.0 % N=85	100.0 % N=64	100.0 % N=101

The students in the Engineering Faculty have the lowest percentage of respondents who "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that their writing skills improved while they were at MUN. All other faculties contain 80 to 85 percent of respondents who felt that their writing improved during their studies in Memorial.

Table 8 C.5: The respondents' opinions as to whether or not English composition courses improved their writing according to whether their writing skills improved during their studies at MUN.

My writing skills improved during my studies at MUN	Never Used English composition courses	Used but not helpful	Used and somewhat helpful	Used and very helpful
Agree or Strongly Agree	81.0 %	63.4 %	83.4 %	98.7 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	19.0	36.6	16.6	1.3
Total	100.0 % N=347	100.0 % N=71	100.0 % N=175	100.0 % N=76

What is noticeable about Table 8 C.1 is that as the percentage of respondents who found English composition courses more useful increased, the percentage of respondents who "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that their writing skills improved also increased.

Table 8 D: The participants' opinions as to whether their writing skills improved as a result of the help they received.

I have received a lot of help and as a result my writing skills have improved.	Frequency	Percent	With	Opinion
Strongly Agree	19	2.6 %	19	2.9 %
Agree	184	25.3	184	27.9
Disagree	333	45.9	333	50.5
Strongly Disagree	123	16.9	123	18.7
No Opinion	67	9.2		
Total	726	100.0 %	659	100.0 %

Among survey respondents, 62.8 percent "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" with the question asked whereas only 27.9 percent were in agreement. This question had a lower response rate than the other questions as 9.2 percent of the students had "No Opinion."

Among respondents with an opinion, the respective percentages increase to 69.2 and 30.8 percent when the "No Opinion" responses are excluded.

Table 8 D.1: The opinion of the respondents in different faculties as to whether the help they received improved their writing skills.

I have received a lot of help which improved my writing skills	Arts	Business	Education	Engineering	Science
Agree or Strongly Agree	34.2 %	38.9 %	23.2 %	25.0 %	32.3 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	65.8	61.1	76.8	75.0	67.7
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
	N=117	N=108	N=82	N=60	N=96

Respondents in the Education and Engineering Faculties report receiving the least amount of help which improved their writing skills while those in the Business Faculty reported receiving the most assistance. Perhaps this stems from the presence of Business 2000 as a similar course was requested by a large number of respondents.

Table 8 E: The students' opinions as to whether marks should be assigned for the quality of writing in most courses.

Marks should be assigned for the quality of writing	Frequency	Percent	With	Opinion
Strongly Agree	122	16.8 %	122	17.5 %
Agree	405	55.7	405	58.1
Disagree	126	17.3	126	18.1
Strongly Disagree	44	6.1	44	6.3
No Opinion	30	4.1		
Total	727	100.0 %	697	100.0 %

Among the participants, 72.5 percent "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that marks should be assigned for the quality of writing; 23.4 percent "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" with this statement while 4.1 percent failed to voice an opinion.

When the "No Opinion" responses are excluded, the figures increase to 75.6 and 24.4 percent respectively.

Table 8 E.1: The opinions of the respondents from different faculties as to whether marks should be assigned for the quality of writing in most courses.

Marks should be assigned for the quality of writing?	Arts	Business	Education	Engineering	Science
Agree or Strongly Agree	83.5%	75.0 %	83.7 %	52.4 %	70.0 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	16.5	25.0	16.3	47.7	30.0
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %

N=127 N=120 N=86 N=63 N=100

Students in the Arts and Education Faculties are most favourable to the assigning marks for the quality of writing; while respondents in the Engineering Faculty are the most opposed.

Table 8 E.2: The opinions of the respondents, of different academic status, as to whether marks should be assigned for the quality of writing in most courses.

Marks should be assigned for the quality of writing?	Under-graduate	Graduated	Graduate (MUN)	Graduate (Elsewhere)
Agree or Strongly Agree	66.9 %	85.4 %	84.0 %	75.7 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	33.1	14.6	16.0	24.3
Total	100.0 % N=326	100.0 % N=144	100.0 % N=128	100.0 % N=74

Undergraduate students are least in favour of assigning marks for the quality of writing. Surprisingly, about one-quarter of graduate students who obtained their graduate degree at another university are also opposed to assigning marks for the quality of writing in courses.

Table 8 E.3: The opinion of undergraduate respondents, in different years of their university careers, as to whether marks should be assigned for the quality of writing in most courses.

Marks should be assigned for the quality of writing	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Agree or Strong Agree	62.7 %	62.7 %	70.3 %	72.9 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	37.3	37.3	29.7	27.1
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %

N=67 83 N=91 N=107

Exactly 62.7 percent of first and second year students feel that marks should be assigned for the quality of writing in courses. This increases to 70.3 percent for third year students and 72.9 percent for fourth year students. Clearly, as education levels increase people are more likely to support awarding marks for the quality of writing.

Table 8 E.4: The cumulative grade average of the respondents and their opinions as to whether or not marks should be assigned for the quality of writing in courses.

Marks should be assigned for the quality of writing?	Below 50 Percent	50-54 Percent	55-64 Percent	65-79 Percent	80-100 Percent
Agree or Strongly Agree	66.7 %	33.7 %	71.2 %	75.0 %	78.9 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	33.3	66.7	28.8	25.0	21.1
Total	100.0 %	100.0 % N=3	100.0 % N=73	100.0 % N=392	100.0 % N=199
	N=6				

As the participants' cumulative grade average increases the support for assigning marks to the quality of writing in courses increases. The responses in the first two columns are not valid as they contain too few respondents.

Table 8 E.5: The ages of the respondents and their opinions as to whether marks should be assigned for the quality of writing in most courses.

Marks should be assigned for the quality of writing?	17-21	22-25	26+
Agree or Strongly Agree	64.7 %	78.8 %	81.4 %

Disagree or Strongly Disagree	35.3	21.2	18.6
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
	N=207	N=231	N=258

As the age of the respondents' increase the amount of support for assigning marks to the quality of writing in courses increases.

Table 8 E.6: The gender of the respondents and their opinions as to whether marks should be assigned for the quality of writing in most courses.

Marks should be assigned for the quality of writing?	Female	Male
Agree or Strongly Agree	78.8 %	70.1 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	21.2	29.3
Total	100.0 % N=411	100.0 % N=283

Females are more favourable than males to assigning marks for the quality of writing in courses.

Table 8 F: The participants' opinions as to whether they do a lot of writing as part of their course work.

I do a lot of writing as part of my course work.	Frequency	Percent	With	Opinion
Strongly Agree	227	31.3 %	227	31.9 %
Agree	339	46.8	339	47.7
Disagree	116	16.0	116	16.3
Strongly Disagree	29	4.0	29	4.1
No Opinion	14	1.9		
Total	725	100.0 %	711	100.0 %

In this study, 20.0 percent of respondents report not doing a lot of writing as part of their course work while 78.1 percent do. Only 1.9 percent of the respondents provided "No Opinion."

When the "No Opinion" responses are excluded, the percentages increase slightly to 20.4 and 79.6 percent respectively.

Table 8 F.1: The respondents of different faculties and their opinions as to whether they do a lot of writing as part of their course work.

I do a lot of writing as part of my course work	Arts	Business	Education	Engineering	Science
Agree or Strongly Agree	94.0 %	84.7 %	98.9 %	34.4 %	66.3 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	6.0	15.3	1.1	65.6	33.7
Total	100.0 % N=133	100.0 % N=124	100.0 % N=87	100.0 % N=64	100.0 % N=104

Students in the Engineering and Science Faculties reported doing the least amount of writing as part of their course work.

Table 8 F.2: The participants of different academic status and their opinions as to whether they do a lot of writing as part of their course work.

I do a lot of writing as part of my course work	Under-graduate	Graduated	Graduate (MUN)	Graduate (Elsewhere)
Agree or Strongly Agree	69.4 %	86.4 %	92.1 %	87.2 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	30.6	13.6	7.9	12.8

Agree				
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
	N=337	N=140	N=126	N=78

Graduate students who received their undergraduate degree at MUN report doing the largest amount of writing as part of their course work. However, undergraduate students identified themselves as doing the least amount of writing as part of their course work.

Table 8 F.3: Participants with differing amounts of a university education and their opinions as to whether they do a lot of writing as part of their course work.

I do a lot of writing as part of my course work	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Agree or Strongly Agree	61.2 %	69.7 %	72.0 %	76.6 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	38.8	30.3	28.0	23.4
Total	100.0 % N=67	100.0 % N= 89	100.0 % N=93	100.0 % N=111

The percentage of respondents who believe that they do a lot of writing as part of their course work increases as their year in university increases.

Table 8 F.4: Students of different age cohorts and their opinions as to whether they do a lot of writing as part of their course work.

I do a lot of writing as part of my course work	17-21	22-25	26+
Agree or Strongly Agree	66.2 %	83.7 %	87.1 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	33.8	16.3	12.9
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
	N=213	N=233	N=264

As the respondents age the amount of writing that they do as part of their course work increases.

Table 8 F.5: The gender of the respondents and their opinions as to whether they do a lot of writing as part of their course work.

I do a lot of writing as part of my course work	Female	Male
Agree or Strongly Agree	84.7 %	72.3 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	15.3	27.7
Total	100.0 % N=419	100.0 % N=289

According to this survey, females are more likely to do a lot of writing as part of their course work than are males.

Table 8 G: The respondents' opinions as to whether they do a lot of writing outside of their regular course work.

I do a lot of writing <u>outside</u> my regular course work.	Frequency	Percent	With	Opinion
Strongly Agree	96	13.2 %	96	13.6 %
Agree	236	32.5	236	33.4
Disagree	298	41.0	298	42.2
Strongly Disagree	76	10.5	76	10.8
No Opinion	21	2.9		
Total	727	100.0 %	706	100.0 %

Among the participants, 51.5 percent "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" with this statement while 45.7 percent "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that they do a lot of writing outside of their courses. In addition, 2.9 percent stated "No Opinion."

When the "No Opinion" responses are excluded the figures increased to 53 and 47 percent.

Table 8 G.1: The respondents of different academic status and their opinions as to whether they do a lot of writing outside of their course work.

I do a lot of writing <u>outside</u> my regular course work	Under-graduate	Graduated	Graduate (MUN)	Graduate (Elsewhere)
Agree or Strongly Agree	31.8 %	48.6 %	69.0 %	66.2 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	68.2	51.4	31.0	33.8
Total	100.0 % N=327	100.0 % N=146	100.0 % N=126	100.0 % N=77

Undergraduate students do the least amount of writing outside of their course work while graduate students who received their undergraduate degree at MUN do the most.

Table 8 G.2: The opinions of undergraduate students as to whether they do a lot of writing outside of their regular course work.

I do a lot of writing <u>outside</u> my regular course work	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Agree or Strong Agree	43.1 %	23.5 %	30.3 %	32.7 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	56.9	77.6	69.7	67.3
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %

N=65

N=85

N=89

N=110

Table 8 G.2 indicates that the amount of writing done outside of course work decreases after the first year in university. However, by the third and fourth year nearly one-third of students "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that they do a lot of writing outside of their course work. With the exception of first year students, the amount of writing done outside of courses increases as the education level rises.

Table 8 G.3: The responses of the participants as to whether they do a lot of writing outside of their regular course work.

I do a lot of writing <u>outside my regular course work</u>	Arts	Business	Education	Engineering	Science
Agree or Strongly Agree	57.3 %	45.5 %	71.4 %	25.0 %	29.7 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	42.7	54.5	28.6	75.0	70.3
Total	100.0 % N=131	100.0 % N=123	100.0 % N=84	100.0 % N=64	100.0 % N=101

Students in the Arts and Education Faculties do the largest amount of writing outside of their regular course work while those in the Engineering and Science Faculties report doing the least amount.

Table 8 G.4: The different age cohorts of the students and their opinions as to whether they do a lot of writing outside of their regular course work.

I do a lot of writing <u>outside</u> my regular course work	17-21	22-25	26+
Agree or Strongly Agree	25.7 %	43.7 %	66.7 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	74.3	56.3	33.3
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
	N=206	N=238	N=261

As the respondents become older they report doing more writing outside of their regular course work.

Table 8 G.5: The gender of the respondents and their opinions as to whether they do a lot of writing outside of their course regular work.

I do a lot of writing <u>outside</u> my regular course work	Female	Male
Agree or Strongly Agree	52.1 %	39.4 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	47.9	60.6
Total	100.0 % N=420	100.0 % N=284

Females report doing more writing outside of their regular course work than males.

Summary of the frequency distributions presented in Question 8.

Question	REPLY	
	Response Rate	Agree or Strongly Agree Disagree or Strongly

			Disagree
A. One must write well to be successful	98.3 %	92.2 %	7.8 %
B. I wrote well when I came to university	97.4	67.9	32.1
C. My writing skills improved at MUN	96.0	81.4	18.7
D. I received a lot of help and my writing skills improved	90.8	30.8	69.2
E. In most courses, some marks should be assigned for the quality of writing	95.9	75.6	24.4
F. I do a lot of writing as part of my course work	98.1	79.6	20.4
G. I do a lot of writing <u>outside</u> my regular course work	97.1	47.0	53.0

With two exceptions, questions D and G, the majority of respondents agree with the questions.

The following tables are based on 6 Likert Scale items. These questions asked the respondent if they: "Strongly Agreed," "Agreed," "Disagreed," "Strongly Disagreed" or had "No Opinion" on a particular question. The questions are listed in the tables.

Table 9 A: The respondents' opinions as to whether it is necessary to be able to read well in order to be successful in life.

To be successful in life it is necessary to be able to read well.	Frequency	Percent	With	Opinion
Strongly Agree	448	61.9 %	448	62.5 %
Agree	239	33.0	239	33.3
Disagree	28	3.9	28	3.9

Strongly Disagree	2	0.3	2	0.3
No Opinion	7	1.0		
Total	724	100.0 %	717	100.0 %

Nearly 95 percent of the respondents think that one has to read well to be successful in life while 4.2 percent disagree with the statement. Only one percent of the respondents had "No Opinion."

When the "No Opinion" responses are excluded, the percentages increase to 95.8 and 4.2 percent respectively.

Table 9 A.1: The perceived correlation between being able to read well and one's success in life among participants of different academic status.

To be successful it is necessary to be able to read well.	Under-graduate	Graduated	Graduate (MUN)	Graduate (Else-where)
Agree or Strongly Agree	96.4 %	99.3 %	92.2 %	94.9 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	3.6	0.7	7.8	5.1
Total	100.0 % N=335	100.0 % N=146	100.0 % N=128	100.0 % N=79

Graduate students are less likely to believe that it is necessary to be able to read well in order to be successful in life than are undergraduate respondents. However, a high percentage of respondents in all categories place a great deal of importance on their reading abilities.

Table 9 A.2: The perceived link between being able to read well and one's success in life among respondents from different faculties.

To be successful it is necessary to be able to read well	Arts	Business	Education	Engineering	Science
Agree or Strongly Agree	95.4 %	97.6 %	93.0 %	98.5 %	94.3 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	4.6	2.4	7.0	1.5	5.7
Total	100.0 % N=130	100.0 % N=125	100.0 % N=86	100.0 % N=65	100.0 % N=105

High percentages of students in each faculty believe that their reading abilities are related to their success in life. Only two faculties, Education and Science, have less than 95 percent of respondents who "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" with the question.

Table 9 A.3: The perceived link between being able to read well and one's success in life. The responses are displayed according to whether the respondents also believe that it is necessary to be able to write well in order to be successful.

SUCCESS IN LIFE REQUIRES ONE TO WRITE WELL		
To be successful it is necessary to be able to read well	Agree or Strongly Agree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
Agree or Strongly Agree	98.3 %	67.3 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	1.7	32.7
Total	100.0 % N=657	100.0 % N=55

Of the respondents who "Agree " or "Strongly Agree" that to be successful in life one must write well 98.3 percent also hold the opinion that they must read well. Furthermore, just over two-thirds of the respondents who "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" that they must write well think that they must read well in order to successful in life.

Table 9 B: The opinion of students as to their reading abilities when they entered Memorial University of Newfoundland.

I read well when I first came to university.	Frequency	Percent	With	Opinion
Strongly Agree	299	41.2 %	299	41.5 %
Agree	371	51.2	371	51.5
Disagree	41	5.7	41	5.7
Strongly Disagree	9	1.2	9	1.3
No Opinion	5	0.7		
Total	725	100.0 %	720	100.0 %

Among the respondents, 92.4 percent "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that they read well when they first came to university while 6.9 percent "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree."

When the 0.7 percent of respondents who had "No Opinion" are excluded the percentages increase to 93.0 and 7.0 percent respectively.

Table 9 B.1: Did the participants with different levels of a university education read well when they arrived at Memorial?

I read well when I first came to university	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Agree or Strong Agree	94.1 %	94.3 %	91.3 %	93.6 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	5.9	5.7	8.7	6.4
Total	100.0 % N=68	100.0 % N= 87	100.0 % N=92	100.0 % N=110

Undergraduate respondents with differing levels of education "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" in nearly identical percentages that they read well when they came to university.

This ensures that the levels of reading are consistent over time.

Table 9 B.2: The opinion of the respondents in the different faculties as to if they read well when they came to university?

I read well when I first came to university	Arts	Business	Education	Engineering	Science
Agree or Strongly Agree	91.0 %	93.6 %	95.4 %	92.3	91.5
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	9.0	6.4	4.6	7.8	8.5
Total	100.0 % N=133	100.0 % N=125	100.0 % N=87	100.0 % N=64	100.0 % N=106

Each faculty has a similar percentage of respondents who "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that they read well when they first came to university. However, the students in the professional schools report a slightly higher level of reading than do those in the Arts and Science Faculties.

Table 9 B.3: Did respondents of differing genders read well when they came to university?

I read well when I first came to university	Female	Male
Agree or Strongly Agree	94.1 %	91.4 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	5.9	8.6
Total	100.0 % N=426	100.0 % N=291

Females report a slightly higher level of reading, as compared to males, upon their arrival at Memorial.

Table 9 C: The participants feelings as to whether their reading skills improved during their studies at MUN.

My reading skills have improved during my studies at MUN	Frequency	Percent	With	Opinion
Strongly Agree	157	21.7 %	157	22.7 %
Agree	338	46.7	338	48.9
Disagree	174	24.0	174	25.2
Strongly Disagree	22	3.0	22	3.2
No Opinion	33	4.6		
Total	724	100.0 %	691	100.0 %

Nearly 70 percent of the respondents think that their reading skills have improved during their studies at MUN. However, 27.0 percent of the respondents percent "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" with the statement.

4.6 percent of the respondents had "No Opinion" and when they are excluded a full 71.6 percent of the respondents "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" with the statement. The percentage of respondents who "Strongly Disagree" or "Disagree" increases to 28.4 percent.

Table 9 C.1: The responses of students from different faculties as to whether their reading skills improved since they came to university.

My reading skills have improved during my studies at MUN	Arts	Business	Education	Engineering	Science
Agree or Strongly Agree	63.8 %	79.7 %	81.2 %	62.9 %	73.0 %
Disagree or Strongly	36.2	20.3	18.8	37.1	27.0

Disagree					
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 % N=62	100.0 %
	N=127	N=118	N=85		N=100

Students in the Arts and Engineering Faculties have the smallest percentage of respondents who believe that their reading skills improved during their studies at MUN. Conversely, students in the Business and Education Faculties have the highest percentage of respondents who believe that their reading skills have improved.

Table 9 C.2: The gender of the participants and their opinions as to whether their reading skills improved since they came to university.

My reading skills have improved during my studies at MUN	Female	Male
Agree or Strongly Agree	67.7 %	77.0 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	32.3	23.0
Total	100.0 % N=405	100.0 % N=283

According to Table 9 C.2 a higher percentage of males, rather than females, believe that their writing skills improved since they came to university.

Table 9 C.3: The participants' opinions as to whether they do a lot of reading as part of their course work and if their reading skills improved since they came to university.

	I DO A LOT OF READING AS PART OF MY COURSE WORK	
My reading skills have improved during my studies at MUN	Agree or Strongly agree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree

Agree or Strongly Agree	73.2 %	47.7 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	26.8	52.3
Total	100.0 % N=637	100.0 % N=44

Among the participants, 73.2 percent of those who read a lot in their courses believe that their reading skills improved during their studies at MUN. In contrast, only 47.7 percent of respondents who "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" with this statement stated that their reading skills improved. Clearly, the amount of reading done as part of course work is positively correlated with the improvement in reading skills during a person's university career.

Table 9 C.4: The amount of reading done outside of course work and the students' response as to whether their reading skills improved since they came to university.

	I DO A LOT OF READING OUTSIDE OF COURSE WORK	
My reading skills have improved during my studies at MUN	Agree or Strongly Agree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
Agree or Strongly Agree	73.7 %	64.6 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	26.3	35.4
Total	100.0 % N=540	100.0 % N=144

Of the respondents who read a lot outside of their courses 73.7 percent believe that their reading skills have improved during their studies at MUN. In contrast, only 64.6 percent of respondents who "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" with this statement believe that

their reading skills improved. The table indicates that the amount of reading done outside of courses is positively correlated with the amount of improvement in one's reading skills.

Table 9 D: The participants' opinions as to whether they received a lot of help which caused their reading skills to improve.

I have received a lot of help and as a result my reading skills have improved.	Frequency	Percent	With	Opinion
Strongly Agree	15	2.1 %	15	2.3 %
Agree	100	13.8	100	15.5
Disagree	416	57.5	416	64.4
Strongly Disagree	115	15.9	115	17.8
No Opinion	77	10.7		
Total	723	100.0 %	646	100.0 %

Of the respondents, 73.4 percent "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" that they received a lot of help which improved their reading skills. Only 15.9 percent of the respondents "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that their reading skills improved because of the large amount of assistance that they received.

A large percentage of students, 10.7 percent, had "No Opinion." When these participants are excluded 82.2 percent "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" with the statement while 17.8 percent "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that they received a lot of help which improved their reading skills.

Table 9 D.1: The participants' faculty and their opinions as to whether they received a lot of help which improved their reading skills.

I have received a lot of help and as a result my reading skills have improved	Arts	Business	Education	Engineering	Science
Agree or Strongly	19.8 %	21.0 %	14.6 %	11.5 %	15.4 %

Agree					
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	80.2	79.0	85.4	88.6	84.5
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
	N=116	N=105	N=82	N=61	N=91

Students in the Engineering, Education and Science Faculties report receiving less assistance with their reading skills than do their counterparts in the Arts and Business Faculties. The amount of assistance received by respondents in the Engineering Faculty is significantly lower than that received by students in other faculties. Also, the amount of assistance received by students in the Business Faculty is slightly higher than in the other closest faculty.

Table 9 D.2: The academic status of the respondents and their opinions as to whether they received a lot of help which improved their reading skills.

I have received a lot of Under-help and as a result my reading skills have graduate improved		Graduated	Graduate (MUN)	Graduate (Elsewhere)
Agree or Strongly Agree	16.6 %	19.1 %	17.4 %	17.9 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	83.3	80.9	82.6	82.1
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
	N=301	N=136	N=115	N=67

Nearly equal percentages of respondents in each cohort "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that they received a lot of help which improved their reading skills.

Table 9 E: The opinion of the respondents' as to whether they do a lot of reading as part of their course work.

I do a lot of reading as part of my course work.	Frequency	Percent	With	Opinion
Strongly Agree	402	55.7 %	402	56.5
Agree	265	36.7	265	37.2
Disagree	38	5.3	38	5.3
Strongly Disagree	7	1.0	7	1.0
No Opinion	10	1.4		
Total	722	100.0 %	712	100.0 %

Among the respondents, 92.4 percent "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that they do a lot of reading as part of their course work while only 6.3 percent "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" with this statement.

Only 1.4 percent of the respondents voiced "No Opinion." The exclusion of this group has a minimal effect on the figures in this table as they increase to 93.7 and 6.3 percent respectively.

Table 9 E.1: The academic status of the students and their opinions as to whether they do a lot of reading as part of their course work.

I do a lot of reading as part of my course work	Under-graduate	Graduated	Graduate (MUN)	Graduate (Elsewhere)
Agree or Strongly Agree	89.9 %	95.8 %	98.4 %	96.2 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	10.1	4.2	1.6	3.8
Total	100.0 % N=335	100.0 % N=142	100.0 % N=127	100.0 % N=78

A slight difference exists between graduate students who received their undergraduate degree at MUN and those who received it at another university. Overall, the respondents report an increase in the amount of reading as they receive higher levels of education.

Table 9 E.2: The respondents' faculty and their opinions as to whether they do a lot of reading as part of their course work.

I do a lot of reading as part of my course work	Arts	Business	Education	Engineering	Science
Agree or Strongly Agree	95.5 %	94.4 %	100.0 %	81.0 %	93.2 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	4.5	5.6		19.0	6.8
Total	100.0 % N=132	100.0 % N=125	100.0 % N=86	100.0 % N=63	100.0 % N=103

Students in the Engineering Faculty report the lowest level of reading as part of their course work whereas all other faculties report significantly higher levels.

Table 9 E.3: The cumulative grade average of the respondents and their opinions as to whether they do a lot of reading as part of their course work.

I do a lot of reading as part of my course work	Below 50 Percent	50-54 Percent	55-64 Percent	65-79 Percent	80-100 Percent
Agree or Strongly Agree	16.7 %	33.7 %	90.7 %	93.0 %	97.5 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	83.3	66.7	9.3	7.0	3.5

Total	100.0 % N=6	100.0 % N=3	100.0 % N=75	100.0 % N=400	100.0 % N=199
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The percentage of respondents who do a lot of reading as part of their course work increases as their cumulative grade average increases. Conversely, the percentage of respondents who "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" decreases as the cumulative grade average increases. Once again, the small number of respondents in the first two columns necessitates their being ignored.

Table 9 E.4: The respondents' gender and their opinions as to whether they do a lot of reading as part of their course work.

I do a lot of reading as part of my course work	Female	Male
Agree or Strongly Agree	93.3 %	94.1 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	6.7	5.9
Total	100.0 % N=421	100.0 % N=288

Unlike other indicators, males report doing more reading as part of their course work than do females.

Table 9 F: The students' opinions as to whether they do a lot of reading outside of their regular course work.

I do a lot of reading <u>outside</u> my regular course work.	Frequency	Percent	With	Opinion
Strongly Agree	283	39.0 %	283	39.6 %

Agree	287	39.6	287	40.1
Disagree	116	16.0	116	16.2
Strongly Disagree	29	4.0	29	4.1
No Opinion	10	1.4		
Total	725	100.0 %	715	100.0 %

A large proportion of the respondents, 78.6 percent "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that they read a lot outside of their courses. However, another 20.0 percent "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" with the statement. Again, only 1.4 percent of the respondents failed to provide an opinion.

When the latter group is excluded, the percentage who agree with the statement increases to 79.7 while 20.3 percent disagree.

Table 9 F.1: The academic status of the respondents and their opinions as to whether they do a lot of reading outside of their regular course work.

I do a lot of reading outside my regular course work.	Undergraduate	Graduated	Graduate (MUN)	Graduate (Elsewhere)
Agree or Strongly Agree	72.4 %	87.7 %	85.2 %	84.0 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	27.6	12.3	14.8	16.0
Total	100.0 % N=330	100.0 % N=146	100.0 % N=128	100.0 % N=81

Students who graduated in 1995 contain the highest percentage of respondents who do a lot of reading outside of their regular courses. This group is closely followed by the two groups of graduate students while undergraduate students report doing the least amount

of writing outside of their regular course work.

Table 9 F.2: The participants' faculty and their opinion as to whether they do a lot of reading outside of their regular course work.

I do a lot of reading outside of my regular course work	Arts	Business	Education	Engineering	Science
Agree or Strongly Agree	81.2 %	79.0 %	90.8 %	69.4 %	74.3 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	18.8	20.1	9.2	30.6	25.7
Total	100.0 % N=133	100.0 % N=124	100.0 % N=87	100.0 % N=62	100.0 % N=105

Students in the Engineering and Science Faculties report doing the least amount of reading outside of their regular course work while those in the Education Faculty read at significantly higher levels.

Table 9 F.3: The respondents' cumulative grade average and their opinion as to whether they do a lot of reading outside of their regular course work.

I do a lot of reading outside my regular course work	Below 50 Percent	50-54 Percent	55-64 Percent	65-79 Percent	80-100 Percent
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Agree or Strongly Agree	100.0 %	66.7%	71.6 %	79.6 %	81.7 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree		33.3	28.4	20.4	18.3
Total	100.0 %	100.0 % N=3	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
	N=6		N=74	N=402	N=202

The amount of reading done outside of regular course work increases as the cumulative grade average rises.

Table 9 F.4: The students' faculty and their opinion as to whether they do a lot of reading outside of their regular course work.

I do a lot of reading outside my regular course work	17-21	22-25	26 +
Agree or Strongly Agree	68.8 %	80.8 %	87.5 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	31.3	19.2	12.7
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
	N=208	N=239	N=267

The percentage of respondents who "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that they do a lot of reading

outside of their regular course work rises as the respondents become older.

Table 9 F.5: The gender of the respondents and their opinion as to whether they do a lot of reading outside of their regular course work.

I do a lot of reading outside my regular course work		Female	Male
Agree or Strongly Agree	81.3 %		77.6 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	18.7		22.4
Total	100.0 % N=422		100.0 % N=290

Females are more likely than males to "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that they do a lot of reading outside of their regular course work.

Summary of the frequency distributions in Question 9.

Question	Response Rate	RESPONSE	
		Agree or Strongly Agree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
A. One must read well to be successful	99.0 %	95.8 %	4.2 %
B. I read well when I came to university	99.3	93.0	7.0
C. My reading skills improved at MUN	95.4	71.6	28.4
D. I received a lot of help and my reading skills improved	89.3	17.8	82.2
E. I do a lot of reading as part of my course work	98.6	93.7	6.3
F. I do a lot of reading <u>outside</u> my regular course work	98.6	79.7	20.3

Once again, the majority of respondents "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" with the questions posed. The only exception is that an overwhelming majority of respondents "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" that they received a lot of help which improved their reading skills.

The following tables are based on 10 Likert Scale items. These questions asked the respondent if they: "Never Used" a particular service or resource at MUN, "Used it but did not find it helpful," or "Used it and found it somewhat" or "Very helpful." Once again, the questions are listed in the tables.

Table 10 A: The students' responses as to whether English composition courses improved their writing skills.

English Composition courses have improved your writing skills	Number	Percent	Number of Users	Percent Among Users
Never Used	363	52.5 %		
Used but not helpful	74	10.7	74	22.5 %
Used and somewhat helpful	179	25.9	179	54.4
Used and very helpful	76	11.0	76	23.1
Total	692	100.0 %	329	100.0 %

Only a minority of the respondents, 47.5 percent, have taken English Composition courses. Of the respondents who have taken the English composition courses 77.5 percent feel that they were "Somewhat" or "Very helpful." Conversely, 22.5 percent thought that they were "Not helpful."

Table 10 B: The respondents' opinions as to if other English courses improved their writing skills.

Other English courses have improved your writing skills	Number	Percent	Number of Users	Percent Among Users
Never Used	215	31.0 %		
Used but not helpful	125	18.0	125	26.1
Used and somewhat helpful	270	38.9	270	56.3
Used and very helpful	84	12.1	84	17.5
Total	694	100.0 %	479	100.0%

Of the respondents, 69.0 percent have taken other English courses. Among this group, 73.8 percent have found them "Somewhat" or "Very helpful." Conversely, 26.1 percent found the other English courses " Not helpful."

Table 10 C: The students' responses as to if the use of computers improved their writing skills.

Use of computers for writing has improved your writing skills	Number	Percent	Number of Users	Percent of Users
Never Used	181	25.3 %		
Used but not helpful	65	9.1	65	12.2 %
Used and somewhat helpful	256	35.8	256	47.9
Used and very helpful	213	29.8	213	39.9
Total	715	100.0 %	534	100.0 %

Among the participants, 74.7 percent have used computers for writing. Of the students 87.8 percent found them to be "Somewhat" or "Very helpful." However, 12.2 percent did not feel that the computers were "Very helpful" for improving their writing skills.

Table 10 D: The students' responses as to if the clarity of professors instructions on how to do assignments helped to improve their writing skills.

Clarity of professors instructions on how to do assignments has improved your writing skills	Number	Percent	Number of Users	Percent of Users
Never Used	47	6.6 %		
Used but not helpful	132	18.6	132	19.9 %
Used and somewhat helpful	393	55.4	393	59.4
Used and very helpful	137	19.3	137	20.7
Total	709	100.0 %	662	100.0 %

A full 93.4 percent of respondents used professors instructions on how to do assignments. Among these, 80.1 percent think that the instructions are "Somewhat" or "Very helpful." However, 19.9 percent felt that such instruction was "Not helpful."

Table 10 D.1: The academic status of the respondents and their opinions as to whether the clarity of professors instructions helped to improve their writing skills.

Clarity of professors instructions on how to do assignments.	Under-graduate	Graduated	Graduate (MUN)	Graduate (Elsewhere)
Used but not helpful	15.6 %	27.3 %	26.1 %	12.5 %
Used and somewhat helpful	56.7	59.7	64.7	58.9
Used and very helpful	27.8	12.9	9.2	28.6
Total	100.0 % N=320	100.0 % N=139	100.0 % N=119	100.0 % N=56

Undergraduate students and graduate students who obtained their undergraduate degree from another university express the highest level of satisfaction with the clarity of professors instructions on how to do assignments for improving their writing skills. The level of dissatisfaction with professors' instructions was highest among participants who spent the most time at Memorial.

Table 10 D.2: The undergraduate respondents' year in university and their opinions as to whether the clarity of professors instructions helped to improve their writing skills.

Clarity of professors instructions on how to do assignments.	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Used but not helpful	19.0 %	16.3 %	15.2 %	13.6 %
Used and somewhat helpful	46.6	57.0	62.0	60.2
Used and very helpful	34.5	26.7	22.8	26.2
Total	100.0 % N=58	100.0 % N=86	100.0 % N=92	100.0 % N=103

First year students report slightly higher levels of dissatisfaction with the clarity of professors instructions for improving their writing skills than do students who have received more education. Beyond the first year, students report finding professors instructions on how to do assignments increasingly more useful.

Table 10 D.3: The participants' faculty and their opinion as to whether professors instructions as to how to do assignments helped to improve their writing skills.

Clarity of professors instructions on how to do assignments.	Arts	Business	Education	Engineer.	Science
Used but not helpful	11.3 %	23.8 %	17.3 %	40.3 %	16.5 %
Used and somewhat helpful	70.2	59.0	64.2	50.0	56.0
Used and very helpful	18.5	17.2	18.5	9.7	27.5
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
	N=133	N=124	N=81	N=62	N=105

Students in the Engineering Faculty report the lowest level of satisfaction with the instructions they received from their professors on assignments for improving their writing skills. In the other faculties, at least 76.2 percent of students believe that the instructions they received were "Somewhat" or "Very Helpful" for improving their writing skills.

Table 10 D.4: The respondents' cumulative grade average and their opinions as to whether the clarity of professors instructions on how to do assignments helped to improve their writing skills.

Clarity of professors instructions on how to do assignments.	Below 50 Percent	50-54 Percent	55-64 Percent	65-79 Percent	80-100 Percent
Used but not	20.0 %		15.3 %	21.0 %	20.6 %

helpful					
Used and somewhat helpful	60.0	33.3 %	55.6	60.6	57.7
Used and very helpful	20.0	66.7	29.2	18.4	21.7
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	N=3	100.0 %	100.0 %
	N=5		N=72	N=381	N=175

There is no pattern in Table 10 D.4, but students with the lowest grades, 55 to 64 percent, report the highest amount of satisfaction with the instruction they received from their professors on how to assignments for improving their writing skills.

Table 10 D.5: The different age cohorts of the students and their opinions as to whether professors instructions on how to do assignments helped to improve their writing skills.

Clarity of professors instructions on how to do assignments.	17-21	22-25	26+
Used but not helpful	17.1 %	22.3 %	20.3 %
Used and somewhat helpful	57.1	60.7	60.0
Used and very helpful	25.7	17.0	19.8
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
	N=206	N=238	N=261

The youngest respondents reported the highest level of satisfaction with the instructions they received from professors, on how to do assignments, for improving their writing skills.

Table 10 D.6: The respondents' gender and their opinions as to whether professors instructions on how to do assignments helped to improve their writing skills.

Clarity of professors instructions on how to do assignments.	Female	Male
Used but not helpful	19.2 %	20.9 %

Used and somewhat helpful	59.1	60.0
Used and very helpful	21.7	19.0
Total	100.0 % N=401	100.0 % N=258

Very little difference exist in the opinions of male and female participants as to whether the instructions they received from professors on how to do assignments helped to improve their writing skills.

Table 10 E: The respondents' opinions as to if professors comments on marked papers helped to improve their writing skills.

Comments by professors on marked papers have improved your writing skills	Number	Percent	Number of Users	Percent of Users
Never Used	41	5.7 %		
Used but not helpful	105	14.6	105	15.5 %
Used and somewhat helpful	354	49.4	354	52.4
Used and very helpful	217	30.3	217	32.1
Total	717	100.0 %	676	100.0 %

Nearly 95 percent of respondents have used professors comments on marked papers. Of these, 84.5 percent found them "Somewhat" or "Very helpful." Furthermore, only 15.5 percent of the respondents who have used the comments found them "Not very helpful."

Table 10 E.1: The academic status of the respondents and their opinions as to whether comments by professors on marked papers helped to improve their writing skills.

Comments by professors on marked papers improved writing skills.	Under-graduate	Graduated	Graduate (MUN)	Graduate (Elsewhere)
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Used but not helpful	12.5 %	21.7 %	18.4 %	13.6 %
Used and somewhat helpful	51.1	55.1	54.4	47.0
Used and very helpful	36.4	23.2	27.2	39.4
Total	100.0 % N=319	100.0 % N=138	100.0 % N=125	100.0 % N=66

The highest percentage of students who report that the comments by professors on marked papers was "Not helpful" for improving their writing skills were those who attended MUN for the longest period of time. Graduate students who obtained their undergraduate degree elsewhere reported the highest level of satisfaction with professors' comments.

Table 10 E.2: The undergraduate respondents' year in university and their opinions as to whether comments by professors on marked papers helped to improve their writing skills.

Comments by professors on marked papers improved writing skills.	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Used but not helpful	11.9 %	11.5 %	11.1 %	16.2 %
Used and somewhat helpful	42.4	52.9	54.4	54.3
Used and very helpful	45.8	35.6	34.4	29.5
Total	100.0 % N=59	100.0 % N=87	100.0 % N=90	100.0 % N=105

The students with differing amounts of a university education report, in about equal percentages, that the comments from professors on marked papers helped to improve their writing skills. However, undergraduate students in their final year of university report the most dissatisfaction with the comments they received on their papers.

Table 10 E.3: The participants' faculty and their opinions as to whether comments by professors on marked papers helped to improve their writing skills.

Comments by professors on marked papers improved writing skills.	Arts	Business	Education	Engineer.	Science
Used but not helpful	14.2 %	17.2 %	19.5 %	26.2 %	14.4 %
Used and somewhat helpful	51.2	59.5	53.7	62.3	42.3
Used and very helpful	34.6	23.3	26.8	11.5	43.3
Total	100.0 % N=127	100.0 % N=116	100.0 % N=82	100.0 % N=61	100.0 % N=97

The participants from the Arts and Science Faculties had the highest percentage of respondents who believed that the comments on their papers helped to improve their writing skills while those in the Engineering Faculty recorded the lowest percentage. Overall, the professional schools found professors' comments less useful than the respondents in the Arts and Science Faculties.

Table 10 E.4: The respondents' cumulative grade average and their opinions as to whether comments by professors on marked papers helped to improve their writing skills.

Comments by professors on marked papers improved writing skills.	Below 50 Percent	50-54 Percent	55-64 Percent	65-79 Percent	80-100 Percent
Used but not helpful	16.7 %		15.1 %	17.5 %	12.4 %
Used and somewhat helpful	50.0	66.7 %	43.8	52.7	56.2
Used and very helpful	33.3	33.3	41.1	29.8	31.4
Total	100.0 %	100.0 % N=3	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %

N=6

N=73

N=383

N=185

The respondents with the highest cumulative averages and those in danger of failing found the professors comments on marked papers to be most useful for improving their writing skills.

Table 10 E.5: The different age cohorts of the students and their opinions as to whether comments by professors on marked papers helped to improve their writing skills.

Comments by professors on marked papers improved writing skills.	17-21	22-25	26+
Used but not helpful	14.4 %	17.7 %	14.6 %
Used and somewhat helpful	50.2	54.0	52.5
Used and very helpful	35.4	28.3	32.9
Total	100.0 % N=209	100.0 % N=226	100.0 % N=240

Among the respondents, the highest percentage who thought that professors' comments on marked papers was "Not helpful" for improving their writing skills were those aged 22 to 25.

Table 10 E.6: The respondents' gender and their opinions as to whether comments by professors on marked papers helped to improve their writing skills.

Comments by professors on marked papers improved writing	Female	Male
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skills.

Used but not helpful	14.7 %	16.5 %
Used and somewhat helpful	52.1	53.0
Used and very helpful	33.2	30.5
Total	100.0 % N=407	100.0 % N=266

A higher percentage of female respondents, than did their male counterparts, report that professors comments on marked papers helped to improve their writing skills .

Table 10 F: The respondents' opinions as to if the other help they received from professors helped to improve their writing skills.

Other help from professors has improved your writing skills	Number	Percent	Number of Users	Percent of Users
Never Used	253	35.5 %		
Used but not helpful	73	10.3	73	15.9 %
Used and somewhat helpful	290	40.7	290	63.2
Used and very helpful	96	13.5	96	20.9
Total	712	100.0 %	459	100.0 %

Of the participants, 64.5 percent received other assistance from professors in order to improve their writing skills. Among these, 84.1 percent felt that this was "Somewhat" or "Very helpful". Another 15.9 percent of the respondents found this "Not helpful" for improving their writing skills.

Table 10 F.1: The academic status of the respondents and their opinions as to whether the other help they received from professors helped to improve their writing skills.

Other help from professors improved one's writing skills.	Undergraduate	Graduated	Graduate (MUN)	Graduate (Elsewhere)
Used but not helpful	14.3 %	19.6 %	19.3 %	11.8 %
Used and somewhat helpful	67.0	59.8	56.7	58.8
Used and very helpful	18.7	20.6	24.1	29.4
Total	100.0 % N=203	100.0 % N=102	100.0 % N=83	100.0 % N=51

The students who spent the least amount of time at Memorial, the undergraduates and those who received their undergraduate degree elsewhere, expressed the most satisfaction with the other help they received from professors for improving their writing skills.

Table 10 F.2: The undergraduate respondents' year in university and their opinions as to whether the other help they received from professors helped to improve their writing skills.

Other help from professors improved one's writing skills	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Used but not helpful	14.8 %	14.6 %	16.4 %	12.7 %
Used and somewhat helpful	59.3	68.8	64.2	69.6
Used and very helpful	25.9	16.7	19.4	17.7
Total	100.0 % N=27	100.0 % N=48	100.0 % N=67	100.0 % N=79

Regardless of their year in university, about 85 percent of the undergraduate respondents believe that other assistance from professors helped to improve their writing skills.

Table 10 F.3: The participants' faculty and their opinion as to whether the other help they received from professors helped to improve their writing skills.

Other help from professors improved one's writing skills	Arts	Business	Education	Engineer.	Science
Used but not helpful	6.8 %	22.1 %	19.6 %	30.2 %	9.1 %
Used and somewhat helpful	65.9	63.6	66.1	58.1	60.6
Used and very helpful	27.3	14.3	14.3	11.6	30.3
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
	N=88	N=77	N=56	N=43	N=66

The participants in the Arts and Science Faculties report the highest level of satisfaction with the other assistance they received from professors for improving their writing skills. The Business and Education Faculties are next with about 80 percent believing that the assistance they received helped to improve their writing skills. The students in the Engineering Faculty report the most dissatisfaction with the other assistance they received for improving their writing skills.

Table 10 F.4: The respondents' cumulative grade average and their opinions as to whether the other help they received from professors helped to improve their writing skills.

Other help from professors improved one's writing skills.	Below 50 Percent	50-54 Percent	55-64 Percent	65-79 Percent	80-100 Percent
Used but not helpful	25.0 %		7.0 %	17.0 %	16.3 %
Used and somewhat helpful	75.0		67.4	61.4	64.4
Used and very helpful			25.6	21.6	19.3
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
	N=4	N=0	N=43	N=259	N=135

The participants with the lowest cumulative grade average reported the highest level of satisfaction with the other help they received from professors for improving their writing skills.

Table 10 F.5: The different age cohorts of the students and their opinions as to whether the other help they received from professors helped to improve their writing skills.

Other help from professors improved one's writing skills.	17-21	22-25	26+
Used but not helpful	15.0 %	14.9 %	17.8 %
Used and somewhat helpful	66.9	61.9	61.1
Used and very helpful	18.0	23.2	21.0
Total	100.0 % N=133	100.0 % N=168	100.0 % N=157

Respondents of different age groups believe, in about equal percentages, that the other help they received from professors helped to improve their writing skills. However, the older respondents express the weakest opinion that the other help they received from professors improved their writing skills.

Table 10 F.6: The respondents' gender and their opinions as to whether the other help they received from professors helped to improve their writing skills.

Other help from professors improved one's writing skills.	Female	Male
Used but not helpful	15.5 %	16.8 %
Used and somewhat helpful	65.5	59.2
Used and very helpful	19.1	24.0
Total	100.0 % N=278	100.0 % N=179

About 85 percent of the respondents, from both genders, believe that the other help they received from professors was "Somewhat" or "Very helpful." However, a higher percentage of males than females believe that the assistance was "Very helpful." Also, females were more likely than males to believe that the other help they received from professors was "Somewhat helpful."

Table 10 G: The respondents' opinions as to whether help from fellow students helped to improve their writing skills.

Help from fellow students has improved your writing skills	Number	Percent	Number of Users	Percent of Users
Never Used	220	30.9 %		
Used but not helpful	47	6.6	47	9.6 %
Used and somewhat helpful	337	47.4	337	68.6
Used and very helpful	107	15.0	107	21.8
Total	711	100.0 %	491	100.0 %

Among the respondents receiving help from other students 90.4 percent thought that this was "Somewhat" or "Very helpful." In contrast, 9.6 percent believed that the assistance was "Not helpful."

Table 10 H: The respondents' opinions as to if the MUN Writing Centre helped to improve their

writing skills.

The MUN Writing Centre has improved your writing skills	Number	Percent	Number of Users	Percent of Users
Never Used	609	85.9 %		
Used but not helpful	29	4.1	29	29.0 %
Used and somewhat helpful	52	7.3	52	52.0

Used and very helpful	19	2.7	19	19.0
Total	709	100.0 %	100	100.0 %

In excess of 85 percent of the respondents "Never used" the MUN Writing Centre. Of the respondents who used the Writing Centre, 71.0 percent found it "Somewhat" or "Very helpful" while 29.1 percent believed that it was "Not helpful."

Table 10 I: The respondents' opinions as to whether the MUN Counselling Centre helped to improve their writing skills.

The MUN Counselling Centre has improved your writing skills	Number	Percent	Number of Users	Percent of Users
Never Used	655	92.5 %		
Used but not helpful	19	2.7	19	35.9
Used and somewhat helpful	25	3.5	25	47.2
Used and very helpful	9	1.3	9	17.0
Total	708	100.0 %	53	100.0 %

Among the participants, 92.5 percent have never used the MUN Counselling Centre. Furthermore, of the respondents who have used it 64.2 percent found it "Somewhat" or "Very helpful" while 35.9 percent found it "Not helpful."

Table 10 J: The respondents' opinions as to whether help from someone outside of MUN helped to improve their writing skills.

Help from someone outside of MUN	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Never Used	346	48.8 %		
Used but not helpful	19	2.7	19	5.2
Used and somewhat helpful	235	33.1	235	64.7

Used and very helpful	109	15.4	109	30.0
Total	709	100.0 %	363	99.9 %

Of the respondents, 51.2 percent obtained help from someone outside of MUN. Nearly all of these people, 94.7 percent, thought that it was "Somewhat" or "Very helpful." However, 5.2 percent thought that such assistance was "Not helpful."

Table summarizing the responses to question ten.

Question	R Never Used	E Used	P Used but not helpful	L Used and somewhat helpful	Y Used and very helpful
A. English composition courses (1110, 1010,2020)	52.5 %	47.5 %	22.5 %	54.4 %	23.1 %
B. Other English courses	31.0	69.0	26.1	56.3	17.5
C. Use of computers for writing	25.3	74.7	12.2	47.9	39.9
D. Clarity of professors instructions on how to do assignments	6.6	93.4	19.9	59.4	20.7
E. Comments by professors on marked papers	5.7	94.3	15.5	52.4	32.1
F. Other help from professors	35.5	64.5	15.9	63.2	20.9
G. Help from fellow students	30.9	69.1	9.6	68.6	21.8
H. The MUN Writing Centre	85.9	14.1	29.0	52.0	19.0
I. The MUN Counselling Centre	92.5	7.5	35.9	47.2	17.0
J. Help from someone outside MUN	48.8	51.2	5.2	64.7	30.0

* **Bold** indicates that only a minority, or a small majority, of respondents used the particular service.

ANALYSIS OF QUESTION 10

When the participants were asked the extent to which a variety of services provided by Memorial University of Newfoundland helped to improve their writing skills a pattern of responses became evident. Although a large percentage of the students "Never Used" some services, those that did reported the highest level of improvement in their writing skills. The indicators in question ten were cross-tabulated with question 8 C (the amount of improvement in writing skills during studies at MUN.) In every instance, except the question pertaining to the MUN Counselling Centre, as the participants found the services increasingly more useful their writing skills were more likely to improve than those who found the service less useful. An example is presented below, but caution should be exercised with question 10 H and 10 I as they each contained a large number of respondents who "Never Used" the Writing and Counselling Centres.

The participants' opinions as to whether English composition courses improved their writing skills and if their writing skills improved during their studies at MUN.

		ENGLISH	COURSES	
My writing skills have improved during my studies at MUN.	Never Used	Used but not helpful	Used and somewhat helpful	Used and very helpful
Agree or Strongly Agree	81.0 %	63.4 %	83.4 %	98.7 %
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	19.0	36.6	16.6	1.3
Total	100.0 % N=347	100.0 % N=71	100.0 % N=175	100.0 % N=76

According to the above table, the respondents' level of satisfaction with English composition courses increases as their writing skills improve.

Next, the indicators in question ten were analyzed according to the student status of the respondents. Graduate students who obtained their undergraduate degree at another university reported the lowest usage of the services listed in question ten. However, given that they have spent the least amount of time at MUN, this is to be expected. Yet, students found professors' instructions on how to do assignments, comments on marked papers, other help from professors, other English courses, and English composition courses to be helpful in improving their writing skills. The services are listed in the order in which they are preferred and the students of different status indicate similar levels of preference for the assistance available.

Table 11: The respondents' suggestions as to how the quality of writing might be improved at Memorial University. Responses to this question varied as 395 students failed to provide a response; 332 provided one answer; 123 provided two; 23 gave 3 responses and 3 people provided four responses.

SUGGESTIONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Institute a mandatory grammar course, or make it a large component of a course, in first year.	92	19.1 %
Clear expectations from professors and more encouraging comments on papers when they are returned.	84	17.5
Professors should be more approachable and interested.	30	6.2
Offer courses in citation forms, such as APA, MLA and a technical writing course for Engineers.	30	6.2
Marks should be assigned for written composition in a course.	39	8.1
Improve high school English grammar courses.	48	10.0
Ensure that professors can write and speak English well.	27	5.6
Entrance test for English, similar to the Math Skills inventory.	16	3.3
Ensure that there is uniform marking of grammar.	22	4.6
Short periodic assignments that concentrate on grammar quality.	9	1.9
More advertising of the Academic and Writing Centres.	7	1.5
Improve the quality and quantity of assistance at the Writing Centre.	10	2.1
Make first year English more relevant--get rid of the poetry component.	17	3.5
Increase the number of English grammar courses required for a degree.	10	2.1
Encourage more group work in writing.	5	1.0
Let first year students do a draft of a paper.	7	1.5

Increase the reading content of courses.	8	1.7
Make computer use mandatory for written assignments.	6	1.2
Have uniform writing styles throughout MUN.	1	0.2
Distribute a handout on how to correctly do a paper.	1	0.2
In English, focus on the quality of the assignments.	2	0.4
Improve writing in the Math and Science Disciplines.	1	0.2
Initiate a program if on-line tutors for writing.	1	0.2
Have the two required English courses taught by the same professor so that progress can be monitored.	1	0.2
Have a smaller number of students in each class.	1	0.2
Stop reducing the number if English 1110, 2010, and 2020 slots.	1	0.2
The allocation of marks in first year English courses should be more generous.	2	0.4
Encourage students to get others to read their papers.	2	0.4
Let students revise papers.	1	0.2
Total	481	100.0 %

Conclusions:

Graduate students who received their undergraduate degree at Memorial have a slightly higher level of confidence in their writing abilities than do graduate students who received their undergraduate degrees at another university. This is evident upon a comparison of Tables 7 A.1 and 7 A.2. Given these results, it should be no surprise that 84.0 percent of the graduate students who have an undergraduate degree from MUN believe that marks should be assigned for the quality of writing in courses whereas only 75.7 percent of the students who received an undergraduate degree elsewhere voiced a similar opinion. In addition, as Tables 8 F.2 and 8 G.1 illustrate, graduate students who received an undergraduate degree from MUN also tend to believe that they do more writing, both inside and outside of their courses, than do graduate students who received their undergraduate degrees from another university.

Of the graduate students who received their undergraduate degree from another university 94.9 percent believe that it is necessary to be able to read well in order to be successful in life while only 92.2 percent of those who attended MUN share a similar opinion. Yet, in Tables 9 E.1 and 9 F.1 the graduate students with an undergraduate career at MUN indicated doing a higher level of reading, both in and out of their courses, than did their counterparts who received undergraduate degrees from other universities.

The data presented in this report indicates that graduate students who received an undergraduate degree from Memorial have slightly better writing skills than graduate students who received an undergraduate degree from another university. However, overall the two groups exhibit little difference.

Numerous cross tabulations involving the faculty of the respondents indicates that students in the professional schools are better at writing than are those in the Arts and Science Faculties. In Tables 7 A.3 and 7 B.2 students in the Business, Education and Engineering Faculties express a higher level of confidence in their writing abilities than did Arts and Science Students. Furthermore, as Table 8 A.1 indicates, students in the professional schools perceive writing as being more closely linked to their success than do students in the Arts and Science Faculties.

However, within the specialized faculties there is room for improvement as respondents in the Engineering Faculty have the highest percentage of respondents who believe that writing is important to their success yet they have the lowest percentage of respondents who believe that their writing skills have improved during their studies at MUN. Also, nearly 50 percent of the respondents in the Engineering Faculty are opposed to assigning marks for the quality of writing in courses. The Arts and Education Faculties recorded the highest percentage of respondents who do the most writing-- inside and outside of their courses. The respondents in the Engineering and Science Faculties reported the lowest level of reading and writing.

Consistent with such low levels of performance are those respondents' opinions as to whether they received a lot of help which improved their reading skills. In Table 9 D.1 the students in the Engineering and Science Faculties report receiving the least amount of assistance to improve their reading skills. However the students in the Arts and Business Faculties report receiving more help which improved their reading skills. The amount of assistance to improve the respondents reading skills was equal among students of different status.

Regarding the amount of help received by respondents to improved their writing skills it appears that students in the Education and Engineering Faculties received the least amount while those in the Arts, Business, and Science Faculties received higher levels.

Females have a higher level of confidence in their reading and writing abilities than do male respondents. Females are more favourable to assigning marks for the quality of writing in courses; they also do more writing than males. However, males report doing a slightly higher level of reading as part of their course work than do females while the latter group reports a higher level of reading as part of their courses. If the participants' responses are correct then males reading skills have improved more than females during their studies at MUN.

The writing ability of the respondents increases as they become older. So too does the amount of reading and writing done inside and out of courses. Not surprising is the fact that the respondents age 26 and older show the highest level of support for assigning

marks for the quality of writing in courses while respondents aged 17 to 21 show the lowest level of support. Similarly, as the respondents' year in university increases so too does the quality of their writing and support for assigning marks for the quality of writing in courses.

The respondents' confidence in their writing abilities increases as their cumulative grade average rises. Furthermore, the higher a respondent's cumulative grade average the more likely they are to support assigning marks for the quality of writing in courses. In addition, individuals who do a lot of reading have higher marks than those who do not.

Appendix A

Appendix B

Explanation Letter accompanying the questionnaire mailed on December 27, 1995.

December 27, 1995

Dear Student:

I am writing to invite your participation in a confidential survey of student attitudes towards reading and writing at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

The study is being conducted on behalf of the Senate Committee on Writing and has been designed to help us better understand students' satisfaction with reading and writing skills acquired through their studies at Memorial. The information collected will help identify any problems that exist and will be used to help improve the writing abilities of students at Memorial.

Please participate in this important project by completing and returning the enclosed questionnaire. Naturally, all of your survey responses will be held in strict confidence and will be used only to produce overall response profiles. Your return envelope has been numbered to allow us to send you a reminder letter, if necessary.

Although the survey is voluntary, we desire your participation in order to obtain a representative sample of opinions and reactions from our students.

We hope that you will help with this important project by completing and returning your survey within the next few days. Please use the postage-paid envelope to return your survey. Thank you very much for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Ron Loder

Research Coordinator

Appendix C

Explanation Letter accompanying the questionnaire mailed on February 7, 1995.

February 7, 1995

Dear Student:

Although the majority of students have now returned their Student Questionnaire on Reading and Writing, we are concerned that we have not yet received your survey.

Students who were asked to participate in this survey were randomly selected to give a representative sample of our students. Because of this, your responses are very important for helping produce a true picture of student backgrounds, opinions and reactions.

Please help in this important research by completing and returning your survey. Another copy is enclosed, along with a return envelop. If you have already returned your survey, I am sure we will be receiving it shortly--thank you. Naturally, participation in the survey

is voluntary and strictly confidential.

We know that this is probably a busy time for you, but if you have not done so already, please complete your survey and return it to us in the enclosed pre-addressed, postage paid envelop.

Hoping to hear from you soon, I again offer our best wishes for your present and future activities.

Sincerely,

Ron Loder

Research Coordinator

Appendix D

An example of the postage-paid return envelope.

Appendix E

Coding Categories. The number, followed by a period indicates the question, as listed on the questionnaire.

1. Status:

0= No response

1= undergraduate status

2= graduated with an undergraduate degree

3= graduate student

4= obtained undergraduate degree at MUN

5= obtained undergraduate degree elsewhere

99= not applicable/codeable

2. Year in university

0= no response

1= first

2= second

3= third

4= fourth or higher

99= not applicable

3A. School or faculty:

0= No response

99= Not applicable

1= General Studies

2= Arts

3= Fine Arts

4= Pre-business

5= Business

6= Education

7= Pre-engineering

8= Engineering

9= Medicine

10= Music

11= Nursing

12= Pharmacy

13= Physical Education

14= Pre-Social Work

15= Social Work

16= Science

97= Undecided/not declared

3B. Department or Major

0= No response

97= Undecided/not declared

98= Not applicable/codeable

99= Library Studies

100= Continuing Studies

2. Arts:

1= Anthropology

2= Classics

3= Economics

4= English

5= Folklore

6= French

7= History

8= Linguistics

9= Philosophy

10= Political Science

11= Religion

12= Russian

13= Sociology

58= Psychology(Arts)

62= Geography(Arts)

64= Women's Studies

65= German

3. Fine Arts:

14= Visual

15= Theatre

5. Business:

16= Accounting

18= Marketing

19= Business Diploma Program

20= Human Resource Management

6= Education:

21. Administration

22. Curriculum and instruction

23. Educational Psychology

24. Elementary

25. Leadership

26. Learning resources

- 27. Primary
- 28. Primary French Immersion
- 29. School Counselling
- 30. Secondary
- 31. Second Language Acquisition
- 32. Special Education
- 33. Teaching And Learning
- 34. Vocational Education
- 60. Physical Education
- 61. School Services
- 70. Native & Northern

8. Engineering:

- 35. Civil
- 36. Electrical
- 37. Environmental and Applied Science
- 38. Mechanical
- 39. Naval Architecture

9. Medicine:

40. Community Medicine

41. Clinical epidemiology

42. Immunology

43. Surgery

11.Nursing:

44. Community Health

45. Post RN program

12.Pharmacy:

59. Pharmaceutics

13.Physical Education:

46. Recreation

16.Science:

47. Biochemistry

- 48. Biology
- 49. Biopsychology
- 50. Chemistry
- 51. Computer Science
- 52. Earth Sciences
- 53. Geography
- 54. Math
- 55. Physics
- 56. Psychology
- 57. Science: Food science
- 63. Oceanography

4. Cumulative Grade Average

0= No response

1= Below 50

2= 50-54

3= 55-64

4= 65-79

5= 80-100

99= Not applicable/codeable

5. Age

0= No response

1= 17-21

2= 22-25

3= 26+

6. Gender

0= No response

1= Female

2= Male

7.A/B

0= No response

1= Very poorly

2= Poorly

3= Adequately

4= Well

5= Very well

99= Not applicable/codeable

8/9.

0= No response

1= Strongly agree

2= Agree

3= Disagree

4= Strongly disagree

9= No opinion

99= Not applicable/codeable

10.

0= No response

1= Never used

2= Used but not helpful

3= Used and somewhat helpful

4= Used and very helpful

99= Not applicable/codeable

1.

¹ The table numbers match the number of the questions as listed on the questionnaire. In addition, the column totals may not add to 100.0 percent due to rounding.

2.

² This refers to generalizations to a larger population on the basis of a sample.