

ISSN 0119-5107



**Philippine Normal University
CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND
DEVELOPMENT IN EDUCATION
Manila**



RESEARCH SERIES

No. 107

January 2009

A COMPARISON OF SKILLED AND LESS SKILLED STUDENT WRITERS' SUMMARIES

ROSARITO TATEL-SUATENGCO

Research Coordinator

College of Languages, Linguistics and Literature

A COMPARISON OF SKILLED AND LESS SKILLED STUDENT WRITERS' SUMMARIES

Rosarito Tatel-Suatengco

Research Coordinator

College of Languages, Linguistics and Literature

INTRODUCTION

Summarizing is an instructional technique frequently observed in the pedagogical and assessment practices of teachers across levels. It is used as a classroom practice to assess a learner's reading and writing competence. Generally, summarizing promotes understanding of the texts, helps assess comprehension and engages students in active reading and writing tasks. A good summary simplifies concepts to help students understand constructs at the independent level; that is, instruction from the teacher is not necessary for the students to comprehend the text.

Summarizing, however, is not a simple task. According to Anderson (1999), it is a complex task that requires considerable reading and writing skills; hence, how a student summarizes may be an evidence of his/her skills as a reader and writer. In summarizing, a student is tasked to state the main points or the most important details of the text. He/she is expected to use his/her own words to create a condensed version of the original text.

Most of the studies on summarizing before 1980 did not show a comparative advantage for summarizing over simple rereading on measures of either comprehension or recall (Arnold, 1942; Germane, 1921a, 1921b; Howe and Singer, 1975; Stordahl

and Christenson, 1956 in Vacca and Vacca, 1999). Analysis of these early studies indicated that summarization consisted of low-level multiple-choice tests of textual information, hardly the type of information that is likely to be encoded during summary writing. The instrument design of these studies did not help researchers in gaining knowledge on the processing of the text performed by students.

Nevertheless, the methodological constraints in those studies were addressed in the 80's; extensive studies on summarization were undertaken during this period. These studies showed more positive methodology and results. A case in point was the Reder and Anderson's (1980) study on the construction of summary passages. The students were prompted to write summaries of passages to convey the main points and eliminate the peripheral details. They found out that students understand better the summarized passages than the passages in the original form.

Other studies on summarizing focused on improving the summarization skills of the students. Day (1980) undertook a study with low-ability community college students as participants. She looked into the effectiveness of summarization training with and without explicit cuing intended to facilitate self monitoring. The results showed that providing students with rules for summarizing influenced their summarizing competence—detecting main ideas and deleting trivial information. The training profited all the students, although those students with writing problems seemed to need more training. The result of this study only showed that one's benefit on training would be dependent on his/her learning needs and capabilities. In the conclusion of her study, Day stressed that the training resulted in more consistent and accurate application of rules and improvement in quality of the summaries with less explicit instruction. The training, however, benefited more the advanced students. She recommended,

though, that students with more severe learning problems should require a more explicit training.

Cunningham (1982) as cited in Barr et al., 1996, as regards effectiveness of the procedure on summarization in improving fourth-grade students' ability to write one-sentence summaries of paragraphs, compared the summarization procedure to a placebo. This procedure differed from other instructional methods for teaching summarization because there was not an explicit rule taught. Rather, the students were led through a systematic procedure for developing summaries designed to enable them to correctly apply the rules for summarization. In Cunningham's study, after nine days of treatment, the experimental subjects performed better than the control subject at composing one-sentence summaries.

In a similar strain, Taylor and her colleagues (Taylor, 1982; Taylor and Beach, 1984; Taylor and Berkowitz, 1980 as cited in Barr et al., 1996) examined the usefulness of engaging middle-grade students in the process of building hierarchical summaries of textbook material. In these studies, the teachers, through modeling, trained the students how to turn the main and the sub-headings into verbal summaries. In the independent practice, the students worked on their own summaries. Findings showed that the hierarchical training helped the students to recall information better than other studying strategies such as answering questions or additional study.

There were also studies that investigated and compared the summarizing abilities of students. Brown and Day (1983), as cited in Barr et al., 1996, studied the summaries of older and more expert readers and the younger and less skilled readers. They found out that the older and the more expert readers' summaries were better than their younger and less skilled reader counterparts'. Moreover, their study revealed that the older

readers planned their summaries more than what the younger and less skilled readers did.

In another study, Brown and Day (1983), as cited in Barr et al., 1996, examined the ability of children from fifth, seventh and tenth grades as well as the ability of college students to summarize. The participants were asked to apply the rules for summarization. Brown and Day used especially constructed tests to enable the participants to predict when each rule should be applied or at least would be applied by experts (college rhetoric teachers). Results showed that the first two rules (on the deletion of trivial and redundant information) was used with at least 90% accuracy by the three groups but the use of rules 3 and 5 was found problematic. Rule 3 was on giving superordinate terms for a category and rule 5 called for the writing or invention of a missing topic sentence.

Similarly, Rinehart, Stahl and Ericson (1986), as cited in Barr et al., 1996, applied Brown and Day's rules for summarization. The study showed that the trained students focus attention on important information. On the other hand, McNeil and Donant's (1982) study for summarization (cited in Barr et al., 1996) utilized the rules similar to van Dijk and Kintch's work (1978) with grade five students. The training group received instruction on how to apply the rules to simple (third-grade level) passages. Effects were found favoring the training group on both the summary-writing activity for a new passage and the comprehension test for that passage.

Day (1986), as cited in Barr et al., 1996, demonstrated the importance of metacognitive skills in summarizing. With the average and below-average writers in junior college as participants, Day provided training on summarization. The study revealed that those participants who received both summarization and self-management instructions showed the most improvement in strategy use. Furthermore, the higher-level students profited

more from the instruction than the lower-level writers, suggesting that more explicit training in complex rules may be necessary to some students. Self monitoring was most effective when the rules were of moderate difficulty. Day suggested that until strategies become routine, students may be unable to use and monitor them simultaneously.

Other studies on summarization in the 1980's showed the following findings: improved comprehension transfer to summarizing new texts (Bean and Steenwyk, 1984; Day, 1980; McNeil and Donant, 1982 as cited in Barr et al., 1996), increased summarizing efficiency (Hare and Borchardt, 1984 as cited in Barr et al., 1996), and increased recall (Doctorow et al., 1978; Linden and Wittrock, 1981 as cited in Barr et al., 1996) and improved test scores (Bean and Steenwyk, 1984 as cited in Barr et al., 1996).

Studies on summarization in the 90's supported the value of writing summaries as informational writing task (Alvermann and Phelps, 1998; Brozo and Simpson, 1995; Vacca and Vacca, 1999). These studies suggest that summarization could lead to a better understanding of the text. Likewise, the more skilled readers and writers summarized better than the less skilled readers and student-writers could be trained for effective summarization. Hence, summarizing, as research showed, could contribute in developing and in enhancing students' reading and writing abilities.

As shown in some researches (Day, 1980; Brown and Day, 1983 as cited in Barr et al., 1996), students observed rules for summarization and these rules helped them to construct better summaries. Brown and Day (1983), as cited in Barr et al., 1996, suggested five basic rules for summarization. The rules are the following:

1. Delete material that is trivial.
2. Delete material that is redundant.

-
3. Provide a superordinate term or event for a list of items or actions or members of category.
 4. Select topic sentences.
 5. Invent topic sentences when missing.

Based on the analysis of Brown and Day (1983) of effective summaries (cited in Barr et al., 1996), an effective summary entails the dropping of less important details and the focusing on the most important aspect of the text. Hence, the insignificant details in the text are excluded from the summaries. These rules were used by experts in summarizing texts (Brown and Day, 1983 as cited in Barr et al., 1996). Similar guidelines, the macrorules, were developed by van Dijk and Kintsch (1978). There were basic operations involved in comprehending and in remembering. The van Dijk and Kintsch's macrorules were based on their studies of people who summarize effectively. The macrorules are the following:

1. Include no unnecessary details. This is distinguishing important from trivial and repetitious information.
2. Collapse lists. In this step, the students categorize bits of information into larger categories.
3. Identify and develop topic sentences. Students search the text for explicit topic sentences and create their own sentences where none exists in a text.
4. Integrate information. Students use key concept, words, phrases and topic sentences to compose the summary.

Comparing the standards for summarizing set by Brown and Day and van Dijk and Kintch, the rules were of the same nature and concern. What appeared to be different was the manner of presentation and the aspect for emphasis. Van Dijk and Kintch put together the rules related to the identification and the statement of topic sentence while Brown and Day separated them into two different rules. Nevertheless, the rules in the two

frameworks pointed to the same direction. Hence, a student-writer performs similar tasks regardless of the framework used. But for this research, the basis for evaluating the student-writers' outputs was grounded on Brown and Day's rules in summarizing. This framework was selected because it is more recent compared with van Dijk and Kintch's framework and the scoring is more manageable. In the analysis of the summaries, what seemed to be apparent was that the participants were monolingual speakers of English.

An investigation on how bilinguals summarize texts remains to be a fertile ground for research and there are numerous facets of summarizing left untouched in the literature like relating summarizing with other constructs. Hence, there are still gaps as far as summarizing is concerned most especially in the aspect of how bilinguals summarize in a second language. This study was an attempt to explore this minimally scathed ground.

This study explored the similarities and the differences in the summaries of the skilled and the less skilled student-writers who have English either as a second or as a third language and learned the English through formal schooling. The specific questions dealt with in this study are the following:

1. How do skilled student-writers summarize a cause/effect text?
2. How do unskilled student-writers summarize a cause/effect text?
3. Is there a difference between the summaries of skilled student-writers and less skilled student-writers?

METHODOLOGY

This study is qualitative and quantitative in nature. It utilized the text analysis research method. Thirty summaries of first year college students belonging to two groups—skilled and less skilled—were analyzed. Each group comprised 15 students (15 summaries). The students were prompted tasked to summarize a cause/effect text. Statistical treatments were applied to identify the frequency scores, the mean scores and the test of difference.

Participants

The participants were 30 first year college students from Philippine Normal University in Manila. The first group comprised skilled student-writers while the second, less skilled student-writers. The skilled student-writers were scholars of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST). They passed the Philippine Normal University Admission Test (PNUAT) in 2007 and they belonged to the top 50 examinees. On the other hand, the less skilled student-writers belonged to the bottom 50 examinees in same year.

Material

The text for the summary was the essay entitled *The Collapse of Public Schools* by John Sawhill (1982). In his essay, Sawhill explored the many possible causes for the failure of public schools in providing quality education. He concluded his essay by suggesting solutions to the problems.

The text was selected for several reasons. First, the topic was familiar to the student-writers from both groups since most of them graduated from a public school. In this case, there were minimal problems on content or on familiarity with the topic. Second, the text was one of the essay selections in a *Composition*

Writing Book for College Students (Rosa and Eschholz, 1982). Third, the text length (1,960 words) was deemed manageable for a two-hour session on summarization which included the reading and the summarizing of the text. Finally, the students already had the background knowledge of the text to summarize which would enable them to perform summarization at an independent level. Estes (1982), as cited in Kintsch and van Dijk (1978), said that a text at the independent level would not require for the intervention or instruction from the teacher for the students to perform the task of summarizing the text.

Task

Before the student-writers summarized the text, they were oriented on the task. The student-writers were allowed to read and to reflect on the material for an hour. Based on the researcher's experience as a language teacher, a one-hour reading and analysis of a less than 2,000-word text is enough for the students to read carefully and to reflect on the material. One hour would also give them enough time to recall important points and details in the material. The student-writers were not also allowed to make marginal notes or outline during the reading stage. After which, the text was taken from the students for them to start summarizing. They were given an hour to summarize the text. Again, the decision to give one hour for summarizing was based on the researcher's observation with her students in composition classes that it usually takes longer for students to write regardless of the type of material to write. The students were then interviewed how they summarized the text.

Data Analysis and Coding

The first phase of data analysis and coding was for the cause/effect text entitled *The Collapse of Public Schools*. The text was analyzed and coded based on the five rules identified by Brown and Day (1983) as cited in Barr et al., 1996.

Each sentence was assessed to determine the rule it would fall under. The total number of occurrences for each rule was determined through frequency counting; that is, all the codes for each rule were counted to get the total number of scores. This would provide information in identifying the frequency for the rating scale.

The second phase of data analysis and coding was on the identification of the frequency score for the rating scale of 1 to 5 where 1 was the lowest and 5 was the highest; that is, a rating of 1 is a manifestation of the least application of the rule and 5 is a manifestation of the most application of the rule, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. A Rubric on Summarization, as Adapted from Brown and Day (1978)

Rules for Summarization	Rating Scale				
	1	2	3	4	5
Rule A: Delete material that is trivial.	0-20% of the insignificant material/s and contents of the text are deleted	21-40% of the insignificant material/s and contents of the text are deleted	41-60% of the insignificant material/s and content of the text are deleted	61-80% of the insignificant material/s and content of the text are deleted	81-100 % of the insignificant material/s and content of the text are deleted
Rule B: Delete material that is redundant.	0-20% of the redundant information are deleted	21-40% of the redundant information are deleted	41-60% of the redundant information are deleted	61-80% of the redundant information are deleted	81-100% of the redundant information are deleted
Rule C: Provide a superordinate term or event for a list or items or actions.	0-20% of the events, list of items and actions are given a superordinate term	21-40% of the events, list of items and actions are given a superordinate term	41-60% of the events, list of items and actions are given a superordinate term	61-80% of the events, list of items and actions are given a superordinate term	81-100% of the events, list of items and actions are given a superordinate term

Rules for Summarization	Rating Scale				
	1	2	3	4	5
Rule D: Select topic sentences.	0-20% of the topic sentences are identified	21-40% of the topic sentences are identified	41-60% of the topic sentences are identified	61-80% of the topic sentences are identified	81-100% of the topic sentences are identified
Rule E: Invent topic sentences where missing.	0-20% of the missing topic sentences are written	21-40% of the missing topic sentences are written	41-60% of the missing topic sentences are written	61-80% of the missing topic sentences are written	81-100% of the missing topic sentences are written

As shown in Table 1, the rubric consists rules for summarization and rating scale. A summary was rated based on how much the rule was applied or utilized. The rubric served as guide in coding the summaries.

To get the frequency score for the ratings 1 to 5, the percentage indicated in the rating scale was multiplied to the total number of occurrences in each rule. Hence, for Rule A, a rating of 1 meant 0-20% of the insignificant materials were deleted; 2 meant 21-40% of the insignificant materials were deleted; 3 meant 41-60% of the insignificant materials were deleted; 4 meant 61-80% of the insignificant materials were deleted; and 5 meant 81-100% of the insignificant details were deleted. This pattern of coding was observed in all the rules.

Before coding the summaries, an analysis of the text based on summarization rules was undertaken. For the first rule (Rule A), there were 19 occurrences of insignificant materials. In the second rule (Rule B), there were 24 occurrences of redundant materials. In the third rule or Rule C, there were 10 set of items that should be given a subordinate term. For Rule D, there were 14 topic sentences and in Rule E, there were nine missing topic sentences. A point was only given when the rules were correctly applied; hence, accuracy and appropriateness in the application of rules were guaranteed by the coder.

The analysis of the text served as basis for determining the rating for each rule. The rubric used to assess the student-writers' application of the rules for summarization provided criteria that described student performance in various levels of proficiency (O'Neill, 1994). Therefore, it served as a guideline in the analysis of the summaries of the student-writers.

RESULTS

The students were prompted to summarize, and their outputs were coded and analyzed. Table 2 shows the results in terms of the physical feature of the summaries, specifically on the number of words.

Table 2. Length of the Summaries of the Skilled Student-Writers

Skilled Student-Writer	Number of Words
SW-1	300
SW-2	338
SW-3	284
SW-4	156
SW-5	173
SW-6	300
SW-7	281
SW-8	385
SW-9	378
SW-10	361
SW-11	308
SW-12	196
SW-13	306
SW-14	488
SW-15	283

Table 2 further shows the number of words for each of the summaries of the skilled-student writers. Most of the summaries had more than 300 words. The lowest number of words was 156

while the highest was 488. Of 1,960 words of the cause/effect text, the summaries were still less than 35% of the original material. Also, the highest number of words of 488 was still significantly lower than 35%. This is still within the prescribed summary length of one-third to one-fourth of the text or 490 to 653 words (http://www.courses.dsu.edu/engl201h/Assignments/writing_a_summary.htm).

As far as summarization is concerned, the skilled student-writer summaries were significantly lower at 302 mean score compared with the prescribed summary length. When ranked from highest to lowest, the central tendency score of 284 words appeared to be significantly lower than the prescribed length.

During the post task interview, the skilled student-writers said that they only drew the essentials or the main ideas from the text. They further said that they analyzed and evaluated each sentence in the text to find out which should be included and excluded in the summary. This view on summarizing expressed by the skilled student-writers seemed to be indicative of their text processing that was reflected in their summaries. The student-writers' summarizing appeared to be incognizance with the guidelines on effective summary writing that call for the reduction of a text to its main points (Anderson, 1999).

With the less skilled student writers, Table 3 shows the length of the summaries of the group. Like the skilled group, the less skilled student-writers' summaries were significantly shorter with an average of 271 words compared with the total number of words of the original text. Comparing the mean score of both groups, the mean score of 271 of the less skilled group was lower than the 302 words of the skilled group. This showed that the skilled group's summaries were longer than their counterpart's. However, the less skilled group had the highest number of words for one summary at 529 and the skilled group at 488. In terms of central tendency, the 314 words of the less skilled group were

slightly higher than the 284 of words of the skilled group. The summaries of student-writers for both groups were shorter than the allowable 490 to 653 words or one-third or one-fourth of the total number of words of the original text.

Table 3. Length of the Summaries of Less Skilled Student-Writers

Less Skilled Student-Writer	Number of Words
SW-1	200
SW-2	202
SW-3	350
SW-4	235
SW-5	529
SW-6	514
SW-7	245
SW-8	216
SW-9	358
SW-10	314
SW-11	196
SW-12	197
SW-13	164
SW-14	345
SW-15	207

When further investigated, the less skilled student-writers likewise claimed that they focused only on the main ideas in the text. These main ideas were their bases for the reconstruction or summarization of the text. Like their counterpart, the less skilled student-writers asserted that they focused only on the main ideas of the text when they summarized.

Table 4 shows the degree of observance of summarization rules as manifested in the summaries of the skilled student-writers. The evaluation of the students' summaries was anchored on the rubric on summarization prepared and adapted by the researcher from Brown and Day's framework. For Rule A, on the deletion of trivial items, all the student-writers scored high with the

majority getting the highest rating of 5. There were 13 writers who scored 5 while only three scored 4. This means that the skilled students correctly identified and deleted the trivial materials. Hence, the irrelevant materials in the text did not appear in their summaries.

Table 4. Rating Score of Skilled Student-Writers on the Rubric on Summarization

SKILLED STUDENT WRITER	RULES FOR SUMMARIZATION				
	A	B	C	D	E
SW1	5	5	2	4	3
SW2	5	5	4	5	5
SW3	4	4	4	5	5
SW4	5	5	4	5	4
SW5	4	4	2	5	3
SW6	4	4	2	4	3
SW7	5	5	4	4	4
SW8	5	5	3	4	3
SW9	5	5	4	5	4
SW10	5	5	2	3	2
SW11	5	5	3	5	4
SW12	5	4	2	3	3
SW13	5	5	2	2	3
SW14	4	4	3	4	3
SW15	5	5	4	5	4

Further analysis of the summaries revealed that skilled student writers, except for a very few, did not include in their summaries the examples mentioned by the author like the particular state in America whose bond issue was rejected. Another example was when the author said that the citizens were moving to the other states that had lower property taxes. This was not found also in any of the summaries, a proof that some

student-writers might have found the information irrelevant or insignificant; therefore, this was not included in the summary.

The skilled group also aptly applied Rule B. Like in Rule A, skilled student-writers identified and deleted the redundant materials. Majority or ten of the 15-member group were rated 5 in the rubric while the remaining five were rated 4. The mean score of the groups is 4.6 which may suggest that the group manifested adequate knowledge and competence in terms of the application of the two rules. The mean score of 4.6 is almost the same as the mean score for Rule A which is 4.7. The close similarity in the mean scores could be accounted by the fact that these two rules would require almost the same cognitive activity; that is, determining and deleting the unessential and the repeated information.

In Rule C, the skilled students did not perform as well as they did in Rules A and B. This means the skilled group may have experienced difficulty in applying the rule. The rule calls for supplying a category for a list of items and actions, among others. Some of the group members scored as low as 2 which means only 21 to 40% of the items were given a superordinate term. The highest score was recorded at 4 points. There were less than 50% of the student-writers who were rated 4. One could notice that none of the members received the highest mark of 5. The mean score was only 3 points which means that 41 to 60% of the items were given superordinate terms.

In Rule D, on identifying a topic sentence, it is noticeable that the skilled group's scores were more diverse in the sense that many scored as low as 2 points while others scored as high as 5 points. In terms of distribution, there was an apparent wider distribution of the scores ranging from 2 points to 5 points. Nevertheless, a majority of the student-writers rated 4 and 5 points. The mean score of 4.2 for Rule D suggests that the student-writers were able to identify the topic sentences in the

text. When analyzed, most of the topic sentences identified were placed at the initial part of the paragraphs; that is, the topic sentences identified and included in the summaries were mostly at the initial sentence of the paragraphs. The organization of the text appeared to have hinted the student-writers on the position of the topic sentences in the text. One explanation is that the author enumerated and then elaborated the causes.

Rule E concerns the stating of the topic sentences if they are not explicit in the text. For this rule, the rating scores of students ranged from 2 to 5 with a central tendency score of 3. Although there was a rating of 2, this accounted for less than 20% of the student-writers. Hence, generally, the skilled student-writers were able to determine the topic sentence in the text. For example:

American's public schools have undergone many things in order to improve the quality of education and to make educational system the principal tool for social change, but this has contributed problems like the increased incidence of functional illiteracy. (SSW-4)

In the example above, the skilled student-writer identified and stated in his own words one of the topic sentences found in the text. This suggests that the skilled student-writer correctly decided on what is essential in the text. Such decision may prove two things about summarizing: first, the student-writer has knowledge on what appeared to be the controlling and central idea in the text; second, the student-writer manifests the ability to present the idea in his own words. These two skills are both essential sub-skills for summarization.

Similar to the skilled student-writers, the mean score of the less skilled student-writers is indicative of the students' observance of Rule A with 11 out of 15 student-writers received a score of 5 and only four got a score of 4 in the rubric. Like the

skilled group, the less skilled group was able to identify and delete trivial and redundant information or details in the text. Although there were some students who included insignificant details in the summary, the occurrences were very minimal and did not affect their overall score. The mean score for Rule A was 4.6 – closer to the mean score of 4.7 for the skilled group. One example error for Rule A:

In mid-fifties people demanded that their schools create harmony among other groups of individuals that existed anywhere in American life. In mid-sixties, their young were engaged in a rebellion that may cause misunderstanding between their countrymen, and yet they still fight their rights to have equal treatment in schools. In mid-seventies schools were instructed to go step to step on how to know what the schools want and knowing their interest which can help them motivate in school.
(LSSW-8)

In the example above, the details on the deterioration of public schools are not anymore necessary in the summary because its omission would not affect at all the essence of the summary. The idea expressed in the above example is already evident in one of the topic sentences. Therefore, its inclusion in the summary is insignificant.

In Rule B, there was a 90% observance among the less-skilled group with the 4.6 rating score average. The same was the mean score of the skilled group. A majority were rated 5 while only six scored 4. This would show that less cognitively demanding task like identifying and deleting insignificant and redundant information could be handily managed by student-writers regardless of their competence. An example of the non-observance of Rule B is shown below:

It is John Sawhill pushed his career from Federal Energy Administration to the government until he became the president of New York University. In his studies, he gave some reasons

why there are failures in public schools in terms of effective learning and he gave some suggestions. (LSSW- 10)

In this example, the less skilled student-writer included the information about the author. This information is trivial because this has no effect or impact in anyway on the topic of the essay about the deterioration of public school education in the United States.

For Rule C, the mean score was 2.3. This suggests that the student-writers did not manifest competence as far as giving of categories is concerned.

One observation in the application of the rule showed that some students gave a few examples of the category then proceeded by identifying the category or by giving the superordinate term. For example:

They are much aware of racial, social, economic and sexual inequalities, poor parenting, malnutrition and a lengthy list of other social disorders... (LLSW-11)

In this example, the student-writer identified the superordinate term after giving some examples of the category. There were also instances when the student-writers would delete the terms instead of identifying the category. Although these did not significantly alter the meaning, these somehow impacted the summaries as a whole.

In Rule D, the ratings ranged from 2 to 5. These were spread among the student-writers. The central score was 3 while the mean score was 3.2. This suggests variation in competence among the less skilled writers. Other variables may account for the variation in the scores of the writers for Rule D. However, the analysis of other variables as they relate to summarizing was not

included in this study. Nevertheless, it would still be an area to be looked into in future studies on summarizing.

As far as Rule E is concerned, the scores varied and ranged from 1 to 5 with a central tendency ranging from 2 to 3 and a mean score of less than 3. This is indicative of the students' struggle in applying the rule. The results also suggest that the less skilled may not be ready to aptly perform this rule. Whether the results for Rule E are indicative of the student's skills or training on summarizing is still to be unraveled. Literature on summarizing was not also specific on whether adherence or non-adherence to this rule is a concern for training. Hence, further researches along this line would provide answers to these queries.

Table 5. Rating Scale of Less Skilled Student-Writers on a Summarization Rubric

LESS SKILLED STUDENT-WRITERS	RULES FOR SUMMARIZATION				
	A	B	C	D	E
SW1	5	5	1	3	1
SW2	4	5	2	2	1
SW3	5	5	2	5	4
SW4	5	5	2	2	2
SW5	5	5	2	3	1
SW6	5	5	4	4	4
SW7	4	4	2	4	5
SW8	4	5	2	4	3
SW9	4	5	3	4	3
SW10	3	4	2	4	3
SW11	4	4	3	2	4
SW12	4	4	2	3	2
SW13	4	4	3	2	2
SW14	4	4	3	4	4
SW15	5	5	2	3	3

On the mean difference, the skilled groups rated higher than the less skilled group with 4 and 3.5 overall mean scores respectively. Except for Rule B, where both groups had the same mean score of 4.6, the skilled groups had higher mean scores in other rules in the mean compared with the less skilled group; although, their mean difference for Rule A was only 0.1. The highest mean difference was in Rule C where the skilled and the less skilled groups scored 3 and 2.3 respectively. Even though the two groups scored low in Rules C and E, the less skilled group showed lower mean score than its counterpart. Both groups had the highest mean in Rules A and B. Brown and Day (1978), as cited in Barr et al., 1996, found out similar result where the participants scored highest for the first two rules.

The mean difference seems to show that the skilled student-writers performed better than the less skilled student-writers at summarizing. The result on mean difference seem to indicate that the skilled group can readily apply the rules to effect a better summary than the less skilled student-writers.

Likewise, it can be recalled that Rules C and E required a complex analysis and assessment of the text that may have an implication for metacognitive and cognitive activities performed by the student-writers.

Table 6. Comparative Means of Skilled and Less Skilled Student-Writers

RULES FOR SUMMARIZATION	GROUPS	
	Skilled	Less Skilled
Delete trivial materials (Rule A)	4.7	4.6
Delete materials that are redundant (Rule B)	4.6	4.6
Provide a superordinate term or event for a list of items or actions (Rule C)	3	2.3
Select a topic sentence (Rule D)	4.2	3.2
Invent topic sentences when missing (Rule E)	3.5	2.8

Other findings showed that both groups of student-writers tended to pattern their summaries after the structure of the text. In this case, the structure of the cause/effect text was also the structure evident in the summaries for both groups; although there were some student-writers who did not follow the pattern of the text. However, most of the student-writers structured their summaries based on the physical format of the original text. Hence, the summaries were introduced with the statement of the problem, followed by the causes of the problem and ended with some suggestions on how these problems should be handled.

Another commonality was that the summaries of the student-writers' groups were generally condensed and centered only on the important portion of the text. Hence, both groups focused only on the problem, its causes and possible solutions. This general practice of the student-writers may be an indication of their skill in summarizing a text.

Both groups also made "call for action" statements. These "call for action" statements at times border on the inclusion of personal opinion.

Our school is our future and we should take care of it. (SSW-1)

In the above example, the skilled student-writer's statement was no longer a summary of a portion of the text but was already an expression of a personal belief addressed to the readers. Hence, an expression of a personal stand was incorporated in the text.

This observation was also evident among less skilled student-writers. Notice in the example below:

These truths are not stated for use to criticize each other. We must do something in order for the public school to perform well

for the future of the students. We must show our concerns for the public education and we should work for it. (LSSW-15)

The above example clearly shows that the student-writer in this instance gave a personal opinion on the topic. The student-writer seemed not to be summarizing anymore but already stating a personal view on the issue. Clearly, this is a violation of what summarizing should be which is centered on the restatement of the author's points.

Closely related to this is the elaboration of the main idea. Both groups of student-writers clarified some ideas by elaborating on the main idea. This was most evident when the author enumerated the reasons. The student writer briefly explained the cause or the reason given by the author.

Schools are asked to do too much. Once they stop asking the school to do too much, they can set on solving their acute problems and perform their basic task that of education – more effectively... (SSW-5)

In this example, the student-writers attempted to elaborate the main point of the author by giving a brief explanation for it.

In addition, student-writers situated the summary by providing or identifying the context. They identified in their summaries that the context is the public schools in the United States. Notice:

For more than 20 years, America's public schools have undergone many this in order to improve the quality of education and to make educational system the principal tool for social change... (SSW-4)

In the example above, the skilled student-writer situated the summary by providing the most basic and essential

information to direct the minds of the readers. In this example, the center of discussion (which is America) was named.

One thing observable in the summary of the less skilled writers is how the student-writers incorporated new ideas different from the author's in the course of stating the main idea. For example:

Students learn only things which their teacher taught them and it sets a low standard of education on their schools. (LSSW-8)

When investigated, the statement above was not found in the text nor was there a portion in the text that hinted on the idea showed in the example. This may be an indication of the student-writer's incorporation of personal knowledge or analysis of the main idea. This is a clear example of the student-writer's departing from what is in the text.

IMPLICATION

The results of the study manifest that the student-writers may have a common schema on summarizing; that is, both groups know which are expressions of main ideas, which portions in the text are irrelevant and immaterial and which should be given a topic sentence. However, the difference lies on two aspects: one is the extent of application of the rules and the other is the extent of deviation from the rules. These two aspects impacted the summaries of the students. There were also instances when the student-writers departed or extended the author's own words by elaborating the idea of the author, giving a personal opinion, or stating a situation or examples which are not evident in the text. These observations are more common among the less skilled than among the skilled student-writers. The summaries of the student-writers may also suggest the level of their comprehension

of the text. Over all, the skilled student-writers appeared to summarize better than the less-skilled student-writers.

One limitation, however, was in the selection of the members of the two groups. The basis for grouping the student-writers was mainly on the result of PNUAT. There were no other bases for the identification of the members of the skilled and less skilled groups. Furthermore, the participants were not given any other tests that determined their level of proficiency as readers or as writers. In a way, this may have accounted for the wide range of scores for Rules C and D with the less-skilled group.

The results of the study posed questions on what could have accounted for the seemingly higher mean scores of the skilled group than the less skilled group. Whether this is a product of individual ability, language proficiency or training on summarization is still a fertile ground for research that has to be explored so as to have an in-depth understanding of students' processing of a text as basis for their summaries. Another area that should be looked into is the interrelationship of reading and writing as they relate to summarizing.

There are also other language constructs that could account for the processing performed by learners as they summarize. Some of these constructs are comprehension, reading and writing skills, proficiency, attitude and knowledge of a genre. It would also be interesting to examine the concept and nature of culture and how this becomes evident in the summaries of learners.

To sum, the implications for pedagogy and research of summarizing for first and second language would need intensive and extensive examination since many areas that relate to summarization remain barely excavated. Only by digging deeper into the constructs related to summarization will the extent of the impact of summarization in both pedagogy and assessment be better understood.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, M. (1999). *Keys to Successful Writing: Unlocking the Writer Within*. New York: Longman
- Alvermann, D. & Phelps, S. (1998). *Content Area Reading and Literacy: Succeeding Today's Classroom* (Second Edition). Boston: Allyn and Bacon
- Barr, Rebecca, Kamil, Michael L. Peter Mosenthal et al. (Eds). (1996). *Handbook of Reading Research Vol. III*. New Jersey: Laurence Erlbaum Associates
- Berger, A. & Robinson, H. A. (1982). *Secondary School Reading: What Research Reveals for Classroom Practice*. Illinois: Eric Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills
- Brozo, W. & Simpson, M. (1995). *Readers, Teachers, Learners: Expanding Literacy on Secondary Schools* (Second Edition). New York: Merrill
- Graves, Michael F., Juel, Connie & Bonnie B. Graves. (1998). *Teaching Reading in the 21st Century*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon
- O'Neill, J. (1994). Making assessment meaningful: "Rubrics" clarify expectations, yield better feedback. *Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Update*, 36, 1-5. In J. S. Cadwell.(2002), *Reading Assessment: A Primer for Teachers and Tutors*. New York: Guilford Press
- Kintsch, W. & van Dijk, T. (1998). Toward a Model of Text Comprehension and Production. *Psycholinguistical Review*, 85 363-394.
- Reder, L. M. & Anderson, J. R. A comparison of texts and their summaries: Memorial consequences. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior*, 1980, 19, 121-134.
- Sawhill, John C. (1982). *The Collapse of Public Schools*. In Alfred Rosa and Paul Eschholz (Eds), *Models for Writers: Short Essays for Composition*. New York: St. Martin's Press
- Vacca, J. L. & Vacca, R. T. (1999). *Content Area Reading: Literacy and Learning Across the Curriculum* (Sixth Edition) New York: Addison Wesley Longman
- (http://www.courses.dsu.edu/engl201h/Assignments/writing_a_summary.htm).