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An Evaluation of an Instructional Package
designed to facilitate
The Study of Literary Themes
among students of
Senior Comprehensive Schools
in
Trinidad and Tobago.

Olabisi I. Kuboni

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Education

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts at
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CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY
Graduate Studies

This is to certify that the thesis prepared

By: Olabisi I. Kuboni
_____

Entitled: An Evaluation of an Instructional Package
_____
designed to facilitate the study of literary themes among
_____
students of Senior Comprehensive Schools in Trinidad and
_____
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and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

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complies with the regulations of this University and meets
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ABSTRACT

An evaluation of an Instructional package designed to facilitate the study of literary themes among students of Senior Comprehensive schools in Trinidad and Tobago.

Olabisi I. Kuboni

This package was designed in an attempt to identify an instructional approach for the teaching of the study of literary themes that, first, would be more effective than the traditional method in use in secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago, and, secondly, would provide an effective learning tool for students of Senior Comprehensive schools who were defined as being low-ability students. A preliminary evaluation was conducted and revisions made to the package. The results of the main evaluation showed that the package group performed better than the traditional group. However achievement was low, thus the discussion focused primarily on an assessment of the package in relation to the target population. Finally recommendations were made for further evaluation and further revision of the instructional design.

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Caribbean Examinations Council.

dedicated

to the memory of

Jacqueline Creft

former Minister of Education

Grenada...

A true Caribbean Teacher

and Educator.

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THE PROBLEM

Context of the Problem.

Within recent years, there has been much debate aimed at determining an effective approach to the teaching of the study of literature.

For example, one school of thought claims that a structured, formal approach tends to destroy rather than enhance students' enjoyment of literature. A strong proponent of this view is Barrett Mandel (1970) who maintains that,

> Literature has to do with joy and creativity, pain and human growth [not with] how it is constructed [or] what critical approaches are respectable. (pp. 7-8)

Indeed Mandel's entire work can be described as an attack against what he conceives as attempts in educational institutions to give literature "academic respectability", which, in his opinion can only stifle students' love for it.

On the other hand, Cox and Lewis (1974) seem to place their emphasis on the need for students to develop a critical awareness of literature. They state,

> The study or interpretation of literature ... is a necessary and important part of the development of critical thinking, selectivity and taste. The ability to interpret literature and communicate that interpretation is not only fundamental to an educated person's life, it is fundamental to the literature itself. (p.vi)

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The Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC), in its syllabus for the General Proficiency Examination in English, seems to adopt a perspective that combines the two approaches mentioned above. The Council recommends the development of a teaching programme that would stimulate students "to read literature for the personal satisfaction and growth that it offers" (p.1). At the same time, it advocates that students should develop specific literary skills, including the skill of recognising implicit themes.

The perspective adopted in the design of this instructional package has been largely derived from that prescribed by the CXC and also strongly supports the position taken by Cox and Lewis.

One cannot deny that literature is to be enjoyed. However, this evaluator submits that ability for critical thought is a necessary prerequisite for optimum enjoyment, and that the personal satisfaction one derives from reading a literary work is proportionately related to the level of one's critical interpretation of it.

In this context, one cannot but note McGuire's (1973) definition of literary criticism. He says,

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Criticism means not only judge, but also to discern
.... The ability to discern is the ability to see,
and that is the first act of the [critical]
process. (p. 7)

Consequently, the evaluator proposes that an
important goal of the teaching of the study of
literature should be to ensure that students acquire the
skills of literary criticism, namely the ability to
discern and to interpret what they have discerned.

Background to the Problem.

Assessment of Examination Requirements

The General Proficiency Examination administered
by the CXC, is currently being phased in as the terminal
examination for secondary school students of the
Caribbean to replace the Cambridge General Certificate
of Education (GCE). The examination is geared for
fifteen and sixteen year old students who have completed
five years of secondary education.

The examination in English comprises two sections,
English A (Language) and English B (Literature).

The English B examination consists of two papers.
Paper I consists of essay-type questions designed to
test candidates' knowledge of the texts assigned for
study. Paper II, on the other hand, is designed around
an extract from a literary work that was not previously

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studied, and consists of short answer questions, aimed at testing candidates' ability to interpret an unprepared piece of literature.

Paper I is further subdivided into two sections. The questions of Section A are geared to test detailed knowledge of eight prescribed texts. Those of Section B do not focus on any specific text; rather, their focus is on literary themes, and they require candidates to discuss these themes within the context of the assigned texts that they have read. Candidates are required to answer four of the essay-questions set in this Paper, choosing at least one from each of the two sections.

This instructional package was designed in response to the requirements of Section B of Paper I where candidates must answer questions that test their skills at recognising and analysing themes in literature. More specifically, this section is a test of candidates' ability to compare treatments of an identical theme in at least two literary works.

However, the package is not intended to provide total preparation for this section of the examination. Rather, it seeks to equip prospective candidates with skills needed for the thematic analysis of the texts assigned for this section. Hence, is is hoped that the

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instruction provided can help students develop an approach for studying themes which ultimately they will use in the reading and study of their chosen texts.

Students must make their choice from the thirty texts assigned for this section. These texts were selected in such a way that most of them represent more than one theme and some as many as four and five. Several texts deal with the same theme(s). A list of suggested themes dealt with in each text is also provided in the syllabus.

Students must make their own selection in such a way that they would be able to answer at least one question comparing the treatment of a given theme in two appropriate works from among those they have studied.

The most important feature about the questions in this section seems to be that they have been designed to assess the level of the candidates' competence in critically analysing the texts they have prepared. What is being measured is not candidates' comprehension of factual detail, but rather their skill at recognising and analysing literary themes.

The following questions, selected from examination papers from 1981 to 1983 should shed some light on the point being made:

Compare and contrast the treatment of friendship in
TWO books which you have studied. (1981)

Select TWO books in each of which an important
character has to endure a crucial test. Say what
each test is and whether you think the character
succeds in passing it. Give reasons for your view.
(1982)

Choose two major characters, each from a different
book, who live in a small town or village. By
referring to TWO outstanding incidents in each
book, show how the smallness of the town or village
has influenced the lives of both characters. (1983)

On observation of the above questions, it is
evident that a variety of question styles have been used
to test the same basic skill.

In the first, for example, the theme is explicitly
stated and a straightforward statement built around it.
This is not the case in the second question. Here
candidates are asked to select a character who endures a
crucial test, to state what the test is, and in
particular, to give reasons for their view.

What is interesting about this latter question is
that such a character can emerge in more than one
thematic context, probably moral courage or social
alienation. Consequently, students who cannot discern
how the writer uses various elements in his work to
develop the theme, may be severely handicapped in
handling this unusual 'twist' in a question even though

the question can be appropriately applied to a text
which they have prepared.

Indeed, lack of ability to discern and interpret
seems to have been the major stumbling block in the
third question cited above. The Report of Candidates'
Work in the 1983 examination states that answers to this
question were disappointingly poor, noting that the main
problem was that of showing how the smallness of the
town or village influenced the lives of the characters.
It states further that most candidates ignored the
concept of smallness and simply gave descriptions of
four incidents.

Regardless of question style (and this includes
the straightforward format of the first question), it is
evident that candidates are expected to demonstrate that
they have critically analysed the development of the
theme(s) in the texts they have prepared. For, in order
to answer any of these questions, candidates would need
to see the theme unfold itself in the way characters are
portrayed, both as individuals and in relation to one
another; in the incidents that are created; in the
conflicts and crises that emerge and are resolved.

In this regard, the recommendation made to
teachers in the 1983 Report is particularly significant.

The Report recommends that,

> Attention should be paid to teaching elementary
> aspects of the writer's craft. Candidates should
> be made aware of writers as people who shape
> language and control what we know or see of a
> character or situation. Teachers should therefore
> devote some time to teaching how a writer achieves
> his effects in any given text. (p.15)

The evaluator submits that the ability to write
about literature in the way that the CXC requires or
even to discuss it in a classroom setting depends on
one's competence in the skills of literary criticism,
which cannot be acquired merely by reading the text.
Instruction must ensure that students have learnt these
skills.

Consequently, the overall recommendation in the
1983 Report deserves special attention. The Report
states,

> There is still need to ensure that candidates are
> adequately prepared for the examination. This is
> particularly true of candidates whose secondary
> school sojourn is divided between Junior Secondary
> and Senior Comprehensive schools, neither of which
> may devote sufficient time to the teaching of
> literature. (p. 13)

The situation with regard to the candidates
singled out for special mention will be discussed in
more detail later. As far as the basic comment about
the adequacy of preparation is concerned however, and
given the suggestion cited earlier about the teaching of

the writer's craft, it would appear that there is need for an assessment of the instructional method used to prepare students for the examination.

In order to do this, however, there is need, first of all, to clarify one's perspective on the function of instruction in learning.

The Function of Instruction in Learning

In educational circles today, there is growing concern over a perceived decline in the academic performance of secondary students, and one often hears about the need to review curricula, to adjust examination standards, in an attempt to improve the situation.

One aspect though that seems to get little attention is the question of instructional methods. In this regard, the thesis advanced by Landa (1976) deserves consideration. In response to the problem of depressed academic performance in schools, Landa focuses on the need "to increase the efficiency of the instructional process" (p. 29).

It is in this context that he draws attention to the instructional environment in which learning is usually expected to take place. One point must be noted, however. Landa's comments about instruction are

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intended as support for his position concerning
algorithmization in instruction. The design of
instruction used in this package was not modelled on the
approach advocated by Landa. Nonetheless, his remarks
are still applicable as a general comment on current
instructional practice. He explains further,

> Many complex processes seem to us to be simple
> "one-act" events ... while in fact they are often
> extremely complex and consist of a large number of
> operations. It is difficult to shape an
> intellectual process if we have never brought the
> corresponding operations to light and therefore do
> not know them. When such a process has been
> analyzed into its constituent operations ... it can
> be taught much more quickly and easily. (p. 54)

Gagne and Briggs (1979) adopt a similar position
in their discussion on human learning. They emphasize
that "an act of learning requires the presence of some
varieties of internal states that have been previously
learned." They state further that these states, whether
information, intellectual skills or "self-management"
strategies, are acquired through prior learning (p.4).

Evolving out of this, the authors also stress the
need for effective sequencing of instruction. They
state,

> One key to effectiveness rests upon the building of
> sequences which hold learners' interest because the
> total context of the sequence is meaningful and
> because elements within the sequence build from
> simple (prerequisite) skills to more complex

(target) skills which take longer to accomplish.
(p.136)

The positions of both Gagne and Briggs, and Landa
are very pertinent in particular when one notes the
further comment in the CXC Report that the ability to
say how a writer has achieved his effects is a "superior
skill" (p.15). In the light of the preceding
discussion, it seems evident that such a skill could
only be attained through the performance, whether
conscious or sub-conscious, of specific lower-level
skills.

Often in the teaching of the study of literature,
teachers require students to perform tasks which they,
the teachers, conceive as "simple one-act events",
simply because they are competent and experienced enough
to perform the corresponding operations without
consciously thinking about them. As a result, they
assume, often incorrectly, that their students are doing
the same.

When expected learning does not take place,
therefore, it is very likely that one should examine the
instructional process.

In the light of the above, it would appear that an
assessment of the traditional instructional method in

the study of literature currently in use in secondary
schools in Trinidad and Tobago must be undertaken.

Definition of the Problem

The Traditional Method of Instruction.

In traditional classroom instruction, the class as
a whole concentrates on one or two texts for a
continuous period of time, probably one term (semester).
In a typical class session, students take turns reading
the text while the others follow silently. The teacher
may also read.

At regular intervals during a session, the teacher
may interrupt the reading and draw students' attention
to some aspect of the section just read which ought to
be noted. For example, it may be a statement, remark or
incident that reveals something about the personality of
a particular character.

The entire text is generally read in this way,
although, from time to time, the teacher may also allot
sections to be read for homework.

Review and study take place both at the completion
of the entire text and at the end of appropriate
sections. These sessions of review and study take the

form of class discussions in which the teacher, using appropriate questions, invites comments from the class about a given aspect of the text. Thus, when the text is being studied in preparation for Section B of Paper I of the examination, questions would be used to generate discussion around the identification and analysis of the themes of the text. Students' participation in the discussion depends on their ability to interpret the text; however no direct instruction on how to do this is provided.

The questions used may be global in nature, not linked to any specific segment of the text, requiring students to examine the text (or the section being studied) for relevant information in order to formulate an appropriate response. For example, in discussing the novel A HOUSE FOR MR. BISWAS, the teacher may ask, "What position do Mrs. Tulsi and Seth represent?"[1]

Another type of question may be built around specific information in a selected segment. For example, the following question may be used in a discussion of the novel, WIDE SARGASSO SEA:[1]

1
The discussion questions referred to above were selected from those used in the traditional method of the evaluation. See Appendix II.

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"She had long-fingered hands, thin and beautiful, I suppose." What does this statement tell us about Mr. Rochester's attitude?

In some instances, one or a few students in the class may be able to respond immediately to the question. If the response is appropriate, a discussion may develop between the teacher and the few "enlightened" students, with the rest of the class assuming the role of passive listeners and probably note-takers.

At times though, lack of immediate response often warrants paraphrasing of the initial question. Thus a process ensues in which the teacher may reword the question to provide greater clarity or, alternatively, break it down into a series of sub-questions.

Thus in relation to the question on the first novel, the teacher may ask students to list the factual details about what Mrs. Tulsi and Seth did or said, then from this point, re-direct them back to the original question. Or, in the case of the question from the second novel, the teacher may isolate the words, "I suppose" and, probably with the aid of some dramatization, get students to focus on the effect of those words.

What is evident about this method is that the

manner in which a question is modified, is totally determined by the structure of that specific question and consequently can vary from question to question with the students not being necessarily aware of the underlying rationale guiding the development of the discussion on that particular topic. In any event, while the process of question generation may at times (though not always) be pre-planned, question-modification is always a spontaneous activity, involving "thinking-on-one's-feet", which may or may not succeed in having the intended clarifying effect. A few more students may be able to join in on the discussion but usually the majority remains excluded.

Whatever route the discussion takes, the teacher usually ensures at the end that the appropriate information is passed on to the class, at which point students may make notes of what the teacher says.

Occasionally the teacher may also draw information related to the interpretation of the literary text from literary commentaries and pass this on to the class either in the form of pre-prepared notes or incorporating it into the class discussion.

The basic problem in this instructional method is that it requires students to perform a task without

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providing them with the tools for so doing. Participation in class discussions that are built around the type of questions referred to earlier, is dependent not merely on student comprehension of the factual detail of the text material, but more importantly on student ability to interpret, and make justified inferences from that factual detail. While the act of reading can give some guarantee that comprehension has very likely taken place, it gives no guarantee that students are prepared to apply the skills of literary interpretation.

What is worth noting though is that, in the process of generating and modifying questions, teachers are in fact applying these skills. For, in the decision to formulate a particular question in relation to theme identification and analysis, they would already have,

a) discerned an implied meaning beneath the surface meaning,

b) recognised the technique that the writer used to convey that implied meaning,

a) using the information derived from above, made a generalisation about the broad human situation that the writer is dealing with.

Armed with this information, teachers formulate

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questions that require students to go through similar procedures to arrive at an appropriate response, but these procedures are never explicitly specified.

Indeed, the same operations are brought into use when original questions are modified. For example, in relation to the first question cited earlier in this section, in asking students to state what Mrs. Tulsi or Seth did or said, the teacher is in fact demonstrating an awareness of a basic literary technique, which constitutes part of the writer's craft, namely that of conveying implied meaning through the way specially created characters are made to behave, and it is as a result of having this knowledge that the teacher is able to manipulate the questionning strategy. However, the overall instructional strategy does not explicitly provide students with information about the underlying operations being performed, even though one expects them to perform these operations.

It is very likely that, over time, more capable students would recognise trends in the pattern of selecting aspects of a text for discussion, in the type of questions formulated and in the manner in which these questions are modified. The recognition of such trends may eventually lead such students to make subconscious,

yet appropriate inferences about the operations that
teachers are performing and use these operations
themselves. Like their teachers, such students are not
likely to be consciously aware of all the inherent tasks
either.

On the other hand, less capable students would
detect neither trends nor operations and consequently
remain excluded. No amount of note-taking of facts,
however important they may be, can remedy the situation.

At the end of the study of a text, students are
required to do an essay. Teachers usually help students
prepare the essay, but such guidance automatically takes
the basic form of the discussion sessions.

Thus in an essay that requires the analysis of a
given theme in the novel, A HOUSE FOR MR. BISWAS, for
example, many students may write very detailed factual
accounts about what Mrs. Tulsi said or what Seth did,
with little or no attempt to explain the behaviour of
these characters within the context of the theme. Often
teachers are unable to analyse students' errors, since,
as far as they are concerned, the significance of that
particular segment was thoroughly discussed in class.

In the light of the above therefore, the evaluator
submits that the open-ended discussion strategy

described above does not allow for optimum learning and further that the operations inherent in the skill of recognising and analysing literary themes must not just be implicitly present in the instructional process, they must be explicitly taught.

Hence the following instructional package was designed in an attempt to respond to this problem.

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

Background

This instructional package was developed within a
conceptual framework on the study of literature that
incorporates two basic principles.

First, the package is based on the principle that
the interpretation of a literary work rests primarily on
factors within the work itself. This approach is
particularly important where theme recognition and
analysis is concerned. Since themes are essentially a
comment on human life, students may unconsciuosly find
themselves imposing their own personal judgements in
assessing the work.

Lorne' Glauser (1980) cautions about the tendency
in secondary school students to remain at the level of
what he refers to as the pre-critical stage of the study
of literature. He states,

> There are some dangers in this pre-critical stage.
> One is the danger of making a response based on
> one's set attitudes ... There is the problem of
> making associations from personal experience, and
> this prevents the reader from understanding the
> writer's point of view. (p. 31)

It is important therefore that students are made
to adopt what McGuire refers to as the objective
approach, for as he explains,

[One] cannot offer any judgement of a work ...
until [one has] seen the work as fairly as possible
and that demands ... an acceptance of the work as
it is. (pp. 65-66)

The second principle adopted in the development of
this package is that the study of literature, that is,
literary criticism, is, like any other area of learning,
the study of an organised body of knowledge.
Consequently, it must be based on the objective
observation and investigation of its subject-matter, and
it must employ clearly defined procedures that can be
replicated by others in the field.

One finds support for this view of literary
criticism in Brightfield (1968) and Frye (1957), both of
whom strongly favour a systematic and objective approach
to the study of literature.

In tracing the history of this debate, Brightfield
re-introduces a question posed by an earlier critic. He
asks,

Is there such a thing ... as a science of
criticism, or is all criticism at bottom merely the
expression of an individual opinion, unsupported,
or supported in varying degrees, by other
individual opinions? (p. 3)

Frye, in building his case, argues that,

The presence of science in any subject, changes its
character from the casual to the causal, from the
random and intuitive to the systematic. (p. 7)

He continues,

If criticism exists, it must be an examination of
literature in terms of a conceptual framework
derivable from an inductive survey of the literary
field [and] the word `inductive' suggests some sort
of scientific procedure. (p. 7)

The evaluator submits therefore that the approach
to instruction used in this package is consistent with a
concept of literary criticism held by proponents in the
field.

The Systematic Design of Instruction

The instructional design used in the creation of
this package is based on the systems approach model
proposed by both Gagne and Briggs, and Dick and Carey
(1978).

Specifically the package was developed using the
model presented by Dick and Carey which, as is stated by
the authors, provides a framework for the systematic
design of instruction. Their model prescribes a
procedure for instructional design that incorporates
nine sequentially arranged tasks proceeding from the
identification of instructional goals to the stage of
summative evaluation (see Figure 1).

It is the opinion of this evaluator that this
approach to instructional design can be expected to
increase the effectiveness of instruction on the study

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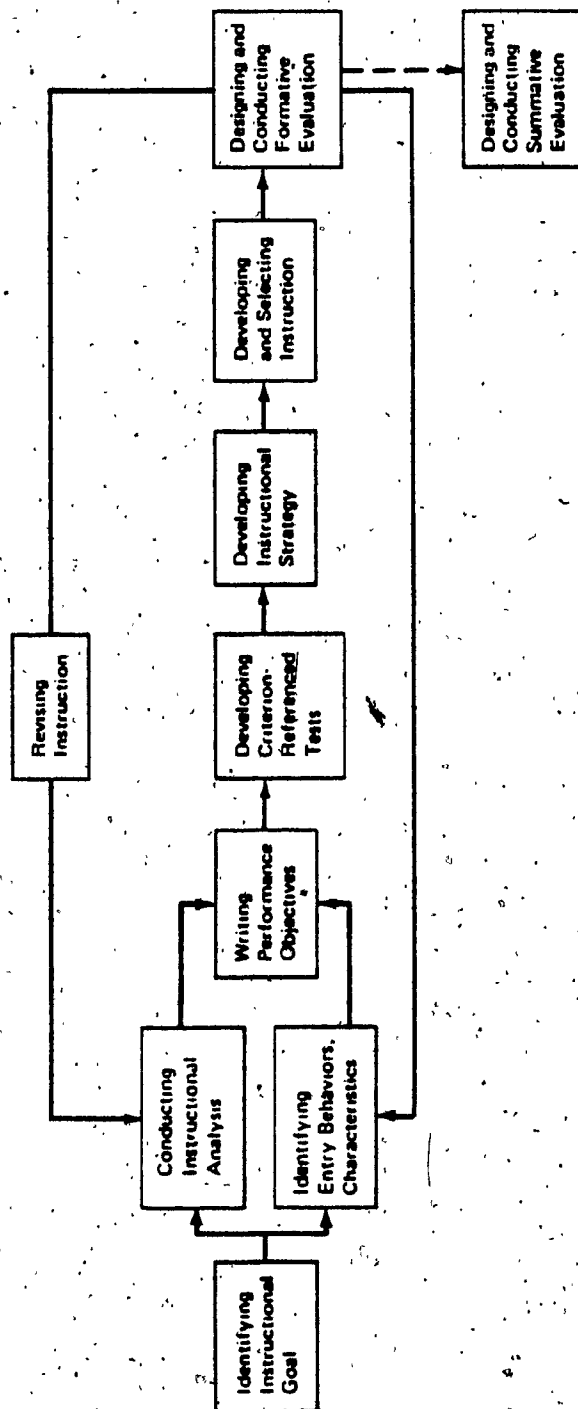
Figure 1.1 Systems Approach Model for Designing Instruction

of themes in literature because of important features inherent in the design process. In this regard, three aspects of the model deserve special attention.

The first is the identification of clearly stated target objectives, not only for the teaching agent, but more importantly for the learner. For, it is very likely that providing information on the target objectives to be attained can be expected to give purpose and direction to the learning process.

For example, an objective that simply states that students will be studying the themes of particular works does not offer much clear-cut direction for the learner. On the other hand, the potential for learning can be increased if students are informed that at the end of a given period of instruction they are expected to be able

a) to recognise the theme(s) in selected works

b) to compare the treatment of given theme(s) in two selected works.

The second aspect of the model that was considered appropriate in the development of this package is the attention paid to instructional analysis, that is the identification and sequencing of subordinate skills.

Given the weaknesses outlined in the traditional approach earlier, it is evident that there is need for

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an instructional method that clearly identifies all subordinate tasks required for theme recognition and analysis.

This is particularly important since, as was observed, the subordinate tasks are not made explicit by the average teacher, which places learners at a disadvantage, as they are not told what steps they must take to perform the complex task that their teacher requires of them.

In addition, the model prescribes that the subordinate capabilities that have been identified must be efficiently arranged. Of the two sequencing techniques described by Dick and Carey the hierarchical technique was considered more appropriate for this design since it was envisaged that the learning of lower-level skills (e.g. deriving the implicit meaning) could be expected to enhance learning of other skills higher up the hierarchy (e.g. identifying the specific theme).

Ultimately therefore, when students are given instruction related to the target objective, they should, without external prompting, be able to recall and execute the subskills that they have learnt in order to facilitate their performance of this final task.

The third aspect of the model that was regarded as being particularly relevant for this package is that for each subskill identified, the corresponding performance objective must also be specified. Thus, not only are students" taught the skills required for the recognition and analysis of themes, but opportunity is also provided for them to demonstrate whether they have indeed learnt what has been taught.

In summary therefore, it was on the basis of the systematic design of instruction, incorporating the various stages of the design process as outlined by Dick and Carey, that this package was developed.

Educational Objectives

The package was developed within the context of the following instructional goal:

> That students will be able to compare treatments of the same theme in different works of literature, according to the requirements of Section B of Paper I of the CXC General Proficiency English B examination.

In the light of the above, this package was specifically designed to attain the following target objectives:

> 1. That students will be able to identify the (universal) theme in specially selected extracts.
>
> 2. That students will be able to compare treatments of an identical theme in two extracts taken from two different novels. In specific terms, that they

will be able to identify the different aspects of the given theme that the respective writers deal with, then support that position using illustrations from each of the two extracts.

Target Audience

Form Four students of Senior Comprehensive schools in Trinidad and Tobago were identified as the target population.

Form Four students were used since direct preparation for the CXC examination takes place during the final two years of secondary education, namely Form Four and Form Five. Since the package is intended as an introduction to the study of themes, it was thought appropriate that it should be directed to students in the earlier stage of preparation.

In the CXC Report cited earlier, special mention was made of candidates from Senior Comprehensive schools in terms of their inadequate preparation for the examination.

In order to appreciate the problem raised by the CXC, a brief explanation of the secondary-school system in Trinidad and Tobago is pertinent at this point.

There are two basic models in the system, namely the single-school model, where students spend their entire five-year period of secondary schooling in the

same institution, and the two-tiered model, where students' schooling is divided between three years in a Junior Secondary school, followed by two in a Senior Comprehensive school.

Students are assigned to either of these two models on the basis of their performance in the Common Entrance Examination which is a placement test taken by eleven and twelve-year olds. Those whose scores fall in the lower bracket go through the two-tiered model.

In all Senior Comprehensive schools, English Literature is an elective subject. However, over the years, there has been a marked trend of low performance among candidates from these schools in the examination in this subject. In addition to the comment made in the CXC Report, one also notes a similar trend in the Cambridge GCE, the forerunner of the CXC. According to reports published by the Central Statistical Office of Trinidad and Tobago, only 6.8% and 11.2% of these students were succesful in the 1979 and 1980 GCE Literature examinations, respectively.

While one cannot overlook the problems inherent in the school structure itself, as cited by the CXC, the evaluator submits that there is also need to consider the instruction factor as well. Based on the placement

criteria of the Common Entrance Examination (see above),
it seems evident that the student in this type of school
is a low ability student. Given the weaknesses
perceived in the traditional method, it would appear
that this method may not be the most efficient for these
students.

This instructional package was not specifically
intended for a particular type of school or aptitude
level of student. Nonetheless, it is proposed that the
systematic design of instruction on which it is
modelled, can be helpful to students in these schools
and provide them with a learning strategy that could be
more effective than the method currently in use.

Instructional Analysis

Appropriate subskills were identified and
sequenced in a hierarchical order proceeding from lower-
order skills to higher-order skills (see Table 1).

Necessary entry level skills were also identified.

Entry Level Skills.

Reading comprehension ability as well as the
ability to report what has been read were identified as
necessary entry skills. All other skills required for
the attainment of the target objectives cited earlier,
were taught.

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TABLE I

Summary of Instructional Analysis

Subskills	Tasks	Embedded Test Items
Summarize the story	Students will write a concise statement of not more than two sentences summarizing the main events of the basic story line of the extracts to be analysed.	In no more than two sentences, write brief summary of the main events of each of the selected extracts.
Formulate statement about implicit meaning.	Students will make an inference about the unstated meaning which the writer intends to convey at the same time as the stated meaning, then write a statement about it using no more than two sentences.	State the implicit meaning that you have derived from each of the selected extracts.
Identify techniques used to convey implicit meaning.	Students will re-examine the extracts to detect the techniques which the writer used to make the reader aware of the unstated meaning. Students will make a list of these techniques using a short phrase or single word to name each.	List the literary techniques identified in each of the selected extracts.

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Table I (cont'd.)

Subskills	Tasks	Embedded Test Items
Classify techniques	Students will determine and state by writing whether the techniques used in the extract under review fall mainly into the category of character or incident techniques or a combination of both.	Place the techniques identified into the appropriate categories, that is, either character, incident or a combination of both.
Identify segments of extract	Having recognised the techniques used students will identify the segments of the extract that convey the implicit meaning, then write a short report on each, in a statement that is not more than two sentences long.	Without repeating the text word for word, write a short report of the information in the segments which you have identified as conveying the implicit meaning.
Identify specific theme.	Students will formulate a statement indicating the human situation out of which the story was created. This statement must not make reference to any of the characters or incidents of the story and should not be more than one sentence long.	Based on your study of the story, determine the broad human situation that the writer is dealing with in the extract.

Table I (cont'd.)

Subskills	Tasks	Embedded Test Items
Identify universal theme.	Students will generalise further to establish the overall view of humanity under which the specific theme can be classified. Students will express this view in the form of a short phrase or single word.	With your knowledge of the specific theme, determine the overall view of humanity that encompasses the specific human situation on which the story is based.
Compare treatments of a given theme.	Students will note in writing the differences and/or similarities between the treatments of a given theme in two different extracts.	Write an essay on the following topic. (see section on Testing for essay-question).

Analysis of Subordinate Skills

Subskill # 1: Summarizing the story was identified
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as the lowest level skill in this hierarchy of
skills. Students were required to isolate the main
events of a story and re-present these in a concise
form. One reason for this exercise was to ensure that
students became conscious of differentiating between the
two levels of meaning in the same text, one that is
explicitly stated and the other that is implied.

Performance of this skill therefore was intended to
force students to focus attention only on the incident
(what actually took place) or the dialogue (what was
actually discussed). In this respect, therefore, it
served as a forerunner of the skill immediately
succeeding it.

This exercise was also intended to ensure that
students would ultimately be able to make a clear
distinction between incident or dialogue on the one hand
and the analysis of the incident or dialogue on the
other. It was considered important that students
perform this basic task, for, very often, in the
traditional approach, they remain trapped in describing
the factual details of an event and seem unable to rise
out of this descriptive level to the higher skills of

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analysis.

Hence the importance of this first step, namely to isolate factual information on the incident or dialogue itself, in order to avoid later confusion at the analytic stage.

Subskill # 2: Formulating a statement about the
_____
implicit meaning was identified as the next skill, primarily because of its link with the first. Because of the skilful use of literary techniques, the average reader does not normally make a distinction between the stated and unstated meanings of a literary text. Therefore in designing instruction, consideration was given to the fact that most students would be processing both levels of meaning as a single unit of information without recognising any distinction between the two.

Hence placing this skill immediately after the first was intended to increase students' awareness of the two-level nature of the information they were processing.

It was also envisaged that this statement would also serve as the point of reference against which students would perform the three succeeding skills, namely identifying and classifying the literary techniques that the writer uses to convey the implicit

meaning and also to identify the corresponding segments that actually do convey this meaning.

An additional feature of the performance of this skill was that students were required to formulate their statements on 'the implicit meaning in terms of situations related to the story-line and not attempt to make generalisations at this point. Since the techniques and corresponding segments would be extracted from the story itself, it was thought that the process would be facilitated if the reference point (i.e. the implicit meaning), that guides the identification of these, was also expressed in terms of the concrete events of the story.

Formulating the implicit meaning according to the guidelines outlined above was also intended to ensure that ultimately students would realise that this second level, unstated meaning about the actions and remarks of the characters is the vehicle in which the abstract theme is contained. Thus it was envisaged that this statement would serve as a bridge, leading students out of the concrete into the abstract.

Subskills # 3 and # 4: In these skills, students were required to identify the techniques that the writer uses to convey the implicit meaning and to

classify these techniques. As was mentioned in the discussion of the preceding skill, the implicit meaning was used as the point of reference for the performance of these skills.

Subskills # 3 and # 4, as well as # 5 can be considered as the section of the instructional process that deals with the analytic aspect of the study. Basically, the term literary techniques, as used in the package, refers to the variety of ways in which a writer uses the basic elements of the story, namely character and incident to convey the implicit meaning.

Thus with the knowledge of this implicit meaning, as well as the definition of technique supplied by the teacher, students would re-examine the extract to detect the various means that the writer used to achieve the above effect.

Having done that, students would classify these techniques under the two categories, character or incident.

Placing these two skills before skill # 5 was done for two reasons. First, it was intended to encourage students to view the whole analytic process in terms of what the writer was doing, and discourage the tendency to become too involved with the action from the

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perspective of the characters. The rationale behind this approach was that if students were encouraged to view the action from the writer's perspective, that is, the action that the writer created, this would facilitate transition to the skill of theme identification, that is, identification of the comment made by the writer, through the action.

Secondly, it was envisaged that identifying the techniques would help students to focus attention on a specific segment of the extract, since a technique would be employed in developing a specific incident or in creating the specific remarks or behaviour of a character. Thus students would be less likely to fall into the trap of arbitrarily re-telling the story of some loosely defined section which may, in some unspecified way, include the appropriate segment.

Subskill # 5: At this point students would isolate
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the segments of the extract that convey the implicit meaning. Essentially the major part of this task, that is the actual identification of the segments, would already have been completed with the identification of the techniques. Now students must formulate a statement reporting the information from each segment.

Subskill # 6: Having inferred the implicit meaning
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and supported the inference made with appropriate
illustrations (segments) from the text, students would
then proceed to the more abstract stage of theme
identification. It was envisaged that performing all of
.the preceding skills would strengthen students'
awareness of what the writer was seeking to achieve and
prepare them for the generalisations to be made at this
stage of instruction.

Within this package the concept of theme in
literature was defined as comprising two levels, namely
the specific theme and the universal theme (Bartel,
1981), in an attempt to distinguish the specific focus
of a writer's concern from the broader ,more inclusive
comment about the total human condition. Thus specific
theme refers to the writer's perspective of a particular
human situation which he used to create his work.
Universal theme refers to the broader comment about the
total human condition under which the specific theme can
be appropriately classified. (Usually, the term
'theme' is used as a synonym for the more explicit
'universal theme').

As an example, the specific theme of one of the
extracts used in the instruction was described as "The

rejection (or alienation) of the French Creole in Post-
Emancipation Caribbean", and the universal theme that
encompassed this specific theme was identified as
"Alienation".

Thus, using the already justified implicit
meaning as the point of departure, students would
generalise to the specific theme as defined above.   In
doing this, students would no longer be referring to the
characters and incidents, but would be broadening their
view to focus on the broader human situation that gave
rise to the characters who were made to behave and speak
in a particular way as well as the incidents in which
they were involved.

At this stage, it is important to note that the
illustrations used earlier to justify the implicit
meaning automatically apply to the specific theme as
well.

Subskill # 7 (Target Objective # 1):   In
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identifying the universal theme, students would be
moving to the next step on the abstraction ladder, since
they would be moving away from the specific human
situation and focusing solely on the broad all-
encompassing view about humanity.

Target Objective # 2: Having performed all the

preceding skills,, students should now be prepared
to compare treatments of an identical (universal) theme
in two extracts. Discussion of the treatment of a theme
revolves around two principal points:

1) The specific theme, that is the specific aspect
of the stated universal theme that the writer is
dealing with. This aspect of the task would
require students to draw on skills # 2 and # 6.

2) The way in which the writer uses his work to
convey his thoughts which are the comments he makes as
expressed in the implicit meaning and the specific
theme. This aspect of the task would require students to
draw on skills # 3, # 4 and # 5, resulting in the
formulation of statements to be used as illustrations to
support inferences made about the writer's thoughts.
While essay-questions do not usually specifically ask
for a summary of the story (skill # 1), such a skill is
still important, in essay-writing, as a means of
precisely indicating the areas of the text that are
being used in the discussion.

Summary of Subskills.

One important feature worth noting about the subordinate skills identified, is that they are applicable to the study of literary themes in any literary work. In this context, the skills being learnt are transferable and are not confined to the particular literary material used in the package.

In the light of the above, instruction was designed, incorporating the subordinate skills identified, tasks corresponding to these skills, and test items.

Testing.

Embedded Tests.

In addition to providing students with practice in the individual subskills, the embedded test items also serve as a means of facilitating students' organisation of information relevant to the answering of a typical essay-question on theme identification and analysis. It is important that instruction also prepares students for the essay type of test since this is the means by which they will eventually be assessed in the terminal examination.

Indeed the entire instructional process can be seen as serving two simultaneous, yet related ends. First it identifies the subordinate skills required for a thematic analysis of the literary material. Second, it provides students with a structure for storing the relevant information to facilitate efficient retrieval and organisation for subsequent essay-writing. In this regard, instruction can be seen as helping students build the necessary cognitive structure that would allow for the kind of information processing described in the literature (e.g. Ausubel, 1968; Mayers, 1979).

Pretest and Posttest

These two tests were designed as parallel forms of an essay-type question, rather than separate short-answer questions as suggested by the form of the embedded test. However, as was discussed above, the essay test was designed to incorporate information that could only be acquired through the performance of the respective skills.

This type of test was chosen since ultimately, it is in this way that students would be tested in the CXC examination.

As a test in an introductory programme of the study of themes, the question was designed to be optimally representative of essays in this area of study, so that procedures used in organising information for this essay, could ultimately be used in the writing of other essays on the comparison of themes in literature.

In addition to the content of the essay-question, consideration was also paid to its structure. Design was based on the restricted response type question rather than the extended type. The former was chosen because it specifically identifies the areas to be tested and as a result lends itself to more efficient

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measuring of student achievement (Gronlund, 1981).

Since instruction was intended as an introduction to the study of themes, it was also envisaged that the controls built into this type of question were necessary for the beginner-learner.

Thus, with the guidelines outlined above, and in consideration of the target objectives specified, a basic test format was devised and used for both the pretest and the posttest. Both tests included two extracts which were to be used as the basis for students' response to the essay-question provided. However, they were both designed around different themes, using extracts from different texts. Those for the posttest were selected from texts not used during instruction. This was done as a means of determining whether the skills acquired were indeed transferable.

The following basic essay-question format was used for both tests:

Write a brief summary of each of the two extracts. Compare the different aspects of the theme of (alienation) on which the two writers focus. Using illustrations from the extracts, show how each extract conveys the writer's thoughts about the theme.

Instructional Strategy.

The learning task in this package is based on the s,tudy of extracts selected from literary works rather than the whole works themselves.

This was done because the instruction is intended to serve as an introduction to the study of themes, with the objective of developing in students relevent skills which they will subsequently apply when reading whole texts.

In this regard, selection was confined to those extracts that have a well-defined thematic quality, in an attempt to eliminate, as far as possible, all non-related factors that may tend to interfere with the learning of the specific task.

The package was designed for classroom instruction to be mediated by a teacher, and was based on the following format:

* Teacher-explanation of subskill.

* Teacher-demonstration of the performance of the sub-skill.

* Group-practice of sub-skill.

* Feedback and Remediation.

* Final individual practice test.

The strategy of teacher-mediated instruction was

adopted since it was thought that students would need maximum guidance from a source which would both possess greater expertise in the subject-matter domain and also be capable of responding to the wide variety of situations that could arise in relation to the learning task.

Group practice was included since small group activity was expected to have a positive influence on individual learning.

Provision for initial feedback and remediation for group exercises was included as a part of classroom activity. Since students were working in groups, it was envisaged that this aspect of the instruction could more adequately address individual needs since the teacher could move from group to group during practice sessions. In addition though, the teacher also provided feedback to the entire class after reviewing students' practice exercises at the end of each instructional session.

Finally, the strategy catered for individual practice test without group support.

Instructional Materials
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1. A Teacher's Guide was prepared, based on the instructional analysis and strategy described above. It also includes an Appendix which provides model answers for the respective embedded tests.

2. The Student Manual/Workbook was designed to incorporate both the materials to be studied, that is, the extracts, as well as a work area for doing the practice exercises. Eight extracts were provided, four from each of two novels, namely A HOUSE FOR MR. BISWAS by V.S. Naipaul (1969) and WIDE SARGASSO by Jean Rhys (1966). Extracts were selected and arranged according to theme. Thus there were four extracts in Section I on the theme of alienation, selected in equal numbers from each of the two novels, and another four in Section II on the theme of cultural conflict, selected in a similar manner.

    The above arrangement of extracts was done to emphasize that the basis of the instruction was the study of themes rather than the study of particular novels.

3. The pretest essay was based on the theme of alienation, using two extracts that were ultimately

used for the instruction.

4.   For the posttest, the essay was based on the theme of moral courage, using different extracts, selected from novels not used for the instruction. These novels were THE PEARL by John Steinbeck (1948) and the OLD MAN AND THE SEA by Ernest Hemingway (1952; 1980).

Copies of all materials can be found in the Appendices.

METHOD

PRELIMINARY EVALUATION

Objectives

Evaluation was conducted at this stage to detect any major flaws in the instructional materials created for the package and to make revisions, accordingly.

Procedures

Two evaluation methods were used. First, the material was assessed by two teachers of Literature. Second, one-to-one evaluation was conducted with five students, going through all the stages of the instruction.

It must be noted however that this preliminary evaluation was not conducted with subjects from the target population, since initial work on the package was done in Montreal.

However this was not expected to have a negative effect on the validity of the data collected since the basic instructional design was not regarded as being exclusively applicable to the school population of a particular country. Subjects selected were of the same age and grade level as the target population and were enrolled in a course on English Literature. In

addition, the subjects were all selected from a remediation class, in attempt to keep as close as possible to the ability level of the target population.

MAIN EVALUATION

Objectives

This evaluation was designed to meet two objectives:

1. The first was to determine whether the type of instruction provided through this package was more effective in facilitating students' acquisition of the transferable skills of theme identification and analysis than the open-ended discussion method described earlier. It was also intended to determine the package's adequacy as a learning tool for Senior Comprehensive students who have been defined as low-ability students (see discussion, Target Audience)

2. The second was to assess the reactions of a) the students and b) the teacher to the package.

In the context of this evaluation, the term **package** refers to the instructional materials that were created for the teaching of the above-mentioned skills

based on the systematic design of instruction discussed earlier. **Traditional method** refers to the open-ended discussion strategy used in this evaluation to represent the method currently in use in secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago.

A modification of the original method was considered necessary in the interest of maintaining the internal validity of the evaluation. Thus, in order to ensure equivalence in the content of instruction, study was based on extracts from texts rather than the whole texts. Suggested questions to be used in the discussion period were also provided, in an attempt to ensure that the traditional group was not left with the impression of being unimportant in the evaluation. In all other respects, however, the traditional method, as applied to the evaluation, incorporated the fundamental characteristics of the original.

A more detailed comparison of the two strategies used will be provided in the Procedures section.

Evaluation Design

There were two aspects to this design.

1. Evaluation for the first objective was based on the comparison of two treatment groups, one receiving instruction via the package and the other, receiving the

traditional method of instruction, as defined above. Both groups received the identical pre- and posttests.

In summary the evaluation was conducted by means of a nonequivalent two-group design, identical to the non-equivalent control group design described by Campbell and Stanley (p.47, 1963) except for the fact that treatment conditions were assigned to both groups. Thus, using the notation provided by Popham (1975), the design created was as follows:

PRETEST_____PACKAGE_____POSTTEST

PRETEST_____TRADITIONAL METHOD_____POSTTEST

2. Evaluation for the second objective was divided into two sections:

a) A questionnaire was administered to the subjects in the package group at the end of instruction. (see Appendix IV).

b) Periodic interviews were held with the teacher of this group at regular intervals during the period of instruction.

Sample

The sample for this evaluation was drawn from the population described earlier, namely Form Four students of Senior Comprehensive schools in Trinidad and Tobago. (see Instructional Design: Target Audience).

Sampling Procedures

Because of practical limitations, neither random sampling nor random assignment was possible. Thus. intact groups were used. These groups were selected from two separate schools in order to avoid contact at either the teacher or student level between the two groups.

Both groups comprised subjects of both sexes, and of the same age and grade level. All participants in both groups had elected to do English Literature as an examination subject.

A Cloze Test was used as a measure of reading comprehension ability, a prerequisite entry level skill identified earlier. All prospective participants reached and/or exceeded the 65% criterion set by the evaluator. (See Appendix V for copy of test).

There were 51 subjects in the total sample with 25 in the package group and 26 in the traditional group. Treatment conditions were randomly assigned.

Instrumentation

In the evaluation comparing the instructional
effectiveness of the two strategies, parallel forms of
the same type of essay test were administered to both
treatment groups, Thus both groups received the same
tests, which were designed following the guidelines
outlined earlier (see Instructional Design: Testing).

As was already mentioned, extracts used for the
pretest were also used in the instruction, however this
was not expected to have a negative effect on the
validity of the evaluation. On the other hand, to avoid
any probable carry-over effect on the posttest, a
different theme and different extracts were used in the
construction of this latter question.

The same grading scheme was used for both tests
and was based on the analytical method of scoring (Ebel,
1979). Thus points were allotted for specific elements
in the essay.

A model answer, prepared for each of the two
tests, was the criterion used for grading subjects'
responses. (See Appendix III for copies of tests, model
answers and grading scheme).

As was stated earlier, a questionnaire and
periodic interviews were used to determine the reactions

of students and the teacher respectively, to the package.

Procedures

In an attempt ta attain maximum possible equivalence between groups (instructional strategy not included), steps were taken to remove all systematic differences that fell under the control of the evaluator. In this regard, the groups received equal treatment in the following areas:

1. Instruction in both groups took place in a classroom setting and was mediated by a teacher.

2. The target objectives were the same for both groups.

3. Both groups were informed of the target objectives and studied the same content, i.e. the same literary extracts.

4. Similar types of instructional materials were used in both groups, i.e. teacher's guide and student manual/workbook.

5. The same pre- and posttests were administered to both groups.

6. Instruction for both groups was held over three days in three 90-minute sessions.

7. Introductory sessions to inform students and

teachers of the purpose of the evaluation were the same for both groups.

8. Neither of the two teachers was given information regarding the designer's predictions about group-performance vis-a-vis the respective instructional methods.

As was mentioned above, the only difference in the treatment was in the type of instructional strategy used. In this respect, the following differences were built into the evaluation design.

Instructional Process

While both groups were provided with the target objectives, the routes used to attain these objectives differed. In the traditional group, open-ended class discussions, initiated by questions posed by the teacher, constituted the primary means for student learning. These questions were the stimulus used to get students to analyse the content of each extract, within the context of the specified objectives, and exchange their analyses with the class.

In the package group, skills required for the attainment of the target objectives were identified and hierarchically arranged. Instruction was based on students' performance of these skills which were geared

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to give students systematic guidelines on how to identify and analyse themes in any literary work using the extracts provided.

Arrangement of Extracts

Extracts for study were included in the student manual/workbook for both groups. However there was a difference in the arrangement of these extracts.

In the traditional group extracts were arranged in two sections according to the novel from which they were selected. This was done in an attempt to conform as closely as possible to the practice of the real-life situation where whole texts are studied.

In the package group, extracts were arranged in two sections, according to theme, thus demonstrating that the goal of instruction was based on the study of themes rather than the study of texts.

Directions to Teachers

In the traditional group, the teacher was provided with a pool of questions from which she had the option of selecting for class discussions. The teacher was expected to modify or amplify these as she thought necessary, depending on student response.

A short commentary on each of the two novels was also provided and the teacher was advised to draw

information from each of these in order to enhance her input into the class discussion. At the end of the discussion of an extract, the teacher was required to ensure that the theme of that extract was clearly identified.

A list of essay topics was provided on each of the two sets of extracts studied. The teacher was required to choose one essay from each set and guide students in preparing notes on it. Because of time limitations, the writing of a full length essay was not attempted. In keeping with traditional practice, these essay topics were provided to give students the opportunity to write about what they had studied in the extracts.

In summary therefore, the teacher of this group was provided with the broad parameters of the instruction, but largely exercised her own initiative in putting it into effect, thus reflecting the primary characteristics of the teaching method used in the real-life situation.

In the package group, for each subordinate skill identified, the teacher was provided with information both to describe the skill and explain its performance. The teacher was instructed to communicate this information to the students, using the presentation

format provided. He was also expected to demonstrate
the performance of each skill before letting students
do the same. Criteria for the performance of the
respective skills were also provided and the teacher was
directed to use these to assess the level of students'
performance.

Thus in the latter group, directions regarding the
conduct of instruction were very detailed and explicit,
in keeping with the basic approach of the systematic
design of instruction.

Feedback

While the content of feedback for both groups was
broadly determined by the same instructional
objectives and study materials, the approach to
providing feedback was different.

In the traditional group, feedback was largely the
result of the teacher's spontaneous, unplanned response
as determined by student behaviour.

In the package group, while student behaviour also
influenced feedback, it was not based on the teacher's
spontaneous response but rather on a pre-determined set
of established criteria, namely the model answers
provided for the respective test items.

Another difference in feedback strategy was that

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in the traditional group, since the line of communication was always between teacher and the whole class, there was little or no opportunity for individualized feedback. On the other hand, in the package group, with students working in groups, there was greater opportunity for individualized feedback.

Student Activity   7

Based on the questions posed by the teacher, students of the traditional group would engage in discussion, mainly on their own initiative, although at times the teacher would also sollicit a comment from a specific student. The strategy did not cater for total class participation in the discussions. The writing of essay-notes followed each discussion session.

Specific written exercises, related to each subordinate skill were to be done by all students in the package group throughout the entire instructional period.

Class Interaction

In the traditional group, no provision was made for student-to-student contact, interaction being mainly between the teacher and students.

In the package group, small group practice was built into the strategy, thus encouraging student-to-

student interaction.

Prior to instruction, training sessions were held with the respective teachers so that they could familiarise themselves with the materials. A separate session was held with each teacher.

The evaluator observed the instructional sessions of both groups to ensure that procedures set out in the respective teacher's guides were being followed.

Data Analysis

Data obtained from the evaluation to determine comparative instructional effectiveness were analysed by means of a one-way analysis of covariance, comparing the two treatment conditions on the posttest and using the pretest as the covariate.

The pretest was included in the evaluation design to control for prior knowledge of subjects in the subject-matter domain. In this analysis therefore, the mean scores of the two groups on the posttest were adjusted to reflect differences in prior knowledge existing among subjects prior to treatment (Keppel, 1973).

It is important to note however, that treatment

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groups were constituted from pre-existing intact groups
rather than by random assignment. Further, it was not
possible to control for all systematic differences
between the groups. Indeed there may probably have been
differences between the two groups as a result of their
belonging to two separate schools, which could have the
effect of limiting the appropriateness of the use of the
analysis of covariance for this evaluation (see Keppel).

Nonetheless, in spite of these noted limitations,
this statistical test was considered as the most suited,
particularly because of its built in capability of
controlling for pre-evaluation differences between
groups on a pre-determined critical variable.
Consequently, even though the evaluation design does not
account for all systematic differences, the statistical
analysis does adjust for variation on this critical
variable. In this regard, one notes the comment made by
Popham that "the analysis of covariance procedure can
often prove helpful in coping with the relevant
disparities that often exist in intact groups" (p.246).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: PRELIMINARY EVALUATION.

As a result of the preliminary evaluation of the package, the following shortcomings were detected in the instruction and the corresponding changes and/or additions made:

Skill # 2: Implicit Meaning

While recognising that the average student instinctively detects an implicit meaning in any piece of literary material, it was discovered that the meaning some students derive may not necessarily be from the same perspective as that intended by the writer. Such a distortion at this level could eventually affect inferences made later about the specific theme.

Thus it seemed evident that explanations for the performance of this skill should include instruction directing students to determine the writer's perspective as a necessary pre-requisite for formulating a statement on the implicit meaning.

Normally it is the main character that represents the writer's point of view. However this information was withheld from students at this stage of instruction to see whether any of them would detect this. A detailed explanation of the function of the main character (and other characters) was provided for the

performance of the subsequent skill.

Skill # 3: Identifying Techniques

It was felt that teacher-introduction to the performance of this skill was inadequate. What was needed was a conceptual framework placing the role of the writer in perspective before proceeding to an identification of the individual techniques. Thus teacher-explanation was expanded to establish a framework based on the following information:

1. That a writer starts off with the intention of making a comment about some human situation that he has observed.

2. That he creates a literary work and uses it as a vehicle for conveying this comment.

3. That he does not express this comment openly, but weaves it into a story which he has created.

4. That the two basic elements of the story that he uses are character and incident and that he manipulates these in a variety of ways (techniques) to achieve his intent of communicating his comment to the readers.

Having set this framework, instruction would then proceed to the identification of the techniques.

It can be said therefore that this aspect of the package has been redesigned to begin instruction at a higher conceptual level and proceed in a top-down fashion to the level of more concrete details, thus incorporating the principles of progressive differentiation as prescribed by Ausubel (1968).

Additional Skill: Justifying selection of Segment

In the original materials, after identifying the techniques, students were required to identify the segments that conveyed the implicit meaning. However there still seemed to be a vacuum in that it was felt that instruction should also require students to justify the segment selected in terms of its appropriateness given the implicit meaning derived earlier.

The inclusion of this as a separate skill was thought necessary since one could not assume that students were doing this justification merely by making the selection. It must be noted that the essay-question requires students to perform this skill and indeed essay-questions generally do require this type of justification.

Skill # 6: Identifying the Specific Theme

Given the adjustment made to teacher-explanations on the implicit meaning, it became evident that a specific theme, i.e. the comment that a writer is making, incorporates two basic elements:

1. A human situation that has been observed,

2. A particular point of view from which the human situation is observed.

In the light of the above, it was thought appropriate that students should be guided to express the specific theme using the standard format employed in literary criticism. This format involves a reversal of the two elements just mentioned. Thus, for example, one speaks of;

The alienation (isolation) of the French Creole in Post-Emancipation Caribbean;

where "the French Creole in Post-Emancipation Caribbean" refers to the human situation that has been observed and "alienation" refers to the perspective from which it has been observed. One also notes that the writer's point of view is generally expressed as an abstract word or phrase.

Consequently, instruction and task requirements for this skill were adjusted to accomodate the above.

Overall Revision

The instructional materials for the package were therefore revised to reflect the above changes and additions. (see Appendix I)

RESULTS: MAIN EVALUATION.

In an attempt to eliminate evaluator bias, both the pretest and the posttest were scored by an independent rater, who was not informed of the treatment or test differences in the scripts. All scripts were scored according to the grading scheme and the appropriate model answer supplied by the evaluator (see Appendix III).

Instructional Effectiveness

Prior to the analysis of covariance, a regression analysis was done to ensure that there was no interaction between prior knowledge and group membership (Kim and Kohout, 1975). The results of this analysis showed no significant interaction, $F (1,47) = .20$, $p >$ .05. Thus, it was possible to assume that prior to treatment, there was group equivalence on the content of instruction.

Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations for both groups on the pre- and posttests.

The results of the analysis of covariance showed a significant difference between the two treatment conditions on the posttest, $F (1,48) = 16.11$, $p < .05$ (see Table 3).

However, while acknowledging that the package

group performed better than the traditional group, it is
also important to note that the overall achievement
level was low. The mean scores for both groups fell
below 50% of the total score of the posttest (see Figure
2).

Table 2.

Summary Table of Means and Standard Deviations

for Main Evaluation.

Treatment	Pretest Mean	Pretest S.D.	Posttest Mean	Posttest S.D.
Traditional	6.42	3.36	10.48	5.60
Package	5.34	2.80	16.18	7.88

Total Score = 48.

Table 3

Summary Table of the Analysis of Covariance

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Covariates	373.20	1	373.20	10.34 *
Treatments	581.39	1	581.39	16.11 *
Experimental Error	1732.57	48	36.10	
TOTAL	2687.16	50	53.74	

* $p < .05$

FIGURE 2
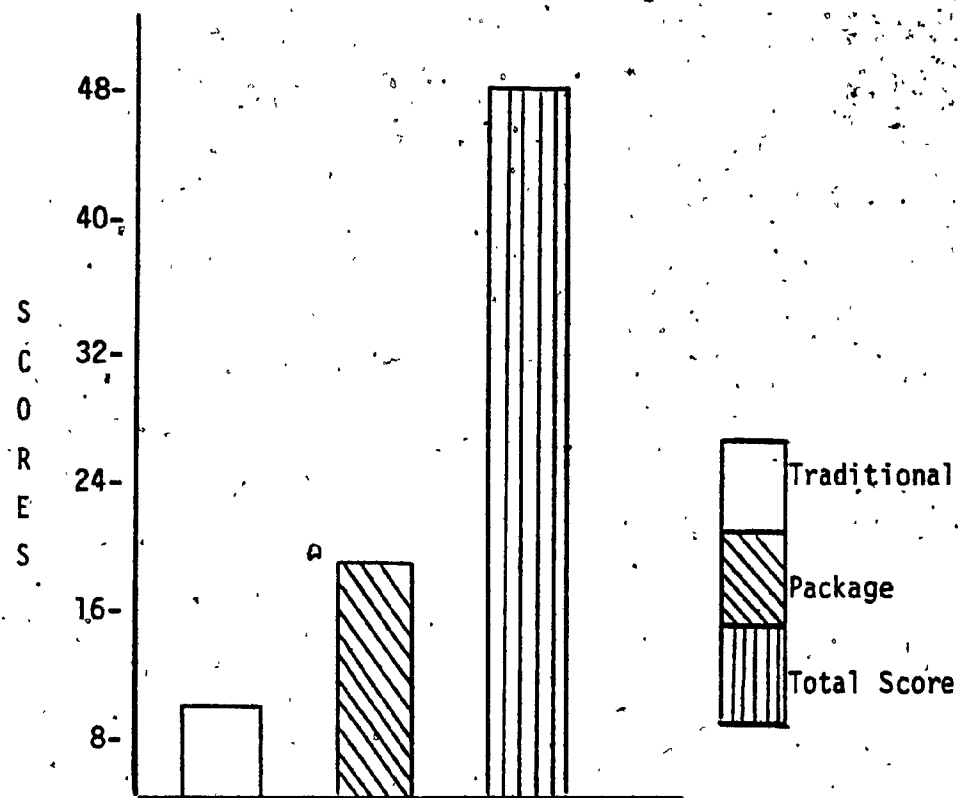
Mean Scores of Treatment Groups compared with total score
of Posttest.

Teacher Reactions

The teacher for the package group made very
positive comments about the package, noting in
particular the importance of the skills identified and
the value of the practice exercises (embedded test
items) for the students. On the whole, he thought that
the approach to instruction could serve to enhance
students' understanding and appreciation of the other
texts that they were studying for the examination.

He did emphasize however that given the target
population, there was need to consider a longer time
period to ensure mastery of all subordinate skills.

Other observations made during the conduct of
instruction would be noted in the discussion of the
respective skills.

Student Reactions

Students in this group generally responded
favourably to the package (see Appendix V).

On the whole most thought that the instructional
objectives were clearly defined and easily understood.
Eighteen percent (18%) strongly agreed and 70% agreed
with this statement.

In addition, most responded favourably to the idea
of group practice, with 75% giving either a four

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(strongly agree) or a three (agree) rating to the relevant statements.

One area of conflict lay in their response to the extracts themselves. On the one hand, 96% gave the top two ratings to the statement that the extracts were interesting to read. On the other hand, with regards to the statement that the extracts were easy to understand, 44% rated it in the lower two categories.

It is very likely that subjects may have interpreted this statement not on the basis of the actual comprehension of the extracts, but rather in relation to their performance of the tasks associated with the extracts.. In the opinion of the evaluator, responses to this statement are very likely proportionately related to the effort required for doing the exercises. This point will be developed more fully in the discussion.

In response to the question whether there were any sections that subjects still found difficult; most indicated the last two skills, identification of the specific and universal themes, with a lesser number mentioning the recognition of the techniques.

On the whole subjects felt that there difficulty could be overcome with more practice. It was

interesting to note that only a few indicated the need for more teacher explanation, which seems to suggest that there must have been a satisfactory level of awareness about the requirements of the respective tasks.

Reactions to the package as a whole were positive, with such comments as "it showed me how to organise my work", and "it gave me good explanations and practice in answering questions based on themes".

Commenting on the value of the practice exercises, one student thought that they helped , since s/he was now able to write the "identical ideas" and further that these ideas were clearer , now that there were limits to the number of sentences used in expressing them.

With regards to the inclusion of lessons of this type in the regular literature programme, many students thought that it would be a valuable addition to their preparation for the CXC examination.

Finally, in many of their remarks, students commented on the disadvantages of the limited time and approximately 62% gave the lower two ratings to the statement that enough time was allotted for instruction.

DISCUSSION: MAIN EVALUATION.

The results of the evaluation provide support for the view advanced earlier that a systematic design of instruction is a more effective learning tool for the study of literary themes than the open-ended discussion method. Scores of subjects in the package group were significantly higher than those of subjects in the traditional group.

However, as was noted earlier, the achievement level of subjects receiving instruction via the package was low. Consequently, the main thrust of this discussion has been directed at a re-assessment of the instruction.

Time Allocation for Group Practice

During the instruction, it soon became very evident that time allocation was grossly inadequate, an observation that is strongly supported by the comments of both teacher and students (see Results).

Subjects did not seem to have difficulty understanding the teacher's explanations and demonstrations of the various skills. However, the actual performance of the tasks themselves, that is, the writing of the respective statements, required much more

effort and time than the evaluator had envisaged.

Ideally, instruction in each subskill should have continued until mastery was attained. This did not always happen; in fact the last two skills were particularly affected by insufficient time because instruction for the preceding skills required more time than had been expected.

Failure to identify accurate time requirements could probably be attributed to inadequate conditions for the preliminary evaluation. Because of restrictions imposed by the schedule of the school in which this evaluation was done, only a limited amount of time was allowed. Thus, not all aspects of the package could be satisfactorily assessed.

A primary consequence of this limitation was that the evaluator did not make an adequate assessment of the time needs of subjects, relative to the cognitive operations which they had to perform in order to demonstrate that they had indeed acquired the skill that was taught.

In particular during the initial stages of instruction, subjects spent a lot of the time allotted for group practice, discussing around the task to be performed. In some groups, the discussion appeared to

remain at an unfocussed level for a great deal of time before eventually converging on what had to be done. Even when subjects seemed to have arrived at a consensus of what had to be done, the verbal exchanges would still continue and there were instances when the teacher had to insist that subjects end the discussion and start writing.

While the evaluator did expect that discussion would take place (and indeed, working in groups was intended to facilitate this), she underestimated the amount of time that subjects would feel the need to spend in this preliminary activity before proceeding to the actual performance of the task.

From the evaluator's observation of the discussions taking place, it seemed that subjects needed to spend time making a mental transition from the assimilation of the explanations previously provided to the performance of the tasks based on those explanations.

The teacher had presented and explained certain procedures and had used a particular extract for this purpose. During that period, subjects had assimilated information related to those procedures. Exchanges between the teacher and some of the students during

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teacher presentation seemed to suggest this. Now, subjects were expected to apply these procedures performing a similar task, but with a different extract.

What seemed evident was that the movement from the assimilation of a skill to its application was not as automatic as the evaluator had previously envisaged. It appeared that there were intermediary mental operations which subjects needed to spend time to activate.

The effort involved in this process could probably be partly accounted for by the fact that, even though subjects were required to perform the identical task that the teacher had just done, they were using a different extract, based on a different story, even though taken from the same literary text. This, it seemed, had a slowing down effect on the process of skill transfer to the new stimulus material.

It is in this context that the view was advanced earlier that probably subjects had interpreted the statement on their understanding of the extracts in relation to the tasks that had to be performed using those extracts (see Results).

However, it is the opinion of the evaluator that it is very likely that the primary factor accounting for the effort and length of time spent making the required

transition as described above, is the ability level of the target population; subjects seemed to lack the facility for self-initiated activation of these particular learning strategies and needed greater assistance from the instructional environment for doing this.

Consequently, the evaluator suggests that the extended discussion sessions during group practice was an attempt on the students' part to create the conditions which, hopefully, would facilitate their activating of the necessary learning strategies for making the transition from assimilation of a skill to its application.

However, as instruction progressed, even though the discussions still tended to be somewhat lengthy , one could have noticed an increasing ease in getting into doing the exercises. It was as if, over time, the required cognitive skills for moving on to the stage of applying the skill were being accessed with increasingly less effort.

In this regard, the comments of students, cited earlier, noting that by the end of instruction they were better able to organise their work and express their ideas seem to lend support to this observation.

If one were to accept the hypothesis that low
ability students must use more time and effort in the
transition from assimilation to application of a skill,
in the context of this learning task, the question that
now arises, is, should an instructional event,
specifically intended to stimulate this cognitive
activity, be incorporated into the overall instructional
strategy.

Gagne and Briggs deal at length with the
relationship between instructional events and learning
strategies (see Chapter 9). In this context, there is
perhaps need to reassess the effectiveness of the
demonstration aspect of the instruction (what Gagne and
Briggs refer to as presenting the stimulus material).
The problem being outlined may probably be pointing to a
need for an increase in the number of examples used for
demonstration, since this latter activity is primarily
intended to serve as a bridge between explanation and
student practice.

While not dismissing the value of this activity,
this evaluator is more inclined to placing greater
emphasis on extending the time allotted for group
activity as a means of addressing the problem outlined.
For it seems to me that there may probably be valuable

potential in the exploratory, probing type of discussion, for facilitating learning in less capable students.

In summary therefore, it would appear that, in relation to instruction on the study of themes for this target population, group practice must fulfil an even broader function than that envisaged by the evaluator. It cannot only be regarded as a means of effectively producing the desired outcome, in other words, ensuring that the job gets done. It must also be seen as providing the conditions in which students would activate the mental operations discussed above.

In the light of the foregoing therefore, it seems evident that more time was needed for group practice, to allow for the activity just described.

Student Acquisition of Skills

On the whole, the performance of subjects from the package group revealed that while they had attained a satisfactory level of competence in some skills, there were others that still had not been mastered. Certain features in relation to the respective skills deserve attention.

Summary of Story

One point worth noting about the performance of the package group in this section of the posttest was the attention paid to precision and conciseness in formulating statements of summary. Indeed, the most important difference between the two groups was that the traditional group still tended to give long, rambling reports, some even reporting the text, word for word. The package group, on the other hand, tended more to focus on main events. In fact, this tendency towards precision and exactness in expression was also evident in all other sections of subjects' responses to the question.

Instruction for this section was generally effective. However, in the teacher's opinion, subjects may have grasped the distinction between the stated and unstated meanings more quickly, if the two skills of summarizing the basic story and deriving the implicit meaning were explained and demonstrated simultaneously, instead of separately.

From the evaluator's point of view, such an adjustment is optional, the important thing being to ensure that the distinction is made.

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Theme Identification

In relation to this aspect of the test, subjects
in the package group provided more clearly-defined
statements that were supportive of the broader specific
theme than did their counterparts in the traditional
group. This could very likely be accounted for by the
practice gained in formulating statements about the
implicit meaning. (One would recall that, in the context
of the instructional package, the implicit meaning was
defined as being the concrete counterpart of the more
abstract specific theme).

In spite of this advantage, however, subjects in
the package group were generally very weak in the
actual identification of the specific theme that the
respective writers focused on. In fact, in most
instances, there was no clear-cut attempt to define this
theme as a separate more generalised statement, even
though at times one could have detected a movement
towards the abstract in the implicit meaning statements
formulated. Thus, while there was clear evidence of
students having accurately identified a meaning that was
beneath the surface, they largely remained within the
limits of the content of the story.

This failure to perform at the higher level of

abstraction can very likely be attributed to insufficient practice during instruction. Identification of the specific theme was the last but one skill taught, and as a result was at a disadvantage because of the extra time actually used for the instruction of the preceding skills.

What was evident even during the instruction was that the movement from the concrete to the abstract involved a fair amount of effort on the part of the subjects. In addition, one must admit that formulating a statement about the specific theme according to the format suggested (see revisions reported after Preliminary Evaluation) did increase the complexity of the task. Nonetheless, the evaluator still maintains that with adequate time and sufficient practice, even subjects of this population can attain mastery of this skill.

In summary therefore, subjects' performance in this section of the test, reflected mastery of the skill of recognising the implicit meaning only, that is, the unstated meaning formulated in the context of the events and characters of the story.

Selection of Illustrations

Subjects in the package group paid greater attention to how they presented the relevant information, while subjects from the traditional group tended simply to copy the appropriate segment from the extract. Ability to report was considered important since ultimately in the final examination, subjects would not have access to the text.

More importantly though, there was greater evidence in the former group of subjects "showing how" the illustrations supported the theme, in other words, justifying their selections. With regards to these two aspects of the test therefore, it was evident that subjects had benefitted from performing the tasks corresponding to the relevant skills.

Nonetheless most subjects failed to identify more than one illustration from each of the respective extracts. This probably could have been due to the fact that they failed to recognise all but the obvious segments that conveyed the theme (and implicit meaning). The segments that were widely identified were those where the writer placed a specific remark in the mouth of a character or made a character perform an easily identifiable act that was central to the incident and

through which the writer's comment could be readily discerned.

Thus for example, in the extract from THE PEARL, most subjects appropriately identified Kino's remarks, "I will fight this thing" or "I am a man". In the extract from THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA, the old fisherman's final words, "Fish, I will stay with you until I am dead", was a popular selection. In addition, from this latter extract, some subjects noted the fact that the old fisherman had hooked the fish, and even though he was unable to pull it in after several hours, would not let it go.

On the other hand, behaviour or descriptions that were not central to the development of the action, for example, gestures or attitudes, were not recognised. In the first extract, subjects failed to note that Kino's eyes glowed fiercely or that his muscles hardened, or even that he pounded his sleeping mat while talking to his wife.

Another type of illustration that was not detected were those in which the technique used involved the interaction of two characters. In such instances two characters are placed side by side and the comment emerges out of their interaction (often in a conflict

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situation). In the two extracts, examples of this type of technique would be the conflict between Kino and Juana and the struggle between the old fisherman and the fish. (see Model Answers, Appendix III)

Examples of segments that were created using both of the above types of techniques did emerge during the instruction, but in spite of this, subjects failed to detect similar examples in the posttest.

The reason for this failure could probably be attributed to weaknesses in the instruction itself.

In redesigning the instruction after the preliminary evaluation, attention was paid to establishing a conceptual framework, detailing the writer's role in the creation of the work. The student was expected to use this framework as a base from which to identify the writer's techniques. The rationale behind this approach was that, once the teacher had identified particular techniques in the extracts used for demonstration, students would be able not only to recognise similar techniques in other extracts but discover others as well.

While such a framework did have some effect in making subjects conscious of the function of literary techniques, its capacity to facilitate recognition of

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them was overestimated.

At the same time, teacher demonstration could have been more focused. In the current design, after the teacher had identified and explained the techniques in the extract used for demonstration, subjects were expected to do the same in other extracts. However, no attention was paid to verifying that specific techniques identified by the teacher were immediately repeated in the extracts used by the subjects. In fact, during the instructional period, the teacher encountered problems and recommended that each technique identified should have been explained and practised separately.

In view of the above, it would appear that the following adjustments should be made to the design:

First, each of the techniques highlighted in the instruction should be identified, labelled and explained separately by the teacher, to be followed by students searching other extracts to identify that same technique.

Secondly, because some techniques are more easily discerned than others, their presentation should be sequenced starting from the more obvious to the more subtle. It is envisaged that such sequencing can be expected to facilitate more effective learning.

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A another adjustment recommended for this section is the removal of the skill of classifying techniques. No attention was paid to this skill during instruction, since in the introductory sessions between the evaluator and the teacher, it was agreed that it was a redundant exercise and was not likely to contribute to students' learning.

Recommendations

As a result of the foregoing, the following recommendations are made:

1. Instruction should be re-designed to allow for the revisions mentioned earlier in relation to the explanation and practice of the skill of identifying literary techniques.

2. A follow-up evaluation should be conducted with another sample of the same population but allowing more time for group practice and discussion.

3. The package should also be evaluated with higher ability students to assess its effectiveness with this population.

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APPENDIX I

a) Teacher's Guide - Package Group.

b) Student Manual/Workbook - Package Group.

THE STUDY OF THEMES IN LITERATURE

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Dear Teacher,

The evaluation process in which you are about to participate, is aimed at determining an efficient method for teaching students to identify and analyse themes in literature.

This evaluation is being undertaken in view of the objectives of one section of the CXC English B examination where candidates are required to compare and contrast literary themes.

In order to ensure maximum accuracy in our final assessment of the method used, it is very important that all procedures are adhered to.

Thanks for agreeing to cooperate in this project. I am certain that our joint participation in the exercise will indeed contribute to our own professional growth and increase our understanding of the educational needs of our students.

Sincerely,

Olabisi Kuboni

INTRODUCTION

INSTRUCTIONAL GOAL AND TARGET OBJECTIVES

The overall goal that this package seeks to address is that students will be able to compare treatments of the same theme across different works of literature. More specifically, instruction has been designed to meet the following target objectives:

1. Students will be able to identify the theme in specially selected extracts from two novels;

2. Students will be able to compare treatments of an identical theme in two extracts taken from two different novels.

In order to attain the above objectives, students will be required to perform the following subordinate skills:

1. Summarize the story;

2. Formulate a statement about the implicit (unstated) meaning;

3. Identify the techniques that the writer uses to convey the implicit meaning;

4. Classify these techniques;

5. Identify segments of the extract that convey the implicit meaning;

6. Justify selection of these segments;

7. Generalize to the appropriate human situation (specific theme);

8. Identify the universal theme.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

TEACHER'S GUIDE

The teacher's guide contains the procedures and information necessary for students to perform the respective skills. All instruction is presented through the teacher, thus the role of the teacher in the whole learning process is of utmost importance.

The guide has been designed around the skills identified earlier with the main subdivisions being based on information related to instruction on the respective skills. The format for each subdivision is as follows:

* Skill

* Performance Objective - what the students must do

* Related Information - about the skill

* Content Presentation - how the instruction is to be presented

* Example - teacher demonstration of the skill

* Group Practice - students perform skills in groups

* Feedback for Group Practice

* Remediation - to ensure that the skill is mastered

* Enrichment

Skills #3 and #4, and Skills #5 and #6, are respectively treated as composite skills and so constitute a single subdivision each.

There are also two class tests.

The Appendix at the end of the Teacher's guide contains Model Answers on each extract, corresponding to the task performed for each skill.

STUDENTS' MANUALS

The students' manuals comprise two main subdivisions. First, there is the work area where students will write their answers related to the various tasks performed.

The work area has been further subdivided to provide separate sections for recording information pertaining to each of the extracts studied.

Each work section is then further divided with the aim of providing students with a format for organizing information on each extract as determined by the skills to be performed.

The second part of the students' manuals contains an equal number of extracts from each of the following novels — A HOUSE FOR MR. BISWAS by V.S. Naipaul and WIDE SARGASSO SEA by Jean Rhys. These novels were selected from the list of thirty assigned by the CXC for Section B of Paper I (comparison of themes) of the examination.

The extracts have been grouped according to theme in two sections as follows:

Section I – Theme – Alienation

2 extracts from A House for Mr. Biswas

2 extracts from Wide Sargasso Sea

Section II: Theme – Cultural Conflict

2 extracts from A House for Mr. Biswas

2 extracts from Wide Sargasso Sea

A brief summary of relevant background information on each novel introduces this latter part of the manual. The names of the themes have not been provided for the students.

TEST MATERIALS

Separate materials have been provided for the pre- and post tests. Students will be tested before and after instruction. The same basic essay-type question has been designed for both tests, except for the fact that for each test, the question will be based on a different theme and different extracts. Both tests will last approximately 40 minutes each.

RECOMMENDED SCHEDULE FOR INSTRUCTION (3 sessions @ 90 mins. each.)

SESSION	ACTIVITY	Teach. Expl. & Demonstr.	Grp. Pract.	Total
I	Skill #1	10	20	30
	Skill #2	10	20	30
	Skills #3 & 4	15	10	25
II	Teach. Comments of work reviewed	5	-	5
	Skills 3, 4 (cont'd)	5	25	30
	Skills 5 & 6	10	30	40
	Skills 7 & 8	5	10	15
III	Comments	10	-	10
	Class Test #1	-	-	20
	Feedback	-	-	15
	Target Obj. 2	10	-	10
	Class Test #2	-	-	15
	Feedback	-	-	10

THE INSTRUCTION

SKILL #1:   Summarizing the story

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:

Students will write a concise statement of not more than two (2) sentences summarizing the main points of the basic story line of the extracts to be analyzed.

RELATED INFORMATION:

The first skill is intended to lay the foundation for the higher skills. Students cannot analyze a piece of literature unless they first demonstrate comprehension of the basic story line.

Performance of this skill also has value for essay-writing as some students have difficulty distinguishing between interpretation of literary material and the factual detail needed to support these interpretations. The result is often a blurred outpouring of words that eventually leads to the entire essay being a mere retelling of the story.

The summary therefore, constitutes one pocket of information essential in essay-writing. It must be clear, concise and to-the-point, focussing solely on the story itself, the action. Isolating the main points of the story can be expected to improve students' performance in making the summary.

CONTENT PRESENTATION:

1. Teacher gives reasons for doing the summary.

2. Teacher advises students to identify main points of action.

3. Teacher outlines criteria for performance of task emphasizing that summary must be short (2 sentences), to-the-

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point and concentrating solely on the story-line.

Example

1.   In demonstrating the performance of this skill and all the other skills, the teacher will use Extract 1 of Section I. As was mentioned earlier, the extracts have been included in the student's manual and suggested responses for each activity can be found in the Appendix of this guide.

2.   Before performing the first skill, the teacher will read the extract aloud for the class.

3.   Students must copy the pattern provided by the teacher into their manuals. This will be done after the demonstration of all skills. Thus, on the first work page of their manuals, students will record all information derived from the study of Extract 1, Section I.

GROUP PRACTICE:

The group will perform the required tasks for this and all other skills using Extracts 2 and 3 of Section I.

FEEDBACK FOR GROUP PRACTICE:

1.   For all skills, the teacher will respond to and comment on the performances of the respective groups.

2.   Occasionally, the teacher should also involve the class in this exercise.

3.   In suggesting changes, improvements etc., the teacher will use the model answers provided in the Appendix as the standard of measurement.

4.   While it will not be possible to write all responses on the chalkboard, the teacher should make good use of this medium as

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students will be better able to assess a statement if they see
it.

5.   For more detailed feedback, students' manuals will be
collected at the end of each day and written comments provided.
A short review of these comments will be done at the beginning of
the subsequent class session..

REMEDIATION:

During group practice of this and all skills, the
teacher should periodically repeat information and instructions
related to the performance of the skill. For this skill, the
teacher may remind students of the following:

*   Concentrate on story-line.

*   Isolate main points and build summary around these.

*   Summary must not be more than 2 sentences.

After the review of the first two extracts, students must
continue practising this skill using Extract 4 of Section I,
followed by Extract 1 of Section II.

ENRICHMENT:

Where groups satisfactorily complete the assigned tasks
for the respective skills ahead of time, they should be allowed
to start discussing the succeeding skill.

SKILL #2:   Formulating a statement about the implicit meaning

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE

Students will make an inference about the unstated meaning which the writer intends to convey at the same time as the stated meaning of the story. Students will define this unstated meaning within the context of the character and incidents of the story, then write a statement about it using not more than two (2) sentences.

RELATED INFORMATION:

Performance of this skill relies primarily on students' intuition, the intention being that students should first make the inference then go through the processes for identifying factors to support this inference.

This instructional strategy was adopted in recognition of the fact that good literary writing is designed in such a way that the average reader can easily "pick up" thoughts and ideas that lay beneath the surface of the basic story line, without necessarily being conscious of the factors that influenced this insight. Under the control of a skillful writer, the mind of the average reader almost involuntarily perceives deeper level meaning, or at least part of it.

Nonetheless, it is also important to recognize that in an average class, there are varying levels of reading ability. Thus, what is perceived can range from nothing at all to superficial details, to the very profound.

While one cannot really teach intuition, sensitive guiding can go a long way in improving the performance of less

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competent students in this skill.

In this regard, students must be told the importance of determining the writer's point of view and letting this guide them in inferring the unstated implicit meaning. In other words, they must realize that the implicit meaning is not any meaning they choose to impose, but rather it is the meaning which the writer has previously decided that the reader should discern.

The whole issue of how the writer gets the reader to "see" his point of view will be developed further in the discussion of the succeeding skill. But it is important to introduce students to the concept at this point.

Another important feature of the performance of this skill is that the implicit meaning must be formulated in the context of the story, that is, it must be seen through the characters and the action of the story-line.

Students must maintain this link with the story when inferring the implicit meaning since this is likely to enhance their skill at selecting sections of the text to support the inference made. In other words, the relationship between the inference and relevant sections of the text can be more easily discerned if both entities are based on the story.

CONTENT PRESENTATION:

1. The teacher uses the following statements and questions to guide the students' search.

   a. We've just summarized the story. We know that 'X' and 'Y' took place, but let's see if there is any other meaning behind this story.

b.   For example, in Extract 1, Mr. Biswas has just been beaten up. Is that the only thing that the writer wants us to get out of that extract?

c..   What other information do we get about Mr. Biswas and the other members of the Tulsi family, other than the beating?

d.   What does the writer really want us to see?

2.   The teacher must insist on the limit of two (2) sentences.

EXAMPLE   )
GROUP PRACTICE   )   Same procedure used for Skill #1.
FEEDBACK FOR GROUP PRACTICE)

REMEDIATION:

        At regular intervals, the teacher will remind students of the following:

1. Determine the writer's point of view.

2. Infer implicit meaning from writer's point of view.

3. There is more to the character than what they actually do or say. Find that "something".

Continued practice after initial review, using extracts already assigned for skill #1.

ENRICHMENT:

        Same procedure used for skill #1.   Students may start developing their ideas on how the writer conveys his point of view.

SKILL #3: Identifying the techniques that the writer uses
to convey the implicit meaning

SKILL #4: Classifying the techniques

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:

Students will re-examine the extract to detect the tech-
niques that the writer uses to make the reader aware of the
unstated meaning. Students will first make a list of these
techniques, using short phrases or single words to name each.
Then students will determine and state by writing whether the
techniques used in the extract under review, fall mainly into the
category of character or incident techniques or a combination of
both.

RELATED INFORMATION:

Because of the interrelationship between these two skills
they will be performed as a single "chunk". Two questions may
probably have emerged in students' minds after performing the
preceding skill. They may be asking, "What made me recognize
this implicit meaning?", and "How did I get the writer's point of
view of it?"

It is important to establish that how a reader responds
to a piece of literature is largely determined by the writer's
skill in manipulating the same tools that he uses to tell the
story, namely character and action.

The writer starts off with an observation of a particular
human situation and creates a literary work that reflects both
the human situation as well as the angle from which he observes
this human situation.

In doing this, the writer creates certain characters,

gives them pre-determined personalities and makes them play roles that complement or reflect the human situation he chooses to focus on. The characters are not all given equal status, they have varying degrees of importance. But in all instances, one character emerges as the most important in the work, and it is through what this main character says or does or what happens to him, that the writer conveys the angle from which he observes the human situation.

But the main character does not work in isolation to achieve this goal. Rather it will be more correct to say that it is in the interaction between the main character and the other characters that the implicit meaning emerges.

Hence the point that must be established at the beginning is that it is the manipulation of characters and in particular the main character that constitutes the primary means that the writer uses to convey the implicit meaning.

However, while emphasis is on manipulation of characters, there are instances where the implicit meaning emerges more in the incident itself rather than in the characters involved in the incident. Making a distinction between an incident and the characters who carry it out may at first appear to be an artificial separation. Most of the time, such a separation is indeed impossible.

In some situations though, the writer seems to de-emphasize the role of the character and focus attention on the incident itself. In these instances the incident itself seems to act as a mirror letting through images of the fundamental human

situation lying beneath it. Extract 1 of Section I is an example of this.

In summary therefore, as an introduction to identifying the techniques, students must be provided with this broad overview of the writer's portrayal of character and incident in the context of theme identification.

This overview is intended to provide students with a conceptual framework for exploring the extract to identify techniques. It is within this framework that students will examine:

a. the characters - their remarks (what they say)

                   - their ideas (what they think)

                   - their behaviour (what they do)

                   - their attitudes, gestures

                   - descriptions about them

with particular emphasis on the main character.

and

b. the incidents - what is done and reports of what is done.

Effective presentation of the overview described earlier and careful demonstration of the skill are important to ensure that this objective is met. Proper identification of techniques is a vital prerequisite for the succeeding skill where students must formulate statements about the sections of the text that support their earlier inferences about the implicit meaning. Without a conscious awareness of what the writer is doing, students may simply resort to retelling the story of the sections selected.

Having identified and listed the techniques used, stu-

dents will classify them under the categories of character or incident. Nonetheless, the teacher should also recognize that techniques identified do not always fall into a specific category. Thus there may be instances where a joint classification is required.

The Model Answers in the Appendix provide suggested responses for practice work on these skills. Collectively, the suggested responses for these two skills in all the extracts provide a wide range of techniques which are commonly used in works of literature.

However, the following list has been prepared to provide some explanation of the application of the main techniques encountered in the extracts under review, as a means of enhancing teacher confidence in presenting this section of instruction to the students.

TECHNIQUES:

1.   Incident mirrors implicit meaning: An incident is selected that acts as a mirror of the human situation that the writer is focussing on and also shows up the respective characters in a light that makes them complement the different forces involved in the situation.

2.   Contradiction: The implicit meaning is inherent in the contradiction between two aspects of the text, for example, between the way a character is portrayed and the way he behaves, or between a situation and the behaviour of individuals within that situation.

3.   Juxtaposition/Contrast: Two situations, ideas etc., are

presented side by side in order to make a statement about either side or both. Sometimes these situations, ideas etc. are opposed to each other, thus creating contrast.

4. Conflict: There are two kinds. First the conflict that occurs in a discussion where the overt topic of the argument mirrors a more fundamental issue. Second, internal conflict where a character is shown struggling to resolve a discrepancy between his ideas, beliefs etc. and his own behaviour or the situation in which he finds himself.

5. Gestures and attitudes of a character — a single gesture or the description of a specific attitude, not essential to the basic story, but which influences the reader to see the story in a particular way.

6. Behaviour of a character — A single act that seems to be making a point beyond the act itself.

7. Exaggeration of an act, reaction etc. — An act or reaction deliberately intended to appear abnormal or unusual, in order to force the reader to read behind it.

8. Remarks of a character — Putting carefully selected words into the mouths of carefully selected characters.

CONTENT PRESENTATION:

1. Teacher begins this section of instruction with the questions:

What made you recognize the implicit meaning?

How did you get the writer's point of view?

(Some students may have responses and these should be dealt with before continuing).

2.   Teacher establishes the fact that the writer creates a situation for this to happen.   How?

3.   Teacher presents conceptual framework, using the following sequence..

> *   The writer observes a human situation
>
> *   The writer creates a literary work to reflect what he observes
>
> *   The writer creates characters and manipulates them so that they reflect the human situation
>
> *   The writer singles out a main character through whom he presents his view of the situation
>
> *   Sometimes the writer makes his point through the incident rather than through the characters.

4.   Teacher emphasizes the importance of knowledge of techniques for subsequent selection of segments.

5.   Teacher discusses classification of techniques.

Example:

1.   As with the preceding skills, Extract 1 of Section I will be used for demonstration.

2.   The teacher will construct a table on the chalkboard, similar to the type used in the Appendix and the students' manuals, for recording responses for this combination of skills as well as the composite group of skills #5 and #6 (the next two to be discussed). Only responses related to skills #3 and #4 (techniques) will be recorded now.

3.   When the teacher identifies a technique, the teacher will name it, explain its use in the extract and write it in the

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appropriate column on the chalkboard.

4.   The teacher will review all techniques identified and
determine classification.

5.   The teacher will remind students to copy these responses on
to the appropriate page in their manuals.

GROUP PRACTICE:

As with preceding skills, students will work on Extracts 2 and 3
of Section I, using the format provided in their manuals to
record their responses

FEEDBACK FOR GROUP/PRACTICE:

1.   Same procedure as preceding skills.

2.   However, because of the need for effective guidance to
ensure accuracy in performance, the teacher should provide all
feedback in class reviews and not include students in this
exercise.

3.   The teacher must be very alert to situations where a group
has accurately identified a technique but is having difficulty in
finding appropriate vocabulary for naming it. In such
circumstances, the teacher must supply the word.

REMEDIATION:

1.   The teacher will periodically repeat information related to
performance of the tasks.

2.   After class review of the first 2 extracts analyzed in Group
Practice, the teacher will do a second demonstration using
Extract 4 of Section I.

(Study of this extract was already started in group practice so
students will be familiar with it.).

3. Students will copy information from second demonstration on to appropriate page of work area in manuals.

4. Students will then continue group practice using Extract 1 of Section II.

ENRICHMENT:

1. Groups that satisfactorily complete the above tasks can be encouraged to begin preliminary work formulating statements related to the selection of segments to support inferences of implicit meaning.

SKILL #5   Identifying segments of the extract that convey
                  the implicit meaning

SKILL #6   Justifying the selection of the above-mentioned
                  segments

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:

        Students will identify the segments of the extract that
convey the implicit (unstated) meaning, then formulate a
statement that gives a concise report of the information in these
segments and justifies the choice of the segments in the light of
the implicit meaning. Students' statements must not be more than
three 3) sentences long.

RELATED INFORMATION:

        The performance of these two skills constitute a single
composite task, hence the joint presentation.

        In order to identify the techniques, students were
directed to examine the remarks of the characters, their ideas,
behaviour etc. as well as the incidents. It was mentioned then
that proper identification of techniques would foster in students
a conscious awareness of what the writer is doing.

        At this point therefore, students are aware that the
writer made a character behave in a particular way, or made a
particular remark or gesture because he, the writer wanted to
convey a deeper message.

        The segments have already been identified for it was
through these that techniques were identified. Thus the first
part of the task has been accomplished. Now students must
formulate a statement that gives a concise report of what
happens, is said or described in the segment and justifies the

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selection of this segment as a transmittor of the unstated meaning.

Statements must be formulated in such a way that the function they are intended to serve (as just described) is clearly communicated.

In the final analysis, it is basically through demonstration that students will become aware of the required standard.

In demonstrating these skills therefore, the teacher must draw students' attention to the two component parts of the statement and also show how information on the technique was incorporated into the statement.

CONTENT PRESENTATION:

1. Teacher notes that when techniques were identified, segments were also automatically identified.

2. Teacher sets three-sentence limit.

3. Teacher explains dual function of statement (see Related Information).

4. Teacher emphasizes that reasons for formulating the statement are:

a) to provide concrete reference or illustration of what the writer used to convey the implicit meaning.

b) to justify the choices made under (a).

5. Teacher introduces the concept that knowledge of the technique can help in formulating a better statement. How?

Example

Teacher will demonstrate using Extract 1 Section I, drawing attention to the two component parts of the statement referred to.

in the Related Information.

GROUP PRACTICE:

Students will fill in the appropriate columns in the appropriate
pages in the work area of their manuals.

FEEDBACK FOR GROUP PRACTICE

1. The teacher will carefully monitor group responses to ensure
that the stated criteria are being met and recommend improvements
as required.

2. The teacher should involve students in the review exercise,
ensuring that they use the established criteria in assessing the
responses from the respective groups.

REMEDIATION:

1. Periodic repetition of guidelines.

2. After review of first 2 extracts, students continue practice
with other two extracts identified earlier.

ENRICHMENT:

Where students complete the above tasks ahead of time, they may
begin discussion on the specific theme (next skill).

SKILL #7:   Generalizing to the appropriate human situation
                   (identifying the specific theme)

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:

         Students will formulate a statement indicating:

a) the human situation out of which the story (and novel) was

created;
                                        θ
b) the perspective from which the writer observes this human

situation.

This statement must not make reference to any of the

specific characters or incidents of the story and should be written

in the form of a phrase that includes two parts of information,

1) the point of view of the writer;

2) the human situation.

RELATED INFORMATION:

         Now that inferences about the implicit meaning have

been justified, the way has been cleared for moving on to the

more abstract levels of the study.

         In generalizing to the appropriate human situation,

students are extending their focus beyond the factual details of

the story to a higher more general human situation, observation

of which would have motivated the writer to create the work in

the first place.

         In effect, the task being performed for this skill can

be seen as formulating the abstract version of the implicit

meaning. This abstraction is what is referred to as the specific

theme. A distinction is being made between specific and

universal theme (skill #7) as a means of letting the former
highlight the specific human situation underlying the creation of
the work.

For example, one of the universal themes that underlies
V.S. Naipaul's A House for Mr. Biswas is alienation. However,
that term places the novel within a broad class of literary works
all having the same universal theme and does not reflect the
thematic focus of the individual work in that class.

Thus when one says that Naipaul's novel deals with the
alienation (exclusion, isolation) of the Hindu who challenges or
questions the practice of the Hindu religion in Colonial
Trinidad, one is, in a sense, giving the novel its own unique
thematic identity. A clear conception of the specific theme is
essential for the thematic comparison of works.

The specific theme must represent two parts of
information. It must reflect the human situation being observed
and it must also reflect the angle or point of view from which
the writer observes the human situation.

It is strongly advised that students adopt the pattern
widely used in literary criticism for representing the specific
theme. Thus the first part should convey the writer's
perspective (usually in the form of an abstract word) and the
second part should identify the human situation being dealt with.

CONTENT PRESENTATION:

1. Teacher establishes the stage of instruction (implicit
meaning justified, now theme to be identified).

2. Teacher notes that this stage has moved the study away from

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the level of the concrete action of the story (with characters, incidents) to a higher abstract level of the general human situation.

3. Teacher identifies general human situation in terms of specific theme of extract (work).

4. Teacher guides students to think of specific theme as abstract version of implicit meaning.

5. Teacher sets out guidelines for formulating specific theme.

How?

Example

Demonstration using Extract 1, Section I.

GROUP PRACTICE:

Same extracts used for preceding skills.

FEEDBACK FOR GROUP PRACTICE) Same basic procedure as pre-
REMEDIATION   ) ceding skills.

ENRICHMENT: Start discussion on universal theme.

SKILL #8:   (Target Objective No. 1) Identifying the universal theme

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:

Students will generalize further to establish the concept representing the quality, condition or aspect of human life under which the specific theme can be classified. In arriving at this concept, students will not include any information identifying the human situation already described. Student will write this concept in the form of a short phrase or single word.

RELATED INFORMATION:

As was mentioned earlier, the universal theme represents a very general thematic class into which several novels can fit regardless of the specific human situation on which each is based. In essence, the universal theme is not limited by time, place or social grouping and makes a statement about the total human condition.

Thus, identification of the universal theme takes students to an even higher level of abstraction where the specific human situation no longer applies.

Because of vocabulary limitations, some students may have difficulty in arriving at the most appropriate word or phrase. In such cases, the teacher should provide this since students must become familiar with the common terms used to describe literary themes.

CONTENT PRESENTATION:

1.   Teacher makes students aware of movement from specific theme to universal theme.

Example	)
GROUP PRACTICE	) Same procedure as for preceding
FEEDBACK FOR GROUP PRACTICE	) skills.
REMEDIATION	)

ENRICHMENT:

All students should be encouraged to review the entire instructional procedure.

CLASS TEST NO. 1

This test is intended to assess students' mastery of skills, thus students will work individually, analyzing Extract 3, Section II, and following the procedure outlined in skills #1 through #7.

This test will be done in students' manuals. While there will be no planned input by the teacher, the teacher may respond to questions and clarify queries as the need arises.

REMEDIATION FOR CLASS TEST NO. 1:

After students' tests have been discussed Extract 4 from Section II may be used for further practice of the skills that students still find difficult.

TARGET OBJECTIVE NO. 2

RELATED INFORMATION:

Having performed all the preceding skills, students should now be prepared to compare treatments of an identical theme in two extracts.

The following essay-question was designed as a measure of students' mastery of this objective:

* Write a brief summary of each of the two extracts.

* Compare the different aspects of the theme of cultural conflict on which the two writers focus.

* Using illustrations from the extracts, show how each extract conveys the writer's thoughts about the theme.

This essay-question constitutes another way of asking students to compare the treatment of the theme of cultural conflict in the two extracts. It is important to realize that the treatment of the theme in any work revolves around two principal points:

1.) the specific human situation that the writer is observing and his view of it (skills 2, 7).

2. the way in which he manipulates character and incident to convey his thoughts (skills 3 and 4; 5 and 6.).

CONTENT PRESENTATION /

1. The teacher establishes the link between this target objective and the subordinate skills.

2. The teacher explains the concept of "treatment of theme" and relates this concept to the subordinate skills performed.

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3.   Teacher presents the essay-question.   Extracts to be used
for answering this question are Extracts 1 and 3 of Section II.
Extract 1 was analyzed in Group Practice and Extract 3, in Class
Test No. 1.

4.   Teacher explains that the information needed for answering
the question has already been recorded, that

> Part 1 of the question tests skill #1
>
> Part 2 tests skill #7, supported by skill #2
>
> Part 3 tests skills #5 and #6, with input from skills
>
> #3 and #4

5.   Answering this question therefore requires re-organization
of information that has already been recorded.

6.   The teacher will offer some guidelines in terms of linking
the information to achieve some level of continuity in the essay.
However, the objective of instruction in this package does not
include the more advanced skills of essay-writing.   The aim is
that students should be able

> a. to formulate the necessary information for doing the
> essay
>
> b. to organize the information to fit the different sections
> of the question.

CLASS TEST NO. 2:

1.   Students will do the essay-question, using Extracts 1 and 3
of Section II.

2.   Students will work individually.

3.   This test will be done in students' manuals.

APPENDIX

Model Answers

SECTION I: Theme - Alienation

Extract 1:   Mr. Biswas comments ----Later he is
                        beaten (A House for Mr. Biswas -
                        pp. 136-137)

SUMMARY: After beating Mr. Biswas, Govind and the rest
of the family leave Mr. Biswas and his wife Shama alone upstairs
and return downstairs for the evening meal.

IMPLICIT MEANING:

        Because of his attitude towards Hinduism, Mr. Biswas
finds himself alone against the other members of the Tulsi
family. In fact, they are very hostile to him.

Technique	Statement about Segment Identified
Selected words in mouth of of selected character	When Omad, the young Tulsi son accuses Mr. Biswas of laughing at "our religion", he is clearly putting Mr. Biswas apart from the rest of the family.
Incident	When the rest of the family leaves Shama and Mr. Biswas alone after the beating, the statement is made that "the room was emptied" This incident creates a feeling that those who left had abandonned those who remained.
Contrast	The laughter and the gaiety downstairs compared with the silence and loneliness upstairs emphasizes that Mr. Biswas is excluded from the life of the family.

TECHNIQUE CLASSIFICATION: Incident.

SPECIFIC THEME: The rejection of the Hindu who questions or

challenges the practice of the Hindu religion

in colonial Trinidad.

UNIVERSAL THEME: Alienation

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Extract 2:   The naming of his first child (A House
                    for Mr. Biswas, pp. 160-163)

SUMMARY: When Mr. Biswas returns to Hanuman House to visit
his wife and new-born baby girl, he discovers that his daughter
has already been named. He was not consulted.

IMPLICIT MEANING:

          Mr. Biswas feels like an outsider, even to his own

child. The Tulsi family has assumed total responsibility for

naming the child and he was completely left out of this exercise.

Technique	Statement about Segment Identified
exaggeration	Mr. Biswas comes to Hanuman House with elaborate ideas for naming his child. However, his long list of carefully chosen names are all rejected because the Tulsis have already named the child. This suggests that the Tulsis have made Mr. Biswas an outsider even to his own child.
character – behaviour	In the middle of their conversation, Mr. Biswas changes from speaking the customary Hindi to English. By using this alien language, Mr. Biswas is deliberately making the point that there is a distance between himself and his wife and child.
character – gesture	At one point, Mr. Biswas jerks his chin in the direction of his child, to ask some question about her. By making this gesture, Mr. Biswas gives the impression that he does not feel close to his own child, that he is not a part of his child's life.
exaggeration	When Mr. Biswas scribbles hard on the birth certificate to write in the name he has chosen and his own name, it is as if he realizes that he is being pushed aside and he definitely means to stop it.

TECHNIQUE CLASSIFICATION: Character

SPECIFIC THEME: The isolation of the Hindu who refuses to

 give in to the dictates of the Hindu family.

UNIVERSAL THEME: Alienation

Extract 3:   An incident between Antoinette and Tia
                    at the river (Wide Sargasso Sea. pp.20-21)

SUMMARY: Antoinette becomes friendly with Tia, a black

girl, even though she was only recently insulted by another black

girl. One day at the river Tia outsmarts Antoinette and takes

away her three pennies.

IMPLICIT MEANING: Antoinette should not really depend too much

on having Tia as a friend. The hostility and mistrust between

their two races automatically puts Antoinette apart from Tia.

Technique	Statement about Segment Identified
Contradiction	Antoinette, a French creole girl, spends a lot of time with Tia, a black girl, even though only recently another black girl had called her "a white cockroach." It is as if Antoinette really wants to prove that she can live in harmony with people like Tia.
Selected words in mouth of of selected character	Antoinette calls Tia "a cheating nigger" when she realizes that Tia has tricked her. These cruel words to someone who is supposed to be a friend shows that Antoinette has suddenly realized that racial mistrust puts her apart from Tia. They are not really friends.
Selected words; language style	At the end, Tia calls Antoinette a "white nigger" and says that her family is not as great as it used to be, that other white people do not accept them. The blunt harsh words that Tia uses drives home the point very forcefully that Antoinette and her family are not accepted.

TECHNIQUE CLASSIFICATION: Character

SPECIFIC THEME: The rejection of the French creole by other

racial groups in the post-Emancipation period in the Caribbean.

UNIVERSAL THEME: Alienation.

Extract 4:   Days spent by the river ---- The burning of the house. (Wide Sargasso Sea: p.20 - p.37)

SUMMARY: Antoinette describes the happy days she has spent at the river with Tia --- Distressed at the burning of their house, Antoinette runs toward her friend Tia, but Tia responds by hitting her in the face with a stone.

IMPLICIT MEANING: Antoinette's isolation is total. She has nothing and no-one to turn to.

Technique	Statement about Segment Identified
Contrast	Antoinette describes the days she and Tia used to spend at the river as being very happy ones for her. So when the house is burning and she turns to Tia, Tia's hostile reaction reveals just how rejected Antoinette is.
Juxtaposition	As the house is burning, Antoinette and Tia stand staring at each other, one with blood on her face and the other in tears. By having the two girls facing each other in this condition, the writer seems to be saying that the friendship is definitely ended and Antoinette is now alone, with no-one to turn to.
Character-behaviour	Antoinette lists each item in the house that is lost in the fire. This shows that she really misses these objects, as if they were a necessary part of her life. Such an action emphasizes just how lonely her life is.

TECHNIQUE CLASSIFICATION: Character

SPECIFIC THEME: The rejection of the French Creole by other racial groups in the Caribbean during the post-Emancipation period.

UNIVERSAL THEME: Alienation.

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Extract 1:   A discussion about marriage (A House for
              Mr. Biswas pp. 89-91)

SUMMARY: Mrs. Tulsi and Seth are trying to force Mr. Biswas

to decide to marry Shama, a daughter in the Tulsi family.

IMPLICIT MEANING: Even though Mr. Biswas does not openly

object, the marriage that Mrs. Tulsi and Seth are arranging

between himself and Shama seems unacceptable to him.

Technique	Statement about Segment Identified
character – attitude, reaction	When Mrs. Tulsi asks Mr. Biswas whether he really likes "the child" Shama, he is stunned, as if he does not quite know how to reply. Mr. Biswas' reaction suggests that he does not want to be a part of the plans.
character – attitude, reaction	Mr. Biswas' reaction to the marriage plans that are being made is described as "incomprehension, surprise and panic". This description suggests that he does not see eye-to-eye with Mrs. Tulsi and Seth on the matter.
contrast, conflict	On the one hand, Mrs. Tulsi and Seth seem very confident about their plans while Mr. Biswas is getting more and more confused. Their very different attitudes reveal a disagreement on the issue.
Selected words in mouth of selected character	When Mr. Biswas enquires whether Shama knows about the plans and whether she likes him, he is introducing a modern point of view about marriage that is completely opposed to the one held by Mrs. Tulsi and Seth. For these two, such things do not matter.
Selected words in mouth of selected character	Mr. Biswas keeps repeating the words "the child" in his questions. By doing this, he is influencing the reader to join him in questionning the practice of child-marriages.

TECHNIQUE CLASSIFICATION: Character

SPECIFIC THEME: The conflict between Hindus who hold on to traditional Hindu customs and those who are influenced by modern Western values.

UNIVERSAL THEME: Cultural conflict.

Extract 2: Mr. Biswas makes an observation (A House for Mr. Biswas: p.104, pp. 125-126)

SUMMARY: Mr. Biswas observes that the two younger Tulsi sons who do the puja in the Tulsi household, also practice the Roman Catholic religion at school. This comment annoys other members of the family.

IMPLICIT MEANING: Even though the Tulsis take pride in being devout Hindus, their religion is being undermined by Christianity.

Technique	Statement about Segment Identified
Contrast	Mr. Biswas draws attention to the fact that the "gods" who conduct the puja in the family home wear Catholic symbols and say Catholic prayers at school. This shows that while the Tulsis are holding on to the outward practices of their religion, beliefs of another religion are creeping in.
Internal conflict	The other members of the family, in particular the "elder god", become hostile when Mr. Biswas makes this comment. This suggests that they know that what he is saying is true but prefer not to admit it.
SPECIFIC THEME	The infiltration of Christian practices and beliefs into Hinduism and the mental conflict which this creates for Hindus.
UNIVERSAL THEME:	Cultural Conflict.

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Extract 3:   A discussion on England and the West Indies
              (Wide Sargasso Sea: pp. 66-67)

SUMMARY: Antoinette and her husband, Mr. Rochester question

each other about the West Indies and England, respectively.

IMPLICIT MEANING: Neither Antoinette nor her husband are

willing or able to understand and accept the customs of the

other's country.

Technique	Statement about Segment Identified
character - behaviour	Antoinette does not put scent in her hair in order not to upset the English tastes of her husband. Antoinette's action brings out the fact that her husband cannot accept the practices of West Indian people.
Selected words in mouth of selected character	Mr. Rochester finds it odd that Antoinette should talk of a small town in Martinique as if it were Paris. Mr. Rochester's remark conveys the impression that life in the West Indies is beneath him.
Conflict	Up to the end of the discussion, neither Antoinette nor Mr. Rochester give up their "strange" ideas about the other's country. This shows that neither is able to accept the way of life of the other.

TECHNIQUE CLASSIFICATION: Character

SPECIFIC THEME: The conflict between the newly-arrived

English and the Creole in their view of life, even though both

are basically of the same racial type.

UNIVERSAL THEME: Cultural conflict.

Extract 4:   Breakfast in Bed (Wide Sargasso Sea: pp.70-72)

SUMMARY: Christophine serves Antoinette and her husband

breakfast in bed. Antoinnette and Mr. Rochester have an argument

about the way Christophine dresses and speaks.

IMPLICIT MEANING: Mr. Rochester, with his strong English background, refuses to recognize anything good in the customs and habits of Christophine, a black West Indian woman.

Technique	Statement about Technique Identified
character – attitude	When Christophine comes into the room, Mr. Rochester leaves temporarily and when she hands him his coffee, he finds it difficult to admit that her hands are beautiful. "She had long-fingered hands, thin and beautiful, I suppose". Mr. Rochester's cold and contemptuous attitude towards Christophine gives the impression that he finds it impossible to accept her.
character – attitude, conflict	Christophine's language, the way she dresses, her alleged dwadling all offend Mr. Rochester. One gets the impression that Mr. Rochester's strong English background is preventing him from appreciating her.
conflict	Mr. Rochester refuses to accept Antoinette's explanation that Christophine's elaborate style of dress is a gesture of respect and honour towards him. He still maintains that it is a dirty habit to let the dress trail. This is yet another example of Mr. Rochester's refusal to appreciate the customs of West Indian people.
contrast	Mr. Rochester's speech is very plain and Christophine's is very expressive and colourful. This great difference between the way they talk emphasizes the differences in their way of life. It also suggests a reason why Mr. Rochester cannot bridge the gap.

TECHNIQUE CLASSIFICATION: Character

SPECIFIC THEME: The inability or refusal of the newly-arrived English to adapt to or accept the way of life of West Indian people in the Post-Emancipation period.

UNIVERSAL THEME: Cultural Conflict

132.

THE STUDY OF THEMES IN, LITERATURE

STUDENT'S MANUAL

Dear Student,

You are about to participate in a series of lessons that have been designed to find an efficient method of studying themes in literature. This exercise, should be of benefit to you (and eventually other students) as you continue preparing for your English Literature examination.

Thanks for agreeing to take part in this project. I do hope that you find it informative and enjoyable.

Sincerely,

Olabisi Kuboni

Olabisi Kuboni

OVERVIEW OF NOVELS

The extracts that you will be studying during this series are all in the second part of your manual. They have been drawn from two novels, A HOUSE FOR MR. BISWAS (V.S. Naipaul) and WIDE SARGASSO SEA (Jean Rhys). In order that you could better understand the extracts, a brief summary of relevant information on each, is provided below.

A HOUSE FOR MR. BISWAS

After a very difficult childhood, Mohun Biswas eventually gets married to Shama Tulsi and like all the other men (e.g. Govind) who have married Tulsi daughters, he moves into the Tulsi family home, Hanuman House. However, after a while, Mr. Biswas and his wife move from Hanuman House to a village called The Chase where Mr. Biswas takes over the running of a small shop.

Mrs. Tulsi, his mother-in-law is a widow and she shares the role of head of the family with Seth, the husband of her sister, Padma, both of whom also live at Hanuman House.

Mrs. Tulsi's two youngest sons are still at school. They attend the Catholic college in Port of Spain. The older of the two is Owad but Mr. Biswas usually refers to them as the gods.

This novel is set in Trinidad during the colonial period.

WIDE SARGASSO SEA

This novel is set in the post-Emancipation period in the Caribbean when slavery had just been abolished.

Antoinette is a French Creole girl, that is, she is mainly European with slight traces of African. She lives in Jamaica with her brother and widowed mother.

When Antoinette grows up, she marries Mr. Rochester, an Englishman who has just moved out to the West Indies. After the marriage, the two leave Jamaica and go to live on a small island near to Martinique. One of the servants in their household is Christophine who has been with Antoinette's family ever since she was a child.

The novel is written in the first person. But in some sections the "I" is Antoinnette and in others, "I" is Mr. Rochester, her husband.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

The aims of this series of lessons are:

1) That you will be able to identify the theme in specially selected extracts from two novels.

2) That you will be able to compare treatments of an identical theme in two extracts taken from two different novels.

SECTION:.........   EXTRACT:........

TITLE:..

SUMMARY:...

IMPLICIT MEANING:...

Technique   Statement about Segment Identified

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TECHNIQUE CLASSIFICATION:...

SPECIFIC THEME:...

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UNIVERSAL THEME:...

_____

NOTES

138.

SECTION I
Extract 1-
Mr. Biswas comments...
and is beaten

'Idols are stepping-stones to the worship of the real thing,' Mr Biswas said, quoting Pankaj Rai to the hall. 'They are necessary only in a spiritually backward society. Look at that little boy down there. You think he know what he was doing this morning?'

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Now that Govind was off his chest Mr Biswas's only concern was to make sure that he was properly dressed. He hoped nothing had happened to his pants. He moved a hand down to investigate.

'He is all right,' Sushila said.

Someone bent over him. That smell of oil, Vick's Vaporub, garlic and raw vegetables told him it was Padma. 'Are you all right?' she asked, and shook him.

He turned over on his side, his face to the wall.

'He is all right,' Govind said, and added in English, 'Is a good thing all you people did come, otherwise I woulda be swinging on the gallows for this man.'

Chinta gave a sob.

Shama had maintained her martyr's attitude throughout, sitting on the low bench, her skirt draped over her knees, one hand supporting her chin, her staring eyes misting over with tears.

'Spitting on me, eh?' the god said. 'Go ahead. Why you don't spit now? Coming and laughing at our religion. Laughing at me when I do *puja. I* know the good I doing myself when I do *puja*, you hear.'

'It's all right, son,' Govind said. 'Nobody can insult you and Mai when I am around.'

'Leave him alone, Govind,' Padma said. 'Leave him, Owad.'

The incident was over. The room emptied.

Left alone, Shama and Mr Biswas remained as they were, Shama staring through the doorway, Mr Biswas considering the lotuses on the pale green wall.

They heard the hall return to life. The evening meal, delayed, was being laid out with unusual zest. Babies were consoled with songs, clapping, chuckles and baby-talk. Children were scolded with exceptional good humour. Between everyone downstairs there was for the moment a new bond, and Mr Biswas recognized this bond as himself.

Extract 2 –
The naming of the child

During the idle hours in the shop he had begun to choose names, mostly male ones: he never thought anything else likely. He wrote them on shop paper, rolled them on his tongue, and tried them out on customers.

'Krishnadhar Haripratap Gokulnath Damodar Biswas. What do you think of that for a name? K. H. G. D. Biswas. Or what about Krishnadhar *Gokulnath* Haripratap, Damodar Biswas. K. G. H. D.'

'You are not leaving much room for the pundit to give the child a name.'

'No pundit is giving any name to any child of mine.'

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And the baby was a girl. But it was born at the correct time; it was born without difficulty; it was healthy; and Shama was absolutely well. He expected no less from her. He closed the shop and cycled to Hanuman House, and found that his daughter had already been named.

'Look at Savi,' Shama said.

'Savi?'

They were in Mrs Tulsi's room, the Rose Room, where all the sisters spent their confinements.

'It is a nice name,' Shama said.

Nice name; when all the way from The Chase he had been working on names, and had decided on Sarojini Lakshmi Kamala Devi.

'Seth and Hari chose it.'

'You don't have to tell me.' Jerking his chin towards the baby, he asked in English, 'They had it register?'

On the marble topped table next to the bed there was a sheet of paper under a brass plate. She handed that to him.

'Well! I glad she register. You know the government and nobody else did want to believe that I was even born. People had to swear and sign all sort of paper.'

'All of we was register,' Shama said.

'All of all-you *would* be register.' He looked at the certificate. 'Savi? But I don't see the name here at all. I only see Basso.'

She widened her eyes. 'Shh!'

'I not going to let anybody call my child Basso.'

'Shh!'

He understood. Basso was the real name of the baby, Savi the calling name. The real name of a person could be used to damage that person, whereas the calling name had no validity and was only a convenience. He was relieved he wouldn't have to call his daughter Basso. Still, what a name!

'Hari make that one up, eh? The holy ghost.'

'And Seth.'

'Trust the pundit and the big thug.'

'Man, what you doing?'

He was scribbling hard on the birth certificate.

'Look.' At the top of the certificate he had written:

Real calling name: Lakshmi. Signed by Mohun Biswas, father. Below that was the date.

Extract 3-
An incident at the river

I never looked at any strange negro. They hated us. They called us white cockroaches. Let sleeping dogs lie. One day a little girl followed me singing, 'Go away white cockroach, go away, go away.' I walked fast, but she walked faster. 'White cockroach, go away, go away. Nobody want you. Go away.'

When I was safely home I sat close to the old wall at the end of the garden. It was covered with green moss soft as velvet and I never wanted to move again. Everything would be worse if I moved. Christophine found me there when it was nearly dark, and I was so stiff she had to help me to get up. She said nothing, but next morning Tia was in the kitchen with her mother Maillotte, Christophine's friend. Soon Tia was my friend and I met her nearly every morning at the turn of the road to the river.

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Christophine had given me some new pennies which I kept in the pocket of my dress. They dropped out one morning so I put them on a stone. They shone like gold in the sun and Tia stared. She had small eyes, very black, set deep in her head.

Then she bet me three of the pennies that I couldn't turn a somersault under water 'like you say you can'.

'Of course I can.'

'I never see you do it,' she said. 'Only talk.'

'Bet you all the money I can,' I said.

But after one somersault I still turned and came up choking. Tia laughed and told me that it certainly look like I drown dead that time. Then she picked up the money.

'I did do it,' I said when I could speak but she shook her head. I hadn't done it good and besides pennies didn't buy much. Why did I look at her like that?

'Keep them then, you cheating nigger,' I said, for I was tired, and the water I had swallowed made me feel sick. 'I can get more if I want to.'

That's not what she hear, she said. She hear all we poor like beggar. We ate salt fish – no money for fresh fish. That old house so leaky, you run with calabash to catch water when it rain. Plenty white people in Jamaica. Real white people, they got gold money. They didn't look at us, nobody see them come near us. Old time white people nothing but white nigger now, and black nigger better than white nigger.

Extract 4- At the river
...the burning of the house

Sometimes we left the bathing pool at midday, sometimes we stayed till late afternoon. Then Tia would light a fire (fires always lit for her, sharp stones did not hurt her bare feet, I never saw her cry). We boiled green bananas in an old iron pot and ate them with our fingers out of a calabash and after we had eaten she slept at once. I could not sleep, but I wasn't quite awake as I lay in the shade looking at the pool – deep and dark green under the trees, brown-green if it had rained, but a bright sparkling green in the sun. The water was so clear that you could see the pebbles at the bottom of the shallow part. Blue and white and striped red. Very pretty. Late or early we parted at the turn of the road. My mother never asked me where I had been or what I had done.

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But now I turned too. The house was burning, the yellow-red sky was like sunset and I knew that I would never see Coulibri again. Nothing would be left, the golden ferns and the silver ferns, the orchids, the ginger lilies and the roses, the rocking-chairs and the blue sofa, the jasmine and the honeysuckle, and the picture of the Miller's Daughter. When they had finished, there would be nothing left but blackened walls and the mounting stone. That was always left. That could not be stolen or burned.

Then, not so far off, I saw Tia and her mother and I ran to her, for she was all that was left of my life as it had been. We had eaten the same food, slept side by side, bathed in the same river. As I ran, I thought, I will live with Tia and I will be like her. Not to leave Coulibri. Not to go. Not. When I was close I saw the jagged stone in her hand but I did not see her throw it. I did not feel it either, only something wet, running down my face. I looked at her and I saw her face crumple up as she began to cry. We stared at each other, blood on my face, tears on hers. It was as if I saw myself. Like in a looking-glass.

SECTION II
Extract 1–
A discussion about marriage

Mr Biswas took another draught of tea, studied his reflection and wondered whether every couple had a room to themselves; he also wondered what sleeping arrangements were made for the children he heard shouting and squealing and being slapped (by mothers alone?) in the gallery outside, the children he saw peeping at him from the kitchen doorway before being dragged away by ringed hands.

'So you really do like the child?'

It was a moment or so before Mr Biswas, behind his cup, realized that Mrs Tulsi had addressed the question to him, and another moment before he knew who the child was.

He felt it would be graceless to say no. 'Yes,' he said, 'I like the child.'

Mrs Tulsi chewed and said nothing.

Seth said: 'I know Ajodha. You want me to go and see him?'

Incomprehension, surprise, then panic, overwhelmed Mr Biswas. 'The child,' he said desperately. 'What about the child?'

'What about her?' Seth said. 'She is a good child. A little bit of reading and writing even.'

'A little bit of reading and writing –' Mr Biswas echoed, trying to gain time.

Seth, chewing, his right hand working dexterously with *roti* and beans, made a dismissing gesture with his left hand. 'Just a little bit. So much. Nothing to worry about. In two or three years she might even forget.' And he gave a little laugh. He wore false teeth which clacked every time he chewed.

'The child –' Mr Biswas said.

Mrs Tulsi stared at him.

'I mean,' said Mr Biswas, 'the child knows?'

'Nothing at all,' Seth said appeasingly.

'I mean,' said Mr Biswas, 'does the child like me?'

Mrs Tulsi looked as though she couldn't understand. Chewing, with lingering squelchy sounds, she raised Mr Biswas's note with her free hand and said, 'What's the matter? *You* don't like the child?'

'Yes,' Mr Biswas said helplessly. 'I like the child.'

'That is the main thing,' Seth said. 'We don't want to force you to do anything. Are we forcing you?'

Mr Biswas remained silent.

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Extract 2 –
Mr. Biswas observes

And it was at these eating sessions that Mr Biswas took
his revenge on the Tulsis.

'How the little gods getting on today, eh?' he would
ask.

He meant her brothers. The elder attended the Roman
Catholic college in Port of Spain and came home every
week-end; the younger was being coached to enter the
college. At Hanuman House they were kept separate from
the turbulence of the old upstairs. They worked in the
drawingroom and slept in one of the bedrooms off it;
these bedrooms were small and badly lighted, but their
walls felt thick and their very gloom suggested richness
and security. The brothers often did the *puja* in the
prayer-room.

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Mr Biswas said, 'Well, since I been in this house I begin
to get the feeling that to be a good Hindu you must be a
good Roman Catholic first.'

The elder god, seeing himself attacked, got up from the
hammock, already prepared to cry.

'Look at him,' Mr Biswas said. 'Little Jack Horner. If
he just put his hand in his shirt he pull up a crucifix.'

The elder god did wear a crucifix. It was regarded in
the house as an exotic and desirable charm. The elder
god wore many charms and it was thought fitting that
someone so valuable should be well protected.

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'You call yourself Hindus?' Mr Biswas said.

Shama tried to silence Mr Biswas.

The younger god got out of the hammock and stamped.
'I not going to remain in this hammock and hear my
brother insulted, Ma. *You* don't care.'

'What?' said Mr Biswas. 'I insult somebody? At the
Catholic college they make him close his eyes and open
his mouth and say Hail Mary. What about that?'

'Man!' Shama said.

The elder god was crying.

The younger god said, '*You* don't care, Ma.'

'Biswas!' Seth said. 'You want to feel my hand?'

Shama pulled at Mr Biswas's shirt and he struggled as
though he were being pulled away from a physical fight
which he was winning and wanted to continue. But he
had noted Seth's threat and allowed himself to be pushed
slowly up the stairs.

Extract 3 –
A discussion on England
and the W.I.

I woke to the sound of voices in the next room, laughter and water being poured out. I listened, still drowsy. Antoinette said, 'Don't put any more scent on my hair. He doesn't like it.' The other: 'The man don't like scent? I never hear that before.' It was almost dark.

The dining-room was brilliantly lit. Candles on the table, a row on the sideboard, three-branch candlesticks on the old sea-chest. The two doors on to the veranda stood open but there was no wind. The flames burned straight. She was sitting on the sofa and I wondered why I had never realized how beautiful she was. Her hair was combed away from her face and fell smoothly far below her waist. I could see the red and gold lights in it. She seemed pleased when I complimented her on her dress and told me she had it made in St Pierre, Martinique. 'They call this fashion à la Joséphine.'

'You talk of St Pierre as though it were Paris,' I said.

'But it is the Paris of the West Indies.'

There were trailing pink flowers on the table and the name echoed pleasantly in my head. Coralita Coralita. The food, though too highly seasoned, was lighter and more appetizing than anything I had tasted in Jamaica. We drank champagne. A great many moths and beetles found their way into the room, flew into the candles and fell dead on the tablecloth. Amélie swept them up with a crumb brush. Uselessly. More moths and beetles came.

'Is it true,' she said, 'that England is like a dream? Because one of my friends who married an Englishman wrote and told me so. She said this place London is like a cold dark dream sometimes. I want to wake up.'

'Well,' I answered annoyed, 'that is precisely how your beautiful island seems to me, quite unreal and like a dream.'

'But how can rivers and mountains and the sea be unreal?'

'And how can millions of people, their houses and their streets be unreal?'

'More easily,' she said, 'much more easily. Yes a big city must be like a dream.'

'No, this is unreal and like a dream,' I thought.

Extract 4 – Breakfast in bed

'Come in,' she called and Christophine came in with our coffee on a tray. She was dressed up and looking very imposing. The skirt of her flowered dress trailed after her making a rustling noise as she walked and her yellow silk turban was elaborately tied. Long heavy gold ear-rings pulled down the lobes of her ears. She wished us good morning smiling and put the tray of coffee, cassava cakes and guava jelly on the round table. I got out of bed and went into the dressing-room. Someone had laid my dressing-gown on the narrow bed. I looked out of the window. The cloudless sky was a paler blue than I'd imagined but as I looked I thought I saw the colour changing to a deeper blue. At noon I knew it would be gold, then brassy in the heat. Now it was fresh and cool and the air itself was blue. At last I turned away from the light and space and went back into the bedroom, which was still in the half dark. Antoinette was leaning back against the pillows with her eyes closed. She opened them and smiled when I came in. It was the black woman hovering over her who said, 'Taste my bull's blood, master.' The coffee she handed me was delicious and she had long-fingered hands, thin and beautiful I suppose.

'Not horse piss like the English madams drink,' she said. 'I know them. Drink, drink their yellow horse piss, talk, talk their lying talk.' Her dress trailed and rustled as she walked to the door. There she turned. 'I send the girl to clear up the mess you make with the frangipani, it bring cockroach in the house. Take care not to slip on the flowers, young master.' She slid through the door.

'Her coffee is delicious but her language is horrible and she might hold her dress up. It must get very dirty, yards of it trailing on the floor.'

'When they don't hold their dress up it's for respect,' said Antoinette. 'Or for feast days or going to Mass.'

'And is this feast day?'

'She wanted it to be a feast day.'

'Whatever the reason it is not a clean habit.'

'It is. You don't understand at all. They don't care about getting a dress dirty because it shows it isn't the only dress they have. Don't you like Christophine?'

'She is a very worthy person no doubt. I can't say I like her language.'

'It doesn't mean anything,' said Antoinette.

'And she looks so lazy. She dawdles about.'

'Again you are mistaken. She seems slow, but every move she makes is right so it's quick in the end.'

APPENDIX II

a) Teacher's Guide - Traditional Group.

b) Student Manual/Workbook - Traditional Group.

THE STUDY OF THEMES IN LITERATURE

TEACHER'S GUIDE

EVALUATION CENTRE: Chaguanas Senior Comprehensive School

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Dear Teacher,

The evaluation process in which you are about to
participate, is aimed at determining an efficient method
for teaching students to identify and analyse themes in
literature.

This evaluation is being undertaken in view of the
objectives of one section of the CXC English B examination
where candidates are required to compare and contrast
literary themes.

In order to ensure maximum accuracy in our final
assessment of the method used, it is very important that
all procedures are adhered to.

Thanks for agreeing to cooperate in this project. I
am certain that our joint participation in the exercise
will indeed contribute to our own professional growth and
increase our understanding of the educational needs of our
students.

Sincerely,

Olabisi Kuboni

INTRODUCTION

OBJECTIVES

The overall goal that this package seeks to address is that students will be able to compare treatments of the same theme across different works of literature.

More specifically, instruction in the package is aimed at helping students identify the theme in specially selected extracts and compare treatments of an identical theme in two extracts taken from two different novels.

The package has been particularly designed around the study of extracts in an attempt to assess whether such an approach can improve student's ability in studying literature with particular emphasis on theme analysis. It is envisaged that if students master this aspect of literary criticism in this controlled situation, they will be better equipped to analyse themes in a whole text.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

TEACHER'S GUIDE

The Teacher's Guide contains information necessary for students to analyse the various extracts. This includes suggested questions for generating discussion

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on each extract, a literary commentary on each novel, with particular emphasis on the extracts being studied, and essay-questions.

All instruction is presented through the teacher, thus the role of the teacher in the whole learning process is of utmost importance.

STUDENT MANUAL/WORKBOOK

The Student Manual/Workbook comprises two main subdivisions. The first part is the work area which students should be encouraged to use to plan and write their essays. The second part contains the extracts which have been selected from two novels, namely A HOUSE FOR MR. BISWAS (V.S. Naipaul) and WIDE SARGASSO SEA (Jean Rhys). Four extracts have been selected from each novel and are based on two themes. Two extracts from each novel are based on the theme of alienation and the other two, on the theme of cultural conflict.

A brief summary of relevant background information on each novel is also included in the manual/workbook. The names of the themes have not been provided, however.

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TEST MATERIALS

Separate materials have been provided for the pre-
and posttests. Students will be tested before and after
instruction, using the essay-type question. Both tests
will last approximately 40 minutes each.

SCHEDULE OF INSTRUCTION

There will be three instructional sessions lasting
90 minutes each, divided as follows:

Session 1: Introduction and Study of Extracts from

A HOUSE FOR MR. BISWAS.

Session 2: Study of Extracts from

WIDE SARGASSO SEA.

Session 3: Comparison of the two writers' treatments of

one of the themes.

THE INSTRUCTION

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY

1. The teacher will ensure that the class has read the
particular extract to be studied.

2. Using appropriate questions, the teacher will involve
the class in discussion aimed at identifying the theme
of the extract. In this regard, the guide provides a
pool of questions which the teacher may draw from.   In

addition, the teacher is also advised to study the commentary on each novel, in order to enhance her ability to guide the discussion.

3. The essay topics are intended for use at the end of the study of each group of extracts. The teacher must sekect one and guide students in planning it. Students must use their manual/workbook for this exercise.

4. On the third day of instruction, students must do the final essay, comparing the different writers' treatment of a selected theme.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

SESSION I - TEXT: A HOUSE FOR MR. BISWAS

Extract 1 - pp.89-91; Theme: Cultural Conflict.

1. How would you describe Mr. Biswas' attitude in this discussion?

2. The word 'child' is repeated quite often. What is the significance of this repetition?

3. What position do Mrs. Tulsi and Seth represent?

4. What would you say is the theme of this extract?

Extract 2 - p.104, pp.125-126; Theme: Cultural Conflict.

1. Mr. Biswas refers to the two youngest Tulsi sons as "gods". What effect do you think he intends to convey with the use of this title?

2. "The younger god got of the hammock and stamped." How would you account for this kind of response to Mr. Biswas' question? Why does he react like that?

3. After reading this extract, what effect would you say Mr. Biswas has on the household?

4. In this whole conflict what do you think is the particular point that the writer is making?

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Extract 3 - p.130, pp.136-137; Theme: Alienation

1. "Coming and laughing at our religion." What are the implications of this statement for Mr. Biswas? Where does such a statement put him?

2. "The incident was over. The room emptied." Is there anything striking about these two short sentences?

3. How would you describe Mr. Biswas' status in the family? Why does he have this status?

Extract 4 - pp.161-163; Theme: Alienation

1. "They had it register?" What does this question reveal about Mr. Biswas?

2. What does Mr. Biswas' behaviour during this visit tell us about him?

3. Mr. Biswas had selected the names Sarojini Lakshmi Kamala Devi. The Tulsis had already decided on Savi. What effect do you think the writer intends to convey through this piece of information?

4. What is the theme of the extract?

SESSION II - TEXT: WIDE SARGASSO SEA

Extract 1 - pp. 20-21; Theme: Alienation

1. Why was Antoinette called a "white cockroach"? What is the full meaning of this phrase?

2. Why do you think Antoinette got involved in this friendship with Tia?

3. What in you opinion is the real role that the writer intends Tia to play in this extract?

Extract 2 - p.20, p.37; Theme: Alienation

1. In your opinion, why does Antoinette describe the days spent by the river with such detail?

2. What is the effect of the detailed listing that she makes of the items she lost in the fire?

3. "We stared at each other, blood on my face, tears on hers." Why do you think the writer makes the two girls face each other in this condition? What comment is she making?

Extract 3 - pp.66-67; Theme: Cultural Conflict

1. Antoinette decides not to put scent on her hair, in order not to displease her husband. What does this simple act say about Antoinette and her husband Mr. Rochester?

2. What impression do you get from the way Mr. Rochester describes the moths and beetles in the room?

3. Antoinette's first question in the discussion about England, is whether England is like a dream and this idea of a dream comes up repeatedly in the discussion. What is the significance of the word "dream"?

Extract 4 - pp.70-72; Theme: Cultural Conflict

1. At the beginning of this extract, Christophine's dress is described in detail. What is the reason for doing this?

2. "She had long-fingered hands, thin and beautiful I suppose." What does this statement tell us about Mr. Rochester's attitude?

3. I can't say I like her language." What is the effect of the different styles of speech used in this extract?

4. On the whole, why does Mr. Rochester object to Christophine?

5. What would you say is the theme of the extract?

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Session 1: A House for Mr. Biswas

1. From the extracts you have read, identify and describe one comment that the writer is making about the Hindu community in Trinidad during the colonial period. Illustrate your answer with reference to the extracts.

2. Mr. Biswas is Naipaul's mouthpiece. Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons in support of your opinion.

Session 2: Wide Sargasso Sea

1. Antoinette is a lonely person; she is alienated because of her race. From the extracts you have read, identify the sections that portray this image of Antoinette. Give reasons for your selections.

2. Christophine and Mr. Rochester belong to different worlds. Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons.

Session 3: Comparison of Themes

Discuss the different perspectives that Naipaul and Rhys use in dealing with the theme of cultural conflict. Support your answer with reference to two appropriate extracts.

COMMENTARY

A HOUSE FOR MR. BISWAS

Two primary concerns emerge in these extracts. The first focuses on the cultural conflict that arises when a traditional culture is confronted by and forced to accomodate itself to the dominant culture of a colonial power.

Naipaul's perception of the Hindu way of life in colonial Trinidad is twofold. On the one hand, he sees it as being inflexible and unwilling to adapt to the social and cultural change taking place in the broader society. On the other hand, he sees it as being undermined and infiltrated by the very forces it claims to oppose.

Mrs. Tulsi and Seth, as if unaware of contemporary practices, see nothing wrong in arranging child-marriages for the daughters. Yet, in spite of their strong adherence to the Hindu faith, they place such a high priority on the young sons getting a colonial education, that they are prepared to turn a blind eye to the boys' participation in the religiuos practices of the Catholic college they attend.

Indeed Catholicism seems to exert a significant influence on their lives; for, when the need arises, the

power of the puja is often reinforced by the power of the crucifix.

Mr. Biswas displays keen insight into the weaknesses and contradictions in the lifestyle of the family. For example, when bombarded by Seth and Mrs. Tulsi on the issue of marriage, he poses some significant questions (e.g. "Does the child know?") which reveal not only a critical awareness of Hindu values, but also a definite bias towards Western cultural values.

Mr. Biswas' dissenting position results in his alienation from the family (the second concern of the writer as highlighted in these extracts). The extracts, as well as the novel, can be seen as portraying the hero's stance in the face of the disregard and hostility which he must endure.

WIDE SARGASSO SEA

Jean Rhys' novel highlights the predicament of the Creole in the Post-Emancipation period in the Caribbean, through her portrayal of the life of Antoinette Cosway-Mason, both as a child and as an adult.

With the near total elimination of slave labour, the family of the child Antoinette finds itself under severe strain to maintain the plantation class lifestyle that it had grown used to.

However, while econimic factors account for much of its social dilemma, they are probably not as important as the racial and cultural factors.

Being neither white nor black, the Creole class finds itself on the one hand, excluded from the elite European group and on the other, ridiculed by the recently emancipated African population.

Antoinette is a product of this cultural crisis. Her life reflects the insecurity and fear that result from an absence of social acceptance. Her need for Tia's friendship far exceeds Tia's need for hers. For Antoinette, it is not simply the natural tendency of a child to make a friend. Rather, it is the deep cry of an outcast yearning to belong.

While Antoinette may have sought the friendship of

a black girl as a child, as an adult she does not escape
the dominant aspiration of her class to seek acceptance
and respectability through marriage into the elite
European group. Antoinette marries an Englishman, Mr.
Rochester, who has only recently arrived in the West
Indies.

Rhys' novel provides great insight into the
fundamental differences and conflict between the Creole
and the English in their outlook on life, differences
which Antoinette and Mr. Rochester are incapable of
resolving in their marriage.

THE STUDY OF THEMES IN LITERATURE

STUDENT'S MANUAL

EVALUATION CENTRE: Chaguanas Senior Comprehensive School

OVERVIEW OF NOVELS

The extracts that you will be studying during this series are all in the second part of your manual. They have been drawn from two novels, A HOUSE FOR MR. BISWAS (V.S. Naipaul) and WIDE SARGASSO SEA (Jean Rhys). In order that you could better understand the extracts, a brief summary of relevant information on each, is provided below.

A HOUSE FOR MR. BISWAS

After a very difficult childhood, Mohun Biswas eventually gets married to Shama Tulsi and like all the other men (e.g. Govind) who have married Tulsi daughters, he moves into the Tulsi family home, Hanuman House. However, after a while, Mr. Biswas and his wife move from Hanuman House to a village called The Chase where Mr. Biswas takes over the running of a small shop.

Mrs. Tulsi, his mother-in-law is a widow and she shares the role of head of the family with Seth, the husband of her sister, Padma, both of whom also live at Hanuman House.

Mrs. Tulsi's two youngest sons are still at school. They attend the Catholic college in Port of Spain. The older of the two is Owad but Mr. Biswas usually refers to them as the gods.

This novel is set in Trinidad during the colonial period.

WIDE SARGASSO SEA

This novel is set in the post-Emancipation period in the Caribbean when slavery had just been abolished.

Antoinette is a French Creole girl, that is, she is mainly European with slight traces of African. She lives in Jamaica with her brother and widowed mother.

When Antoinette grows up, she marries Mr. Rochester, an Englishman who has just moved out to the West Indies. After the marriage, the two leave Jamaica and go to live on a small island near to Martinique. One of the servants in their household is Christophine who has been with Antoinette's family ever since she was a child.

The novel is written in the first person. But in some sections the "I" is Antoinnette and in others, "I" is Mr. Rochester, her husband.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

The aims of this series of lessons are:

1) That you will be able to identify the theme in specially selected extracts from two novels.

2) That you will be able to compare treatments of an identical theme in two extracts taken from two different novels.

NOTES

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SESSION I-
A HOUSE FOR MR. BISWAS
Extract 1-
A discussion about marriage

Mr Biswas took another draught of tea, studied his reflection and wondered whether every couple had a room to themselves; he also wondered what sleeping arrangements were made for the children he heard shouting and squealing and being slapped (by mothers alone?) in the gallery outside, the children he saw peeping at him from the kitchen doorway before being dragged away by ringed hands.

'So you really do like the child?'

It was a moment or so before Mr Biswas, behind his cup, realized that Mrs Tulsi had addressed the question to him, and another moment before he knew who the child was.

He felt it would be graceless to say no. 'Yes,' he said, 'I like the child.'

Mrs Tulsi chewed and said nothing.

Seth said: 'I know Ajodha. You want me to go and see him?'

Incomprehension, surprise, then panic, overwhelmed Mr Biswas. 'The child,' he said desperately. 'What about the child?'

'What about her?' Seth said. 'She is a good child. A little bit of reading and writing even.'

'A little bit of reading and writing —' Mr Biswas echoed, trying to gain time.

Seth, chewing, his right hand working dexterously with *roti* and beans, made a dismissing gesture with his left hand. 'Just a little bit. So much. Nothing to worry about. In two or three years she might even forget.' And he gave a little laugh. He wore false teeth which clacked every time he chewed.

'The child —' Mr Biswas said.

Mrs Tulsi stared at him.

'I mean,' said Mr Biswas, 'the child knows?'

'Nothing at all,' Seth said appeasingly.

'I mean,' said Mr Biswas, 'does the child like me?'

Mrs Tulsi looked as though she couldn't understand. Chewing, with lingering squelchy sounds, she raised Mr Biswas's note with her free hand and said, 'What's the matter? *You* don't like the child?'

'Yes,' Mr Biswas said helplessly. 'I like the child.'

'That is the main thing,' Seth said. 'We don't want to force you to do anything. Are we forcing you?'

Mr Biswas remained silent.

Extract 2-
Mr. Biswas observes

And it was at these eating sessions that Mr Biswas took his revenge on the Tulsis.

'How the little gods getting on today, eh?' he would ask.

He meant her brothers. The elder attended the Roman Catholic college in Port of Spain and came home every week-end; the younger was being coached to enter the college. At Hanuman House they were kept separate from the turbulence of the old upstairs. They worked in the drawingroom and slept in one of the bedrooms off it; these bedrooms were small and badly lighted, but their walls felt thick and their very gloom suggested richness and security. The brothers often did the *puja* in the prayer-room.

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Mr Biswas said, 'Well, since I been in this house I begin to get the feeling that to be a good Hindu you must be a good Roman Catholic first.'

The elder god, seeing himself attacked, got up from the hammock, already prepared to cry.

'Look at him,' Mr Biswas said. 'Little Jack Horner. If he just put his hand in his shirt he pull up a crucifix.'

The elder god did wear a crucifix. It was regarded in the house as an exotic and desirable charm. The elder god wore many charms and it was thought fitting that someone so valuable should be well protected.

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'You call yourself Hindus?' Mr Biswas said.

Shama tried to silence Mr Biswas.

The younger god got out of the hammock and stamped. 'I not going to remain in this hammock and hear my brother insulted, Ma. *You* don't care.'

'What?' said Mr Biswas. 'I insult somebody? At the Catholic college they make him close his eyes and open his mouth and say Hail Mary. What about that?'

'Man!' Shama said.

The elder god was crying.

The younger god said, '*You* don't care, Ma.'

'Biswas!' Seth said. 'You want to feel my hand?'

Shama pulled at Mr Biswas's shirt and he struggled as though he were being pulled away from a physical fight which he was winning and wanted to continue. But he had noted Seth's threat and allowed himself to be pushed slowly up the stairs.

Extract 3—
Mr. Biswas comments
...and is beaten

'Idols are stepping-stones to the worship of the real thing,' Mr Biswas said, quoting Pankaj Rai to the hall. 'They are necessary only in a spiritually backward society. Look at that little boy down there. You think he know what he was doing this morning?'

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Now that Govind was off his chest Mr Biswas's only concern was to make sure that he was properly dressed. He hoped nothing had happened to his pants. He moved a hand down to investigate.

'He is all right,' Sushila said,

Someone bent over him. That smell of oil, Vick's Vaporub, garlic and raw vegetables told him it was Padma. 'Are you all right?' she asked, and shook him.

He turned over on his side, his face to the wall.

'He is all right,' Govind said, and added in English, 'Is a good thing all you people did come, otherwise I woulda be swinging on the gallows for this man.'

Chinta gave a sob.

Shama had maintained her martyr's attitude throughout, sitting on the low bench, her skirt draped over her knees, one hand supporting her chin, her staring eyes misting over with tears.

'Spitting on me, eh?' the god said. 'Go ahead. Why you don't spit now? Coming and laughing at our religion. Laughing at me when I do *puja*. I know the good I doing myself when I do *puja*, you hear.'

'It's all right, son,' Govind said. 'Nobody can insult you and Mai when I am around.'

'Leave him alone, Govind,' Padma said. 'Leave him, Owad.'

The incident was over. The room emptied.

Left alone, Shama and Mr Biswas remained as they were, Shama staring through the doorway, Mr Biswas considering the lotuses on the pale green wall.

They heard the hall return to life. The evening meal, delayed, was being laid out with unusual zest. Babies were consoled with songs, clapping, chuckles and baby-talk. Children were scolded with exceptional good humour. Between everyone downstairs there was for the moment a new bond, and Mr Biswas recognized this bond as himself.

Extract 4—
The naming of the child

During the idle hours in the shop he had begun to choose names, mostly male ones: he never thought anything else likely. He wrote them on shop paper, rolled them on his tongue, and tried them out on customers.

'Krishnadhar Haripratap Gokulnath Damodar Biswas. What do you think of that for a name? K. H. G. D. Biswas. Or what about Krishnadhar *Gokulnath* Haripratap Damodar Biswas. K. G. H. D.'

'You are not leaving much room for the pundit to give the child a name.'

'No pundit is giving any name to any child of mine.'

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And the baby was a girl. But it was born at the correct time; it was born without difficulty; it was healthy; and Shama was absolutely well. He expected no less from her. He closed the shop and cycled to Hanuman House, and found that his daughter had already been named.

'Look at Savi,' Shama said.

'Savi?'

They were in Mrs Tulsi's room, the Rose Room, where all the sisters spent their confinements.

'It is a nice name,' Shama said.

Nice name; when all the way from The Chase he had been working on names, and had decided on Sarojini Lakshmi Kamala Devi.

'Seth and Hari chose it.'

'You don't have to tell me.' Jerking his chin towards the baby, he asked in English, 'They had it register?'

On the marble topped table next to the bed there was a sheet of paper under a brass plate. She handed that to him.

'Well! I'glad she register. You know the government and nobody else did want to believe that I was even born. People had to swear and sign all sort of paper.'

'All of we was register,' Shama said.

'All of all-you *would* be register.' He looked at the certificate. 'Savi? But I don't see the name here at all. I only see Basso.'

She widened her eyes. 'Shh!'

'I not going to let anybody call my child Basso.'

'Shh!'

He understood. Basso was the real name of the baby, Savi the calling name. The real name of a person could be used to damage that person, whereas the calling name had no validity and was only a convenience. He was relieved he wouldn't have to call his daughter Basso. Still, what a name!

'Hari make that one up, eh? The holy ghost.'

'And Seth.'

'Trust the pundit and the big thug.'

'Man, what you doing?'

He was scribbling hard on the birth certificate.

'Look.' At the top of the certificate he had written:

Real calling name: Lakshmi. Signed by Mohun Biswas, father. Below that was the date.

SESSION II–
WIDE SARGASSO SEA
Extract 1–
An incident at the river

I never looked at any strange negro. They hated us. They called us white cockroaches. Let sleeping dogs lie. One day a little girl followed me singing, 'Go away white cockroach, go away, go away.' I walked fast, but she walked faster. 'White cockroach, go away, go away. Nobody want you. Go away.'

When I was safely home I sat close to the old wall at the end of the garden. It was covered with green moss soft as velvet and I never wanted to move again. Everything would be worse if I moved. Christophine found me there when it was nearly dark, and I was so stiff she had to help me to get up. She said nothing, but next morning Tia was in the kitchen with her mother Maillotte, Christophine's friend. Soon Tia was my friend and I met her nearly every morning at the turn of the road to the river.

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Christophine had given me some new pennies which I kept in the pocket of my dress. They dropped out one morning so I put them on a stone. They shone like gold in the sun and Tia stared. She had small eyes, very black, set deep in her head.

Then she bet me of the pennies that I couldn't turn a somersault unde 'like you say you can'.

'Of course I can.'

'I never see you do it,' she said. 'Only talk.'

'Bet you all the money I can,' I said.

But after one somersault I still turned and came up choking. Tia laughed and told me that it certainly look like I drown dead that time. Then she picked up the money.

'I did do it,' I said when I could speak but she shook her head. I hadn't done it good and besides pennies didn't buy much. Why did I look at her like that?

'Keep them then, you cheating nigger,' I said, for I was tired, and the water I had swallowed made me feel sick. 'I can get more if I want to.'

That's not what she hear, she said. She hear all we poor like beggar. We ate salt fish – no money for fresh fish. That old house so leaky, you run with calabash to catch water when it rain. Plenty white people in Jamaica. Real white people, they got gold money. They didn't look at us, nobody see them come near us. Old time white people nothing but white nigger now, and black nigger better than white nigger.

Extract 2- At the river
...the burning of the house

Sometimes we left the bathing pool at midday, some-times we stayed till late afternoon. Then Tia would light a fire (fires always lit for her, sharp stones did not hurt her bare feet, I never saw her cry). We boiled green bananas in an old iron pot and ate them with our fingers out of a calabash and after we had eaten she slept at once. I could not sleep, but I wasn't quite awake as I lay in the shade looking at the pool – deep and dark green under the trees, brown-green if it had rained, but a bright sparkling green in the sun. The water was so clear that you could see the pebbles at the bottom of the shallow part. Blue and white and striped red. Very pretty. Late or early we parted at the turn of the road. My mother never asked me where I had been or what I had done.

But now I turned too. The house was burning, the yellow-red sky was like sunset and I knew that I would never see Coulibri again. Nothing would be left, the golden ferns and the silver ferns, the orchids, the ginger lilies and the roses, the rocking-chairs and the blue sofa, the jasmine and the honeysuckle, and the picture of the Miller's Daughter. When they had finished, there would be nothing left but blackened walls and the mounting stone. That was always left. That could not be stolen or burned.

Then, not so far off, I saw Tia and her mother and I ran to her, for she was all that was left of my life as it had been. We had eaten the same food, slept side by side, bathed in the same river. As I ran, I thought, I will live with Tia and I will be like her. Not to leave Coulibri. Not to go. Not. When I was close I saw the jagged stone in her hand but I did not see her throw it. I did not feel it either, only some-thing wet, running down my face. I looked at her and I saw her face crumple up as she began to cry. We stared at each other, blood on my face, tears on hers. It was as if I saw myself. Like in a looking-glass.

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Extract 3—
A discussion on England
and the W.I.

I woke to the sound of voices in the next room, laughter and water being poured out. I listened, still drowsy. Antoinette said, 'Don't put any more scent on my hair. He doesn't like it.' The other: 'The man don't like scent? I never hear that before.' It was almost dark.

The dining-room was brilliantly lit. Candles on the table, a row on the sideboard, three-branch candlesticks on the old sea-chest. The two doors on to the veranda stood open but there was no wind. The flames burned straight. She was sitting on the sofa and I wondered why I had never realized how beautiful she was. Her hair was combed away from her face and fell smoothly far below her waist. I could see the red and gold lights in it. She seemed pleased when I complimented her on her dress and told me she had it made in St Pierre, Martinique. 'They call this fashion à la Joséphine.'

'You talk of St Pierre as though it were Paris,' I said.

'But it is the Paris of the West Indies.'

There were trailing pink flowers on the table and the name echoed pleasantly in my head. Coralita Coralita. The food, though too highly seasoned, was lighter and more appetizing than anything I had tasted in Jamaica. We drank champagne. A great many moths and beetles found their way into the room, flew into the candles and fell dead on the tablecloth. Amélie swept them up with a crumb brush. Uselessly. More moths and beetles came.

'Is it true,' she said, 'that England is like a dream? Because one of my friends who married an Englishman wrote and told me so. She said this place London is like a cold dark dream sometimes. I want to wake up.'

'Well,' I answered annoyed, 'that is precisely how your beautiful island seems to me, quite unreal and like a dream.'

'But how can rivers and mountains and the sea be unreal?'

'And how can millions of people, their houses and their streets be unreal?'

'More easily,' she said, 'much more easily. Yes a big city must be like a dream.'

'No, this is unreal and like a dream,' I thought.

Extract 4- Breakfast in bed

'Come in,' she called and Christophine came in with our coffee on a tray. She was dressed up and looking very imposing. The skirt of her flowered dress trailed after her making a rustling noise as she walked and her yellow silk turban was elaborately tied. Long heavy gold ear-rings pulled down the lobes of her ears. She wished us good morning smiling and put the tray of coffee, cassava cakes and guava jelly on the round table. I got out of bed and went into the dressing-room. Someone had laid my dressing-gown on the narrow bed. I looked out of the window. The cloudless sky was a paler blue than I'd imagined but as I looked I thought I saw the colour changing to a deeper blue. At noon I knew it would be gold, then brassy in the heat. Now it was fresh and cool and the air itself was blue. At last I turned away from the light and space and went back into the bedroom, which was still in the half dark. Antoinette was leaning back against the pillows with her eyes closed. She opened them and smiled when I came in. It was the black woman hovering over her who said, 'Taste my bull's blood, master.' The coffee she handed me was delicious and she had long-fingered hands, thin and beautiful I suppose.

'Not horse piss like the English madams drink,' she said. 'I know them. Drink, drink their yellow horse piss, talk, talk their lying talk.' Her dress trailed and rustled as she walked to the door. There she turned. 'I send the girl to clear up the mess you make with the frangipani, it bring cockroach in the house. Take care not to slip on the flowers, young master.' She slid through the door.

'Her coffee is delicious but her language is horrible and she might hold her dress up. It must get very dirty, yards of it trailing on the floor.'

'When they don't hold their dress up it's for respect,' said Antoinette. 'Or for feast days or going to Mass.'

'And is this feast day?'

'She wanted it to be a feast day.'

'Whatever the reason it is not a clean habit.'

'It is. You don't understand at all. They don't care about getting a dress dirty because it shows it isn't the only dress they have. Don't you like Christophine?'

'She is a very worthy person no doubt. I can't say I like her language.'

'It doesn't mean anything,' said Antoinette.

'And she looks so lazy. She dawdles about.'

'Again you are mistaken. She seems slow, but every move she makes is right so it's quick in the end.'

APPENDIX III

a) Pre-test.

b) Pre-test - Model Answer.

c) Posttest.

d) Posttest - Model Answer.

e) Grading Scheme - Pre- and Posttests.

THE STUDY OF THEMES IN LITERATURE

PRE-TEST

Your answer to the following essay-question must not be more than two pages long.

Read the extracts before beginning to answer the question. An overview of each extract is provided on the next page.

ESSAY-QUESTION

*   Write a brief summary of each of the two extracts.
*   Compare the different aspects of the theme of Alienation on which the two writers focus.
*   Using illustrations from the extracts, show how each extract conveys the writer's thoughts about the theme.

    To Alienate - to set apart; to isolate

OVERVIEW OF THE EXTRACTS

Extract #1 - from A HOUSE FOR MR. BISWAS by V.S. Naipaul

Mohun Biswas is married to one of the Tulsi daughters,
Shama. In the beginning they live in the Tulsi family home,
Hanuman House. Eventually they move to their own home in a
village called The Chase where Mr. Biswas takes over the running
of a small shop.

Shama has returned to Hanuman House for the birth of
their first baby and Mr. Biswas visits her there.

Extract #2 - from WIDE SARGASSO SEA by Jean Rhys

Antoinnette is a French Creole girl (mainly European
but with traces of African) who lives in Jamaica with her brother
and widowed mother in the period just after slavery was
abolished. Antoinnette's mother owns a plantation.

Christophine is a servant in the household of
Antoinette's family.

In this post-Emancipation period, the three racial
groups in the Caribbean are Europeans (pure white), Creoles and
Africans.

Extract I–
The naming of the child

During the idle hours in the shop he had begun to choose names, mostly male ones: he never thought anything else likely. He wrote them on shop paper, rolled them on his tongue, and tried them out on customers.

'Krishnadhar Haripratap Gokulnath Damodar Biswas. What do you think of that for a name? K. H. G. D. Biswas. Or what about Krishnadhar *Gokul*nath Haripratap Damodar Biswas. K. G. H. D.'

'You are not leaving much room for the pundit to give the child a name.'

'No pundit is giving any name to any child of mine.'

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And the baby was a girl. But it was born at the correct time; it was born without difficulty; it was healthy; and Shama was absolutely well. He expected no less from her. He closed the shop and cycled to Hanuman House, and found that his daughter had already been named.

'Look at Savi,' Shama said.

'Savi?'

They were in Mrs Tulsi's room, the Rose Room, where all the sisters spent their confinements.

'It is a nice name,' Shama said.

Nice name; when all the way from The Chase he had been working on names, and had decided on Sarojini Lakshmi Kamala Devi.

'Seth and Hari chose it.'

'You don't have to tell me.' Jerking his chin towards the baby, he asked in English, 'They had it register?'

On the marble topped table next to the bed there was a sheet of paper under a brass plate. She handed that to him.

'Well! I glad she register. You know the government and nobody else did want to believe that I was even born. People had to swear and sign all sort of paper.'

'All of we was register,' Shama said.

'All of all-your *would* be register.' He looked at the certificate. 'Savi? But I don't see the name here at all. I only see Basso.'

She widened her eyes. 'Shh!'

'I not going to let anybody call my child Basso.'

'Shh!'

He understood. Basso was the real name of the baby, Savi the calling name. The real name of a person could be used to damage that person, whereas the calling name had no validity and was only a convenience. He was relieved he wouldn't have to call his daughter Basso. Still, what a name!

'Hari make that one up, eh? The holy ghost.'

'And Seth.'

'Trust the pundit and the big thug.'

'Man, what you doing?'

He was scribbling hard on the birth certificate.

'Look.' At the top of the certificate he had written: *Real calling name: Lakshmi. Signed by Mohun Biswas, father.* Below that was the date.

Extract 2 –
An incident at the river

I never looked at any strange negro. They hated us. They called us white cockroaches. Let sleeping dogs lie. One day a little girl followed me singing, 'Go away white cockroach, go away, go away.' I walked fast, but she walked faster. 'White cockroach, go away, go away. Nobody want you. Go away.'

When I was safely home I sat close to the old wall at the end of the garden. It was covered with green moss soft as velvet and I never wanted to move again. Everything would be worse if I moved. Christophine found me there when it was nearly dark, and I was so stiff she had to help me to get up. She said nothing, but next morning Tia was in the kitchen with her mother Maillotte, Christophine's friend. Soon Tia was my friend and I met her nearly every morning at the turn of the road to the river.

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Christophine had given me some new pennies which I kept in the pocket of my dress. They dropped out one morning so I put them on a stone. They shone like gold in the sun and Tia stared. She had small eyes, very black, set deep in her head.

Then she bet me three of the pennies that I couldn't turn a somersault under water 'like you say you can'.

'Of course I can.'

'I never see you do it,' she said. 'Only talk.'

'Bet you all the money I can,' I said.

But after one somersault I still turned and came up choking. Tia laughed and told me that it certainly look like I drown dead that time. Then she picked up the money.

'I did do it,' I said when I could speak but she shook her head. I hadn't done it good and besides pennies didn't buy much. Why did I look at her like that?

'Keep them then, you cheating nigger,' I said, for I was tired, and the water I had swallowed made me feel sick. 'I can get more if I want to.'

That's not what she hear, she said. She hear all we poor like beggar. We ate salt fish – no money for fresh fish. That old house so leaky, you run with calabash to catch water when it rain. Plenty white people in Jamaica. Real white people, they got gold money. They didn't look at us, nobody see them come near us. Old time white people nothing but white nigger now, and black nigger better than white nigger.

MODEL AMSWER

1. BRIEF SUMMARY

(i) A House for Mr. Biswas

When Mr. Biswas returns to Hanuman House to visit his wife and new-born baby girl, he discovers that his daughter has already been named. He was not consulted.

(ii) Wide Sargasso Sea

Antoinette becomes friendly with Tia, a black girl, even though she was only recently insulted by another black girl. One day at the river Tia outsmarts Antoinette and takes away her three pennies.

2. THEMATIC FOCUS

(i) A House for Mr. Biswas

(a). This extract deals with the isolation of the Hindu who refuses to give in to the dictates of the Hindu family.

(b) Mr. Biswas feels like an outsider even to his own child. The Tulsi family has assumed total responsibility for naming the child and he was completely left out.

(ii) Wide Sargasso Sea

   (a) Here the writer focuses on the rejection of the French Creole by other racial groups in the post-Emancipation period in the Caribbean.

   (b) Antoinette should not really depend too much on having Tia as a friend.   The hostility and mistrust between their two races puts Antoinette apart from Tia.

3. ILLUSTRATIONS

(i) A House for Mr. Biswas

* Mr. Biswas comes to Hanuman House with a long list of carefully chosen names for the naming of his child. However, they are all rejected because the Tulsis have already named the child.   This suggests that the Tulsis have made Mr. Biswas an outsider to his own child.

* In the middle of the conversation with his wife, Mr. Biswas changes from speaking the customary Hindi to speaking English.   By using this alien language, Mr. Biswas is deliberately making the point that there is a distance between himself and his wife and child.

* At one point in the conversation, Mr. Biswas jerks his chin towards his child to ask some question about her. By making this gesture, Mr. Biswas gives the impression that he does not feel close to his own child, that he is not a part of his own child's life.

* Mr. Biswas scribbles hard on the birth certificate to write in the name he has chosen and his own name.   This act seems to suggest that Mr. Biswas feels that he is being pushed aside and he definitely means to stop it.

(ii) Wide Sargasso Sea

* Antoinette, a French Creole girl, spends a lot of time

with Tia, a black girl, even though only recently another black girl had called her a "white cockroach". This shows that Antoinette really wants to prove that she can be friends with people like Tia.

* Antoinette calls Tia "a cheating nigger" when she realizes that Tia has tricked her. Antoinette's cruel remarks to someone whom she thinks is a friend shows that she has suddenly realised that there are bad feelings between her race and Tia's race. She and Tia are not really friends.

* At the end, Tia calls Antoinette a "white nigger" and says that her family is not as great as it used to be. Tia also says that other white people do not accept Tia's family. Tia's harsh words emphasize the point that Antoinette and her family are not accepted.

THE STUDY OF THEMES IN LITERATURE

POSTTEST

Your answer to the following essay-question must not be more than two pages long. Read the extracts before beginning to answer the question. An overview of each extract has been provided.

ESSAY-QUESTION

* Write a brief summary of each of the extracts.

* Compare the different aspects of the theme of MORAL COURAGE on which the two writers focus.

* Using illustrations from the extracts, show how each extract conveys the writer's thoughts about the theme.

OVERVIEW OF THE EXTRACTS

Extract #1 - from THE PEARL by John Steinbeck

This novel relates the experiences of a New Mexican Indian family who is in possession of a very valuable pearl which the husband, Kino, had found while fishing for oysters.

Extract #2 - from THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA by Ernest Hemingway.

This novel tells of the life and work of an old Cuban fisherman.

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Extract 1 –
After the attempt
to steal the pearl

Juana dropped her stone, and she put her arms around
Kino and helped him to his feet and supported him into
the house. Blood oozed down from his scalp and there
was a long deep cut in his cheek from ear to chin, a deep,
bleeding slash. And Kino was only half conscious. He
shook his head from side to side. His shirt was torn open
and his clothes half pulled off. Juana sat him down on his
sleeping-mat and she wiped the thickening blood from
his face with her skirt. She brought him pulque to drink
in a little pitcher, and still he shook his head to clear out
the darkness.

'Who?' Juana asked.

'I don't know,' Kino said. 'I didn't see.'

Now Juana brought her clay pot of water and she
washed the cut on his face while he stared dazed ahead of
him.

'Kino, my husband,' she cried, and his eyes stared
past her. 'Kino, can you hear me?'

'I hear you,' he said dully.

'Kino, this pearl is evil. Let us destroy it before it
destroys us. Let us crush it between two stones. Let us –
let us throw it back in the sea where it belongs. Kino, it is
evil, it is evil!'

And as she spoke the light came back in Kino's eyes so
that they glowed fiercely and his muscles hardened and
his will hardened.

'No,' he said. 'I will fight this thing. I will win over it.
We will have our chance.' His fist pounded the sleeping-
mat. 'No one shall take our good fortune from us,' he
said. His eyes softened then and he raised a gentle hand
to Juana's shoulder. 'Believe me,' he said. 'I am a man.'
And his face grew crafty.

'In the morning we will take our canoe and we will go
over the sea and over the mountains to the capital, you
and I. We will not be cheated. I am a man.'

'Kino,' she said huskily, 'I am afraid. A man can be
killed. Let us throw the pearl back into the sea.'

'Hush,' he said fiercely. 'I am a man. Hush.' And she
was silent, for his voice was command. 'Let us sleep a
little,' he said. 'In the first light we will start. You are
not afraid to go with me?'

'No, my husband.'

His eyes were soft and warm on her then, his hand
touched her cheek. 'Let us sleep a little,' he said.

Extract 2–
A fishing expedition

The fish moved steadily and they travelled slowly on the calm water. The other baits were still in the water but there was nothing to be done.

. . . .

He held the line against his back and watched its slant in the water and the skiff moving steadily to the north-west.

This will kill him, the old man thought. He can't do this forever. But four hours later the fish was still swimming steadily out to sea, towing the skiff, and the old man was still braced solidly with the line across his back.

. . . .

"It was noon when I hooked him," he said. "And I have never seen him."

He had pushed his straw hat hard down on his head before he hooked the fish and it was cutting his forehead. He was thirsty too and he got down on his knees and, being careful not to jerk on the line, moved as far into the bow as he could get and reached the water bottle with one hand. He opened it and drank a little. Then he rested against the bow. He rested sitting on the un-stepped mast and sail and tried not to think but only to endure.

. . . .

The fish never changed his course nor his direction all that night as far as the man could tell from watching the stars. It was cold after the sun went down and the old man's sweat dried cold on his back and his arms and his old legs.

. . . .

Then he began to pity the great fish that he had hooked. He is wonderful and strange and who knows how old he is, he thought. Never have I had such a strong fish nor one who acted so strangely. Perhaps he is too wise to jump. He could ruin me by jumping or by a wild rush. But perhaps he has been hooked many times before and he knows that this is how he should make his fight. He cannot know that it is only one man against him, nor that it is an old man.

. . . .

"I wish the boy was here," he said aloud and settled himself against the rounded planks of the bow and felt the strength of the great fish through the line he held across his shoulders moving steadily toward whatever he had chosen.

. . . .

But you haven't got the boy, he thought. You have only yourself and you had better work back to the last line now, in the dark or not in the dark, and cut it away and hook up the two reserve coils.

. . . .

"Fish," he said softly, aloud, "I'll stay with you until I am dead."

POSTTEST

MODEL ANSWER

1. BRIEF SUMMARY

(i) The Pearl

After Kino was attacked, his wife Juana took him inside their house and cleaned his wounds. In spite of his wife's pleadings, Kino refused to get rid of the pearl.

(ii) The Old Man and the Sea

The old fisherman had hooked a fish. However after several hours, he was still unable to pull it in.

2. THEMATIC FOCUS

(i) The Pearl

(a) This extract deals with the determination of the New Mexican Indian to fight for a better way of life regardless of the dangers.

(b) In spite of the attack on his life, Kino is determined to keep the precious pearl so that his family can enjoy its benefits. He is prepared to face all dangers since he strongly believes that he must do this for the good of his family.

(ii) The Old Man and the Sea

(a) This extract deals with the persistence of the

typical fisherman to get a catch even when fishing conditions are not favourable.

(b) The fisherman in this extract refuses to give up. In spite of his age, he insists that he must catch the fish, even though the fish is too big and powerful for him.

3. ILLUSTRATIONS

(i) The Pearl

* While talking about what to do with the pearl, Kino insists that he will fight and win and that his family will not be robbed of their good fortune. Kino's attitude shows that he will not let anything or anyone make him give up what he believes is rightfully his.

* Several times Kino repeats the words "I am a man". This clearly shows that he is not going to let any attack weaken him or make him afraid.

* While talking, Kino's eyes glowed fiercely and his muscles hardened. This description emphasizes how determined Kino is to fight.

* At one time as Kino spoke, he pounded the sleeping mat. At another time, he spoke fiercely with command in his voice. These acts emphasize that Kino does not intend to give in.

* Juana is afraid that the pearl might bring harm to the family and so she says that they should destroy it. However Kino strongly disagrees. This disagreement between the husband and wife shows up Kino's strong will even more.

(ii) The Old Man and the Sea

* The old man had hooked the fish several hours before but the fish kept pulling his boat further out to sea.

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However he refused to give up. This shows how determined he was that nothing would prevent him from catching the fish.

* The old man would not let go of the fish even though he was very uncomfortable.. His hat was cutting into his forehead and when the sun went down, 'the sweat dried on his body. This again shows how determined he was.

* After many hours and still not catching the fish, the fisherman says that he will stay with the fish until his death. These words show that he is not prepared to give up.

* The old man himself describes the fish as great. He also says that he had never before had to deal with such a strong fish. The fish therefore seems to be a big challenge which the old man feels he must overcome at all cost.

GRADING SCHEME: PRETEST AND POSTTEST.

SECTION OF QUESTION	Points for 1 extract	Points for 2 extracts	TOTAL POINTS
SUMMARY			
Completeness of statement Statement includes information on all the main events of the extract.	2	4	
Precision of statement Statement covers main events only and comprises 2-3 sentences.	2	4	
TOTAL SCORE - SUMMARY			8
THEMATIC FOCUS			
Accuracy of Identification of Specific Theme (aspect of theme on which writers focus. Evidence of accurate identification of the general human situation that the writer is dealing with and the perspective from which he deals with it.	4	8	
Clarity of Presentation Specific theme is organised so that writer's perspective and general human situation are contained in a separate single statement.	2	4	

Use of Story to support   2   4
Specific Theme
      Inclusion of implicit
      meaning derived from
      story and referring to
      characters, incidents
      in story.

TOTAL SCORE - THEMATIC FOCUS   16

ILLUSTRATIONS
(Best 2 examples from each
extract to be graded.)

Points for each illustration:

Appropriate segment selection   4   8
   (2 points each).
      Segment selected
      adequately conveys theme.

Reporting   4   8
(2 points each).
      Segment not simply
      copied, but information
      from it organised and
      restated.

Justification   4   8
(2 points each).
      Segment not only
      restated but adequate
      attempt made to justify
      why it was selected.

TOTAL SCORE - ILLUSTRATIONS   24

TOTAL SCORE - ESSAY   48

APPENDIX IV.

Questionnaire.

Results.- Questionnaire (Part I only)

THE STUDY OF THEMES IN LITERATURE.

QUESTIONNAIRE

PART I

Please rate the statements below according to the following scale:

4. Strongly agree

3. Agree

2. Partially agree

1. Do not agree

Place a tick next to each statement under the number you have selected.

Statement	4	3	2	1

The objectives of this series of lessons were clearly defined and easily understood.

I was able to see the link between the essay-question and the exercises which I did in class.

I am now able to distinguish between the surface, stated meaning of a story and the implicit, unstated meaning.

Knowing the writer's techniques helped me in recognising segments of the extract that conveyed the implicit meaning.

Knowing the implicit meaning helped me later in deciding what the specific theme was.

I understand the difference between the specific theme and the universal theme of a piece of literature.

The extracts were easy to understand.

I found the extracts interesting to read.

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The lessons held my interest most of the time.

My group worked well together.

I learnt more working in a group than I would have, if I were working alone.

Enough time was allotted for the series of lessons.

PART II

Please reply to the following questions:

1. Overall, how would you rate this method of studying themes in literature?

    (a) excellent (b) good (c) fair (d) poor

    Please explain further.

2. Are there any section(s) that you still find difficult? If yes, please identify.

3. If your response to (2) is yes, do you think you need (a) more teacher explanation, (b) more practice or (c) both, to master those section(s)? Please explain.

4. What do you think of the idea of doing short written exercises while studying the extracts? Please explain fully.

5. Would you like to have lessons of this type included as one part of your literature study programme? Please give reasons for your reply.

6. ANY OTHER COMMENTS:

QUESTIONNAIRE - RESULTS

(Part I only)

Statement	Rating (as % of total)			
	4	3	2	1
The objectives of this series of lessons were clearly defined and easily understood.	17.4	69.6	8.7	4.4
I was able to see the link between the essay-question and the exercises which I did in class.	29.2	45.8	16.7	8.3
I am now able to distinguish between the stated meaning of a story and the implicit, unstated meaning.	52	28	12	8
Knowing the writer's techniques helped me in recognising segments of the extract that conveyed the implicit meaning.	36	44	20	0
Knowing the implicit meaning helped me later in deciding what the specific theme was.	20	60	20	0
I understand the difference between the specific theme and the universal theme of a piece of literature.	28	36	32	4
The extracts were easy to understand.	16	40	24	20
I found the extracts interesting to read.	40	52	8	0
The lessons held my interest most of the time.	12	44	40	4

My group worked well together.	20.8	45.8	25	8.3
I learnt more working in a group than I would have, if I were working alone.	40.9	36.4	18.2	4.6
Enough time was allotted for the series of lessons.	14.3	23.8	47.6	14.3

APPENDIX V

Cloze Test

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Student No.................

Student Name...............................

School...............................

CLOZE TEST

In the following passage, there are blanks where a word has been left out. Fill in each blank with the word that you think is missing. You should write only **ONE WORD** in each blank.

Before starting to fill in the blanks, read through the entire passage once.

Use a pencil for doing this exercise.

THE JOURNEY

The driver of the lorry was a very quiet man. He was either eating kola nuts or smoking .... The kola was to keep him .... at night because the journey began in the late .... took all night, and ended in the early .... From time to time he asked Obi to .... a match and light his .... for him. Actually it was Obi who offered to do it in the first .... He had been .... to see the man controlling the wheel with his elbows while he ....for a match.

Some forty miles or so beyond Ibadan the driver suddenly said: "Dees b_____f_____ police!" Obi..........two policemen by the side of the road about three hundred yards away,

"Your particulars?" said one of them to the driver. It was at this .... that Obi noticed that the seat they sat on was also a ....of safe for keeping money and .... documents. The driver asked his .... to get up. He unlocked the box and brought out a sheaf of papers. The policeman looked at them...................

"Where your roadworthiness?"
The driver ....him his certificate of roadworthiness.

Meanwhile, the driver's mate was .... the other policeman. But just as he was .... to hand something over to him Obi looked in their .... The policeman was not prepared to take a risk; for all he knew Obi might be a C.I:D. man. So he............ the driver's mate away with great indignation. "What you want here? Go away!"

Extract taken from **NO LONGER AT EASE** by Chinua Achebe.