CHAPTER IV

DESCRIPTION OF THE TEST BATTERY

AND

ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANCE
CHAPTER IV

Description of the Test and Report of the Administration and Analysis of Performance

In this chapter the constitution of the instrument is described and a report on the administration of the test is presented. Results of the item analysis on the various tasks in the test are stated, leading to a revised version of the test. The claim in framing the test items is that they represent certain abilities and measure those abilities. This claim of the validity of the items as measures of certain specified abilities is examined.

Description of the test battery: (See Appendix VI)

The test battery is organized in two parts. One is concerned with investigating the reading habits and the reading interests of the students. It is expected that students who have a regular reading habit will score highly on the performance tests.

Reading Practices Inventory:

There are five questions on the Reading Habits Inventory. Possible answers are provided and students
are asked to mark the ones that describe their own practices. Except for Question No.1 more than one answer may be marked, if necessary. There are no correct answers but certain answers are expected to correlate highly with high scores on the tests.

Item 1 concentrates on whether reading is a preferred activity for individual students. The desirable answer is 'Yes', on the argument that someone who has an established habit of reading is more likely to fulfil the heavy reading requirements for the M.A.

For Item 2 the more spread out the answers are, the better. A wide range of interest in reading offers a healthy prognosis for higher studies.

Item 3: Here again a variety of sources is a good indication in the sense that the student taps all available sources to get books.

Item 4 is meant to find out the preferred environment for reading.
Item 5 provides a range of answers from recreational needs (i.e., reading as a pleasurable pastime) to academic or examination needs to social and cultural needs. The greater the range of purposes for which a student reads, the greater his flexibility is likely to be in carrying the reading load for M.A.

The Reading Interest Inventory is intended to get an idea of the general proclivities in reading of our graduates.

The other part relates to literacy skills and literary abilities. Tasks III, IV, V, VI and VII are from existing standardized texts. A question-wise analysis of abilities tested is given below:

I. Identifying registers in prose: "efferent" reading

Ability to recognise various registers, the kind of writer who wrote it or the kind of reader for whom it is written. This requires sensitivity to a combination of things such as the choice of words, the way the words are used, the kind of situation that the writing is
about and the effect of the work. Extracts from a variety of writings are used, not only literary ones. The format used is multiple choice.

II. A series of questions are given on the opening paragraph of a Hindi novel by Rajendra Yadav translated into English. The extract bears the strong colour of the Indian social context and point of view.

Q. What the answer requires

1. inference from textual clues.
2. perception of point of view.
3. perception of diction and point of view.
4. extra-textual reaction to content.
5. extra-textual (ability to relate characters and words to their social and cultural content).
6. perception of cross-cultural differences and similarities, extra-textual.
7. interpretive inference based on text.
8. interpretive inference based on text.
9. conjecture (culturally bound) based on knowledge of the world around.
10. interpretation of character's nature and motive.
III. Understanding an extract from a novel (prose)

Format - multiple choice.

Item 1: understanding/inference of factual information.

2: inference based on evidence within the text.

3: inference based on cultural knowledge.

4: inference/knowledge of connotation.

5: perception of content in terms of action.

6: general perception of content.

7: ability to perceive literary technique.

8: ability to perceive technique in terms of its relation to content.

9: ability to perceive technique.

10: ability to analyse technique in terms of its relation to content.

IV. A preliminary test of critical ability:

The ability to sift the more important questions that pertain to a particular work from a mêlée of possible questions that can be asked is tested in this item. This ability is important since each literary work is unique and no set of questions is equally
applicable to the understanding and interpretation of all literary works. The questions range from analysis and interpretation of literary form and quality to mimetic force and psychological force to personal response. Out of the universe of questions that can be asked about literary works, some would probably be more relevant to some genres than to others. For example, questions of social import are likely to be more relevant to the novel or the epic than to the lyric.

From a list of twenty questions students are asked to pick out the five they consider the most relevant to ask about a story they have just read. Understanding the story matters but the response to the story demands that the student should use his understanding of the story to identify the saliences of the story - a critical faculty.

Using Purves' categorisation of elements of writing about a work, the twenty questions are examined below for the elements they focus on (See Appendix III).
Qn. 1. 350 - Hortatory interpretation
2. 420 - Evaluation of Method
3. 250 - Structure
4. 270 - Literary classification and
   504 - Comparison with (to) other works
5. 320 - Interpretation of content
6. 130 - Reaction to content
7. 210 - Language
8. 200 - Perception general
9. 430 - (433) - Evaluation of author's vision
10. 300 - Interpretation general
11. 240 - Relation of technique to content
12. 400 - Evaluation general
13. 300 - Interpretation general
14. 280 - Contextual classification
15. 220 - Literary Devices
16. 400 - Evaluation general
17. 100 - Engagement
18. 250 - (252) - Structure
19. 260 - Tone
20. 330 (331-2) - Mimetic interpretation

V. This relates to understanding of the subject as well as the content of a poem (in Cox and Dyson's
terms). The item-wise analysis of the focus of each item is as follows:

Format - multiple choice.

Poem: Item 1. perception of tone
   2. knowledge of poetic convention
   3. recognition of triteness in the poem. This is possible only if a person reads much and can therefore recognize cliches as such.
   4. application of the knowledge of poetic conventions and the terms pertaining to them.
   5. knowledge of stanzaic conventions and recognition of rhyme scheme.

VI. Matching of stanzas from five different poems:

This is an integrated test of application of the knowledge of poetic conventions such as rhyming, regularity of rhythm or beat, and understanding of theme and appropriateness of word use.

VII. Choosing from lines to complete a stanza:

This is also an integrated test of ability to apply knowledge of conventions. The tasks here are multiple since the student is not merely expected to pick out the acceptable completion but also account for unacceptability either in terms of style/tone/sound or in terms of inappropriateness to the meaning or theme of the stem of the item.

VIII. Written free response to a poem:

An integrated test of application of knowledge of various types of convention and capacity for personal engagement with and response to a poem not on the prescribed list, that presumably the students encounter for the first time without teacher intervention. The kinds of statements a student makes about the poem and his response to it will be categorized using Purves' Elements.

A report on the administration of the measure:

The measure was administered to 75 students of the B.A. (English) and M.A. (English) from three colleges in the city of Madras -
i. Bharathi College for Women, a government college affiliated to the University of Madras and located in North Madras.

ii. Loyola College, a private and autonomous college, co-educational at the post-graduate level and located in Central Madras.

iii. New College, a private college for men affiliated to the University of Madras and located in South Madras.

The following table shows the distribution of the student sample for the present study drawn from the three colleges:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B.A.</th>
<th>M.A.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bharathi</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyola</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In all the tests were administered by the researcher to each class in three instalments each lasting for an hour. The students were told of the purposes of the study and they were co-operative.
Scoring Procedures:

For the Reading Interest Inventory and for the Questionnaire on Reading Practices the profile of the individual student is of interest and the profile of the sample as a whole are of interest. There are no correct answers as mentioned in the description of the test battery but the student patterns of response and their performances are expected to show a relation.

The measure of abilities (the test battery) consists of eight tasks each with five or ten items or questions in it. Except for the questions in IV and VIII, each question carries one point.

For Task II what is of interest is the cultural interference in a student's response. For Task IV the 20 questions listed under the task have been classified using Purves' method of scoring by Elements and Sub-categories. The questions preferred by a student are expected to show up a preferred pattern of response in that student. For Task VIII
each statement is classified using Purves' Elements and an essay score is derived from this classification denoting a student's overall level of interaction with the text. A higher value is placed on a student's response if he/she operates at the level of perception than at the level of engagement; similarly the level of interpretation is valued more than the level of perception. A statement at the level of evaluation supported by a statement of perception or interpretation is higher in value than a mere pronouncement of evaluation without responsible backing.

The higher the level of a student's response, the more mature and educated his attitude is to literature study.

This manner of scoring an essay or a piece of continuous writing avoids the pitfall of impressionistic marking and directs attention to each statement and the overall score is based on this. No explicit weightage has been allocated to the different levels of response but a relative ranking is allotted, as indicated above.
Tasks expected to measure the literacy skills:

I 1-10; II 1-6; 9-10; III 1-6

Tasks expected to measure the literary abilities:

II 7-8; III 7-10; IV - Reading prose
V, VI, VII, VIII - Reading poetry

Of these IV and VIII are also more closely focussed on critical abilities.

Analysis of questionnaire responses:

Questionnaire on Reading Habits

Responses were overwhelmingly in favour of reading (75%) but from the performance on the tests there is very little carry-over from this positive inclination to actual capacity to read literary texts with discrimination.

64.6% of the respondents expressed a preference for reading to the exclusion of other activity during leisure.
Preferred reading is newspapers (78.3%) followed by story books and novels (77.6%) and popular magazines (71.7%). Articles and Essays interest a modest 48.4%.

60.4% find home the most convenient place to read in and the lending library is the most popular source of reading material.

The most popular purposes of reading are to gain understanding of the modern world, understanding of human nature and knowledge of and information on various subjects - a strongly instrumental motivation.

Analysis of Questionnaire Responses:

Responses to the Reading Habits Questionnaire are reported (in percentage) below:

1. Yes No.
   75   24

2. A B C D E F G H I J K L
   78 23 72 78 21 23.5 17.5 31 27 14 48 7
3. A B C D E F
   31 40 75 33 66 10

4. A B C D E
   60 25 8 4.5 5.5

5. A B C D E F G H I J K L
   62 51 39 38 34 39 39 35 66 44 34 32

Responses to the Reading Interests Inventory
Preferences in reading

The Reading interests inventory showed up pronounced preferences for reading books that seem real (No.28 on the inventory), reading amusing books, reading books about people like the reader, reading books about the problems that readers face as people, reading mystery books and reading books about teenage problems.

Responses were equally divided between strong preference and dislike of reading books about hobbies, science fiction and books with a lot of violence in them.
From the mentions of favourite authors and books 96% prefer light, transitory, reading i.e., escape literature to any other kind. This is borne out on the questionnaire as well, where newspapers, story books and novels and popular magazines claim first preference. Material that is traditionally thought of as literature does not figure more than three times in the 75 questionnaires.

In all, the questionnaire responses point to a sample of student population that is not especially inclined to read literature except on prescription for examination purposes.

**Item Analysis on Tasks I, II, III, V, VI and VII**
(Tasks IV and VIII are treated differently)

Item analysis was performed to find out the basic efficiency of the individual items that go to make up the test.² The values derived from the analysis, the facility value and the discrimination index

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are presented below. Facility values indicate the ease or difficulty of the item for the tested group in percentage. Discrimination indexes represent the extent to which an item differentiates the able student from the ill-equipped student and are expressed in values from 1 to -1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F.V.</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.I.</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.2</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.1</td>
<td>.4</td>
<td>.3</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.1</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The following is a discussion of the performance of items under each task:

Task I: Items 1, 3, 6, 7, 8 have functioned well. Item 10 may be retained at the beginning of the test to ease students into the test. Items 4 and 9 may be improved and kept. Item 2 has fogged most students and item 5 has a negative discrimination.
Task II:

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
F.V.  53  57  40  37  30%  33  37  43  13%  30
D.I.  .5  .5  .2  .5  .5  .5  .3  .5  .3  .5

Task II has generally been successful in that discrimination values are high, even though facility values continue to be low. Items 5 and 10 have very low facility values but are quite discriminating. Item 9 emerges as the most confusing and merits exclusion.

Task III:

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
F.V.  40  37  40  33  47  47  23  53  20  43
D.I.  .5  .3  -.1  0  .3  .5  .2  .4  .1  .3

Task III repeats the pattern of low facility values. Items 3 and 4 cannot be retained as they are since they show negative discrimination or none. It is to be noticed that items 7-10 claim to test literary
ability. If an item like No. 7 has low facility value, the question arises whether it is not a reflection of the general low level of achievement in literature of our literature students.

Task V:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F.V.</th>
<th></th>
<th>D.I.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.4</td>
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<td>.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Task V: The lack of discriminating power\* of item 1 may be due to the negative in the rubric of the question. However, the focus of the question is unmistakable; as such, the performance reflects the ability of the students rather than a defect of the question.

Task VI:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F.V.</th>
<th></th>
<th>D.I.</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>.7</td>
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</table>
Task VI shows excellent discriminating power and the facility values are appropriate for tests of prediction.

**Task VII:**

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<tr>
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<th>i</th>
<th>ii</th>
<th>iii</th>
<th>iv</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F.V.</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.I.</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>i</th>
<th>ii</th>
<th>iii</th>
<th>iv</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F.V.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.I.</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>i</th>
<th>ii</th>
<th>iii</th>
<th>iv</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F.V.</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.I.</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>i</th>
<th>ii</th>
<th>iii</th>
<th>iv</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F.V.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.I.</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>i</th>
<th>ii</th>
<th>iii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F.V.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.I.</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Task VII: Item 5 (all four sub-questions) is a candidate for outright expulsion from the test. Items 1, 3 and 4 have functioned well. Sub-item ii in item 2 shows excellent values, so the item may be retained after improvement. Students have been more successful in deciding whether a line is acceptable or it is inappropriate in meaning than in deciding non-acceptability on the basis of style or tone or sound which are more specifically literary criteria.

Two observations are inescapable on even a first look at the item analysis values.

i. Facility values are low, indicating that even the upper level achievers on the test find the items difficult.

ii. Discrimination indexes are on the high side, indicating that the test is performing as expected.

The values are low both for the items claiming to test literacy skills and for the items claiming to
test literary abilities. This casts doubts even on the basic language competence levels of the students. What is learnt over years of study becomes a crucial question for investigation both in relation to the goals of education and in relation to the expenditure on education overall as well as per capita.

Since the sample population includes both Final year B.A. and First year M.A. students, the general rate of success on the tasks for the sub-groups as well as for the whole group is presented below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task I - 10 items</th>
<th>(Percentages are rounded off to whole numbers)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task II - 10 items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.A.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Task III - 10 items  
(Percentages are rounded off to whole numbers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. of students</th>
<th>No. of correct attempts</th>
<th>Percentage of correct attempts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Task V - 5 items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. of students</th>
<th>No. of correct attempts</th>
<th>Percentage of correct attempts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Task VII - 5 items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. of students</th>
<th>No. of correct attempts</th>
<th>Percentage of correct attempts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>86</td>
<td>56</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Task VIII - 20 items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. of students</th>
<th>No. of correct attempts</th>
<th>Percentage of correct attempts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Task VII has been scored differently from the other tasks, adapting the framework evolved by Purves with Victoria Rippere.³ (See Scoring Procedures earlier in the chapter).

**Task VIII - Continuous writing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL OF APPROACH</th>
<th>No. of students</th>
<th>100</th>
<th>200</th>
<th>300</th>
<th>400</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: **Level of Approach**

100 - Engagement - involvement in the work

200 - Perception

300 - Interpretation

400 - Evaluation

Item analysis procedures were followed to assess the functioning of the items. Further work in improving the test would be to re-fashion those items that would function effectively with changes in wording and to weed out those that confuse the able student since discriminating power is an important criterion in tests used for prediction of success in future study.

Reliability of the test:

The co-efficient of correlation was computed using the split-half method. Scores in all tasks excluding IV and VIII were used in the computation. The items included numbered 70, yielding 35 in each half. The value for $r = 0.852$. This is a high level of significance indicating a marked relationship between the two halves of the test. ($0.273$ and $0.354$ being the values at which $r$ becomes significant at the 5% and 1% levels respectively for 50 degrees of freedom.)

Validity: There is a larger question concerning the
test, that of its validity; its capacity to do the job it is supposed to do. As Elizabeth Ingram put it:

"We provoke certain kinds of behaviour in the candidate, in the hope and belief that we can generalize from the way that he behaved on a given occasion on a limited number of tasks, to the way that he will perform on all other relevant occasions". (18). 4

The pragmatic predictive validity of the test may be estimated by correlating the test scores with the scores or ratings obtained from a criterion measure. This study faces the problem of the lack of a suitable criterion. The first choice in the normal course would be the university examination but in this case, the examination scores are not an acceptable criterion for reasons discussed in Chapter III. Teachers' ratings are more acceptable because they are free of a few, at least of the shortcomings and contaminations of the university examination scores.

Therefore, a university model examination was held and scored according to university specifications (few as they are) in two of the three colleges.

It was not possible to obtain the same teachers' ratings for all the students. Two different teachers rated the Loyola College and Bharathi College scripts respectively; they were the only two willing to undertake the scoring while already burdened with a heavy schedule of work.

Correlation co-efficients were found, using the formula for the product moment correlation, for the test and the university type examination. Two different values were found for the two groups evaluated by the two teachers.

**The Bharathi College group:**

\[ r = 0.684 \]. This argues a substantial relationship but not as much as one would require for claiming predictive power (significant at 5% level = 0.404 and at 1% level = 0.515) for 22 degrees of freedom.

**The Loyola College group:**

\[ r = 0.876 \] (For 25 degrees of freedom 0.381 at 5% and 0.487 at 1%). This shows a high level of significance
and it appears that the text does have the pragmatic validity required for prediction purposes.

Difference in correlation between the test and the examination for the two groups may be because two different teachers valued the two groups and the inter-rater difference which plays havoc with our large scale examinations did the damage in this case as well. It is also possible that the Loyola College evaluator was more closely allied in thinking with the researcher and this (despite what the university may specify or omit to do) may have reflected in her evaluation of the papers.

Problems focussed on through the tests: Results of analysis:

1. Does the possession of literary skills pre-suppose the presence of literary abilities?

   i. Items 1-6 under task III were listed as literacy tests and items 7-10 as tests of literary analysis. The co-efficient of correlation (derived through the formula for product moment correlation) was 0.3. This is significant
at the 5% level but fails to reach significance at the 1% level. There is only a small relationship, if any at all.

ii. Co-efficient of correlation between

I and V = 0.3 (a small relationship)
I and VI = 0.280 (still smaller)
I and VII = -0.09 (a negligibly negative correlation)

The above values except the last seem to indicate a very minor relationship between literacy and literary skills indicating that the presence of literacy skills is no sure indication of literary competence. As was pointed out earlier, facility values were low for this testing group even for the literacy tests.

II and III: II has two items listed under literary abilities and III has four. The correlation of the two tasks as a whole yielded a co-efficient of 0.501 (0.288 and 0.372 significant at the 5% and 1% levels respectively). This shows a moderate relation.
which can be explained by the presence of items measuring literary abilities in both tasks.

2. Is the ability to appreciate prose related to the ability to appreciate poetry?

III and V : \( r = 0.185 \)

III and VI : \( r = 0.106 \)

III and VII : \( r = 0.158 \)

III is a test on an extract from a novel and V is a test on a small poem. VI is an integrated test of knowledge of poetic conventions and VII a test of judging appropriateness in poetry. It is to be noted that out of the ten items in III four are tests of analysis of fiction.

The low correlations above are a little strange in that III is partly a test of literary ability. It is just possible that the \( r \) value indicates that reading poetry does require different abilities from reading prose. But one would expect a slightly higher correlation between tests of literary abilities.
Examining further the intercorrelations between the tasks in poetry there are still further surprises because one would expect that these would show a high correlation. On the contrary, V and VI: \( r = 0.382 \) (0.273 and 0.354 significant for fifty degrees of freedom at the 5% and the 1% levels respectively).

\[
\begin{align*}
V \text{ and VII} & : r = -0.03 \\
VI \text{ and VII} & : r = -0.057
\end{align*}
\]

V consists of items testing understanding of a particular poem and knowledge of poetic conventions. VI is a matching type question where consecutive stanzas from five different poems are split into two sets to be put back together by the testees. They have to identify the subject, the content, the length and the tone of the stanzas in sets A and B to be able to get the answers right.

VI and VII would at first appear to be the same kind of task but the number of clues is many in VI. In VII a decision has to be made regarding each line.
on fairly specific criteria. As can be seen from the facility values for VII students found it easier to identify the acceptable line but determining the grounds for rejection of the other three alternatives given was decidedly more difficult work.

3. Does literary material with a native cultural background create more immediate impact than that with a foreign cultural background?

Task II is from an Indian novel and III from a Russian, both translations. A correlation co-efficient of 0.501 is significant at the 5% and 1% levels of significance. Facility values indicate that II is somewhat more accessible than III. The mean is also higher for II. General experience also inclines to a view of native cultural background as increasing the accessibility of a literary work. This needs more investigation since the two samples of Indian and foreign writing used for this test are in actuality too small for any confident conclusions to be made about their relative ease of access.
4. Is the ability to name or identify literary devices an indication of literary competence?

From the analysis there does not appear to be any conclusive evidence pertaining to this question. This ability is certainly expected as part of the students' equipment of technical knowledge. As already noted the level of performance on literary abilities is very low (See facility values for Task III). Tasks IV and VIII in an indirect way offer some idea of how genuine critical ability is rooted in ability to come to terms with the text on one's own.

In Task IV what is of interest is the nature of the questions the students choose to ask about a given literary work. Out of the twenty questions covering a variety of aspects of the text, internal and external, the preferred questions were

For the Whole group    - 1, 5, 10, 16, 19
For B.A.                1, 5, 10, 16, 19
For M.A.                1, 5, 10, 16, 19
Question 1 belongs to sub-category Hortatory interpretation, 5 to Interpretation of content, 10 to Interpretation general, 16 to Evaluation general and 19 to Sub-category Tone. In general the trend in the group is towards interpretation and evaluation.

For discovering preferred patterns of questioning for individual students the questions may be presented with a number of short stories and the choice of questions can be correlated to see if the individual has already formed a pattern of questioning in approaching literary texts.

Task VIII merits special attention for its demonstration of the way of coping with an unseen text in the mode of free response. The rubric is reproduced below:

Does this poem appeal to you? Why (not)? State your response to the poem. Justify your response by analysing the poem and your response to it using whatever knowledge and interest you have in poetry. Give a sub-title to each paragraph you write in answer, so that you can see for yourself what aspects of the poem you are
taking into consideration. Around 200 words would be sufficient.

The general trend of response has been to try to retell the situation in the poem. A sample of such an attempt is reproduced below: 5

Bhuvaneswari's script: (B.A. rated 123 Reaction to Form by retelling)

Ruin of my family

In the first few lines the poet brings out his father's proudish nature. Because of his proudness he was killed by the white man.

In the third and fourth line he brings out his mother's beautiful which was seduced by the white man.

In the fifth to seventh line he brings out his brother's nature who was brave and killed by the white man by burning him because of his strength.

In the concluding three lines, he says that the white man turned to him, and realised that he was the poet so he called him as a 'Boy', and gave him an equal position - a Chair, a drink.

From this poem, we saw that power, beauty, strength all of them may be destroyed. But the genius of a person could not be destroyed by any external affairs.

In over 15 of the 30 scripts there is an immediate social-historical perception of the racial conflict that is the basis of the poem.

5. The students' responses are reproduced verbatim.
Here is an excerpt from a script: ... "With a history that has been shaped very much by white colonizers, it makes it easy to enter the poem".

There have been a very few attempts to apply certain aesthetic and formal criteria in analysing the poem. Hardly any of these appear in the scripts exhibiting poor ability. One of these is given to illustrate the phenomenon of mouthing criteria without demonstration of any understanding of the poem. It must be noticed that this kind of response shows no acquaintance with the poem itself.

Anil Kumar's script: (B.A. a pseudo-evaluation attempt, therefore rated - 400 and 502 - rhetorical filling)

This poem does not appeal to me because of the following reasons:

Lack of thought: The poem does not succeed in leaving an impression on me. According to me there should be some aspect in a good poem which makes the reader reflect.

Lack of Proper structure: Even if the poem is not serious, it should atleast be entertaining. It has no rhythm in it and it is not discussed.

Lack of similes or metaphors: Poetry is an art. A poem should have atleast one comparison which enhances its beauty. According
to the similes and metaphors form a very important part of a poem.

**Lack of information:** Poetry is a medium of instruction. It should instruct the readers. If not it should at least add to their delight. The poem does none of these. Due to the above reasons this poem does not appeal to me. I don't even find the title 'Martyr' appropriate.

An attempt to apply a variety of learnt criteria to the poem is seen in the following:

Renuka's script: (M.A. rated 270 for perception of content and literary classification)

**Appealing:**
This poem appeals to me. For a first reading the poem meant an ordinary humour. But a thorough reading would reveal the mishap of the narrator or the author. The poem is musical not only in words but also in thought.

**Mishap in the family of the author: (Theme of the poem)**
Author is a black American and White man has killed his father, spoiled his mother, burnt his brother and ordering the author himself to supply a chair and a drink to him.

**Musical:**
The poem does not have any set rhyme scheme. But the poem in itself is musical.

When I read this poem I remembered Lamb. A comment about Charles Lamb is that he laughs only to prevent crying. I feel that David Diop is an equivalent to Charles Lamb.

In a very few words he had clearly stated the treacherous nature of the white Americans and the sympathetic condition of the Black Americans.
"Apt words in apt order" is poetry according to Coleridge. This poem proves to be a good example for this definition.

The title:
The title seems to be traditional but the poem is not traditional. There is no rhyme scheme, similes or not even comparisons.

Martyr:
Martyr means, a person who sacrifices his life for the cause of religion. The father, mother and his brother had become martyr's for the cause of the colour difference in their society. Martyrdom is traditionally kept in a pedestal. David had brought down Martyrdom from its pedestal or raised his parents death to the height of martyrdom and had tried to make martyrdom and his parents' death equivalent, not thematically but by suggesting such a title.

In contrast there is the following statement of engagement with the poem for its rhetorical structuring:

"This poem appeals to me by way of its construction on the pattern of statement and reason (explanation). This makes the poem so simple and crisp...."

The following script displays interpretation of style and evaluation of the poet's method:

Ramkishore's script: (B.A. rated 400 and 425 for general evaluation and evaluation of method)

The poem is remarkable for the profusion
of feelings it succeeds in conveying. It starkly brings out the cruelties perpetrated by the white conqueror on a proud black family. The style and the tone convey the feelings of hatred felt by the author.

The style:
The style is extremely simple. The author has eschewed all poetic devices. The meaning is conveyed in short, terse language. This produces a sharp, staccato effect in the recital. Most of the words are monosyllabic. All these features bring out the seething, suppressed hate that the author feels against the man who butchered his people and then commanded him to serve.

The tone:
The tone of the poem also shows the naked hate that the black victim has for his white conqueror. The last line, "Boy, A napkin..." serves as a kind of anticlimax, but a culmination of the cold-hearted cruelty of the white race. The hate felt for one man, is, in reality, the hate felt against the whole white race. In the poem we find that the cruelties of the conqueror alternate with the noble qualities of the black family. The pride, strength and beauty of a race was savagely stamped out by another race, which then reduced the blacks to servility and used them for its own ends. All these are vividly brought out in just 10 lines. Although the poem is extremely brief it succeeds in rousing the same emotion of hatred in the reader that it raised in the heart of a proud black victim.

Application of aesthetic criteria and interpretation of form go into the making of the following response:
Huzafa’s script: (B.A. rated 420 for evaluation of method)

Yes, the poem appeals, but will not bear more than two readings.

It appeals because enshrined in its cryptic statements, there is a lot to think and reflect over. It will not bear more than two readings yet, because, its expressions are not worth going back to or remembering – there is no ‘beauty’ created here.

The two readings are necessary to gather the impact of the ironic contrasts like ‘white man’ and ‘black blood’, the blood, which in truth, is only ‘red’. (1.7)

The ending of the poem – the last two lines – only spells out the scene and setting of the poem. So two readings are necessary to go back, now with the added knowledge of the setting, to consider the significance of the statements made in the earlier part of the poem. Taken as a whole, the setting elevates the poem to the status of an image. And this image – of the white conqueror’s invasion, fight and subsequent mastery over the black native – is encapsulating. The final statement (image) of the barked-out order “Boy!” points out the slavery the black has now been put to.

After each plain statement “The White man killed my father”, etc, there follows an explanation which is both ironic and perceptive, like – “My father was proud”, etc. This statement and explanation structure succeed in bringing out the enforcement that the white man’s view has had over the blackman’s – a wholly prejudiced enforcement, exposing his intolerance, and also the shrewdness he shows in moving up to the status of conqueror.

As an image, the poem stays in the mind for its terseness; it can be easily remembered,
that's its advantage, but it cannot be read over again. Which is the more profitable gain, I cannot say.

Contrasted with this is the response that follows. This typifies the general run of response to this task, based on some literary criterion (however simplisticly stated).

Satya's script: (M.A. rated 100 for engagement)

This poem is interesting to a certain extent.

Idea of the poem:
The idea embedded in this poem has words which does not soothe or refresh the mind but does appeal a little.

Rhyme:
There is no rhythmic or beauty in the poem. The poem deals with relationships too. The father had killed a white man. The same white man had seduced the mother which is so harsh to read as she is seduced.

Again the burning of the brother is tor-cherous task.

Lastly, the brave quality of the brother who faced the white man with much strength and vigor is so beautifully given in the poem.

In the main, the response patterns raise ques-
students are exposed to. Most of the 30 scripts either re-tell the 'story' in the poem or try to apply rawly apprehended criteria to a partial understanding of the poem.

The task itself emerges as an excellent discriminating as well as broad diagnostic device. The method of scoring essays on literature evolved by Purves and Rippere seems to work very well. A high score on the categories also relates very positively to a high score on the test. As such, it might be profitable to use a task of this kind as the only selection device, provided the practice of scoring by sub-category and element is used, but for the time required for scoring. But this practice can be recommended where there are not too many candidates applying for admission and most certainly in tutorial work with the students during the term of study.

The findings of the study are summed up in the final chapter and what they imply in terms of educational action and research is sketched.