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Checklist Developed to Reinforce Student Writing Skills

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CHECKLIST DEVELOPED TO REINFORCE
STUDENT WRITING SKILLS

DAYTON, Ohio, November 24, 1980 -- The verbal scores of American students taking standardized tests decline. Employers complain that college graduates cannot write. Is anyone working to correct the problem?

Actually, somebody is.

Faculty and students at The University of Dayton are both aware of the importance of effective writing. The Department of English's freshman composition program is an integral part of the University's curriculum. And departmental officials report that students are enrolling in increasing numbers in advanced courses such as Expository Writing, Advanced Composition, Applied Written Communications, Report Writing, Argumentation, and Professional-Technical Writing.

This increased enrollment in advanced writing courses is a welcome phenomenon since writing skills appear to deteriorate with lack of use. Some recent studies at other institutions have indicated that many juniors and seniors write worse than they did at the end of their freshman year.

Advanced writing courses are one means of countering this atrophying of writing ability. Another means is being used by the University's Department of English. "A Checklist for Evaluating Written Work" has been distributed to members of the University faculty as a tool to aid them in reinforcing the writing skills of their students. The checklist allows students, in composing papers, and professors, in reading those papers, to evaluate quickly the effectiveness of the writing.
Posed to student writers are step-by-step questions that focus on three major concerns in composing a paper: developing the factual basis; organizing ideas; word usage, sentence structure, and punctuation.

Enclosed is a copy of the checklist which was distributed to the faculty by the University's Center for Professional Development. One side contains two copies of the checklist ready for duplication. The other side is an explanation summarized by the center, of the checklist. For a more detailed explanation, call R. Alan Kimbrough, chairman, Department of English, 229-3434.

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