THE EFFECT OF TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN WRITING
ASSIGNMENTS ON CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES
TOWARDS WRITING AND ON CHILDREN'S
ABILITIES TO WRITE

THESIS

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By

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The purpose of this study was to determine whether students' attitudes towards writing and their abilities to write were affected by their teacher's participation in their writing assignments. The null hypotheses that no significant differences would be found were supported.

The control group and two experimental groups were all composed of fourth, fifth, and sixth graders from a racially mixed elementary school in a large metropolitan school district.

The two experimental groups received identical instruction in writing skills except that the teacher wrote with one group and not with the other.

The attitude scale, constructed for this experiment, proved to be statistically invalid and unreliable.
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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**LIST OF TABLES** .......................................................... v

**Chapter**

I. INTRODUCTION ......................................................... 1
   - Purpose of the Study
   - Hypothesis
   - Background and Significance of Study
   - Definition of Terms
   - Limitations of the Study
   - Basic Assumptions

II. A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ..................................... 8

III. METHOD, PROCEDURES, AND INSTRUMENTS ....................... 29
    - Method of Research
    - Procedures for Collection of Data

IV. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA .............................................. 34
    - Writing Ability
    - Attitude Test

V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS ............... 46
    - Summary
    - Conclusions
    - Recommendations

**APPENDIX** ................................................................. 50

**REFERENCE LIST** .................................................... 84
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>Mean Score Gains between Pre- and Post-Assessment of Writing Ability</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>Analysis of Covariance on Writing Ability Pre- and Post-Assessment Scores</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>Holistic Scoring Inter-Rater Reliability</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>Attendance for Subjects in Experimental Groups</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>Reliability Check on Writing Attitude Measurement Instrument</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI.</td>
<td>Comparison of Mean Scores on the Writing Attitude Instrument of Students</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rated by their Teachers to have Positive or Negative Attitudes about Writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII.</td>
<td>Breakdown by Total Points of Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Grade Scores on the</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attitude Measurement Instrument Post-Test</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As complaints about writing competence pour in from all segments of society, and the blame is continually transferred from one educational layer to another, it eventually reaches the elementary school level. None of the educational layers is blameless, but the burden of responsibility should be accepted by the elementary school, and some of the national attention being riveted on children's ability to compose (Lundsteen, 1976) needs to be focused on the teachers and children of grades one through six. Jensen (1979) states, "In the 80s, I hope writing will command the attention and energy and financial support that reading did in the 70s" (p. 729). Studies are now being done, but much lost time must be compensated for by current researchers. Hunt (1979) feels that knowledge about how to teach writing has increased more in the decade now coming to a close than it has in any other decade--perhaps than it has in all previous decades. It is not that we know so much now, but that we knew so little before (p. 734).

Obviously from the declining test scores and from the public outcry about poor writing, either this research is not being disseminated to the elementary classroom teacher, or the key to elementary school children's interest and skill development in writing has not been found (Zarnowski, 1980).
The degree to which children learn is determined, in part, by the classroom teacher. This is true in any subject area, not excluding writing (Evertts, 1970; Grindstaff and Shepherd, 1976; Maybury, 1967; Mellon, 1975; Roberts, 1972). Mellon (1975) asserts, "The most important person in English education remains as always the frontline teacher, whose daily business is direct interaction with the student" (p. 3). Since the teacher is vitally important to children's learning, research about the teacher of composition is essential.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine whether students' attitudes towards writing and their abilities to write were affected by their teacher's participation in their writing assignments.

Hypotheses

There will be no significant difference in mean score gains on a holistic writing test between students in the experimental group (E₁) who will receive formal writing instruction and students in the control group (C) who will not receive formal writing instruction.

There will be no significant difference in mean score gains on a holistic writing test between students in the experimental group (E₁) who will receive formal writing instruction and students in the experimental group (E₂) who
will receive formal writing instruction and whose teacher will write with them.

There will be no significant difference in mean score gains on a holistic writing test between students in the experimental group (E\textsuperscript{2}) who will receive formal writing instruction and whose teacher will write with them and students in the control group (C) who will not receive formal writing instruction.

There will be no significant difference in mean score gains on an attitude test about writing between students' in the experimental group (E\textsuperscript{1}) who will receive formal writing instruction and students in the control group (C) who will not receive formal writing instruction.

There will be no significant difference in mean score gains on an attitude test about writing between students in the experimental group (E\textsuperscript{2}) who will receive formal writing instruction and whose teacher will write with them.

There will be no significant difference in mean score gains on an attitude test about writing between students' in the experimental group (E\textsuperscript{2}) who will receive formal writing instruction and whose teacher will write with them and students in the control group (C) who will not receive formal writing instruction.
Background and Significance of Study

Writing is a prominent criterion for measuring school success. Mellon (1975) asserts that,

Despite the rise of visual studies and broadsides announcing the post-literate society, writing, the second R, continues to be viewed by teachers and non-teachers alike as one of the most important subjects taught in school (p. 14).


But, with all these studies, no one has studied the effect of the teachers' attitudes and involvement with writing as it affects their students. Studies of this type regarding reading have been done and have been significant in that they have shown a positive correlation between teachers' attitudes and involvement with reading and their students' attitudes and involvement with reading (Einhorn, 1979;
Monson, 1980). Since "writing is at least as complex a process as reading, and the latter shows no signs of yielding all its secrets" (Read, 1979, p. 738), does it not seem appropriate to conduct a study of teachers' writing and its effect on students?

The proposed study focused on elementary school children and their writing instructor. The study was significant in that it attempted to

1. Determine whether specific writing instruction for elementary school age children affects their attitudes and abilities to write;

2. Determine whether a teacher's personal participation in his/her own writing assignments affects students' attitudes and abilities to write;

3. Provide direction for improvement of instruction in composition based on the results of the study.

Definition of Terms

For purposes of clarification, the following definitions apply to this study:

1. Writing/composing: The terms writing and composing will be used interchangeably to refer to the encoding process in its broadest sense, not as the manipulative activity of handwriting. Writing is considered a skill which can be taught (Hillerich, 1979; Roberts, 1972; Stewig, 1972).
2. **Formal writing instruction:** The children in the experimental groups (E1 and E2) received instruction in writing on a weekly basis. The instruction was designed to be highly structured to bring about specific improvement in writing.

3. **Writing with children:** This refers to the teacher actually sitting down with his/her students and writing with them, either on the same topic as has been assigned or on a topic of his/her own choosing, if that is the option offered to the students.

4. **Holistic writing test:** The holistic method of assessing writing is a method of rating the overall quality of a piece of writing. The name is derived from its emphasis on the readers' impressions of the whole piece of writing rather than independent aspects of the whole, such as style, content, grammar, and punctuation. In holistic grading, the writing of the students is judged relative only to the other writing of the group.

**Limitations of the Study**

Certain limitations of this study should be recognized.

1. Only children within one elementary school located in the Southwest Subdistrict of the Dallas Independent School District were involved.

2. A holistic method of rating was used to measure the students' writing abilities. Holistic scoring has an
inter-rater reliability correlation of up to .70 to .80 and above if the raters are given a special training session (Mellon, 1975, p. 23), as the raters in this study were given. Intra-rater reliability is equally as high in its correlation (based on initial and delayed readings) according to Mellon (1975, p. 23).

3. A writing attitude test designed for this study was used to measure the students' attitudes about writing. It was based on a validated attitude test of reading: the Bullen Reading Attitude Instrument. At this time, no validated writing attitude test exists. An attempt was made to validate the instrument used for this study.

**Basic Assumptions**

It is assumed that the instructor for the writing classes taught the two experimental groups (E₁ and E₂) as nearly alike as possible except as it involved writing or not writing with the children.

Furthermore, it is assumed that the children in the writing classes (treatment groups) had more of an interest in writing than a randomly selected group of fourth, fifth and sixth graders.

Thirdly, it is assumed that the children in the experimental groups (E₁ and E₂) did not discuss the fact that the instructor wrote with those students in E₂ and not with those in E₁.
CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A review of the literature about writing has shown that although a fair amount of research has been conducted concerning composition, it is decades behind the research conducted in reading (Graves, 1978). According to Graves, the research dollars spent on reading as compared to those spent on writing are at a 1000:1 ratio. Of the research done in writing, there seems to be none directed specifically at determining the difference a writing teacher (i.e. a teacher who writes) makes on his/her students' attitudes and abilities to write. A number of experts have opinions about a teacher who writes with his/her students, and this will be discussed later in the chapter.

The Value of Writing

There are a number of reasons why writing should be valued. According to Calkins (1978), writing is fundamental to a literate society. Through writing, says Evertts (1970), children discover more about themselves and their uniqueness. Writing helps them to organize their world (Russell, 1973). After discovering their unique self, they can expand into the creative mode that is a part of every child. A child,
claims Reimer (1969), also learns that by writing, he/she can affect his/her world, and the world of others.

Writing is a primary activity. Calkins (1978a) declares, "Before we can have readers, we must have writers. And before we can get people to read, the writing must be worth reading...where would readers be without writers?" (p. 892). Never has a nation been remembered for its readers, but it has been for its writers (Riemer, 1969). Students need to extend their general linguistic abilities by using language to define, explore, and master other disciplines. Writing can be used as a teaching method (Stallard, 1979).

Writers write for themselves as much as, and sometimes more than, for others (Calkins, 1978c; Evertts, 1979; Kantor, 1979). Sharp (Students' Right to Write, 1971) says,

While writing is always addressed to a reader, it is not always addressed to a person other than the writer; sometimes we write to a future self; sometimes we write to discover what we mean to write; sometimes we write to play (p. 10).

Through writing, children gain insight into themselves and their thoughts (Evertts, 1970; Kantor, 1979; Roberts, 1972; Shane, Walden, and Green, 1971; Tway, 1974). Children must be allowed to use their language to discover what they know and to organize the world around them (Calkins, 1979; Maybury, 1967; Russell, 1973). If writing is indeed a discovery process, then a child often will not make a
Graves (1978b) says that children will write if we let them. According to Evertts (1970),

We try to push the child to say more than he wants to say and this is where we touch upon the anti-creative aspect of teaching. We destroy rather than help. Children should begin to see and realize that what they have to say is important no matter what the length or what the idea may be (p. 95).

Teachers need to get over the notion that only a select few are creative. All children are creative (Evertts, 1970; Landrum, 1974; Ullyette, 1963). Creativity and creative writing are recorded responses to the unique stimulants around a child (Shane, Walden, and Green, 1971; Ullyette, 1963). Our nation's most wasted resource could very well be creativity, and, affirms Shane, et al., "In today's world creativity is not just a nice thing to have, it is a grave necessity" (p. 89).

Writers leave an imprint on the world. Riemer (1969) states,

By learning to write, therefore, the child acquires that instrument for making his mark in life. He will not make that mark reading. It is through writing that he submits himself as a candidate to any society beyond the limits of his voice and touch, beyond his family, and outside his neighborhood (p. 18).

Burrows (Students' Right to Write, 1971) says that,

"...the need for writing springs from the need to affect others through the impact of the written word" (p. 27).

Although elementary school children will seldom affect the
world 'in toto,' they are getting ready for that time when they will (Evertts, 1970; Kantor, 1979; Stewig, 1972). Children are in a process. They are in the process of becoming their future selves. They must be allowed to grow and become in that direction.

Teacher and Societal Preparation for Teaching Writing

If writing is to come to the forefront of educational attention, several situations are going to have to change. Teacher training institutions are going to have to stress preparedness for teaching writing as much as they now stress preparedness for teaching reading. The public will have to be re-educated so that they are mindful of how well their children are writing as well as being mindful of how well they are reading. Also, those teachers, principals, and other educators already in-service will have to have their thinking redirected toward writing as the necessary skill it is. They will need to be shown that writing enhances reading (Bond and Dykstra, 1967; Oehlkers, 1971) besides being a skill that justifies teaching time spent solely on writing for writing's sake.

Graves (1978a) says that teachers do not teach what they do not feel prepared to teach. Bossone and Larson (1980) found that a large percentage of writing instructors do not believe that they are well-trained to teach writing. Half of the 219 respondents to Bossone and Larson's questionnaire said they had no proper training. Only
one-fifth of the respondents thought they had received proper training. The teacher training institutions are training their students how to teach reading, but not how to write or to teach writing (Tiener, 1969; Shane, Walden, and Green, 1971). Graves (1978a) reports that in a study of thirty-six universities that train teachers, it was found that there were a total of 169 courses taught in reading, 30 courses taught in children's literature, 21 courses taught in language arts, and only 2 taught in the teaching of writing.

Riemer (1969) believes that no one is trained to teach a grade school writing curriculum. Everyone is so busy teaching Johnny to read that there is no one and no time left to teach him to write. Graves (1978a) found that for every two hours spent teaching reading, five minutes are spent teaching writing; for every one hundred dollars' ($100.00) spent on reading materials, one dollar ($1.00) is spent on writing.

Writing involves so much more than those skeletal skills which are the most objectively testable (grammar, spelling, punctuation, handwriting), but unfortunately, the body of writing is being ignored for the bones. Kantor (1979) says,

We stress only the narrowest skills because these are the ones that can be most easily measured. In writing, the most important abilities---development of fluency, imagination, sense of purpose and audience---go undetected by the usual instruments. And testing in turn influences instruction beyond
any standard of rationality, by compelling teachers' to teach only those skills on which their students will be tested, and thereby focusing primarily on shortcomings rather than accomplishments (p. 743).

Part of the re-education of in-service educators will involve testing. Teachers have become frantic about teaching those skills which are going to be tested (Graves, 1978a). Administrative pressure is forcing competency testing at all levels, including the elementary school. Sealey, Sealey, and Millmore (1979) define writing as a

...complex symbolic representation of a person's thoughts and images. Often, it is indicative of the search for meaning and reveals the degree of knowing. Thus, writing is closely related to the internal manipulation of external experiences,... (p. 3)

which cannot readily be tested. Time for writing is being diminished so that more class time can be spent on those skills which are going to be tested. Lloyd-Jones (1979) hopes that "with luck, the eighties will give us better prepared teachers who will be able to persuade school administrators to give them the time required to teach the craft" (p. 737).

Time--an essential for writers to evolve--is one of the several characteristics enumerated in a study of classrooms where good writing was taking place, reports Graves (1978a). Teachers allowed time for their students to write. In a study done by Galloway and Gray (1976), they defined two necessary ingredients for children to become skilled writers:
1. Teachers must provide instruction in the basic skills in reading and writing in order to assure success.

2. Teachers must provide ample time to develop the writing (p. 5).

If writing is to be expected, as Graves (1978a) says it should be, then teachers must designate a portion of every day to writing. Teachers must signal to their students that writing is a central and valued part of the curriculum. Hoffman (1978) says the teacher must be "willing to devote sizeable amounts of time to writing activities, with the full conviction that they are as important as anything else the child does in school" (p. 124). Calkins (1978a) agrees.

Writing should be center stage. Practice in writing will not only help children learn to write, it will help them learn to read...we haven't begun to realize the potential for development of our children through writing (p. 895).

In England, writing is used to teach writing and to teach reading (Hughes, 1979). Artificial barriers between writing and reading need to be removed according to Pooley (1976) and Day and Swetenburg (1978) so that children can realize that what is written is meant to be read and what is read can be the substance and springboard for their writing. Children can "build their reading skills through and because of their extensive writing" (Day and Swetenburg, 1978, p. 233).

John Blackie, the Chief Inspector of the Primary Schools in England was cited by Maybury (1967). He concurred
with other experts about providing time for writing and becoming when he said,

No human skill or art can be mastered unless it is constantly practised. A short composition once a fortnight, interspersed with formal exercises, is no good at all. There must be bulk. If that is accepted, the argument goes on, the children must have a period in their lives when you let them rip. They learn to speak in this way—by continual chatter of which only a tiny proportion is in any sense corrected—and they must learn to write similarly, by writing far more than any teacher could ever possibly correct or even look over. This also seems perfectly sensible as far as it goes. I should like to see all juniors keeping diaries, writing stories, editing magazines, writing letters and generally performing those writing activities which have always been quite familiar features in educated families. The theory that if mistakes go uncorrected when they are first made they will be perpetuated won’t bear much examination or we should all cut pretty sorry figures (p. 19).

The writing process involves time, practice and making mistakes. Mistakes are opportunities; crossed out words are part of the creating process (Calkins, 1979). The center of an effective writing class should be generating material, drafting, and revising the draft to make it more effective (Gebhardt, 1977). Getzells and Csikszentmihaly (1979; reported by Calkins, 1979) did a longitudinal study of art students and they found that the successful artists were the ones who agonized over their drawings and changed direction several times. Murray (1978) relates that “writers have to write before writing” (p. 375). Children learn a dangerous model of the writing process if they do only one draft of a piece of writing. They get the mistaken
notion that an idea just appears in a writer's head, is written down, and is then finished (Gebhardt, 1977). A teacher must help the children realize that a writer's best work is that which merits the time it takes to revise. Calkins (1979) reminds educators that revision is a tribute to the potential in a piece; it is not punishment, but opportunity.

A child needs to be involved in the revision process. Tiedt (1976) says that revision should be a process of self-examination and self-evaluation, not a directive imposed from teacher to pupil. Teachers can certainly be vitally instrumental in helping children discover revision. In a study done about how children compose, it was found that gentle suggestions and questions by the teacher caused self-discovery of revision by students (Graves, 1979). Schiff (1979) states that "the writing process involves more physical effort than just putting pen to paper" (p. 793).

Part of the physical effort is prewriting. According to Long (1978), prewriting

...broadly speaking, includes everything a person has done, learned, felt, or fantasized about up to the moment of writing. Narrowly, it refers to those preparations undertaken for this particular topic—the adoption of a point of view, a tone of voice or attitude toward the material, an approach that will facilitate the writing, and an understanding of the scope or size of the audience to whom the paper is addressed (p. 1).

Prewriting is an essential stage of writing, and time for it must be allowed (Murray, 1978; Schlawin, 1979; Smelstor, 1978, 1979).
Time for prewriting may be time for talking and discussing. Zarnowski (1980), in her study of teacher-writers, found that they admired the amount of language learning a child brought with them to school and capitalized on their students' abilities to speak meaningfully. These teacher-writers recognized differences in speech and writing, but they also recognized that speaking gave students a chance to test their ideas and receive immediate feedback before writing. "Extended talking led to extended writing" (p. 505). Zarnowski's article goes on to quote several teacher-writers, including Kohl and Herndon, on the imperativeness of talking before writing. In a study reported by Loban (1976), it was found that those children who were superior in oral language in kindergarten and first grade were the ones who excelled in reading and writing in sixth grade.

Talking and writing are closely related. Hubert (1976) says that "talk can arise out of writing just as writing can arise out of talk" (p. 23). Especially for young children, if they are given the opportunity to talk out their story, writing is an easy step. Burgess (1973) expresses a strong view about the relationship between speaking and writing:

Let me close by attempting to face squarely the issue of how children learn to write. Before the child learns to write he learns to talk—and we know a certain amount about the way that ability is acquired. We know, for example, that he acquires his syntax by a process of refinement;...We know too that talk about the way in which the child acquires language which sees the central process in terms of
imitation or alternatively in coming to associate words with certain things, misdirects us as to the kind of thing language is. Rather we have to give a central place to the fact that the child has to interpret the language that he hears about him, that he has to feel his way essentially experimentally, towards its rules, and that he learns it in the context of his own world, his own purposes, and his own meanings.

There is little reason to suppose that the process of learning to write is radically different. He has of course, to master the writing system—a relatively specific matter. Thereafter his development as a writer depends on his general acquiring of resources and his ability to mobilize them in specific writing tasks (p. 23).

All of the talking, and all of the development of writing skills takes time. Children must be given this time; parents, teachers, and society must allow it.

Teachers' Effect on the Writing Processes of their Students

It is safe to say that no one has more of an effect in whether a child learns to write than the teacher (Evertts, 1970; Maybury, 1967; Roberts, 1972). The teacher, not a state Department of Education dictum, not a curriculum guide, and not a textbook, causes writing ability to develop in a child (Grindstaff and Shepherd, 1976). Evertts (1970) says, "Until something happens in the classroom, no curriculum has much value, either negative or positive, because it exists in a state of limbo. The teacher makes the curriculum become real and true" (p. 13).

In preparing a study of writing among eleven-year-olds in England, Maybury (1967) looked for a specific type of class where he could see real creative writing taking place.
I have in mind...a teacher whose main interest is not the teaching of English but who has established reasonable rapport with the class and is prepared to spend at least half the lesson fully engaged in involving the children in their writing (p. 9).

The teacher's attitude and the classroom climate are crucial in determining the direction of the class in writing (Burrows, 1971; Evertts, 1970; Gee, 1972; Grindstaff and Shepherd, 1976; Hillerich, 1971a, 1971b; Nikoloff, 1965; Roberts, 1972; Smelstor, 1978; Staton, 1980; Taylor and Hoedt, 1966; Tiedt, 1976; Tway, 1974).

How can teachers ensure that the children in their classrooms will continue to enjoy language as they experiment with expressing their ideas in writing? The first essential concern is providing a classroom climate that is psychologically conducive to free expression, a climate that is stimulating, yet accepting. Only children who are respected and encouraged will feel truly free to write (Tiedt, 1976, p. 1).

Numbers of studies indicate that praise and encouragement produce better writers than does criticism (Burrows, 1971; Gee, 1972; Grindstaff and Shepherd, 1976; Hillerich, 1971a, 1971b; Nikoloff, 1965; Taylor and Hoedt, 1966). Roberts (1972) believes that encouragement by the teacher before the writing takes place, and appreciation by her after it has been completed, are probably the strongest contributions a teacher can make to the establishment of this habit [writing] (p. 67).

Children will do activities that are fun for them. They will participate in, and bring their best efforts to those activities in which they find pleasure and satisfaction.
The pleasure of writing stems from the feelings that are there before the writing begins, that are released during the writing, and then are shared afterward. The initial step of determining what to write, or "getting at the feelings," is essential. And for this, the teacher, not the recipe is crucial...Good teaching does the trick. A writing assignment is only as good as the teaching which precedes it. The teacher must set the mood from which valuable writing experience come (Hubert, 1976, p. 38).

Teachers should never forget that one person can make the difference. Roberts (1972) agrees when he says,

It is a reasonable generalization to say that a school has to have only one teacher who is enthusiastic about art or poetry for the influence of that teacher's work to be felt throughout the school. Therefore, it is equally reasonable to assume that the same thing would apply where there is a teacher who is enthusiastic about the development of English (p. 71).

Read (1979) says a teacher must give of his/her time to help foster good writing in students. Individual writing conferences between teacher and child are valuable (Graves, 1980; Staton, 1980). One suggestion for student-teacher writing conferences is offered by Schiff: have the student watch the teacher write (1978). Children can be supportive of each other in much the same way by doing team-writing (Tway, 1974), implementing a writers' workshop (Crowhurst, 1979), or using the Talk-Write method (Wixon and Stone, 1977).

The British often use team-writing as a steppingstone for reluctant writers. In team-writing, groups of children write, illustrate, and bind their own books. They receive the encouragement of other members of the group as they
share ideas, and experience the satisfaction of team effort. In a secure classroom where it is safe to try new things, a child will not become dependent on team-writing so that he/she is unable to write on his own, assures Tway (1974).

Writers' workshops serve much the same purpose as does team-writing. Moffett (1976) describes the writing workshop as "any small group of students...who exchange or read aloud their papers in order to try out their compositions and make suggestions to each other for improvement" (p. 154). In a study of classrooms where good writing was taking place, it was found that one characteristic of the classroom was that writing occurred in community (Graves, 1978). When children share their writing says Tway (1974), the classroom becomes a community of writers.

In writers' workshops, children are assigned to groups of four or five. They are instructed to read each others' writing and to make specific positive comments about the writing. The children must be trained in the skill of making these specific, positive comments. The teacher provides guidance and many real opportunities and reasons for writing and revision. The work is always kept so that both child and teacher may note development.

Crowhurst (1979) listed the benefits of the writing workshop.

1. Students evidence increased motivation to write.
2. Students write for a real audience other than the teacher, not only when they write compositions but also when they write comments for their peers.

3. Students received prompt, varied feedback. Moreover, the amount of feedback given is likely to be greater than the amount that can be given by the teacher.

4. Students learn from reading the compositions of others. They pick up good ideas from good writers; they develop realistic standards for their own writing by comparing their work with that of their peers; responding to others tends to make them more discriminating about writing.

5. Reading the writing of others in order to comment usefully is valuable practice in critical reading for a real purpose (p. 762).

The Talk-Write method, developed by Robert Zoellner (Wixon & Stone, 1977), focuses on the process of writing. Students are paired. One child talks out an entire composition while the other child questions in order to draw out and clarify. The composition is written on the chalkboard or on large paper. Further encouragement and interaction comes as other children walk around the room and comment on each others' work. The Talk-Write method focuses on the process, not the product; children gain skill while writing. The classroom is the natural audience for the compositions, and the writing act of one pair, since it is public, is a model for everyone else. The "impetus behind the Talk-Write method is that nearly all students come to the classroom with talking skills far superior to their writing skills (Wixon & Stone, 1977, p. 3).
Teachers do not always see the value behind their students' speaking abilities. Kantor (1979) states that

Ironically, some teachers see their students' writing as deficient because "they write just like they talk." If that statement is true (and I think it often is), nothing but good can come from it since the best writing sounds like someone is talking to you. I don't wish to discount certain key differences between speaking and writing; I just want to assert that talk (or "inner speech") represents for kids their best entry into writing, and as such ought to be encouraged rather than denied to them (p. 745).

A study by Martin (1976) and her associates contends that talk enables children to develop and maintain a unique identity, to understand how and why things happen the way they do, and to predict the outcome of new situations—all of which are capacities essential to writing skill development.

There are numerous advantages to language experience approaches to children's writing (Galloway & Gray, 1976). In the second year of their Delaware project, which was analyzing children's creative writing performance, Stauffer and Hammond (1969) found that the language experience group wrote significantly longer stories, used significantly more varied vocabulary, spelled significantly more words correctly, and performed significantly better in terms of writing mechanics than did the group not using a language experience approach. According to Galloway and Gray (1976), an advantage of using language experience was that the child was
highly motivated to write further about an experience after seeing one of his or her stories put into print by the teacher.

Writing down a child's story as he/she tells it (taking dictation) is valuable both at the transition stage when the child is going from talking to writing, and when a child has become more proficient in writing on his or her own (Froese, 1978; Russell, 1973). Ribovich (1979) says,

The fact that some children have difficulty getting ideas on paper does not mean that they cannot be writers. These children, brimming as they are with ideas and intents, need only have an intermediary available who will take down their dictation (p. 899).

Taking dictation is more than just writing down the child's words. Landrum (1974) points out,

Copying stories down is slow work. Not all of them are interesting. Only a few are truly exciting. You can get sleepy—-with or without coffee—-or bored or nervous. But copying the dictations down is crucial work. The way you listen affects the children. It can inspire a child if you respond—-laughing, groaning, nodding, exclaiming. If you lose your concentration the kid will drift, too. The minute-by-minute reaction to the dictation is tricky business (p. 13).

The vocation of teaching is vital. Teacher characteristics are a strong determiner of the progress made in a classroom.

The children you teach approach anything you bring to them with expectations very much based on what they think of you, and what they have found your offerings to yield to them on previous occasions (Evertts, 1970, p. 49).
If a teacher's attitude has been positive, encouraging, and reassuring about a child's writing, that child will continue to experiment with written language. Teachers make the difference.

The Teacher Who Writes

Teachers who write with their students are in a better position to help them learn to write (Calkins, 1979; Evertts, 1979; Finch, 1979; Goggin, 1980; Graves, 1978a; Kantor, 1979; Lundsteen, 1976; Mellon, 1975; Monson, 1980; Murray, 1978a, 1978b; Peckham, 1978; Petty and Finn, 1975; Schiff, 1978; Smelstor, 1978; Students' Right to Write, 1971; Tway, 1974; Zarnowski, 1980). When children belong to a community of writers, they become better writers. According to Tway (1974),

Teachers ought to be part of the community of writers in a classroom. Teachers should share in the writing process, too. Even if they can only take a few minutes to write, or failing that (Teachers, after all, do sometimes have to offer spelling support and other guidance to children as they write), if they can let children know that they do write, it will show their pupils that they value writing as an enjoyable and worthwhile activity (p. 3).

Teachers who write can be more empathetic to the frustrations and joys of writing (Kantor, 1979; Mellon, 1975; Monson, 1980; Tway, 1974; Zarnowski, 1980). Goggin (1980) believes,

Teachers need to become actively involved in the writing process and all its attendant problems. Students can learn from—and become less suspicious of—such persons. The teacher who is able to
share with his students his own concerns regarding sentence structure, diction, organization, and even publication is in a far better position to provide students with meaningful instruction than is the teacher who can merely talk about writing (p. 234).

Murray (1980) draws an analogy when he says teachers should not be in the stands observing the process of writing from a distance; they should be on the field experiencing the process.

Teachers often do not teach writing because they do not feel confident about their own writing. Calkins (1979) believes "another reason...why some teachers take such a narrow approach to teaching and evaluating writing is that they feel insecure about their own writing abilities" (p. 743). Various groups throughout the country are forming writers' workshops for teachers, patterned after the Bay Area Writers' Project. Through these workshops, teachers learn to write and to value writing with their classes (Evertts, 1979; Monson, 1980; Peckham, 1978). The Students' Right to Write (1971) says,

A teacher's preparation does not, of course, stop on the day he receives his diploma. He continues to learn about composition by doing considerable writing (for instance, he may write the same kind of composition he asks his students to write) (p. 77).

It is easier for a teacher to postpone the teaching of writing when he/she does not feel comfortable about writing. Jacobs (1955) says that "what a person prizes, he does. What the teacher values, he teaches" (p. 123). Teachers who do not write and/or who do not like writing, let their students
know in subtle, and in not-so-subtle ways that they do not value writing (Calkins, 1979). Smelstor (1978) feels that teachers should write often with their students and should share their writing with them.

Children model themselves after adults and this is evident in studies about sustained silent reading (Einhorn, 1979; Monson, 1980), storytelling (Stewig, 1972), art and composition (Graves, 1978a; Lloyd-Jones, 1979; Lundsteen, 1976; Monson, 1980; Stewig, 1972). Lloyd-Jones feels that "Writing is a craft, mainly learned by observation, imitation, and practice" (p. 737). A teacher should evaluate his/her own writing activity (or lack of it) and its effect on the students both as an inspiration to write and as a model for writing. A teacher's role in the writing process of his/her students continues over time (Petty & Finn, 1975). A self-contained elementary school child spends nearly as much time with a teacher as he or she does with a parent during the school year. The teacher bears a tremendous responsibility in terms of the type of example that is set for the children in his/her classroom. Lundsteen (1976) offers this:

Consider the dimensions of the adult as the model. Many a young child has been motivated to go off to write (sometimes on the walls) after observing an adored parent working hard at this task. It is a common observation that teachers who thoroughly enjoy writing and who share their products serve as stimulating models for children. Their authority as models comes from more than their expertise as writers. Adults can 'rub off' on youngsters, not just for the moment but for a lifetime (p. 30).
Not until teachers write can they appreciate and understand the writing process (Graves, 1978a; Lundsteen, 1976). Teachers have "underestimated the arduousness of writing as an activity and consequently overestimated the level of investment that unrewarded and unmotivated students would bring to the task" (Mellon, 1975, p. 34). Writing is as valuable for the teacher as for the child, and each makes it more valuable for the other. Murray (1978a) says that "the single most dramatic change that can be made in a language arts or English teacher who wants to teach writing is for the teacher to write with the students" (p. 7). Kantor (1979) makes a powerful statement:

Teachers who write themselves, and in particular, write along with their students, come to know that writing is often difficult but also rewarding. Thus they can offer sympathetic help to kids in their struggles to find the right word or sentence structure and at the same time can enthusiastically lead kids to experience the pleasure of having written something well and sharing it with an appreciative audience. Ultimately, then, appreciation is not so much a technique as it is a human instinct. We should appreciate the writing of children...because there is in it much to appreciate if we're willing to look (p. 746).

Teachers who have looked have found that value--it has changed them and their students.
CHAPTER III

METHOD, PROCEDURES, AND INSTRUMENTS

Method of Research

The experimental form of research was used to determine whether or not children's interests and abilities to write were influenced by their teacher writing with them. The following experimental design was used:

\[ \begin{align*}
E^1 & \quad T_1 & \quad X_2 & \quad T_2 \\
E^2 & \quad T_1 & \quad X_1 & \quad X_2 & \quad T_2 \\
C & \quad T_1 & \quad & \quad & \quad T_2
\end{align*} \]

Procedures for Collection of Data

An elementary school located in the Southwest Sub-district of the Dallas Independent School District was used for this study. The ethnic breakdown for this elementary school was 32 percent Anglo, 30 percent Black, 36 percent Mexican-American, and 2 percent Other. An attempt was made to have a similar ethnic representation in both experimental groups (E\(^1\) and E\(^2\)) as well as the control group (C).

Letters were sent home to the parents of each fourth, fifth, and sixth grade student at the elementary school. (see Appendix 1). From the group of applicants, thirty-two were accepted into the program. This many were accepted as
insurance against possible attrition within the groups since the elementary school has a somewhat transient population.

The thirty-two children were divided into the two experimental groups (E₁ and E₂) based on grade, sex, ethnicity, and parental request (some brothers and sisters signed up for the classes and their parents wanted them to be in the same group so that they would be attending on the same day). The parents of the children accepted into the treatment groups were sent a letter informing them of their child's class time and day (see Appendix 2).

Prior to the beginning of the writing classes, which were the vehicles for treatment (X₁ and X₂), a writing pretest (T₁) was administered to the entire fourth, fifth, and sixth grade. The researcher taped the directions for the writing assignment (see Appendix 3). Each fourth, fifth, and sixth grade teacher was given a packet which contained the taped directions and a card for each of their students. The student's card had his/her name, class section, and ID numbers printed on it. The teacher was directed to pass out each student's card and to direct the student to print only his/her class section and ID number on the top of the paper on which his/her story was to be written. The cards, tape, and stories were returned to the researcher at the end of the exercise.
After the conclusion of the treatment period, a post-test was administered in a similar manner to all fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students at the elementary school in the study. The only difference was the book that was used as the stimulus for the writing (see Appendix 4).

Both pre-test and post-test writing assignments were holistically scored. In Cooper's (1977) words, "Holistic evaluation of writing is a guided procedure for sorting or ranking written pieces" (p. 3). The sorting, ranking, or scoring occurs quickly and impressionistically after the rater has practiced with other raters. In holistic scoring, the stories are to be judged relative only to the other stories in the group (Mellon, 1975). Holistic evaluation is better than word counts, sentence element counts, or objective, machine-scored tests because a human respondent can get closer to what is essential in writing—communication (Cooper, 1977). Myers (1980) writes that "the whole of a piece of writing is greater than the sum of its parts" (p. 1). The rater must not base the rating on only one aspect, no matter how good or bad that one aspect is, but must attend to all aspects (Educational Testing Service, 1978; Mellon, 1975; Powills, Bowers, and Conlan, 1979).

The raters for this study were trained together and read at the same time and under the same conditions. This was essential for good inter-rater reliability (Cooper, 1977; Mellon, 1975; Myers, 1980). Each student's paper was read
twice and given a numerical score between zero and four (inclusive) by each rater with four being a high score and zero being a low score (see Appendix 28). A paper was given a third reading only if there was a discrepancy of more than one point between the two scores (e.g. if a paper received the scores 2 and 4, or 3 and 1). The third rater's score was doubled to give the student his/her final score. All other papers simply had the two raters' scores added together.

Also prior to the treatment sessions ($X_1$ and/or $X_2$), all the students in grades four, five, and six were given a writing attitude measurement instrument, partially based on the Bullen Reading Attitude Instrument. There was no validated writing attitude test, so a new instrument was designed for this study (see Appendix 5). An attempt was made to validate this new instrument through retesting and teacher opinionnaires. The writing attitude measurement instrument was scored on a point system. All first choices were worth two points, second choices were worth zero points, and third choices were worth one point. A higher point score would seem to indicate a more positive attitude toward writing; a lower point score would seem to indicate a poorer attitude toward writing.

A second instrument was given to those students in the experimental groups (see Appendix 8) just prior to the beginning of the writing class. This instrument was a longer,
more extensive questionnaire regarding the student's writing habits and opinions. The purpose of this questionnaire was to help the instructor better individualize the writing classes.

As shown in the experimental design, one treatment ($X_1$) was applied only to one experimental group ($E_2$). The instructor deliberately made at least two references to her own writing and/or experience with writing during each class. Also, whenever the students wrote in class or had a take-home assignment, the instructor also wrote and/or did the assignment.

Both experimental groups ($E_1$ and $E_2$) received the second treatment ($X_2$). The treatment involved a specific course of study about writing (see Appendices 9 through 26). Every effort was made to have the topics and materials as nearly alike as possible in the two classes. An identical lesson plan was used for both classes. The only differences were due to the individuals comprising the groups.

The children in the control group (C) received no treatment. They were not even aware that they were in the control group since the entire fourth, fifth, and sixth grades were pre- and post-tested. Their teachers also were not aware which children were the controls. The lack of awareness by the children and the teachers should have kept the control group from making changes simply due to the fact that they were involved in the experiment.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

A pre-test/post-test experimental design was used to determine the amount of change in the subjects' writing abilities and attitudes towards writing. The resulting scores were recorded and analyzed using several statistical techniques.

Writing Ability

The initial analysis of the data is shown in Table I. From this table, it appears that the $E^2$ group gained more

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean Pre-Test Score</th>
<th>Mean Post-Test Score</th>
<th>Mean Gain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$E^1$</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$E^2$</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$C$</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

than either the $E^1$ or $C$ group did. These statistics are somewhat misleading though.
An analysis of covariance was performed on the pre-
and post-test writing scores of all three groups (E\(^1\), E\(^2\),
and C). The F score was .015, which was insignificant at
the .05 level. The mean adjusted post-test scores can be
seen in Table II.

**TABLE II**

**ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE ON WRITING ABILITY**
**PRE- AND POST- ASSESSMENT SCORES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Between</th>
<th>Within</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DF</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUM SQRS X</td>
<td>6.68518</td>
<td>152.5</td>
<td>159.185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUM XY</td>
<td>2.90747</td>
<td>43.1666</td>
<td>46.0741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUM SQRS Y</td>
<td>1.26575</td>
<td>126.364</td>
<td>127.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADJ SS Y</td>
<td>.148926</td>
<td>114.145</td>
<td>114.294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADJ DF</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEAN SQR</td>
<td>.0744629</td>
<td>4.96283</td>
<td>4.57176</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MEAN ADJ Y (C) 4.73186
MEAN ADJ Y (E\(^1\)) 4.77357
MEAN ADJ Y (E\(^2\)) 4.58992

The following null hypotheses were supported by the
analysis of the data.

1. There will be no significant difference in mean
score gains on a holistic writing test between
students in the experimental group (E₁) who will receive formal writing instruction and students in the control group (C) who will not receive formal writing instruction.

2. There will be no significant difference in mean score gains on a holistic writing test between students in the experimental group (E₁) who will receive formal writing instruction and students in the experimental group (E₂) who will receive formal writing instruction and whose teacher will write with them.

3. There will be no significant difference in mean score gains on a holistic writing test between students in the experimental group (E₁) who will receive formal writing instruction and whose teacher will write with them and students in the control group (C) who will not receive formal writing instruction.

The Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance of ranks was used to determine whether the three samples came from the same population. The results of the analysis support the null hypothesis that the three sample groups (E₁, E₂, and C) are not from different populations. That is, the analysis indicates that the samples are from the same population. The H value of 1.132 is less than the 5.99 score (at .05 level of significance) necessary to reject the null hypothesis.

Table III shows the inter-rater reliability of the four holistic scorers. If the cases of two raters scoring a paper exactly the same and the cases of two raters scoring a paper within one point of each other are figured together, the inter-rater reliability is .88. The rationale for considering the "exact" rating and the "within one point" rating classifications together is that some papers are
more in-between two scoring categories than they are within one scoring category. Fowles (1978) addresses this when

TABLE III

HOLISTIC SCORING INTER-RATER RELIABILITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stories Receiving Exact Ratings</td>
<td>Stories Receiving Ratings Within One Point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stories Receiving</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratings Within One</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Test</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stories Receiving</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratings Within One</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentages are rounded so totals are not always exact

she says that

Because there is a range of student writing within each score category, some of the weakest 4 papers will not be much better than some of the best 3 papers. Some of the lowest 3 papers may not be much better than the best of the 2 papers, and so
on down the scale. These end-of-the-range papers may very well receive two different scores from two different readers. If the two scores are separated by only a one-point difference (4/3, 3/2, or 2/1), they are called "split scores." A split score is not only acceptable but is, for many papers, the most accurate score. When the two scores are added, the 3/2 split, for example, will result in a final score of 5. That test paper has been judged better than the 2/2 papers (with a final score of 4) and not as good as the 3/3 papers (with a final score of 6) (p. 14).

Seven papers had a gap of two points or more between the two raters' scores. In six of the seven cases, one of the raters gave the paper a score of zero, while the other rater scored the paper as a two or a three. In most cases, a zero rating was given because one rater did not feel that the writer had addressed the subject. (see Appendix 28: Guidelines for Holistic Scoring). So, the paper could have been well-written (2 or 3) but not based on the stimulus given, as judged by one rater. Anytime a discrepancy of two points or more occurred between the scores on one paper, the head scorer re-scored the paper and the final score was obtained by doubling the head scorer's rating.

The head scorer for the holistic scoring session was the researcher in this study. The researcher believed she could be a competent head scorer because of extensive reading in the area of holistic scoring and extensive and varied experience with children's writing.

One possible reason for the experimental groups' failure to achieve significance could be the inconsistent attendance by the subjects. As seen in Table IV, only
TABLE IV

GAIN/LOSS IN WRITING ABILITY FOR SUBJECTS HAVING 50% OR BETTER ATTENDANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Number</th>
<th>Days Present (out of 18)</th>
<th>Gain/Loss in Writing Post-Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6C317801</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6A329851</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5D545171</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5D508614</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>+7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5C701968</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5C344601</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4B530000</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4D551504</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4B660589</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5C508591</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5D507800</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5C701975</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5B660553</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4B701969</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4B543231</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4A660504</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>+5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4A344659</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

60 percent of the students have 75 percent attendance or better. Of the students who attended between 88 and 100 percent of the treatment sessions, the average gain in
writing ability (as measured holistically) was +2 points. The average gain by those attending 83 percent of the time or less was 1.2 points. Because this is a small sample, nothing conclusive can be stated, but the poor attendance is worth considering. Attendance was affected for six of the seventeen students during the thirteenth through eighteenth week of treatment due to an after school remedial reading and mathematics program that was conducted district-wide to help those students in danger of failing their current grade. All six affected students had previously had good attendance in the writing program.

Another possible reason for the experimental groups' failure to achieve significance could be the infrequent completion of their out-of-class assignments. As can be seen in Appendix 9 through 26, each treatment was designed to build on the previous treatment(s). Often, part or all of the lesson was to be based on the completed homework assignment. When few or none of the students had completed (or attempted) the assignment, it made the lesson less meaningful for the students. Some activities had to be modified to accommodate those students who did not have their assignment. A number of suggestions for the poor homework completion rate are as follows: students were not sufficiently motivated; students had too much homework from their regular classes which took priority; students were not in the habit of completing any work outside school.
Whatever the reason for the noncompletion of assignments, it may have prevented the students from gaining all that they could have if they had taken part in all the outside writing assignments.

**Attitude Test**

The attitude measuring instrument, which was designed for this experiment proved to have low validity and reliability (see Table V). To check for reliability, one group of students was given the attitude post-test (Appendix 6) and then one week later, they were given the reliability check test (Appendix 7). Only 21 percent of the students had the same score one week later on the check test as they had on the post-test. Fifty-three (53) percent of the group had scores that varied by only one point between the post-test and the check test.

As a test of validity, teachers of fourth, fifth and sixth grade students were asked, prior to and after the treatment sessions, to list three students whom they perceived as "really liking writing" and three students whom they perceived as "really not liking writing." It was found that sometimes teachers listed a student as "liking writing" and that student's score on the attitude measuring instrument was low, supposedly indicating a poor attitude toward writing. Other times, a student with a high score on his/her attitude measurement instrument (supposedly indicating a good attitude toward writing) would not be
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Post-Test Score</th>
<th>Check-Test Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
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<td>12</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>5*</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*exact correlation
listed by the teacher as having a good attitude. It would seem then, that the writing attitude instrument was not able to indicate the attitude of elementary students toward writing.

Table VI seems to indicate that, overall, teachers were able to determine which students in their class had

TABLE VI

COMPARISON OF MEAN SCORES ON THE WRITING ATTITUDE INSTRUMENT OF STUDENTS RATED BY THEIR TEACHERS TO HAVE POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE ATTITUDES ABOUT WRITING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Pre-Test</th>
<th>Post-Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Like</td>
<td>Dislike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>12.3*</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>9.7</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>10.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>8.0</td>
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</table>

* all scores are out of a possible 14 points
more positive or more negative attitudes about writing. In 79 percent of the classes, the mean score of the students listed by their teacher as the ones who "really enjoy writing" was higher than the mean score of the students listed as the ones who "really do not enjoy writing." But, in 32 percent of the classes, the difference between the mean score of the "likes" and "dislikes" was less than one point. This could indicate several things: that the teachers are not able to distinguish between those students who like writing and those students who do not; that the students' attitudes are not really very clear-cut at this time; or that the attitude measuring instrument is not constructed in such a way as to distinctively differentiate children's attitudes toward writing.

The majority of the students in grades four, five, and six at the elementary school used for the investigation, had total scores on their post-test above seven (see Table VII). Less than 26 percent of the students completing the questionnaire received scores between one and seven (supposedly indicating a poor attitude toward writing). Seventy-four (74) percent of the students received scores between eight and fourteen (supposedly indicating a good attitude toward writing). It is therefore possible that the majority of the children surveyed had a positive attitude toward writing, as indicated by the attitude measurement instrument. However, it is possible that the instrument was constructed in such
TABLE VII

BREAKDOWN BY TOTAL POINTS OF FOURTH, FIFTH, AND SIXTH GRADE SCORES ON THE ATTITUDE MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENT POST-TEST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Score</th>
<th>Total Number Having Score</th>
<th>Percentage of Total $\times/222$</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt; .01</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>&lt; .01</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
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<td>.17</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.04</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A way that it would tend to skew to the upper end of the scale. A more sensitive instrument for measuring students' attitudes towards writing may have produced different results.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not children's ability and interest in writing is affected by having their teacher write along with them. The study was carried out using a group of fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students at an elementary school in Dallas, Texas. The two experimental groups were composed of students who signed up for an after school writing course. The applicants were divided into two groups. Both groups had the same curriculum taught by the same instructor. The $E^2$ group received different treatment only in that the instructor participated in the writing assignments along with the children. A control group was chosen to generally reflect the same age, sex, and ethnic breakdown as the experimental groups.

All students in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade were pre- and post-tested by an attitude questionnaire designed by the researcher. The attitude measurement instrument was shown to be statistically invalid and unreliable, so results from the instrument are not indicative of any gain, loss, or change in the students' attitudes.
Also, all students in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade wrote a story before the experimental groups began their treatment, and a story after the experimental groups' treatment was concluded. Both sets of stories were scored holistically by a group of trained scorers. The scores revealed that no statistically significant changes took place.

Conclusions

The generalizability of this study is limited since the investigator was also the teacher in the experiment. The results of this experiment would lead one to believe that direct writing instruction and writing with one's students make no difference in a student's interest and ability to write. But, the results could have been affected by the inconsistent attendance and the inconsistent completion of out of class assignments by the students. Of the students who had 50 percent attendance or better, twelve made gains in their writing ability while only three declined. Also, since growth in writing occurs very slowly (Stallard, 1979; Tomlinson and Straehly, 1978) in children, research done within a five month period may not reflect any growth or change in the students' abilities.

Further individual questioning of students completing the attitude survey revealed that many of the children perceived "writing" not as the creative skill of composing, but as the manipulative skill of cursive handwriting or as
the rote copying of sentences from a grammar book. This situation is analogous to children's perception of "reading" as workbooks, basal readers and worksheets. Thus, since all the attitude questions asked about "writing," many children answered from one of the aforementioned reference points, not from composing as was the researcher's intention.

Recommendations

After a thorough review of the materials collected during the study, especially the review of the literature concerning children's writing and its motivation, it is possible to make the following recommendations.

1. Elementary classroom teachers need to be trained to teach writing.

2. Direct teaching of writing skills at the elementary school level needs to be expanded and its effects monitored.

3. Based on the results in Table IV showing the gains/losses in writing ability made by students with 50 percent attendance or better, research needs to be done to determine whether consistent attendance is a factor in facilitating writing improvement in children.

4. An experiment similar to this investigation needs to be conducted at the regular classroom level, where teachers will be trained to carry out the specific curriculum. The effects should be measured after one year and again after two years.
5. A valid, reliable, easily administered writing attitude measurement instrument needs to be developed for use in the elementary school. Once it is developed, it can be used to determine what improves children's attitudes towards writing.
APPENDIX
Dear Parents:

Throughout the months of November, December, January, February, and March, I will be conducting after school classes for children who are interested in creative writing. The classes, for fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students, will be taught once a week from 2:50 to 3:35, on either Monday or Tuesday. The workshops will help the children improve their sentence structure, paragraph construction, and other composition skills.

I have taught Language Arts for three years in Jefferson City, Missouri and am now in my second year of teaching in Dallas at _________________. I am now getting my Master's degree from North Texas State University in Elementary Education with an emphasis in children's writing, which is the area of my greatest interest, experience, and expertise.

I will only be offering two classes, and each will be limited to a few students. The size will be limited so that individual attention can be given. There will be a $5.00 registration fee. This fee will be used to buy all the materials your child will need for the 16 weeks of the course. Please attach the $5.00 to the completed registration form and have your child return it to me by Friday,
October 23, 1981. If the classes fill up before then, your $5.00 will be returned to you right away.

If you have any questions, call the school between 8:00 and 4:00 and leave a message for me; I will return your call.

Thank you,

Meggin McIntosh

--------------------------
Child's name______________________Class section____

Briefly, why are you interested in enrolling your child for the writing class?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Parent's signature____________________________________________________
Dear Parents;

Thank you for enrolling your child in the writing classes. We will begin classes during the week of November 2. Your child will be in the (Monday or Tuesday) class.

The dates for the classes are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>November 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>December 1</td>
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<td>December 7</td>
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<td>January 4</td>
<td>January 5</td>
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<td>February 1</td>
<td>February 2</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>Wednesday (due to staff development)</td>
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<td>March 1</td>
<td>March 2</td>
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<td>16</td>
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I am very excited about the classes. Thank you for supporting the idea. Feel free to call me at school anytime between 8:00 and 4:00. I'll return your call as soon as possible.

Meggin McIntosh
Directions for Writing Pre-Assessment

"Please listen to the following story about a little old woman who lives way up in the mountains in a place where there is no weather. In the story, she buys four paintings from a peddler, or salesman. The paintings turn out to be quite magical.

After you hear this story, I will give you directions for a story that I would like for you to write. The story I am going to read to you is Ida Fanfanny by Dick Gackenbach."

Read Ida Fanfanny

"Now that you have heard the story of Ida Fanfanny, I want you to imagine that you have a picture that is magical. Your picture, which can be of anything, or of anyplace that you want, is enchanted, just like the four pictures that Ida bought. All you have to do to get into your favorite picture is to sing your favorite song very loud, and you will magically float into the place or situation that your picture shows.

After I finish talking to you, I want you to write a story about your magical picture. You may tell how you got the picture, and what it shows. Then, tell about at least one adventure or experience you have had with your
picture. Remember, a story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. Please do your best while you are writing your story. It's O.K. to think for a few minutes before you start writing, but don't take too long because you will only have thirty minutes to write. You may not ask your teacher how to spell any words. Just spell the best you can. I'll be able to tell what you mean.

There should be no talking at all while you are writing. Please remember: it is important to do your best. Thank you!
APPENDIX 4

Directions for Writing Post-Assessment

"Please listen to the following story about a little girl who gets a very special ring out of a gumball machine. After you hear this story, I will give you directions for a story that I would like for you to write. The story I'm going to read you is The Sweet Touch by Lorna Balian."

Read The Sweet Touch

"Now that you have heard the story of Peggy and her shiny plastic ring, I would like for you to imagine that you got a ring from a gumball machine that was magical. Pretend that Oliver the Magnificent Magic Genie appeared to grant you one wish. After I finish talking to you, I want you to write a story about your magical ring. In your story, tell about your wish and what happened after you made your wish. Remember that a story has a beginning, a middle and an ending. Please do your best while writing your story. It is O.K. to think for a few minutes before writing your story, but don't think for too long because you will only have 30 minutes to write. You may not ask your teacher how to spell any words. Just spell everything the best way you can. I'm sure I'll know what you mean."
There should be no talking at all during the 30 minutes you're writing. Please remember that it is important to do your best. Thank you."
APPENDIX 5

Writing Attitude Measurement Instrument

Circle the answer that is the closest to the way you feel about the question. Thank you.

1. Do you like to write stories?
   YES            NO            SOMETIMES

2. How many stories do you write in a week?
   MORE THAN 1   NONE          1

3. Do you write when you have free time at home?
   OFTEN         NEVER         SOMETIMES

4. Do you write when you have free time at school?
   OFTEN         NEVER         SOMETIMES

5. Do adults need to know how to write?
   YES            NO            I DON'T KNOW

6. Would you like to learn to write better?
   YES            NO            I DON'T CARE

7. Will you need to know how to write when you are out of school?
   YES            NO            I DON'T KNOW
APPENDIX 6

Writing Attitude Measurement Instrument
Post-test

Circle the answer that is the closest to the way you feel about the question. Thank you.

1. Do adults need to know how to write?
   YES       NO       I DON'T KNOW

2. Will you need to know how to write when you are out of school?
   YES       NO       I DON'T KNOW

3. Would you like to learn to write better?
   YES       NO       I DON'T CARE

4. Do you write when you have free time at school?
   OFTEN     NEVER     SOMETIMES

5. Do you write when you have free time at home?
   OFTEN     NEVER     SOMETIMES

6. Do you like to write stories?
   YES       NO       SOMETIMES

7. How many stories do you write in a week?
   MORE THAN 1   NONE   1
APPENDIX 7

Writing Attitude Measurement Instrument
Check Test

Circle the answer that is the closest to the way you feel about the question. Thank you.

1. Do you write when you have free time at home?
   
   OFTEN   NEVER   SOMETIMES

2. Do you write when you have free time at school?
   
   OFTEN   NEVER   SOMETIMES

3. How many stories do you write in a week?
   
   MORE THAN 1   NONE   1

4. Do you like to write stories?
   
   YES   NO   SOMETIMES

5. Would you like to learn to write better?
   
   YES   NO   I DON'T CARE

6. Do adults need to know how to write?
   
   YES   NO   I DON'T KNOW

7. Will you need to know how to write when you are out of school?
   
   YES   NO   I DON'T KNOW
APPENDIX 8

Writing Attitude and Interest Questionnaire

Please answer these questions honestly and completely. Use the back of the paper if you need more room to write your answer.

1. What is writing?

2. What should you know to be able to write well?

3. What is a good writer?

4. Is writing important to you?

5. Is writing important to adults?

6. Is your teacher a writer?

7. How many times per week does your teacher write (if she does)?

8. What is your teacher’s opinion of writing?

9. Why does your teacher have you write (if she does)?

10. Do you ever get to write about anything you want?

11. What do you like to write about?

12. What do you think about before you write?

13. How much of a story do you have in mind before you begin writing?
14. What do you think about while you are writing?

15. What problems do you have while you are writing?

16. What help do you need when you write?

17. Where do you get this help?

18. How many times each week do you write?

19. Why do you want to write well (if you do)?

20. What is the one thing you really want to learn about writing?
Day 1
Thrust: Tools for Writing
   Journal Writing
Plan: Introduce tools for writing: dictionary, 20,000
   Words, etc.
   Introduce the thesaurus, briefly
   Pass out spiral notebooks for journals
Describe journal and how it will be used during
   this course:
   a) write everyday
   b) write about anything
APPENDIX 10

Day 2
Thrust: Sentence Construction
Plan: Talk about complete sentences
Discuss and write a bunch of complete sentences
(contrast with incomplete sentences).
Make a long list of verbs (fun verbs: wiggled, squeezed, tromped).
Make a long list of funny names (e.g. Fredinella, Samnoffa).
Put the noun and verb together; have the students flesh out the noun and verb into full sentences.
Sentence combining (use sheet from Writing/Thinking)
Homework: More practice with sentence combining
APPENDIX 11

Day 3

Thrust: Sentence review

Introduction: Paragraph

Plan: Go over sentence combining assignment

Review complete vs. incomplete sentences

Discuss what a paragraph is (group of sentences that all go together about one idea or topic)

Have a large chart in view with a plan for a paragraph (Pass out sheet from MacMillan T. Ed. about organizing and designing a paragraph)

Let them generate a topic sentence and 4-6 detail sentences (Put on chart paper)

Homework: Another sentence combining activity

Write a paragraph about being an only, oldest, youngest, or middle child. Put paragraph on transparency.
APPENDIX 12

Day 4

Thrust: Paragraph construction

Revision

Plan: Put their paragraphs up on the overhead projector
We will critique (positively). We will discuss
the 'goods' and look for ways to improve.

Talk about the value of revising

Pass out "Revision Checklist" (from Writing/Thinking)

Begin revising paragraphs

Homework: Finish revising paragraph

Write another paragraph using ideas from the Birdseye
Writing Skills: Paragraphs book
APPENDIX 13

Day 5

Thrust: Paragraphs

Plan: We will write a paragraph together (using an idea from Values Clarification as a topic)

Then, they will have 15 minutes on their own to organize and write a paragraph on a similar topic.

Read paragraphs to peer groups; critique positively

Homework: Write another similar paragraph

Revise the paragraph that they wrote and read to peer group
Day 6
Thrust: Characterization
Plan: Discuss "What is characterization?"
List characteristics that a person can have (add to "Description Checklist" from *Not Just Schoolwork*
Discuss ways to characterize someone without coming right out and saying e.g. "She is nice."
Write characterizations on chart paper (generated by the group), both sentences and paragraphs.
Using description checklist, characterize the kind of person that would wear a padded suit (as shown on the front of an *Instructor* magazine)
Homework: Finish characterization of padded suit person
Characterize self using "10 Most Wanted List" from *Not Just Schoolwork* as a guide
Day 7

Thrust: Characterizations

Beginnings/Openings

Plan: Collect all the "10 Most Wanted List" assignments.

Teacher will read them aloud; the students will attempt to determine whose characterization it is.

Discuss how, when writing a story, it is a good idea to come up with the characters, do the characterizations, then write the story.

Introduce "beginnings" or "openings" of stories.

Generate ways to begin stories: with questions, with exciting characterizations, with intriguing settings, etc.

Do examples of each together.

Homework: Use page in Not Just Schoolwork that focuses on writing interesting questions.

Write a paragraph with the opening being "How did I ever get into this mess?"
Day 8

Thrust: Beginnings/Openings

Plan: Have students read their assignments from last week

Pass out pages from Writing/Thinking for their notebooks (about ways to open stories)

Generate beginnings for several different types (themes) of stories, e.g. mystery, supernatural, discovery, legend, future (space), history, humor, sports

Homework: Generate a beginning for 2 of the types (themes) that were listed
APPENDIX 17

Day 9

Thrust: Setting

Plan: Discuss "What is the setting?"

List what can be included in the setting (use 5 senses, setting the mood, etc)

Talk about the Thesaurus and how it can help in writing descriptions

As a group, write a setting for a story

Homework: Find 2 setting descriptions in books

Pick 2 types of stories; write a setting for each
Day 10
Thrust: Setting
Plan: Read settings that were written for homework.
The group will determine what mood is set, and what senses are used.
Meet in peer group to read the second setting that each student wrote. Proceed in same manner as above.
Homework: Using their own house as a setting—they are to describe it twice: once each for two different types of stories (e.g. humorous and mystery)
Day 11
Thrust: Endings/Closings
Plan: Discuss endings
Discourage catchall endings like "and then I woke up"
Discuss "winding up a story"
Read several good endings to the group from books
Homework: The students are to find an old story that they wrote before and rewrite the ending.
Write an ending for a story.
APPENDIX 20

Day 12

Thrust: Endings/Closings

Plot

Plan: Read endings that were written for homework to peer group

Introduce plot (What is the plot of a story?)

Discuss the concept of problem/resolution, give numerous examples

On chart paper, list some of the problems that characters in a story could have (ideas generated by the students)

Homework: Using one of the problems that was listed, write a plot showing how a character resolves the problem or conflict.
APPENDIX 21

Day 13

Thrust: Plot Development

Plan: Read the plots written as homework in the peer groups. Peer groups are to help each person fill in any holes that they perceive in the plot.

Homework: Using suggestions made by peer group, continue working with plot. Children may decide to rewrite their plot completely, using a new problem.
APPENDIX 22

Day 14

Thrust: Interesting Writing (good word choice)

Plan: Work with the thesaurus. Find interesting words to replace some over-used words (e.g. said, good, big)

Using ordinary sentences (which have been prepared ahead of time on sentence strips), the group will transform them into interesting sentences by changing the wording and/or replacing some words with synonyms.

Homework: Do 2 pages from Not Just Schoolwork about using new and different words.

Take any 2 previous assignments. Rewrite them using more descriptive, interesting words.
APPENDIX 23

Day 15

Thrust:  Story Development

Plan:  Review all the parts of the story that have been discussed so far in the class: beginnings, character development, settings, endings, plot.

Talk about putting a whole story together.

Tell them that they are going to write a whole story.

Encourage them to incorporate any of the writing they have done since October into this story (e.g. characters, settings, etc.)

Pass out "Starting from Scratch" from Birdseve Writing Skills: Fiction. Explain it.

Homework:  Begin working on "Starting from Scratch"
APPENDIX 24

Day 16

Thrust: Story Development

Plan: Work on story in class

Encourage the children to work out any problems that they are having with each other or with me (community of writers).

Homework: Continue working on story--it should be completed by next class time.
APPENDIX 25

Day 17

Thrust: Adapting story to a filmstrip

Plan: Explain the option that they have of making their story into a filmstrip (using U-Film Kit)

   Explain steps: a) storyboard
                  b) script
                  c) put drawings on filmstrip

Homework: Work on and try to complete filmstrip
Day 18

Thrust: Culmination

Plan: Complete filmstrip

Prepare it for showing
APPENDIX 27

Books Used as Resource Books for Treatment


Guidelines for Holistic Scoring (Story A & B)

0= Not scorable because it is blank or fails in some other way to respond to the assignment.

- does not respond to assignment, regardless of how well-organized and free from mechanical errors.

- paper says "I don't know."

- paper that simply copies the assignment.

- illegible paper.

1= Attempt to address topic is unsuccessful. Verbal cues are considered in a marginal way.

- response is a disconnected group of sentences that merely answer questions possibly formed about the stimulus.

- a list of things that might happen as long as the list is related to the stimulus.

- incoherent because of garbled syntax or extremely confused details.

2= Relates an expressive/narrative in a manner consistent with the stimulus but in a skeletal way or in a way that rambles on and on losing focus of the story.

- short sequence of events: this happened, then this, then this.

- inclusion of additional information that detracts from the story.

- contains major gaps; e.g., action taking place in one setting abruptly shifts to another.

3= Consistent with stimulus and presents a somewhat elaborated narrative that may contain slight gaps and inconsistencies.
- dialogue, particular details, varied choice of words, names, or details or emotional reaction between the writer and the situation.

- a narrative sequencing with few gaps or inconsistencies.

- tends to stop rather than come to a conclusion.

4 = Consistent, well-organized and elaborated narrative. Reader has to do little or no inferring about the writer's meaning.

- elaboration that is interconnected with the story line (details are imbedded within the story).

- rich details and varied word choices that help the reader visualize events and enter into the story.

1 = poor  2 = fair  3 = good  4 = excellent
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