

**BENEFITS TO THIRD GRADE STUDENTS FROM
ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN A WRITING
WORKSHOP**

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Writing had always been an important part of my third grade curriculum, or at least I thought it had until I became a Summer Fellow of the Oklahoma State University Writing Project. After working collaboratively with other teachers and becoming a member of a writing group, I began to realize that there was much more to teaching writing. I was merely instructing my students on different techniques and types of writing. I was not allowing them to grow on their own as writers or to work in groups where ideas could be shared and help was available from a peer when needed. I decided at that point that I wanted my students to reap some of the same benefits I had by actively participating in a writing workshop.

As I thought back over what I had gained from participating in a writing workshop, I began to piece together the tangible benefits I had received. Over the five-week period my writing group (three other teachers besides myself), as well as the group as a whole, became my friends and colleagues. We became a community of learners working and learning together, and sharing our thoughts and feelings through our writing. Our strengths and talents became a resource we shared with each other. Sometimes we would struggle to construct something new and different from anything we had written before. By working so closely together, my perception of what I was capable of accomplishing grew, and I became more comfortable with trying different types of writing. I had always considered writing to be an independent activity, so I was surprised to learn that writing became a social activity when you joined a writing group.

I used a writing workshop with my class last year, and I was pleased with the progress they made, both in writing skills and collaborative skills. My class this year was unique. In my 12 years of teaching, this class has probably produced more challenges than any I have ever encountered. A large portion of these children struggle for the daily necessities of food, clothing, and shelter. One child has moved to the Salvation Army shelter with her mother; another has been knocking on the doors of his apartment complex asking for food; and another child, who is almost 11, was in first grade until April of 1993. At that time he was put into a second grade class and then in August he started third grade. Several students have a parent in jail or prison; some will be released this year. These children struggle with daily living because their personal lives are so complicated. They have low self-esteem, and their interpersonal skills are almost nonexistent. This class also has a group of children who lead more stable lives and are typical third grade students: talkative, inquisitive, active, and sometimes troublesome, but willing to work and learn.

This unusual group of students became very special to me, and I wanted them to experience what Atwell (1987), Calkins (1991), and Graves (1983) described in their books about children experiencing a sense of community, developing decision-making skills, and learning to work with others in a cooperative spirit. But I was still reluctant to try a writing workshop. I had never read of a group like this in a writing workshop. Would these children be able to trust one another to work together? Would they be a part of our class long enough to even begin the process, or would they move out and more new students move into our classroom? It was my hope that by instituting a writing workshop as part of our daily curriculum, my students would reap some of the benefits I enjoyed by participating in a writing workshop.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to determine what benefits students attending a school with a high mobility rate would derive by actively participating in a writing workshop.

Research Questions

The following questions provided direction for this study:

1. What benefits will children attending a school with a high mobility rate derive by actively participating in a writing workshop?
 - a. Will the class become a community of learners even though the population fluctuates often?
 - b. As the children begin to construct their own knowledge based upon their mistakes, will their writing skills and punctuation skills improve?
 - c. Since cooperative-operative learning is an integral part of the writing workshop, what benefits will the students receive by learning to work together?

Definition of Terms

The following list of terms was used in this study:

Writing Workshop. A writing workshop, for the purpose of this study, was defined as: (a) a time set aside during the school day when children have time to think, write, discuss their writing, and write again; (b) mini lessons taught by the teacher to help students improve their writing and collaborative skills; (c) a place for students to share their work, in groups in published form; and (d) a place where students become responsible and independent learners because of the choices they are allowed to make.

Process Writing. Process writing was defined as ". . . a multistep strategy through which students learn how to gather and organize ideas for writing, how to write a rough draft, and how to refine and polish that piece of writing" (Tompkins, 1990, p. 15). This is not a lock-step process, but each part of the process interacts with the other parts (Murray, 1990).

Mini-Lesson. For the purpose of this study, a mini lesson was defined as ". . . a brief meeting that begins the workshop where the whole class addresses an issue that's arisen in previous workshops . . . to introduce different modes and genres writers might want to try" (Atwell, 1987, p. 77), as well as to teach the procedures to be followed in the writing workshop.

Mobility Rate. Mobility rate was defined by the following mathematical formula:

$$\text{Mobility Rate} = (\text{Mobility Transactions}/\text{Beginning enrollment}) \times 100.$$

"Mobility transactions include any enrollment or withdrawal for any reason, including suspensions, after the third day of school. Beginning enrollment is the membership on the fourth day of school" (Roger, 1993, p.1).

Constructivism. For the purpose of this study, constructivism was defined as ". . . showing that children acquire knowledge not by internalizing it directly from the outside but by constructing it from the inside, in interaction with the environment" (Kamii, Manning, & Manning, 1991, p. 18).

Cooperative Learning. Cooperative learning was defined as students discussing their work, helping and assisting each other, and encouraging each other to work to accomplish a shared goal (Johnson & Johnson, 1991).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Writing Workshop

Our students need what readers and writers the world over need. They need places to go and things to do. They need supplies: paper, pens, pencils of all sorts and sizes, typewriters and word processors, if possible; stamps, envelopes, phone books, catalogues, and files of addresses; paper clips, staplers, scissors, carbon paper, tape, white-out; file folders, file drawers, and ways to index their work; dictionaries, encyclopedias, atlases, and thesauruses. They need lots of time to write and doodle and dream and play. They need ways to get advice, to gain distance, to settle down and write, to take a break. But more than all of this, they need to feel at home. They need to feel safe and respected and free to be themselves (Calkins, 1991, p. 27).

Calkins described a classroom writing workshop--a time set aside during the day for students to focus on their thoughts and feelings, and to write and rewrite. A time to share their ideas, their writing and their thoughts about others' writing. A quiet place to be alone to collect one's thoughts, as well as a noisy place to share, confer, and applaud (Atwell, 1987; Graves, 1983; Moffett & Wagner, 1992; Tompkins, 1990). Bunce-Crim (1991) described a writing workshop as ". . . an environment conceived to encourage written expression . . . a predictable, safe place for them [children] to take risks" (p. 36).

Once the physical setting has been designed and constructed, the teacher needs to decide on the amount of time allotted for the writing workshop. Murray (1990) suggested that "Most productive writers establish a routine and write at the same time every day" (p. 16). Atwell (1987) allotted at least three hours a week for her students to write. She also felt it to be extremely important for students to write on consecutive days to provide a sense of routine and continuity. Hansen (1987) and Tompkins (1990) both suggested daily writing for elementary students. The ideal for all teachers would be to allow 45 minutes to an hour daily. The reality is that this amount of time is difficult to find in an already tight schedule. According to Graves (1983):

Teachers find time for writing by taking it. They take it from reading, handwriting, spelling, and language, knowing that writing produces gains in all of these subject areas. The gains come only if the teacher takes enough time with the writing . . . at least four forty-five to fifty minute periods [a week] are necessary to provide a strong writing experience (p. 90).

Mini-Lessons

Mini-lessons become an integral part of the writing workshop. During the 5-10 minute lessons, new concepts and techniques are introduced and taught to help students who are struggling with different aspects of their writing. Procedural information about the writing workshop and how students function in a writers' workshop are also included (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1991). Mini-lessons can be used in small groups as well as for individuals. During these lessons, the teacher addresses a particular problem that the students are having. In this way, a teacher is able to individualize instruction and teach a skill at a time when learning it is important to the student (Tompkins, 1990). Graves (1983) suggested using mini-lessons to model writing for children. Through the

use of modeling and writing together, the group learns to solve writing problems which all writers encounter.

Writing becomes a process of sharing what we know about our experiences. The class becomes a community because we possess a growing fund of facts about each other's experiences. . . . When a class becomes a community, its members learn to help and model for each other (Graves, 1983, p. 51).

Writing Process

There are probably as many models of writing process as there are writers. Each writer develops his/her own process as he/she develops as a writer. Even though each writer ultimately develops this individualized process, there are models which can be taught to help emergent writers. Murray (1990) suggested five primary activities that take place during the writing process. These activities are: (a) collecting--we are constantly collecting and recollecting specific information we receive through our five senses; (b) focusing--". . . paying special attention to those scraps of information that begin to have particular meaning" (p. 7) for the writer; (c) ordering--connecting the information that interests the writer with other information, so that meaning evolves; (d) drafting--writing begins; writers talk to themselves, using their voices to help them define what they have to say; and (e) clarifying--a process where the writer tries to learn what has been thought, learned, and felt. All of these activities take place simultaneously. The writing process is not a linear process, but a recursive process, one where the writer might go back to collect, or focus, or reorder while writing a draft.

Atwell (1987) talked in generalities about the writing process. She used a poster for the first three weeks of her writing workshop. It gives the writers a guideline for what they will be doing during the writing workshop. The poster consists of:

WRITERS:

- rehearse (find an idea)
- draft one
- confer
- draft two/revise
- confer
- decide the content is set
- self edit
- teacher edit
- final copy/go public (p. 127).

It was Atwell's goal, after a three-week period, to have her eighth-grade students make their own decisions about their writing by looking at and thinking about their writing.

Since elementary-aged students are more concrete in their thoughts, Tompkins' (1990) overview used more specific language. It is defined as: (a) prewriting, (b) drafting, (c) revising, (d) editing, and (e) sharing. The labels of the different stages are used for ". . . identifying and discussing the activities that represent each stage" (p. 72). The process is described as being "cyclical, involving recurring cycles" (Tompkins, 1990, p. 72).

Each of the authors described the same process, using terms (or labels) that were appropriate to the group they were focusing on...Murray (1990)--adults, Atwell (1987)--junior high students, and Tompkins (1990)--elementary-aged students.

Benefits From Participation in a Writing Workshop**Community Building**

Improved writing skills would be considered a primary benefit that students would receive when actively participating in a writing workshop. Before these skills can develop fully, the class needs to become a community of writers. "They need to feel at

home. They need to feel safe and respected and free to be themselves" (Calkins, 1991, p. 27). The group sharing time during writing workshop is where the community begins to form and grow. Atwell (1987) worked hard with her eighth-grade writers to ". . . make the group share meeting a safe place....--all writers--need to know when they read about that their ideas will be heard and nothing bad will happen" (p. 85). Developing a safe place for students to risk writing and exposing their thoughts is considered to be one of the most important factors in forming a community of writers (Bunce-Crim, 1991; Dudley, 1989; Graves, 1983; and Tompkins, 1990). Hansen (1987) described a writers' community as a place where everyone wants to share and learn from each other, and that through sharing, each member knows what the others know. The community becomes a collective of diverse information, which underlies the success of writing. "Children need to be called together into a community, and they need to rediscover over and over again that yes, indeed, they have observations to make, stories to tell, lessons to teach" (Calkins, 1991, p. 28).

Writing Skills

"At third grade, kids' wings emerge and begin to unfurl. The unfurling happens if the classroom is a safe enough place to take that risk, to reveal these gorgeous, delicate wings" (Maxim, cited in Atwell, 1987, p. 124). "Teachers can provide that help by responding sensibly and sensitively to students' writing by modeling, by helping kids make choices, by giving enough class time to writing so that writers can work through and solve their problems" (Atwell, 1987, p. 124).

Writing skills are taught mainly through mini-lessons involving the whole class, or through conferencing, either one-on-one or in small groups. Mini-lessons are used to demonstrate for students the techniques needed to grow as writers (Atwell, 1987; Tompkins, 1990). Atwell's (1987) mini-lessons are based in four skill areas: format, punctuation, usage, and spelling. She feels mini-lessons are a valuable addition to the

writing workshop, but are not a substitute for the personal response given during conferences.

When teaching skills while conferencing, the teacher needs to ". . . seize the teachable moment when students want or need to learn a particular language skill to communicate effectively in writing" (Tompkins, 1990, p. 20). Graves (1983) contended that skills taught during a conference last longer because they are taught within the context of the child's own writing. The teacher is able to focus directly on the needs of the student she is conferencing with, and teach only the most important skill or skills the student needs for that work (Silver, 1989).

Once these skills have been taught, either through mini-lessons or conferencing, the teacher needs to observe the student and his writing to check the progress of the student in using the skills. Checklists can be kept in the child's writing folder as a permanent record of the child's progress in writing (Graves, 1983; Tompkins, 1990).

Cooperative Skills

"What children can do together today, they can do alone tomorrow" (Vygotsky, cited in Johnson & Johnson, 1991, p. 57). This is an important goal for cooperative learning groups and writing groups.

Cooperation is working together to accomplish shared goals. . . . In cooperative situations, individuals perceive that they can reach their goals only if the other group members do so. Their goal attainments are positively correlated; consequently, individuals discuss their work, help and assist each other, and encourage each other to work hard (Johnson & Johnson, 1991, p. 6).

For cooperative groups to be successful, the students need to be taught the necessary skills to function in these groups. They need to ". . . become skillful in communication, building and maintaining trust, providing leadership, and managing

conflicts" (Johnson & Johnson, 1991, p. 146). Once these collaborative skills are taught and implemented in small groups, the groups should become productive and effective. Many times, the students need refresher lessons in collaborative skills when they are dealing with a difficult problem.

Piaget (cited in DeVries & Kohlberg, 1987) viewed cooperation in a social context. Cooperation became a ". . . method of social relations, and included conflict. Mutual respect created the basic dynamic in which individuals wanted to try to cooperate . . ." (Piaget, cited in DeVries & Kohlberg, 1987, p. 30). This leads to problem solving, which is an important aspect of any cooperative group. By encouraging interaction in a group, the children learn how others in the group solve problems. Since this is a continuing process, the students learn many strategies for solving problems and are able to deal effectively with more of the problems on their own (Hansen, 1987).

Cooperative groups are heterogeneous groupings where each person's contributions are valued and learning occurs at all levels. Katz and Chard (1990) advocated using project work to provide ". . . activities in which children of many different ability levels can contribute to the ongoing life and work of the group. Working together on projects also provides situations and events in which social skills are functional and can be strengthened" (p. 49). Writing groups are another form of cooperative groups. In these groups, children work with a partner, or the group, to prewrite, draft, revise, and edit their writing. By working in writing groups, children become responsible for their own learning. Writing becomes a social activity in which children learn from each other (Harste & Short, 1988; Tompkins, 1990).

Other benefits of cooperative learning are ". . . higher levels of self-esteem and healthier processes for deriving conclusions about one's self worth" (Johnson & Johnson, 1985, p. 23), higher academic achievement, and improved social skills which will allow the child to work cooperatively with others throughout his life (Johnson & Johnson, 1991). DeVries and Kohlberg (1987) stated that children who work in

cooperative groups receive other benefits in addition to those listed above. These benefits are:

1. take the perspective of co-workers, whose ideas may differ from their's
2. learn to communicate their own points of view in a way that will be listened to
3. make fair decisions about the division of labor
4. compromise when differences arise about what should be goals and how to achieve them
5. coordinate their actions with those of others
6. feel responsibility for the welfare (success) of their partner or group members
7. develop social-moral understandings and skills that they can transfer to a wide range of social interactions (pp. 174-175).

Decision Making

"When they wrote, the students made more decisions than at other times of the day..." (Hansen, 1987, p. 5). Decision making is an integral part of writing groups. The students are constantly making decisions while writing. These decisions range from the very personal: choice of topic, form, what details to include in their writing and how to revise the work (Hansen, 1987; Moffett & Wagner, 1992; Tompkins, 1990); to general group decisions: who will be in charge, who is responsible for different jobs, what they will write, what illustrations to include, and how to revise and edit their work (Moffett & Wagner, 1992; Tompkins, 1990). All of the above decisions are made during the writing workshop. As children work with writing partners, writing groups, or the teacher during conferencing, even more decisions are made. The author now receives positive feedback on what was written: what did the group like, was more information needed

to explain certain aspects, what changes could be suggested, and many other ideas. After sharing, the author decides what revisions need to be made. These are personal decisions, and the author has the final choice in what revisions will be made in the draft (Barron, 1991; Dahl, 1988; Dudley, 1989; Hansen, 1987; Moffett & Wagner, 1992, and Tompkins, 1990). It is important for the students and teachers to remember, "Authors are Authorities. They make decisions" (Hansen, 1987, p. 14).

Knowledge Construction

For centuries educators have assumed that children acquire knowledge by internalizing it from the environment. Constructivism shows, however, that children acquire knowledge not by internalizing it directly from the outside, but by constructing it from the inside, in interaction with the environment (Kamii, Manning, & Manning, 1991, p. 18).

Piaget (cited in Kamii, Manning, & Manning, 1991, p. 9) developed the scientific theory of constructivism ". . . in opposition to another scientific theory, associationism." Behaviorism grew out of associationism. According to the theory, knowledge is acquired by internalizing certain ". . . connections, contingencies, and stimuli from the sources external to the individual" (Kamii, Manning & Manning, 1991, p. 20).

Most of the research on constructivism has been conducted with early learners (four to eight years of age). The research studied how young children construct their knowledge about literacy and mathematics. Ferreiro (1986) researched the evolution of literacy development. It was basic research on the ". . . psychogenesis of the interpretation systems children build in order to understand the alphabetic representation of the language" (p. 12). This research was carried over several years in Argentina and Mexico on children who spoke Spanish as their first language. As a result of this research, it became apparent that children, with their assimilation schemes, must be put at the center of the learning process. Children learn in social settings and not in isolation; and

everyone in the classroom must be accepted as being able to read and write at his or her own level. It also became apparent that it is important to understand the developmental meaning of strange answers and questions for the teacher to act in ". . . accordance with the problems children face at crucial points in their development" (Ferreiro, 1986, p. 25). In Italy, Pontecorvo and Zucchermaglio (1986), found that the social context can help the development of literacy in children, and by social interaction with teachers and peers they can learn to read and write. They also found that children need to be exposed to the rich literate environments in which they are immersed outside of school. The learning experiences need to be organized so that children are invited to ". . . participate in literacy events as a legitimate and significant part of their daily academic learnings" (Loughlin & Martin, cited in Goodman, 1986, p. 117).

Constructivism is a scientific theory that has been confirmed all over the world. "The whole-language perspective developed independently of constructivism" (Kamii, Manning & Manning, 1991, p. 10), even though the thinking involved is similar. Proponents of whole language reject the behavioristic concept that reading and writing are a collection of surface skills and bits of information to be taught. Whole language is ". . . a set of beliefs related to teaching that grew slowly out of many sources such as psycholinguistic research and theory and beliefs about good teaching" (Goodman, cited in Kamii, Manning & Manning, 1991, p. 12.).

Writing in a whole language classroom takes on many forms. It might include journal writing, free writing, retelling of stories, writing books, making lists, writing letters, poetry, as well as many other forms. Teachers in whole language classrooms use modeled writing to introduce children to new forms of writing (within the context of what is being studied), as well as to help children understand the thinking processes of a writer as the teacher verbalizes her thoughts as she writes (Manning & Manning, 1991).

During modeled writing, the teacher writes slowly, thinking aloud about the content and mechanics. . . . She sometimes asks for children's

opinions about words to use, how to spell them and about mechanics.

The teacher makes sure the content is interesting and meaningful for the students. The source of content varies; the teacher uses her/his own ideas on some days while on other days the ideas come directly from the students (Manning & Manning, 1991, pp. 112-113).

Children who observe the teacher writing often are more likely to construct knowledge about written English, especially if the students talk with their teacher and other students about writing. An important concept to remember is that "Children construct different ideas as they experience modeled writing because they bring different kinds and amounts of knowledge to the situation" (Manning & Manning, 1991, p. 114).

Writing can also be an important part of a more traditional classroom. In these settings, children also construct knowledge as they write and interact with what has been written by others. Authoring becomes a form of learning. As children use language to communicate their thoughts and ideas, the process of working with words allows them to construct and generate meanings for themselves and others (Harste & Short, 1988). When authors write (children or adults), the text is never wholly conceived beforehand. The writing process allows authors to clarify what has been written and to revise by adding or deleting information. This gives the author the freedom to construct tentative meanings. When this is combined with ". . . social interaction, authors have the maximum opportunity to encounter new perspectives on their work and to clarify and develop their understandings" (Harste & Short, 1988, p. 17).

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Research Approach

This was a qualitative study which used a narrative inquiry methodology. "Narrative names the structured quality of experience to be studied, and it names the patterns of inquiry for its study. To preserve this distinction we use the reasonably well established device of calling the phenomenon 'story' and the inquiry 'narrative'" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1991, p, 121). Narrative researchers describe storied lives, collect stories about them and write of their experiences (Short, 1991).

Subjects

The students in this study were the 17 children in one section of my third grade communication skill classes. This was a heterogeneous grouping of children, which consisted of 11 girls and 6 boys. Of these 17 children, 9 were Caucasian, 4 were African American, 2 were Hispanic, and 2 were Native American.

Setting

School

The school was John Marshall and Thurgood Marshall Elementary School in Tulsa, Oklahoma. This was considered to be a low-income school, since approximately 55%-60% of the students qualified for free lunches. This school qualified as a Chapter 1 school based on the guidelines of the federal government. The mobility rate for this

school during the 1992-1993 school year was 61%. The mobility rate for my self-contained third grade classroom during the 1992-1993 school year was lower than that for the whole school. Since I only had five students move out and five new students move into the class, it was more stable.

Room 2

John Marshall Elementary School was built in 1956, so the rooms were large, bright, and filled with sunshine. There were eight bulletin boards in the classroom. Each one was covered with bright fabric or bulletin board paper. The best part about having so many boards was the fact that we could hang the students' work all over the room. One board had the calendar, another had our reading homework charts where we kept track of how many minutes each child had read at home; they were totalled for each week. Across the top of the longest white board (we had these in the rooms instead of chalkboards, since our school had the only visually impaired elementary program in Tulsa Public Schools) were kites with diamantes comparing spring and winter. Another long bulletin board had birthday information and poetry. The two largest bulletin boards (wall size) were covered with a farm quilt (from our rural unit) and a large poster of the terra cotta soldiers in X'ian, China (the country studied during our multicultural unit). Since the students were writing books, a small board was devoted to showing the sections of a book. Miss Nelson is Missing was the book used as an example. The last board was beside my desk and on it I had lunch, detention, planning, and library schedules. The board was decorated with drawings and letters the children had written to me during the school year.

Two of the walls were lined with bookcases. These were filled with chapter books, picture books, class books, big books, learning centers, puzzles, dictionaries, encyclopedias, thesauruses, as well as all of the other supplies needed for a third grade class. The children sat at tables instead of in desks. This gave them more room

to spread out and interact with each other. There were rugs covering half the floor in the room. These areas were used for group meetings: "Author's Chair," reading aloud to the children, and space for the children to work with a partner during reading time or writing workshop. My desk was in one corner, usually covered with books, papers, pencils, and whatever else needed a place to rest until I could put it away, grade it, or file it.

Publishing Center

An important area of the room was the publishing table. A large box with shelves held several kinds of paper for writing. Pencils, glue, scissors, staplers, tape, crayons, and markers were available for the students to use while writing and publishing their work. If other supplies were necessary for a special project, they were made available for the students.

Our Workshop

As we began planning the writing workshop, it became evident fairly early that the workshop would include writing across the curriculum--reading and social studies, as well as the many forms of writing one might encounter in a writing workshop. The reason for this was time; I had decided to decrease the reading time by about 10 minutes and the social studies time by 5 minutes. By adjusting our schedule, we were able to find the 45 minutes to an hour daily for writing. The schedule for the workshop was to be: 10 minutes for a mini-lesson, or class discussion; 30 minutes of writing--individual or group writing; and 5 minutes for sharing their writing with a partner, their group, or the class during Author's Chair (which was to be held once or twice a week). This schedule lasted for about one week. After that, the time allotments seemed to disappear. The time needed for mini-lessons and class discussions was usually longer than what we had planned. Sharing began to occur normally during the writing

workshop: someone might need ideas for his/her piece, so he/she would share with a partner; he/she might take time for each person in the group to read what they had been working on; or they might read their story to Miss Pybas or myself. By the end of the third week, Author's Chair was used when someone requested it. The children were very satisfied with the ways they were sharing and did not want to take the time as often for class sharing. Writing time seemed to extend well past the 30 minutes many days. As they became more prolific and more comfortable with writing, they wanted to spend more time each day writing. During the last three weeks of the study, we spent five days a week writing, instead of the four planned.

I didn't tell the students that we were adding something new to our class schedule until the Monday morning we started our writing workshop. Even though we had been writing throughout the year, I had never set a certain time for writing each day. When I mentioned writing, I heard the usual groans, and "Do we have to?" from several children. After a class discussion about what we would be doing, what they would be learning, and all the different types of writing they would be involved with, they seemed a little more comfortable with our writing workshop.

Writing Groups

When designing our workshop, we made the decision that the groups would be selected by the teacher. I selected a strong writer for each group, and I tried to separate the really "bossy" children so there would be only one to a group. This class also included several children with emotional problems, so I worked diligently to keep these in separate groups. If two of these children worked together in a group, then most of my time and the groups time was spent solving the problems they caused. They would tease and sometimes fight with each other or other members of the group. To begin with, we had two groups with four students in each of these groups, and three groups with three students each. The students were anxious to start working in groups.

The first impression I received was that they had already figured out that each person would not have as much work to do if they divided the work. Even though we didn't directly address this issue, all groups came up with this idea at about the same time. The groups seemed to be working rather well until the fourth day. At that time we had two students move. One group was left with two members. It was time to rearrange the groups. We now had four groups of four students each. The very next day another student left. I didn't make any changes that day. During the next week, two more students moved. The groups were becoming unbalanced. The group with only two members complained that each person had too much to do on their collaborative book. I decided then that we would not be able to keep "fixed" writing groups throughout the five week period. The next Monday, when everyone had finished their The Jolly Postman Visits China books, we had a group meeting and discussed what we were going to do about the writing groups. We disbanded the groups and decided a more flexible grouping would work. If they wanted to share their work with someone, they could choose a partner to work with. Some days, when we worked on a collaborative project, I would group them just for that project. At this time, we added a new girl to our classroom. She had been in a learning resource class up to that point in time, and her mother decided she would be better served in the regular classroom. The students never developed the closeness that can be developed when writing groups are stable, but they learned to work with a variety of people. They usually chose the same partner when it was time to work with partners. This at least provided some stability for them. At the end of the five-week period, I computed the mobility rate for that period of time using the formula used by Tulsa Public Schools to compute mobility rates for the school year. We had five students move and one student change from a learning disabilities resource classroom to our class full time. I was surprised to find that we had a mobility rate of 33% for that five-week period.

Data Collection Procedures

The data for this study were collected through a variety of ways. I kept a daily anecdotal journal of happenings during the writing workshop (excerpts in Appendix I) and a weekly reflective journal (excerpts in Appendix J) in which I described what changes I saw happening as a result of the workshop. Copies of my writing lesson plans (mini-lessons, literature read to the children, and publishing plans) were included (Appendix K). The students were interviewed individually during the first and last weeks of the research period of our writing workshop (Appendix G). The interviews were conducted in the classroom at a separate table, where either Mary or I would meet with one child at a time. The other students continued working on their writing during the interview time. We interviewed four to six students a day. The same interview was used both times and the answers compared. During the teacher-student conferences and through observation, the Writing Process Checklist (Appendix H) was completed on two separate occasions. When conferencing with each individual student, either Mary or I would discuss with the student what they had used as a prewriting activity, if they had written more than one draft, what revisions were made after sharing their work with someone else, and how they planned on publishing the piece. The Punctuation Mark Skill Checklist (Appendix H) was also used, but not consistently. At the beginning of the study, I used this form each week (first two weeks), then I realized that little growth was seen by checking that often, so I decided to use the checklist once more, at the end of the study. A Writing Forms Checklist (Appendix H) was utilized for each student to help the student decide what form their writing should take for publication. Samples of the students' writing were collected throughout the writing workshop. A letter (Appendix F) was sent home the first week of the study to obtain permission from each child's parents to use the results of the interviews and the Writing Process Checklist, as well as entries from my journals. I also

asked permission to use samples of the students' writing in this thesis. I received 12 of the 14 letters back granting me permission to use their child's work.

Procedure

The morning section of my communication skills classes was chosen for this study for two reasons. The first was that this was a smaller class, since my afternoon class had 23 students at the beginning of this study. The second reason was that the students could attend to the task better in the morning by virtue of the fact that it was morning and they were more alert. These students traveled to science, math, and art or physical education during the afternoon. I have taught 12 years in this district; six of those years in this building. I have also taught third grade for 8 of the 12 years. Mary Pybas, an elementary education student teacher from Oklahoma State University, was my assistant in this research, since she was in my classroom the entire time of this study.

An introduction of what a writing workshop would be was given to the students on the first day of the study, and they were then assigned to their writing groups. The workshop was scheduled to meet four days a week for 45 minutes each day. Three of the five weeks, the students chose to work five days, and each day longer than 45 minutes. At the beginning of the five-week period, the schedule was more closely adhered to than at the end of the five weeks. The time spent writing increased as a result of their interest in writing and their desire to continue working on their piece of writing. In the beginning, the 45 minutes of the writing workshop were scheduled as follows: 10 minutes for a mini-lesson or class discussion, 30 minutes writing time (alone or with their writing group), and 5 minutes of sharing time. As the weeks progressed, we would usually start with the 10 minute mini-lesson or discussion time, but the writing and sharing time was combined and usually lasted longer. Many times

the students wanted to share as they wrote, or conference with a partner for help on their writing.

The following mini-lessons were taught to introduce process writing, cooperative learning skills, and various forms of writing:

1. Ways to generate ideas for writing and how to turn these ideas into a first draft.
2. How to work with others in a writing group.
3. What is revision, and how you can make your story more interesting.
4. How to solve problems that come up while working in a writing group.
5. Publishing.
6. Letter and postcard writing.
7. Using children's literature to motivate and model writing.
8. Research writing--the question-answer approach.

Children worked at their own pace. Most of the time they had a choice of topic and many times they had a choice of the form of the writing. They used process writing, but many of their pieces were not edited and published. Third grade students have a difficult time with self and peer editing.

In my classroom, the students were seated at tables instead of desks. This helped children to begin to learn to work together. Many times the students used carpet squares to sit on the floor while conferring or writing. This led to a more informal work setting for writing. This setting had already proven productive when used with reading. A writing center was set up which included the paper and supplies the students needed for their writing and the subsequent publishing of their pieces.

Data Analysis

An analysis of this data included comparing the two interviews of each child to see what changes had taken place in the five-week period of the study. I was

interested in their opinions concerning working with a partner or group, how the writing group functioned and if he/she could work within a writing group, and if he/she felt they could make decisions about his/her writing without always consulting me. Had his/her opinions changed during the five week period or were they basically the same? The Writing Process checklist was used to see if each student was doing prewriting, drafting, sharing and revisions. Each piece of writing did not include all these steps, so many times we based our information on our observations of the children and what they were doing while they were writing and working together. The Punctuation Checklist was not as beneficial since this study lasted only five weeks, although a few improvements could be noted. This list needed to be used for a longer period of time (the entire school year) to truly see what growth had taken place, and if the children continued to use the correct forms of punctuation over a long period of time. The Forms of Writing Checklist was used to help the children realize the many forms of writing they already knew and what forms they learned during the writing workshop. The anecdotal and reflective journals were probably the most useful, along with the interviews, in actually seeing the progress of the children in their cooperative skills and community building.

Time

The research portion of the writing workshop lasted for five weeks during the third quarter of the 1993-1994 school year. The five-week period was chosen because I had spent five weeks in my writing group at the OSU Writing Project. The students participated in the writing workshop four to five days a week, depending on their interests and the school's schedule for assemblies, fire drills, and the many other unscheduled interruptions we had.

CHAPTER IV

THE WRITING WORKSHOP AND HOW IT HELPED STUDENTS DEVELOP

The Writing Workshop

A Morning in Our Writing Workshop

This workshop took place during the second week. The students had written two personal narratives and had been working on The Jolly Postman Visits China books collaboratively. It was time for them to think about ways to make their writing more interesting by using descriptive language and adding more details.

The class walked quickly to the carpeted area after I asked them to come for a mini-lesson. When everyone was comfortable, I asked them about illustrators and how they create the illustrations for books. The answers varied from drawing the pictures first and then writing a story, to reading what the author had written and then deciding what to draw. This led to a discussion about the types of words authors use, and how these words help the reader visualize what is happening in the story. At this point, I read Jane Yolen's Owl Moon to the class. I did not show the illustrations to them as I read the book. I wanted them to keep their eyes closed while I read so they could visualize what Jane Yolen wanted them to "see" with her choice of words. When I finished reading we discussed what they had "seen" as I read. Johnathan described the "pointy black trees against the sky," while Darlene described the shadows in the woods. Others began to describe what they had visualized. The next step was to get them to

realize that the only way they could form these images was by the very specific and descriptive language of the author.

After the discussion, they went back to their seats for the writing portion of this mini-lesson. The class book we were going to make was to be called Behind This Door You Will Find.... I modeled what I wanted them to write. I described broccoli, and they had to guess what I was describing by the details and descriptive language that I used. Next, each child decided what he/she wanted to describe for the other students. As I walked around the room, I had each child whisper to me what he/she was going to write about. Most of them understood that they had to use as many details as they could to give the reader clues about what was behind the door. When everyone was finished with their writing and illustrations, we shared what they had described. Everyone had a good time guessing what was "behind the door." There were two instances when they could not guess what that student was describing. As a group, we discussed what other details or descriptive words could have been used as clues.

For this lesson, the complete writing process was not utilized. They did not revise, edit, or rewrite. My goal for this lesson was for the students to become more comfortable using descriptive language in a fun way. Appendix A presents examples of the students' writing for this mini-lesson.

Benefits the Students Derived

Several themes emerged through analysis of the data:

They Became a Community

"Sometimes I'm scared to read my stories to the people." Dee

"If they don't like it [my story] then it's hard to share it." Tammy

These sentiments were common at the beginning of the writing workshop. During Author's Chair on the second day, most children were reluctant to share their

writing, even though we had discussed using only positive comments; and I had modeled positive responses when I responded to a child's writing. Those who shared enjoyed the positive remarks. By the second week, almost everyone wanted to share their writing. The students were learning how to make positive comments and ask questions when they wanted to know more about someone's writing.

Since we used flexible writing groups, I felt this also contributed to a sense of community. The students became more comfortable working with a variety of personalities. They began to trust each other and value each other as unique individuals. We had worked on building this sense of trust since the beginning of the school year, but with the mobility rate for third grade being at almost 88% for the year (computed at the end of the third quarter), they needed the concentrated time spent working together in the writing workshop to feel comfortable with each other. I believe that Author's Chair and working in writing groups caused our class to become a community of learners, a community of writers. This community of writers began to emerge when the students learned to trust each other. They learned to open up, discuss their ideas and feelings about problems with their writing, as well as solutions to problems they encountered when working together. Author's Chair and working in writing groups facilitated this trust.

At the end of the five weeks when we interviewed the students again, there were some very different responses to the question about sharing their work.

"I feel good [about sharing my stories] because some people are happy about it, some people like it a lot and that makes you want to do [write] another one!" Leslie

"I feel proud of myself for writing it [the story]" Margaret

They Learned to Work in a Cooperative Way

"We work together. We think about what we're going to write, and then we see if we agree to write about the same thing." Leona

"We decide before we start who is going to do what." James

Cooperative learning is a prime result of working in a writing group. These children learned to cooperate and work with other students. As they decided what they wanted to write, who would be responsible for different tasks, and how these would be accomplished, they were learning skills that would help them throughout their lives. I wish I could say that cooperative learning and working together in groups was successful every day. Many days they struggled. I taught mini-lessons on working with others and how to make decisions in a group. The groups would function well for several days, then someone would have a bad day. They might scream, throw things, hit someone, or call the other person names. There were just a few students who reacted this violently, but it upset the class each time that it happened. When this occurred, we would work with the group, or the whole class, and discuss what had happened and why it had happened. Then we would begin to talk about solutions to the problem. As the weeks passed, these outbreaks began to happen less often, and the writing groups became cooperative groups. They began helping each other with writing skills, and if someone needed help, they knew the help was available in their group. They joined together to finish the books and other writing assignments.

"When we write, we take turns doing things. If somebody doesn't know how to do something, you help them." Margaret

"In your writing group, you have other people to help you!" Leslie

They Learned to Solve Problems in Productive Ways

Problem solving became a necessary and important skill for our students to acquire. Many of these students reacted before thinking of other solutions to their problems. At the beginning of the five weeks, Mary Pybas and I solved most of the problems within the groups. We worked with each group individually. In this way, we talked about responsibility and choices. These talks had been taking place since the

beginning of school with the children who continued to make poor choices about their behavior and how to solve their problems. While working with the writing groups, the students who were responsible for their behavior and could make fairly good choices became role models for the others. As the weeks passed, Miss Pybas and I were needed less and less to mediate problems within the groups. As we would walk around and work with the different groups, we would overhear some of them solving their problems in their own ways. During the last interviews, one of the questions was, "How do you solve the problems that happen during the writing group?" Many students had some very good suggestions:

"We sort out the problem. If someone is mad, we make them happy again. We apologize to each other." Barbara

"We ask the other people [in the group] how we can solve the problem. We talk over the problem, and then we figure it out." Leslie

"Whoever wants to do the most [work] does. You trade work if you don't want to do a certain thing." Tammy

"Compromise." Maria

"We work together to figure it out and then we take care of it." Leona

"We ask somebody from another group to come over and pick a number if two people want to do the same thing. Who ever gets the closest, gets to do it." James

If students who are 8, 9, and 10 can learn to work in cooperative groups, solve problems, and develop a sense of community while learning to write, then these students are developing life skills which will serve them well throughout their lives.

Improved Writing

"I like [writing workshop] because you get to learn a lot of different things about writing--punctuation, capitals, [and] how to add or take away from your story to make it better." Margaret

Children who are immersed in writing by participating in a writing workshop, should show improvement in their writing ability and punctuation skills. This proved to be the case with these children. Almost everyone improved, nine students improved a great deal, four students not as much, and one child did not improve much at all.

The writing skills and punctuation skills were taught through mini-lessons with the whole class, while working with small groups, or during conferencing one-on-one with students. The lessons that were emphasized were: using prewriting activities to generate ideas and organize their writing; adding details and descriptive language to their writing to make it more interesting; and learning to use dialogue in a story. The punctuation skills which were emphasized were: to consistently use capital letters at the beginning of sentences and for proper nouns; to consistently use the correct ending punctuation for sentences; and using quotation marks correctly when writing dialogue.

To show the improvements, I chose the work of three students. One child, Leslie, was very bright (she scored in the 99 percentile on the composite portion of the ITBS achievement test); the second, Sarah, was a very verbal well-traveled average writer; and the third student, Thomas, struggled to pay attention when it was time to write (Thomas was on medication for ADHD, but many days he would forget to take it before coming to school and would struggle to just stay in one place long enough to write anything and keep his hands to himself). There are three pieces of work included for each child: their "Terrible, Horrible, No Good Very Bad Day!" story, which were modeled from Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day; a prewriting activity; and the story written as a result of the prewriting activity. The first story was written as a rough draft/final draft. The second story was written after brainstorming, using either webbing or listing the ideas. It was read aloud, and some revisions were made. Appendix B displays examples of Leslie's work. Appendix C displays examples of Sarah's work, and Appendix D presents examples of Thomas' work.

By using the first story as a baseline example, it was possible to show how each child improved. Their second stories were organized and more descriptive language was used. In Leslie's story, she described her mother and father diving on their trip: "My dad and mom went deep in the ocean; my dad dived down and picked up a sea urchin." Sarah described the different ways she could do splits in her story: "I can do the splits two ways, left leg and middle." Thomas gave more details about bees making honey: "Bees make honey from inside the trees." Thomas had a difficult time making a story from his sentences about honey (he considered these to be his story). He finally wrote a very short story about his sisters and honey.

Leslie was the only child to include dialogue in her second story: "Then I said, 'Johnathan get that one.'" Since these stories were written, Sarah has used dialogue in her book for our Young Authors' Conference. Even though Thomas has shown a little progress with his writing (organizing it to make more sense), he has yet to use dialogue in his writing. I felt the reason for this was the fact that he struggled to pay attention most days and just never grasped the idea of using dialogue in a story.

Punctuation skills seem to come and go, depending on how quickly they are writing. All three students showed improvements with ending punctuation and capital letters. Leslie was very conscientious about her writing from the beginning. Sarah wrote like she spoke--non-stop! Her second story did show improvement. Thomas used fairly good ending punctuation in his first story. An example of this was: "SO, I went out side and screamed my head off!" He also used capital letters at the beginning of most of his sentences. By the second story, "Honey Looks Good," he used capital letters very consistently.

As a whole, the entire class showed improvement from their first story to the last writing they did during the five-week period. I have included a copy of one group's The Jolly Postman Visits China (Appendix E). This book was written as a class collaborative effort. They dictated the story while I wrote it on the overhead. Each writing group

wrote the story in book form, illustrated the pages, decided what letters and invitations to write, and made it into a book. These were written as a culminating activity for our unit on China.

Constructed Knowledge About Writing

As the students became more active in the writing workshop, they began to be more aware of their writing. They began to recognize when words were missing, when ideas were not well stated, and when the piece of writing did not satisfy them. When a piece of writing satisfied them, they could also express why it was a good example of their work. They gained this awareness about their writing through questioning during conferencing with either Mary or me and during Author's Chair. As the other students would question them about what they had read, they would construct what was missing in the story. This was a slow process, but all the students showed progress in constructing knowledge about their writing (see Appendix J). The following question was a part of the individual interviews: "Do you ever decide there is a better way to write something without the teacher telling you what to do?"

"Yeah, by adding more details. Then I go back and read through it again to see what is needed." Sarah

"Sometimes. I figure out this isn't any good so I pick another topic. I look for ways to make it better. I use quotations--like a conversation with the person." Margaret

"Yes, I read what I wrote. If I like it, I don't do anything to it; if I don't, I change it." James

These are examples of what the students said when they were describing how they construct knowledge about their writing.

At the beginning of the five week-period, it was difficult for me to observe children constructing their own knowledge about writing. I began to become aware of this as they struggled with their writing. Many times their writing did not say what they

thought it did. This became more evident during conferencing or sharing time. When the students read their work aloud to either a partner or the group during Author's Chair, they would recognize that words had been left out, the sentence didn't say what they wanted it to say, or that the sentence ran on forever, because they did not use punctuation marks. When we conferenced with them, we would have them read their story aloud to us first. Then we would begin to ask questions about the story. The first one would always be, "What can you tell me about the story?" Sometimes what they would tell me was different than what they had written. Usually, they gave more details, correcting what they had left out during the writing. They would usually correct the lack of punctuation when retelling the story, but not necessarily in the writing. We would then have them go back to their story to see if they needed to change, add, or delete anything in it. Usually, they would decide to make some changes so the story would make more sense. If they chose not to make changes, then the story was accepted as presented. Editing was done at a different time, since I did not want the students to confuse revising with editing.

Derrick

Derrick has been surly, angry, disrespectful and explosive at times since he started at Marshall last November. He had no friends and made no attempt at making friends. I was very concerned about Derrick becoming part of a writing group. I had absolutely no idea how he would react with the other children. His first group consisted of two girls and another boy. During their time together, Derrick actually smiled a little and seemed to get along well with the other children. He contributed very little, either verbally or in writing to the group, but he didn't explode. When we started changing groups around, I became concerned again. Derrick had good days and some terrible days. By the end of the fourth week he had worked with three groups. Each time I would try to place another boy (one who was emotionally stable) in the group. Derrick

was beginning to contribute to his group, usually verbally. He might write a little every now and then. Derrick began to make friends with two boys who had been in his writing groups. By the end of the five-week period, Derrick was interacting in a more positive manner with his two friends and with the other children in the class. He still had days when he was disruptive, surly, and rude, but he had not exploded into a rage in three weeks. Derrick's writing skills basically did not change during the five-week period, but what he gained was much more valuable. He learned how to work with other children, and he began to learn how other people control their emotions. Derrick continued to have good days and bad days, but it was several weeks between his explosions. If instituting the writing workshop in our classroom had only accomplished this and nothing else had changed, it would have been worth our investment of time and effort (see Appendixes I and J).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, SUGGESTIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

As I observed my third grade students participating in our writing workshop, I saw their "wings emerge and begin to unfurl" (Maxim, cited in Atwell, 1987, p. 124). Their delicate and gorgeous wings became stronger as they learned to work with others in our writing community. The many hours they spent writing, making decisions, solving problems, and constructing knowledge about writing will help them become more capable members of a larger community. I believe that the variety of benefits derived by working together in our writing workshop can only help them become more competent students.

We have continued the writing workshop since the study was completed. Their writing ability improves with each piece they complete. The writing workshop has become their favorite part of the morning. On days when we have assemblies, programs, or field trips, they want to spend at least a little time writing, even if it is only for 15 minutes.

When we began this study, I had absolutely no idea my unique group of third grade students would even share a few of the benefits I felt I had experienced when I was in a writing group. The gains these students have made continue to astonish me. Even though we had to tailor our writing workshop to accommodate our needs, my students are shining examples of what working together in a community of writers can accomplish.

Suggestions

Next August, when a new group of third grade students enter room 2, we will begin writing the very first day. Our writing workshop will be in place by the end of the first week. Since I will be starting this at the beginning of school, I will not need to "steal" time from reading and social studies. The time for the writing workshop will be built in from the beginning.

If a teacher has never had a writing workshop or taught much writing in his/her classroom, I would suggest starting a writing workshop. The best way to do this is to begin slowly. For the first few weeks, use journal writing and Author's Chair. Students begin to get additional ideas for writing by listening to other students read. Once the students (and teacher) feel comfortable with writing using journals, then it is time to expand the students' knowledge of writing. Mini-lessons are a wonderful way to teach a writing skill or a new format for writing. It is helpful to consult teacher resource books when the mini-lessons are being planned. Tompkins' book Teaching Writing: Balancing Process and Product (1990) is a wonderful resource. The first year a writing workshop is included in a classroom is a time of growth, for the students and teacher, and a chance to experiment with different forms and formats of writing.

Children's literature should always be included in any writing workshop. The connection between writing and reading is very strong. The students can model what the author has written, or the students could use the book as a beginning point and write a new ending, a different form to the story, or as a resource for research in other subjects.

It is important that the school library contain the books that will be used in the writing workshop. The librarian could order these books. Our librarian orders books at the end of the school year for the next fall. I try to give her a list of the books I want to use the next school year. As teachers, it is our responsibility to keep informed about the newest publications in children's literature. A librarian or bookstore owner are usually

well informed and can be a valuable resource for the classroom teacher. Above all else, a writing workshop should become an enjoyable time during the day. Give the students time to write, share, and to grow in their writing.

As more and more teachers use writing workshops in their classrooms, I think it needs to be said that there is not only one way to design and conduct a writing workshop. We need to be flexible enough to accommodate the needs of our children. We, the teachers in the classrooms, become experts about our students. We need to use this knowledge to tailor our workshop to our students. The students will be the winners in these situations. They will become more comfortable and more productive because their needs are being met.

Recommendations

For other teachers interested in conducting research on writing in their classrooms, I would recommend a writing workshop. The time frame should be much longer, at least a semester, or preferably a year. With the longer period of time, the changes and growth in writing could be charted easier. Since all students learn at different rates and incorporate what they have learned in different ways, the longer time frame would be beneficial to everyone involved. If a teacher has children with emotional problems in the classroom, the use of cooperative learning helps them to begin to model more normal behavior. A study dealing with the behavior changes of a child with emotional problems who is participating in a writing workshop in a regular classroom setting, would be an interesting area for more research.

The mobility rate of my students was a contributing factor in the decision making process of trying to decide whether to include a writing workshop into our classroom schedule. With so many of the students living mobile lives, I felt that it would be difficult for the children to build the sense of trust and community that are necessary for a writing workshop to be effective. I was very pleasantly surprised to find that my students did

develop into a community of writers who were able to trust one another with their thoughts and writing. I would definitely recommend a writing workshop for classrooms with a high mobility rate. These students need that chance to develop a trusting relationship with a community of their peers. A writing workshop provides this opportunity.

I would like to recommend a writing workshop to all teachers, even if they feel their students are different from those in Atwell's (1987) writing workshop. Mine did not resemble her students at all. The gains they make may not be the same, but I think each of us needs to be cautious about comparing our students with other groups of students. We need to rejoice in their accomplishments and celebrate even small changes. These become the building blocks for other changes as they grow and mature.

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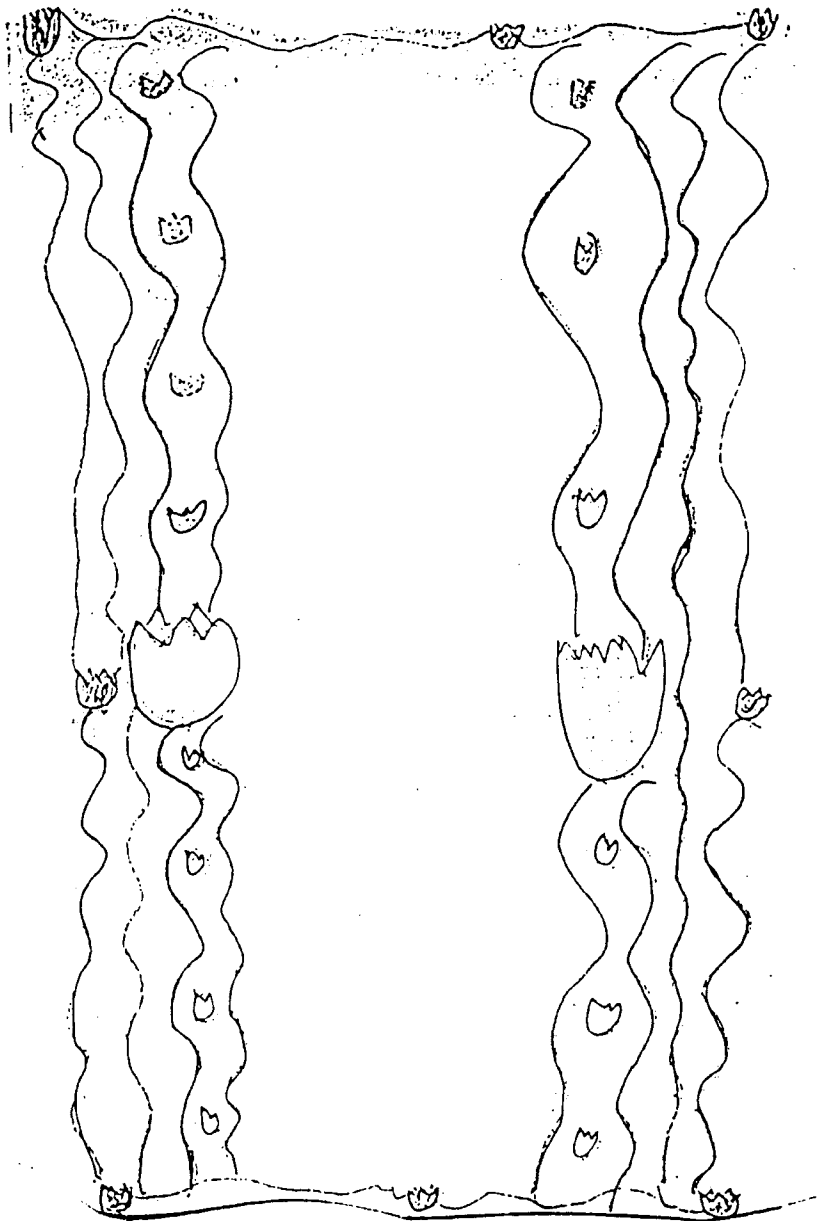
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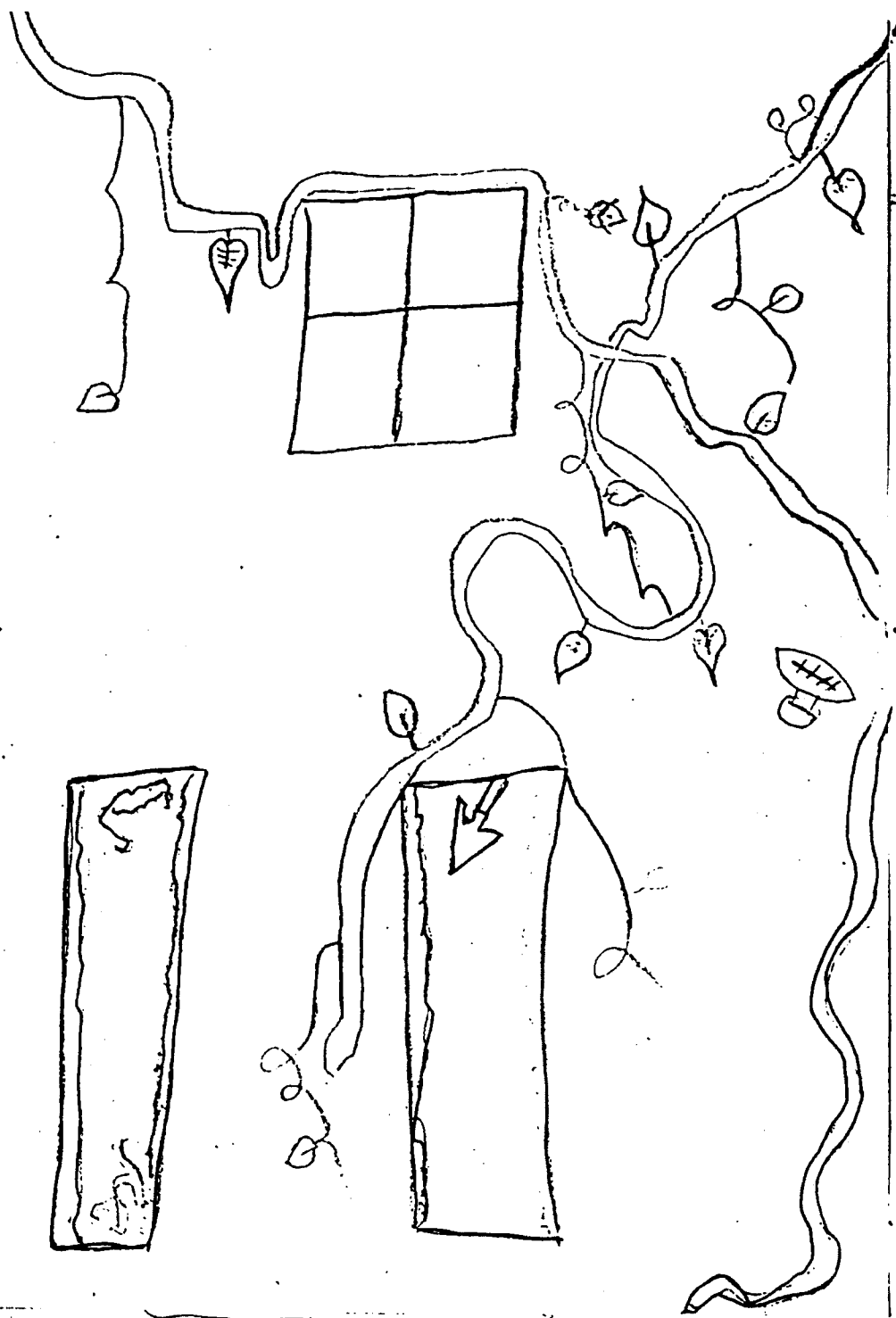
APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

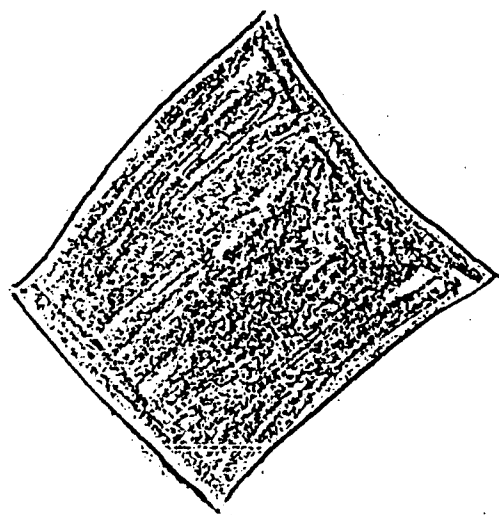
"BEHIND THIS DOOR YOU WILL FIND. . ."



Behind the door you will find something that is shaped like a crown grows in a flower bed, has long slim green leaves has five petals, and the colors can be red, yellow, or white, orange, purple, pink and any more than these.



Behind this door you will find something that is...
 Billy green, they are long, they shed, they live in holes,
 they are almost blind so they use their tongue, and they
 crawl around, and I used to have one for a pet.



Behind the door you will find
something that is
brown and soft. It has pink ears and
a pink nose. I sleep with it. It is
pretty big, it can be small. It has soft
paws and a stubby tail.

APPENDIX B

EXAMPLES OF LESLIE'S WORK

and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day

One day I woke up on the floor, I slipped on a thumb tack
 I hit my head on the wall, then I skinned the dog on my hand.
 I fell off the table, I bought platform shoes and they fell apart.
 We went to the mall and I rolled down the escalator.
 When we were eating dinner I spilled soda on my self.
 I went to go take a bath and the water froze.
 My day was a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day

THE END

rollerblading
 St. Tomas
 gymnastics

beautiful
 has a ocean
 sand is

went on vacation in August to
 St. Tomas

half of family lives there

grandmas live there

mom's mom bakes cakes

and sells them to people.

it has coconuts, bananas
 and mangos

it is a tropical island,

it is a small island close

to Puerto Rico. one grandma

lived in Puerto Rico

My Trip to St. Thomas

One early morning we woke up about 3:00 AM we got ready for 4:00 AM, about 4:30 AM we were on the plane to go to St. Thomas.

We were going to surprise our whole family, except our Uncle Mike and my grandma.

We were taking our grandma back to St. Thomas. Our Uncle knew because we asked him if we could stay on his boat. When we got there our family was

only expecting my dad and grandma, but after we were off the plane we went to surprise them. They were really surprised that my brother and I came.

When we went to my grandma's house they all went back to what they were doing. Some of them were making dinner and some were baking cakes.

After we ate our fish and did a few other things we went on a little boat to my uncle's big boat. We slept on it, when

we woke up we got dressed we went to the beach. My brother and I put on

our masks and went to swim. My dad and mom went deep in the ocean, my dad dived down and picked up a sea urchin. It did not poke him, but he came and showed it to us.

Then he went to put it back. While he was putting it back, we were trying to get some little fish. We swam around and finally my dad came to us with a little fish it was a pretty fish but my dad put it back.

Then I said, "Johnathan get that one." He saw it but it swam too fast. We played and swam and had fun. We had to go home and take a shower. After we ate dinner I went outside I saw a hen and 12 black and yellow chicks. One was left behind so I went to pick it up. It was so soft and so cute.

I went and put in my suit case. I would give it food every now and then. When the 8th day came we went to Veigas. I had my cousin feed my chick. We went to visit are grand parents.

APPENDIX C

EXAMPLES OF SARAH'S WORK

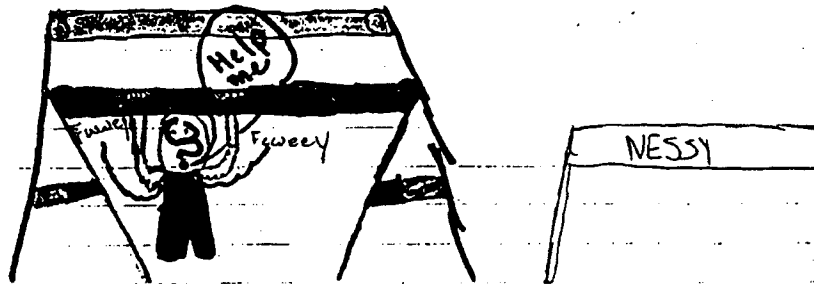
And the terribly horrible
No good very bad Day

I went to sleep one night with gum in
my mouth and when I woke up it was all in
my hair, instead of my mouth. When I was
out of the shower my sister took
a picture of me it was like a zests
green towel, commercial. When I was
eating breakfast I spilt my cereal all
my cereal in my lap and I had to
change clothes in like a minute. When my
bus came by it splashed mud all over
me. It had been a terrible, horrible, No
good, very bad day. At school we were
going to the mountain on the way in the
bus I got sick and it was bad enough
when I was hiking down the mountain
I got stuck inbetween two rocks.

When I got home
-It was 5:00. My
family had already
eaten so I was so
tired I went up stairs
and jump into bed
and all three of
my cats went crazy
and clawed me all
over. The end

The Gymnastics Story

One day when I went to gymnastics we started with exercises like straddles, situps, pushups and also I can do the splits 2 way ^{split} ^{split} I can't do right leg splits. Next we do flips and all different tricks like katiwells and roundoffs and all different kinds of flips and tricks. On vault we do tuck jumps and straddle jumps. And that is mostly all you can do on the vault. I love to do the bars I can do all most any thing like flips and back pull over. But it isn't easy I like it. The beam is hard its hard to not fall off its just plain old hard.



APPENDIX D

EXAMPLES OF THOMAS' WORK

I was trist when I woke up
with baby gum in my hand
could belt it would be a Terribl
ferrible, No Good, Very Bad Day
And then I don't want to go to
school but when I got to
Some kids push me and called
me a crybaby. Then when I was
spiny down stairs I slip my foot in
the Newber door. Oh so it is a
terrible, terrible, no good, very bad day
So I went out side and scream
head off. And then I went to
the and seen this elvont the size
of two Dinosaurs. And he speed
on me. So I felt I wanted to
go to New York. So I had a
terrible, terrible, no good, very bad

And then Kriss pushed me
down then I kite her and then
pushed her in her face. But
I got scared I was having
a terrible, terrible, no good, very
bad day. But I still want to
go to New York. But when he
got to New York, he didn't like
it. So he tried going to Air Force
But he didn't like it so he went
to his house so when brush
his teeth he lost a tooth
and it was a terrible, terrible,
very bad day.
But when I woke up
there was a tooth in my
body. And my mom
got on my sister. The end

Sunhouse read Honey
honey

1. it's good
 2. it taste good
 3. it's good for you
 4. it comes from bees
 5. it feels sticky
 6. The last time I had it
 7. it was on peanut butter and
 8. honey it come from forest
 9. and in trees the bees make it
- in hives honey is good for your bones.

Honey looks Good

I like honey.

Honey is very good for you.

it's good for your bones.

It comes from bees.

Bees make honey from inside the trees.

The last time I had it was on peanut butter

and honey. It feels sticky.

The bees make it from hives.

Honey it taste good

Honey looks good.

That's honey you can buy it at stores.

But they get it from trees and other stores.

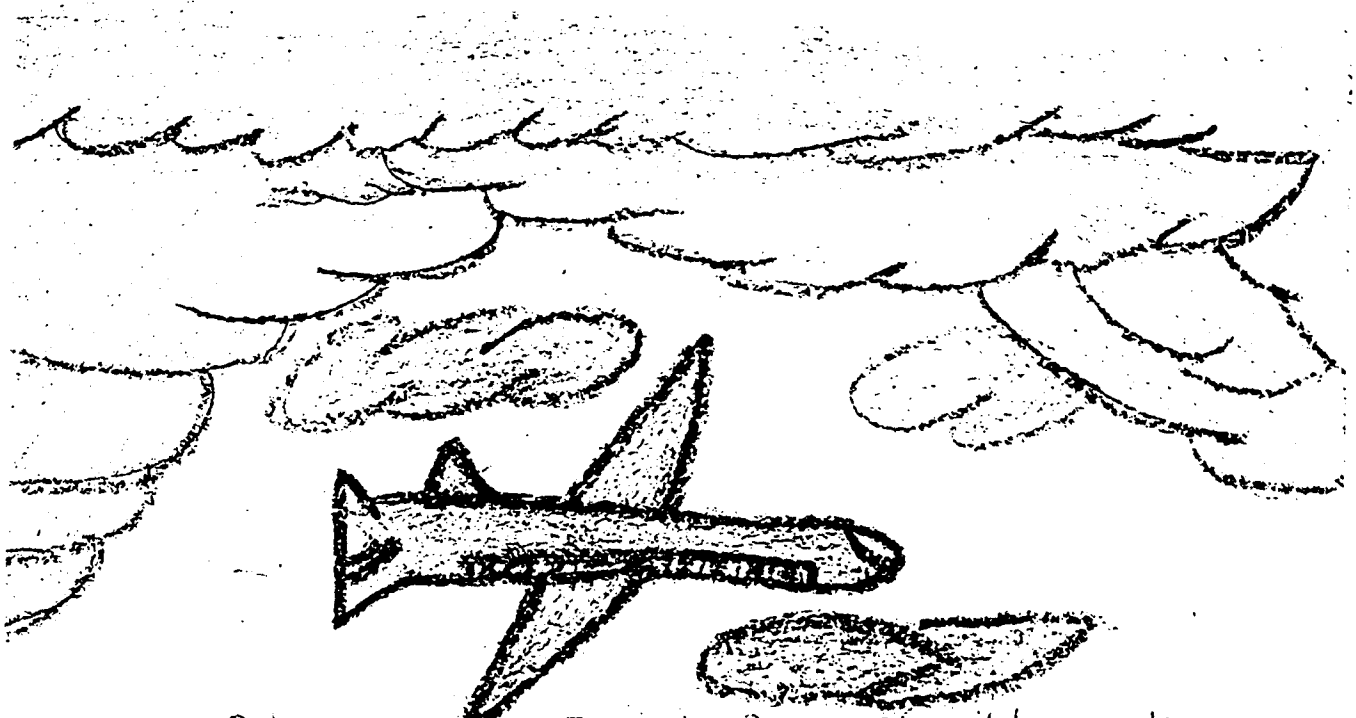
My sisters like honey so it is so good. My mom likes it on peanut butter and honey. I taste good on it if you every tried it. Honey looks good and taste good too.

APPENDIX E

"THE JOLLY POSTMAN VISITS CHINA"

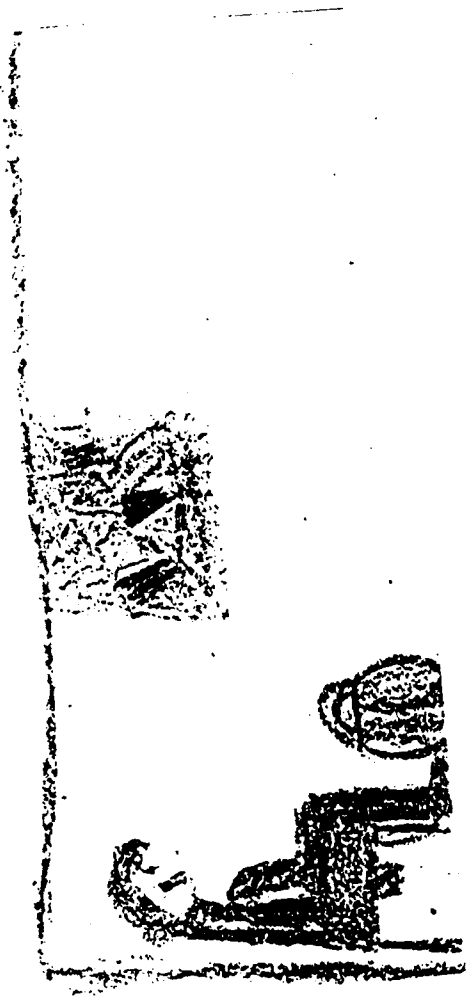
The Jolly Postman
Visits China

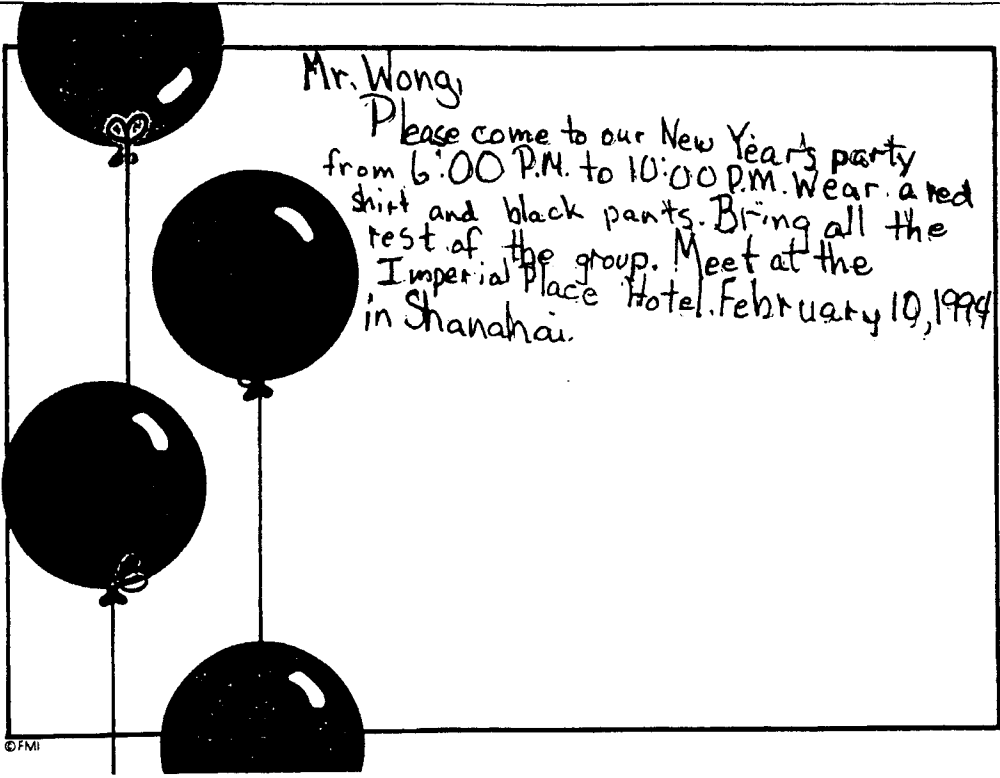
Marshall Publishing Co.
Tulsa



The Jolly Postman is flying from Tulsa to Beijing, China. He meets
with people from all over the world to tell their

The first visit was to the Forbidden city
 which is also known as the Imperial. They
 well see the emperor's throne and many beau-
 tiful tapestries. In the Jolly Postman's
 bag the tour guide is an envelope.
 Mr Wang





Mr. Wong,

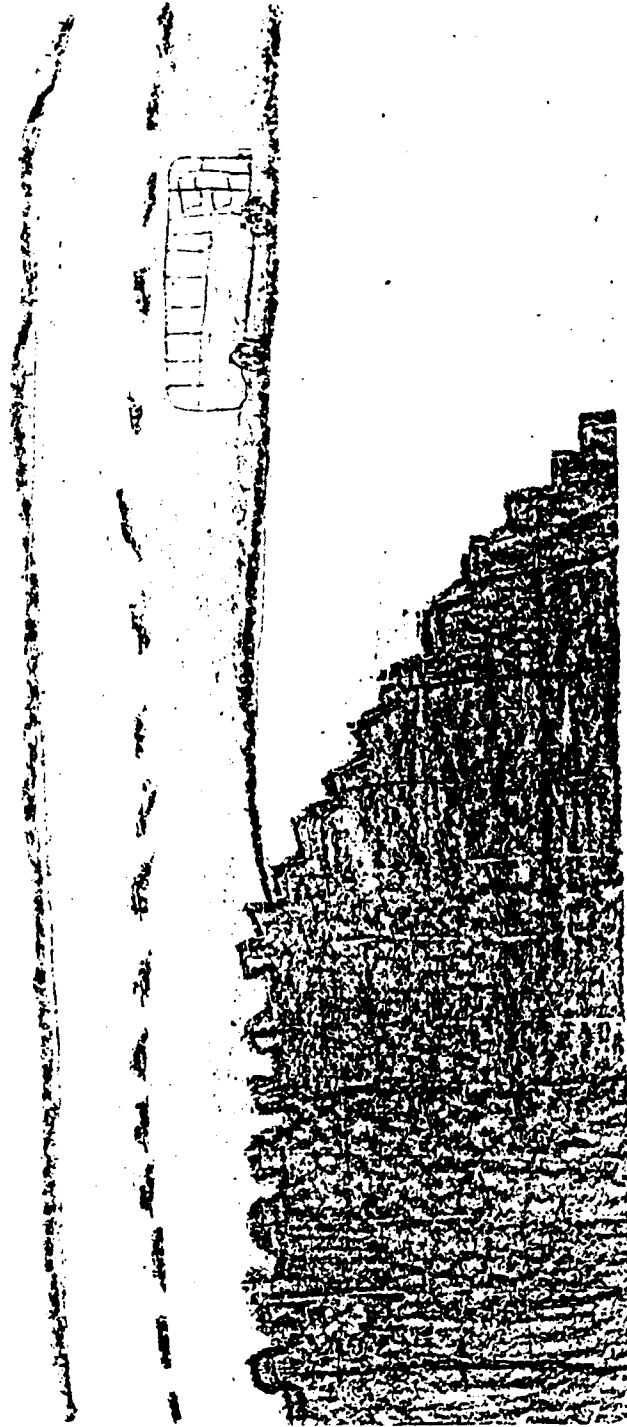
Please come to our New Year's party from 6:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M. Wear a red shirt and black pants. Bring all the rest of the group. Meet at the Imperial Place Hotel. February 10, 1999 in Shanghai.

© FMI

The Jolly Postman and his group get on the bus,
The travel through beautiful rural areas on their way
to see the Great Wall of China.

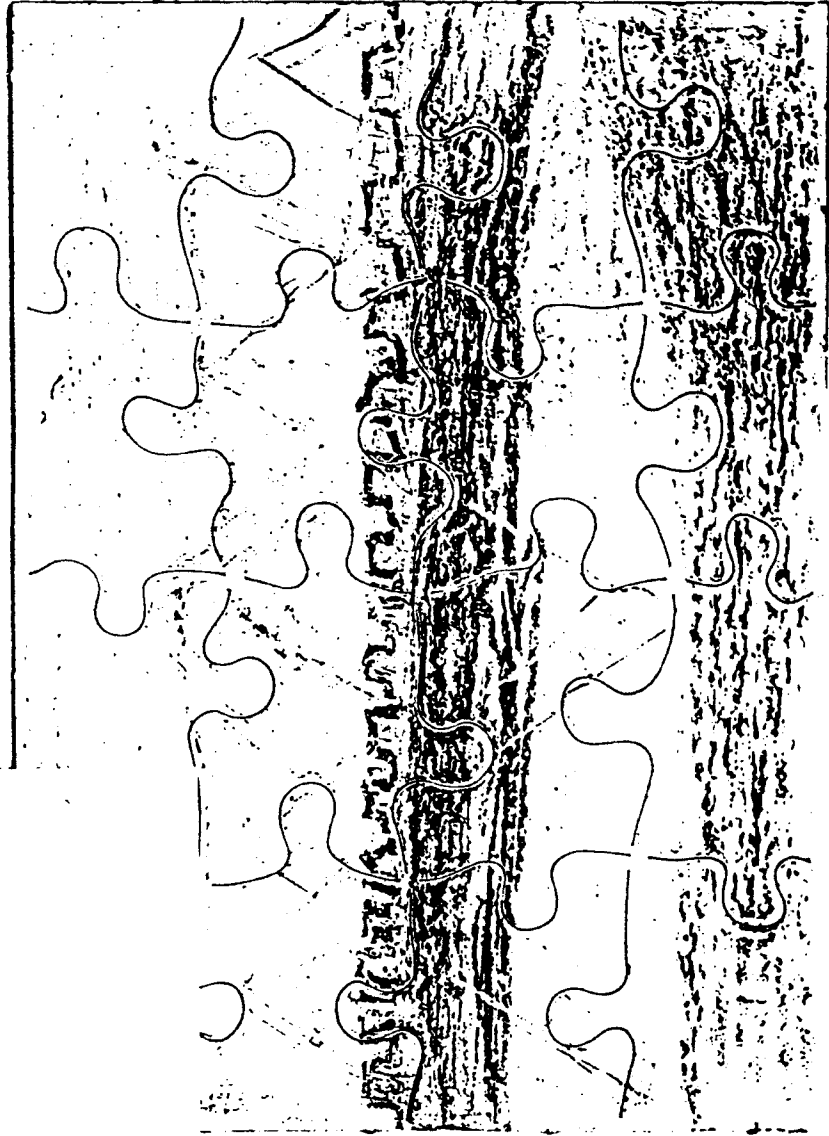


Once they arrived they climbed up the steps to the Great Wall. As they walked along the top of the Great Wall, they took photographs. The July Postman has an envelope for Mr. Lee, a guide at the Great Wall.

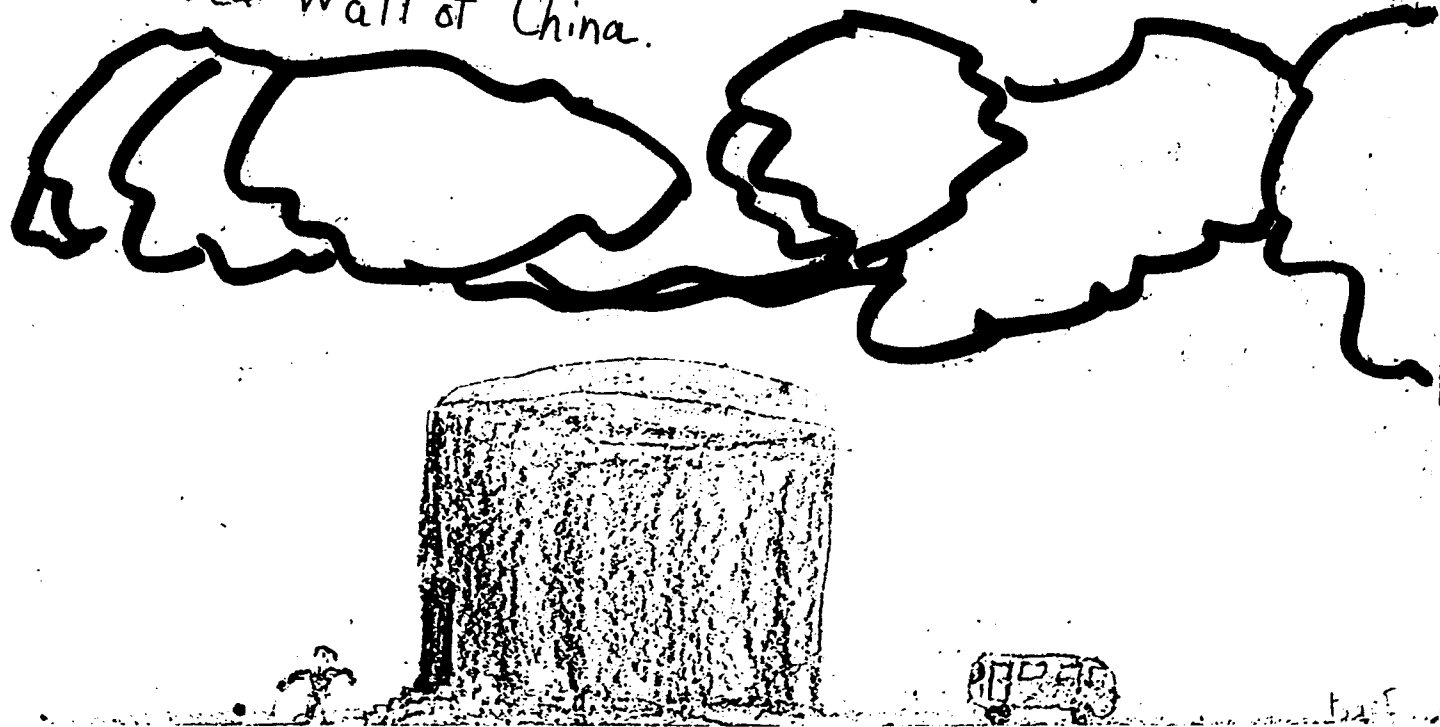


Dear Mr. Lee

We have some puzzles
up here at the store, and
we would like you to buy
some. They are very nice for
each puzzle.



They rode the bus back to Beijing to catch a flight to Xian. They flew over the Great Wall and could see how long it really is. Once they landed in Xian, they took a bus to the tomb of the Emperor Qin Shi Huang Di. This is the emperor who started the Great Wall of China.



At the tomb, they saw thousands of terra cotta statues of warriors, horses, and chariots. The statues were made to protect the body of the emperor. The Jolly Postman looks into his bag and finds an envelope for Mr. Bill Jones, an American visitor from Xian. After delivering the letter, they board another plane.



Sarah Jones
5512 E. Olive
Full, 1994



Mr. Bill Jones
Emperor's Tomb
Xian, China

Dear Dad,

I miss you a lot.

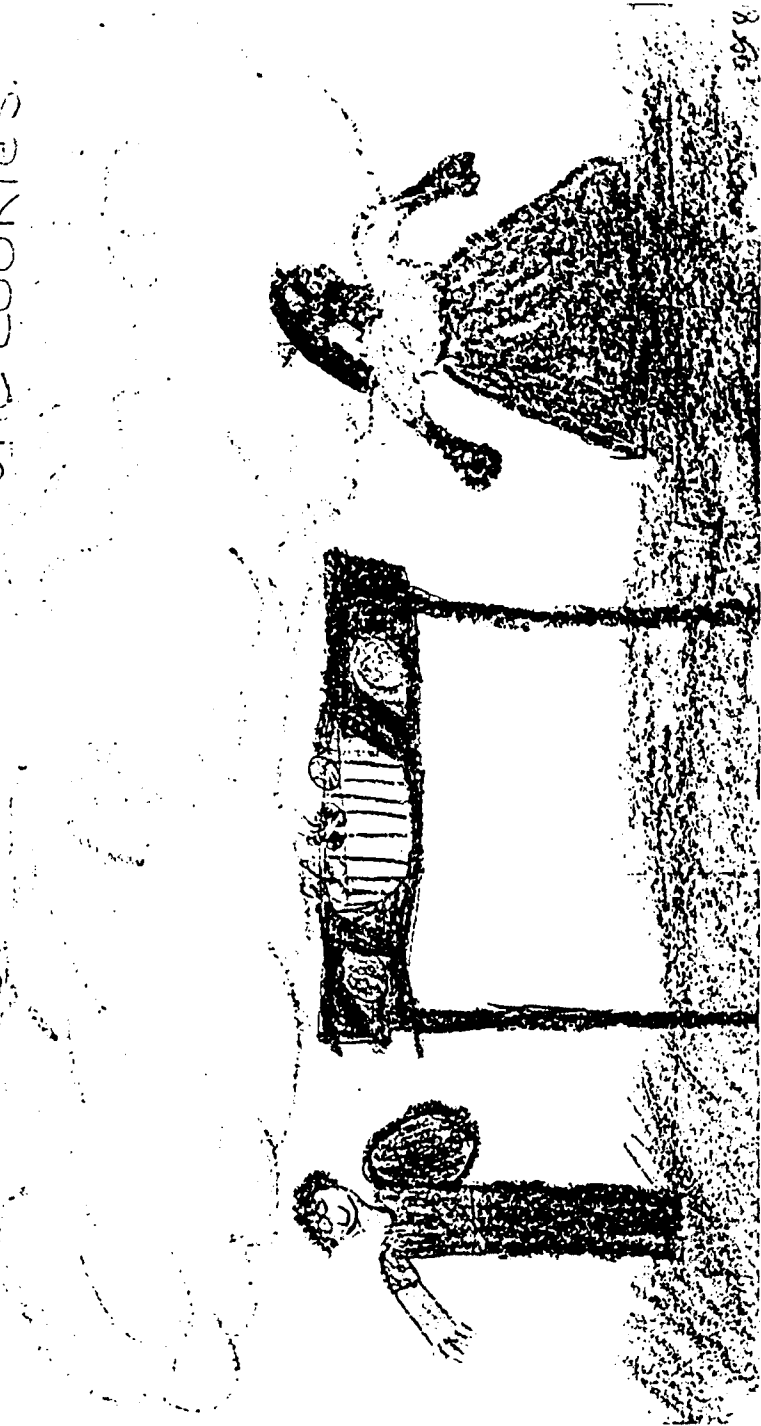
I wish you didn't miss my
gymnastics meet, but I got 1st place.

Love,
Sarah

Their next stop is Shanghai, China's largest urban area. On the way to the hotel they see a dragon dance to celebrate New Year's.



A party is being held in their honor to celebrate the Year of the dog. They will eat oranges, apples, rice, vegetables, and fortune cookies.



Dear Jolly Postman,

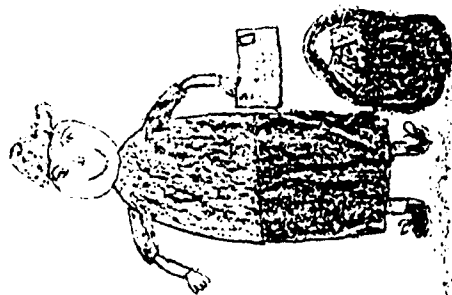
If you would like to see some snow come to North Carolina. The snow is two feet high here. There is lots of things to do in the snow.

Sincerely



The Jolly Postman
1353 S. Quincy Avenue
Xian, China

After celebrating the jolly postman finds a letter
in his bag. It's address to him! May be this
letter will be a clue to his next adventure!



APPENDIX F

PERMISSION LETTER

Marshall Elementary School
 1142 E. 56 St.
 Tulsa, Oklahoma 74105

Dear Parents:

Your student will be participating in a writing workshop during our communication skills class. The students will write, share their writing, work in cooperative groups, and learn new forms of writing during the writing workshop. This will become a part of our daily curriculum.

I am in the process of writing my thesis as partial fulfillment for the requirements of my master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Oklahoma State University. My thesis will be written about our writing workshop and the benefits the students will derive by actively participating in the workshop. I would like to include samples of your child's writing in my thesis. I would also like to include information from the writing interview I conduct with each child, information from the Writing Process Checklist that records each child's writing progress, and entries from my journal about the writing workshop. You are welcome to look at the interview, the checklist, and samples of your child's writing which are all a regular part of the curriculum. I will not use your child's name or any other identifying information in my thesis. Children's identities will not be revealed in accordance with commonly accepted research practice.

Please fill out and return the attached permission slip, granting me permission to use samples of your child's work in my thesis. I would appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

Thank you for your help and cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Mary Jane Fahey

Please complete the permission slip and return to Mary Jane Fahey.

Mary Jane Fahey has my permission to use samples of my child's work in her thesis.

Child's name _____

Parent's name _____

Parent's signature _____

Date _____

If you have any questions please contact me at Marshall Elementary 743-2589, or you may contact Dr. Kathryn Castle at OSU 405 744-7125 or Beth McTernan at OSU 405 744-5700.

APPENDIX G

STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. When you write a story, where do your ideas come from?
2. Do you ever get ideas from other people? How?
3. Do you ever get ideas from books that you've read or have been read to you? Describe some.
4. What is it like working with a partner when you write?
5. Describe what you do in a writing group.
6. Do you like working in a writing group? Why?
7. How do you solve the problems that sometimes happen during the writing group?
8. How do you feel about your writing after you have shared it? Does it make you want to write something else?
9. What do you want to talk about during a conference with the teacher?
10. What decisions do you make when you are writing a story? How do you reach these decisions?
11. Do you ever decide there is a better way to write something, without the teacher telling you what to do? How do you do this?
12. What other kinds of writing would you like to learn about?

A Writing Process Checklist

Student:	Dates					
Prewriting						
Can the student identify the specific audience to whom he/she writes?						
Does this awareness affect the choices the student makes as he/she writes?						
Can the student identify the purpose of the writing activity?						
Does the student write on a topic that grows out of his/her own personal experience?						
Does the student engage in rehearsal activities before writing?						
Drafting						
Does the student write rough drafts?						
Does the student place a greater emphasis on content than on the mechanics in the rough draft?						
Revising						
Does the student share his/her writing in conferences?						
Does the student participate in discussions about classmates' writing?						
In revising, does the student make changes to reflect the reactions and comments of both teacher and classmates?						
Between the first and final drafts, does the student make substantive or only minor changes?						
Editing						
Does the student proofread his/her own papers?						
Does the student help proofread classmates' papers?						
Does the student increasingly identify his/her mechanical errors?						
Sharing						
Does the student publish his/her writing in an appropriate form?						
Does the student share this finished writing with an appropriate audience?						

Tompkins, Gail E., *Teaching Writing: Balancing Process and Product*. 1990. p. 380-381.

Punctuation Mark Skills Checklist			
Name:	Grading Period 1 2 3 4		
Skill	Introduced	Practiced	Applied in Writing
Period at the end of a sentence			
after abbreviations			
Question Mark at the end of a question			
Exclamation Mark after words or sentences showing excitement or strong feeling			
Quotation Marks before and after direct quotations			
around title or a poem, short story, song or TV program			
Apostrophe in contractions			
to show possession			
Comma to separate words in a series			
between day and year			
between city and state			
after greeting in a friendly letter			
after closing of a letter			
after an initial <i>yes</i> or <i>no</i>			
after a noun of direct address			
to separate a quote from a speaker			
before the conjunction in a compound sentence			
after a dependent clause at the beginning of a sentence			
Colon before a list			
in writing time			
after the greeting of a business letter			
after an actor's name in a script			
Parentheses to enclose unimportant information			
to enclose stage directions in a script			
Hyphen between parts of a compound number			
to divide a word at the end of a line			
between parts of some compound words			

Tompkins, Gail E., *Teaching Writing: Balancing Process and Product*. 1990. p. 377

Writing Forms Checklist	
Name: _____	Grading Period 1 2 3 4
ABC book	letter-business
ad/commercial	letter-friendly
autobiography	letter-simulated
biography	lifeline/timeline
book/film review	map
brainstormed list	newspaper
cartoon/comic	poem
chart/diagram/poster	puzzle
cluster	research report
comparison	script
cubing	story
directions	other
greeting card	
interview	
journal-dialogue	
journal-personal	
journal-simulated	
learning log	

Tompkins, Gail E. *Teaching Writing: Balancing Process and Product*. 1990. p. 379.

Excerpts From My Anecdotal Journal

Week 1--Monday

Overall, things went better today than I had anticipated. The children were open to a writing workshop—only a few groans. They seemed excited about working together. Sarah was especially anxious to work in a group. She likes to be involved with the other students. After reading Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day we had a good discussion about this story. Then we discussed some "terrible" things they had experienced. I told them it was okay to use experiences from different times and then incorporate them into a "Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day" story.

Week 2--Tuesday

It's been a really hard day today. The writing groups are unbalanced since so many kids are moving. It was a day of whining. "They have more people in their group than we do!" "I'm tired. I don't want to write any more!" Derrick blew up. He threw crayons across the room, followed by kicking and then throwing his chair. During the whole episode he was screaming. I couldn't get him to leave the room, so I finally called the office and told them I needed help with Derrick. Mr. Aduddell came quickly. He had to "help" Derrick out of the room. I never know what is going to set him off. I still don't know what happened today. By the time we finally got Derrick out of the room, I was exhausted. Writing time was shortened today. I read a book to the class instead. It seemed to calm us all.

Week 3--Thursday

Today was a workday. Each group seemed to be functioning fairly well. It was a day of lots of questions. I decided to answer their questions by asking them if they had consulted the other members in their groups. If they had, I helped with the answers; otherwise, they had to go back to their group and ask for help. This worked

fairly well. Derrick was talking with his group and he smiled several times. That was nice to see. He didn't write much, but at least he was trying to be a part of the group.

Week 4--Friday

While they were working today, Mary and I began the interviewing process again. They like to give their opinions and have us write their thoughts on the paper. I think it gives them a sense of importance. I like comparing these interviews with the ones we conducted the first week. They are willing to share their thoughts with very little coaxing. The rest of the kids worked on their stories and illustrations while we interviewed six students. The noise level wasn't too bad. I can't believe this is the end of the fourth week.

Week 5--Wednesday

I talked with the kids today. I wanted to know what they liked best about the writing workshop. They enjoyed writing, illustrating, and publishing "The Jolly Postman Visits China" books. I think this was their favorite because they worked on them so long, and they turned out to be books that were fun to read. They were proud of their work and felt like authors and illustrators. They also said they liked learning how to make their stories more interesting. Writing partners and groups seemed to help with this. I'm glad they have enjoyed this experience. We've all learned a lot along the way!

APPENDIX J

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL EXCERPTS

Excerpts From My Reflective Journal

Week 1

I can't believe kids are moving already. Our mobility rate has always been high, but it seems like it is increasing this year. We just formed the writing groups and they are changing. Maybe no one else will move! The kids are excited about the writing and working in groups. They are feeling their way. It will take some time and work to get the "kinks" worked out. At this point in time the "bossy" ones want to be in charge all the time. With time, I hope this problem will resolve itself. The other kids will become annoyed with the bossy ones, and we should be able to resolve the conflicts. I'm going to wait and see if they can work it out on their own. If they do, they will learn more about working together, than if I step in and solve the problem for them.

Using the picture books to model seems to be a positive way to show the kids what I want them to write. They enjoy the stories, and our discussions are always lively. Sometimes they see things from a different perspective than I do, so we all share our opinions. A lot of good ideas for writing come from these discussions. It is becoming more apparent that the kids are beginning to value each other's opinions. This is exciting!

Week 3

Flexibility seems to be the key word for our writing workshop. I do not know how anyone could have a writing workshop and not be flexible. We've changed the way we are grouping for writing--almost on a daily basis. I think we will probably not have fixed groups for anything; too many students are moving. Even though this is not working exactly the way I thought it would, I still feel that this is a valuable experience for the students and me. They are beginning to trust each other--a big plus for this school. We have too little of that going on sometimes, and I am sure it is a result of the mobility.

How can anyone build any type of relationship when so many move? Even with this question, I still see good sharing and community building starting to take shape.

What I find really exciting now is that they are beginning to question their writing. At the beginning they were perfectly satisfied with everything they wrote. Now they are looking at their work (with the help of a partner or the group) and are beginning to look for ways to improve it. They are still looking for editing mistakes, even though that is not what I want them to do just yet!. Revising seems to be just adding material—not necessarily deleting or rearranging the writing. This is a long process and I'm sure it will take them a very long time to move through it.

Week 5

It's hard to believe five weeks have passed. I think I've learned more than my students. I've learned that the kids can be really flexible, supportive of each other, and open to new ideas from the other students and well as from me. We've all grown to love this time of the morning. I know this will continue to be a very special part of our class time. They are excited about learning more about writing as well as learning new forms of writing. We've struggled through some problems, but with patience (sometimes in short supply) we've solved them as they happened. Even Derrick has mellowed some. He smiles every day, at least a little bit. I'm always so glad to see that; it gives me hope for the days when he struggles with his temper and anger. I think I will always wonder how he is doing as he matures—he's a special little boy who needs a lot of attention.

I am amazed as I look back over the last five weeks and see the many changes in our class and in the individual children. Our community of writers has become a family as well. Their concern for each other is evident when someone is having a bad day. They at least seem to be more understanding of each other and more patient when someone is grumpy. Their enthusiasm for learning has grown. Even the very reluctant writers and readers are showing improvement. They, too, look forward to this

time. Working together with other students has probably been the primary cause of this enthusiasm. It's fun to watch their "wings unfurl". These little children are truly special and have unique personalities. I wouldn't have traded this year for anything, even though I've had days when I've questioned my skills at coping with the myriad of problems. These unique children have been a special gift for me, teaching them has been an experience I will treasure throughout my life. It has been my privilege to know these special children.

APPENDIX K

WRITING LESSON PLANS

Writing Lesson Plans

Read: Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day by Judith Viorst.

Have students write their version of this book. Share with a partner.

On overhead, write a short story with the class. Read aloud and then discuss ways to make a story better. Revise the story after the discussion. Have the students revise their own story.

Share their revised stories.

Write a diamante. Discuss opposites and contrast. Write one together on the overhead and then have each student write their own.

Continue working with diamantes. Begin one on one conferencing about their poems.

Read: Aunt Isabel Tells a Good One by Kate Duke. This book tells all the elements to include in a narrative story to make it interesting and fun to read. Have the students write their own narrative (fiction).

Work with a writing group to discuss their stories and get help with their stories.

Continue working on their stories. Share with the class in Author's Chair.

To introduce descriptive writing, read Owl Moon by Jane Yolen. While reading the book, have them close their eyes to visualize what the author is describing. Discuss what they "saw". Emphasize the words the author used to help them "see" what she described. Next, introduce "Behind This Door You Will Find...". Write a description of broccoli on the board. See if the students can guess what I am describing. Show them how to set up their page using a 4" x 6" card for the door. Have them write their description.

Share their descriptions. Can everyone guess what they are describing? Discuss why and why not.

Introduce alliteration using Animalia by Graeme Base. Assign writing partners and letters of the alphabet. Have them work with their partner to write a sentence using their letter. Illustrate their sentence.

Read Home Place by Crescent Dragonwagon. Discuss dialogue. Why do we use this in stories? What punctuation do we use? Have them write a conversation between two friends. Share. Use one for the overhead. Discuss placement of sentences and quotation marks.

Have the students begin a descriptive narrative which must include descriptive language, the important parts of a story, and dialogue. This will take almost a week by the time they go through the writing process of brainstorming, drafting, revision, editing, and publishing.

Introduce The Jolly Postman or Other People's Letters by the Ahlbergs. Share this book and the many types of letter writing. Teach them how to write a friendly letter and the parts of a friendly letter. Have them write a letter to a family member describing what they are going to do this weekend.

Read "The Jolly Postman Visits Tulsa" and introduce the concept of writing their own "Jolly Postman" books. They will be writing about visiting China. This will include information they learned during their study of China. Begin brainstorming places to visit, people to see, types of transportation, and any other important information about China.

The story will have to be written together as a class. I will write it on the overhead. Allow two to three days for this.

Each writing group will make their own book, deciding what types of letters to write. Each group has a blank puzzle to incorporate into a letter.

The class story will be used.

To take this project through to completion, allow at least 10 days. It is very time consuming for the students to write, revise, edit, and write in a final form each and every piece of writing included in this book. Illustrations take quite awhile also.

APPENDIX L

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FORM

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: 02-18-94

IRB#: ED-94-059

Proposal Title: BENEFITS THIRD GRADE STUDENTS RECEIVE BY
ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING IN A WRITING WORKSHOP

Principal Investigator(s): Kathryn Castle, Mary Jane Fahey

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

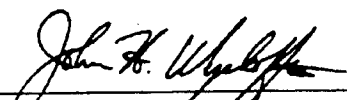
Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

APPROVAL STATUS SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD AT NEXT MEETING.

APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR ONE CALENDAR YEAR AFTER WHICH A CONTINUATION OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR BOARD APPROVAL. ANY MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL.

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reasons for Deferral or Disapproval are as follows:

Signature:


Chair of Institutional Review Board

Date: March 1, 1994

VITA

Mary Jane Fahey

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

**Thesis: BENEFITS TO THIRD GRADE STUDENTS FROM ACTIVE PARTICIPATION
IN A WRITING WORKSHOP**

Major Field: Curriculum and Instruction

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Stillwater, Oklahoma, February 14, 1948, the daughter of Edwin L. and Betty J. Bechtold; married to William J. Fahey, Jr.

Education: Graduated from Memorial Senior High School, Houston, Texas, in May, 1966; attended University of Texas at Austin, University of Houston, Tulsa Junior college; received Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from University of Tulsa in December, 1981; completed requirements for the Master of Science degree at Oklahoma State University in July, 1994.

Professional Experience: Elementary Teacher, Tulsa Public Schools, January, 1982 to present; Co-Director of Summer Youth Writing Project, Oklahoma State University Writing Project, 1994; Public School Teacher Co-Director, Oklahoma State University Writing Project, 1994.