

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE INFLUENCE
OF CLASSICAL MUSIC ON THE
WRITING PERFORMANCE
OF SEVENTH GRADE
STUDENTS

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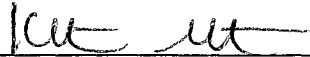
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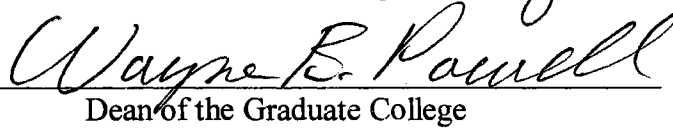
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem	6
Research Questions	10
Definitions of Terms	10
Limitations and Assumptions	11
Summary	11
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	12
Introduction	12
The Arts, The Mind, and Education	12
Music and The Mind	19
Music and Writing	28
Summary	32
III. METHODOLOGY	34
The Teacher	37
Subjects	39
Setting	40
The Curriculum	41
The Writing Environment	44
Data Collection	46
Procedures Used in the Collection of Data	48
Data Analysis	49
Summary	55
IV. RESULTS OF THE STUDY	58
Introduction	58
A Typical Writing Day	58
Writing Before Classical Music	59
Beginning Survey	61
Introducing Classical Music	64

Chapter	Page
Writing During Classical Music	70
Student Self-Evaluations	75
Writing After Classical Music	81
Summary.	83
 V. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS	 87
Implications	91
Further Activities	94
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 98
 APPENDIXES	 103
APPENDIX A - PARENT CONSENT FORM	104
APPENDIX B - EVALUATION POINT SYSTEM	106
APPENDIX C - BEGINNING SURVEY	107
APPENDIX D - RESPONSES TO BEGINNING SURVEY	108
APPENDIX E - STUDENT SELF-EVALUATION	117
APPENDIX F - RESPONSES TO STUDENT SELF-EVALUATION	118
APPENDIX G - SAMPLES OF STUDENT WRITING BEFORE CLASSICAL MUSIC	127
APPENDIX H - SAMPLES OF STUDENT WRITING DURING CLASSICAL MUSIC	135
APPENDIX I - SAMPLES OF STUDENT WRITING AFTER CLASSICAL MUSIC	153
APPENDIX J - CLASSROOM DESIGN	160
APPENDIX K - IRB FORM	162

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
I.	Data Summary Table.	85
	A. Beginning Survey Results	85
	B. Self-Evaluation Results.	86

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Writing has often been characterized as having special value as a tool for promoting learning and as such has influenced theory and instruction in English, composition, and other disciplines especially since the 1970s. Writing is believed to have such unique and inherent potential for developing thought that “writing across the curriculum” is believed by many to be the solution to underdeveloped thought among students in all disciplines (Jones & Comprone, 1993). Many believe the process of writing can help learners develop thought regardless of the content area. In fact, “writing” and “composition” have become synonymous. “Writing, therefore, is regarded as a tool with the capacity to promote thinking across the curriculum, even in disciplines in which a written product is not the standard medium of communication and representation” (Smagorinsky, 1995, p. 161). Research has demonstrated that writing can actually mediate thinking, particularly when knowledge is task-specific or discipline-specific.

Working with words is working with thoughts. Writing especially provokes questions and thought. The dynamics of creating and criticizing, of pouring thoughts on the page and retreating to question, wonder, reminisce, organize, and rethink make writing a powerful tool for learning. Writing helps develop thinking because it allows for a revisiting of first thoughts. Spoken words vanish, but print attaches thoughts to paper. As Calkins (1994) states, “We can hold our ideas in our hands. We can carry them in our

knapsacks. We can think about our thinking and use writing as a way to outgrow ourselves” (p. 222). Through writing, we can review, reshape, and refine our thoughts.

Calkins (1994) believes people write because they need to write; writing meets the need to understand our world. Writing defines the writer and makes meaning of experiences. “Writing can be a powerful process for discovering meaning rather than just transcribing an idea that is in some sense waiting fully developed in the writer’s mind” (Applebee, Auten, & Lehr, 1981, p. 100). Too often educators defend writing as a skill, saying writing should be taught so students can get a job. Writing is a skill on that level, but writing is also a craft and an art; writing satisfies an essential need of the human animal. Writing satisfies a need to understand ourselves and the world. Writing defines oneself and makes meaning of the human experience (Murray, 1990). Writing can create a learning environment by encouraging students to ask questions, to notice, to wonder, to connect, and to inquire. Writing can generate ideas, observations, and questions (Calkins, 1994). Writing is viewed as a means of representing ideas that students can consider and judge. Writing is also an excellent way to analyze thinking and understanding. As researchers acquire more knowledge about the role of writing in learning, they are increasingly making claims that writing plays a crucial role in the development of abstract and higher-level thinking (critical thinking, problem solving) and in helping students apply these skills to understand subject matter (Rosaen, 1990).

Although many books and articles have been written about the benefits of writing, allowing students the freedom to write from topics of their choice, and allowing them the freedom to select in which form they wish to present the writing (such as a letter, a personal narrative, a poem, a play, etc.), many students are still spending a great deal of

time working from a textbook or completing worksheets. In the early 1990s the National Assessment of Educational Progress reported that overall writing performance of students at all grade levels was poor. Furthermore only half of all 12th graders reported writing more than two papers in the previous six weeks and most stated their writing consisted of only a few paragraphs (Rothman, 1990). Other studies confirm and extend those findings. Not only are students spending little time on writing, but the emphasis of instruction remains on grammar and punctuation rather than content and cohesion. One study of writing instruction in elementary schools found that the majority of writing time consisted of verbatim copying of others' texts and that teachers neglected opportunities to relate writing to class activities (Mavrogenes & Bezruczko, 1993).

Furthermore, writing, especially academic writing, has often been taught as a logical, step-by-step process, a carefully outlined plan, working in a controlled linear fashion focusing on what comes next. Although this method has proven unsuccessful, writing is still being taught in this fashion. In fact, American education, in general focuses on the left brain, on the processes of reason and logic and linear thinking, giving little attention to imaginative, intuitive, non-linear right brain processing. Therefore, a division has been made between "academic" and "creative" writing. Academic writing is viewed as writing that relies upon logic while creative writing upon imagination. Yet some of our greatest academic writers' breakthrough often came as flashes of insight, moments of intuitive knowing, not as the result of careful, linear, step-by-step thinking (Boehm, 1993). Teachers must explore both logical and imaginative ways of thinking and writing to connect both hemispheres of the brain so that students become whole-brain thinkers.

Some reasons for teachers not having students write more and in varied formats could be that language arts texts stress the teaching of grammar and mechanics with only fragmented writing tasks, that teachers do not feel prepared to teach writing, and that the immediate and constant demand for evaluation can be overwhelming. Writing takes time to read whereas most worksheets, with their right or wrong answers, are easy to score and therefore teachers can assign a grade more quickly. In addition, many teachers do not feel confident about their own writing, do not know who the authorities are, where to find good research articles, and many still just simply teach the way they were taught years ago (Graves, 1978).

In the past few years, schools have been under considerable pressure to improve their language arts programs and to strengthen the teaching of writing and reading. Walmsley and Walp (1990) present a rationale for an integrated language arts curriculum based on pedagogical principles that (1) place genuine reading and composing at the center of the language arts curriculum; (2) place skills instruction within rather than before genuine reading and writing; (3) integrate the various components of language arts through content rather than skills; and (4) insist that all readers and writers-not just the most able students-gain equal access to genuine reading and writing. He proposes that reading and writing together should constitute most of the time set aside for language arts with equal amounts of time devoted to each component. Walmsley and Walp define genuine composing as, “writing about a variety of worthwhile topics (those in which students have some interest and investment) for authentic purposes and audiences. Composing involves generating and communicating content, but the form in which it is communicated involves the actual production of text, which is governed by conventions of grammar, usage,

mechanics, and spelling. Acts of writing, therefore, involve both composing and editing” (p. 255). Walmsley and Walp believe the composing experiences of students need to reflect a variety of topics, purposes, and audiences and should not be limited to any one of these; students also need experience with the conventions of writing. “Genuine composing emphasizes both: composing that excludes editing is as undesirable as editing that excludes composing” (p. 255).

Glatthorn (1988) defines the writing curriculum as having two parts, the mastery curriculum and the organic curriculum. He states that “the mastery curriculum in writing should provide all students in all grades with a variety of structured writing experiences” (p. 49). These writing experiences include: exposition, which includes all the writing that explains process analysis, comparison and contrast, definition, and so on; persuasion which expresses opinions; writing about literature; academic writing which includes term papers, reports, and essay tests; practical and applied writing which includes business letters, resumes, application forms, and social notes; personal creative writing which includes short stories, monologues, dialogues, character sketches, journals, and personal essays. The organic writing curriculum, on the other hand, should emphasize a flexible use of the writing process and writing for self-expression. In using the organic writing curriculum, each time teachers teach writing they should “emphasize the importance of writing as a means of communication, the need to find one’s personal voice, and the value of being sensitive to an audience” (p. 49).

Murray (1990) believes that the teacher’s job is not to teach students how to write, but rather to teach them how to teach themselves to write. Therefore, the teacher’s job is to help students develop successful writing strategies. Teachers must teach students that

there is no one “right” or “wrong” way to write, that learning to write is a process of discovering what will help them be successful. Teachers must teach strategies instead of rules. Writers can manipulate strategies only if they know other strategies. Students who develop more strategies for writing are less likely to block and are more able to discover what works for them and for a variety of writing assignments. (Boehm, 1993). Murray (1985) believes that the need to write is the need to think. Writing provides students with the opportunity to view the world, examine it, capture it, and form opinions about it. Through writing students use what they already know and manipulate this information into acquiring further knowledge.

Statement of the Problem

Research suggests that young children convey meaning to others using many different communication systems such as singing, drawing, and acting, and that they use what is known about one system to support the understanding of another system (Karnowski, 1986). As young writers compose, they use oral language, drawing, music, and drama to increase their communication potential. Young writers enjoy using the sounds of music to make meaning. They often hum or sing while they are drawing or writing. When observing children at play, one sees their enjoyment of rhythm and rhyme. For example, children recite jump-rope jingles, rhymes for hide and seek, and refrains to popular verse. Most children first learn the A,B,C's in a song and become acquainted with the letters of the alphabet visually, auditorily, and kinesthetically. The early childhood writing program depends on a writing environment that encourages children to use all of their communication potential to make sense of the writing process (Kormanski, 1992). In offering students opportunities for writing in the classroom, teachers need to provide

students with as many strategies and tools as possible to help develop imagination, creative thinking, and in general, enhance writing.

Torrance believes that people are creative in an almost infinite number of ways and that often children's creative abilities are suppressed at school. Torrance devised the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking to reflect different aspects of creative behavior. Torrance presented research that supported the fact that many students' creative abilities go unrecognized. Torrance (1962) states, "Certainly we cannot say that one is fully functioning mentally, if the abilities involved in creative thinking remain undeveloped or are paralyzed" (p. 3). Torrance believes that creativity is the most valuable resource in coping with the daily stress of life. Torrance continues, "It has been generally conceded that the possession of high intelligence, special talent, and technical skills is not enough for outstanding success. It has also been recognized that creativity is important in scientific discovery and the arts" (p. 6). As a matter of fact, writing requires students to utilize creative abilities. Writing is creating and good writing is both creative and imaginative. Since people increase their creativity through experience, it is important that teachers offer students many opportunities in which to enhance creative abilities.

Osborn (1993) also offers a great deal of research about creativity or creative problem-solving and imagination and how they are essential in all areas of life. The Creative Problem-Solving Process ideally consists of three procedures: (1) Fact-finding, (2) Idea-finding, and (3) Solution-finding. Fact-finding calls for problem-definition and preparation, idea-finding consists of idea-production and idea-development, and solution-finding calls for evaluation and adoption. All require deliberate effort and creative imagination. In his book, Applied Imagination, Osborn discusses the importance of

imagination, factors that tend to stifle creativity, and ways by which creativity can be developed. Kindergartens tend to cultivate creative talent, whereas the primary and secondary grades usually tend to stifle imagination. Schools promote an academic attitude at the expense of creativity. This attitude develops in students a mellow tolerance and scholarly insight at the expense of creativity. Osborn states, "The fact is that the generation of ideas often requires an almost irrational enthusiasm—at least until verification shows that we have misfired" (p. 65). Schools even smother creativity in the teaching of art. Oftentimes students are given the same color of paper, told how to fold it, mark it, and how and where to cut. Goodlad (1984) states, "Arts classes, too, appear to be governed by characteristics which are best described as "school"—following the rules, finding the one right answer, practicing the lower cognitive processes" (p. 220). In this manner every child produces the same product. The incentive to create is destroyed. To enhance creativity, students need to be allowed to create the design and carry it out. Osborn writes, "We can vigorously exercise imagination by trying to think up new hobbies" (p. 76).

Osborn believes that fine arts, reading, and writing are excellent ways to enhance creativity and imagination, but that the benefits depend on how one approaches the task. He states, "The fine arts call for imagination. This is true of music, sculpture, painting, and even aesthetic dancing. But the creative good we get out of an art depends on how we go at it. When we passively listen to music we merely set a mood for imagination; but when we are trying to compose, we actively exercise our creativity" (p. 77). He continues, "Writing can do much to train imagination. Scientific tests rate 'facility in writing' as a basic index of creative aptitude" (p. 80). Osborn also stresses the necessity

of practice in enhancing creative ability. He emphasizes that the most direct way to develop creative ability is to actually think up solutions to specific problems.

As stated by Osborn, music seems to be an effective tool in enhancing creative thinking. Music is a part of our culture. It is part of the way people express themselves. Williams (1977) argues that the introduction of creative art into the curriculum could cause marked improvement in core subjects. Williams includes music as a creative art. Music is a powerful medium that educators can and should incorporate into their classrooms. By not doing so, educators may be overlooking an easy and productive way to connect students to the processes of reading and writing. Since there is some evidence that music enhances the writing of young children as well as human life in general, it may be that music enhances the writing of older children as well.

Because music may enhance creativity, music may have a place in teaching middle level children how to write more effectively. The focus of this study was to explore the relationship between listening to classical music and writing, based on process writing assumptions, in two seventh grade English composition classrooms. The writing process consists of five steps: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. The researcher chose classical music because she had read that classical music had been used with math, and also because classical music has no words. Listening to music without words allows students the opportunity to create their own pictures, ideas, and stories.

This study attempted to examine if and how music influenced writing performance. The teacher-researcher planned a twelve week period for students to write using the writing process theory. During the course of the twelve week period students wrote three days a week for approximately thirty-five minutes. The researcher collected completed

writing for three weeks before the introduction of classical music, six weeks during the introduction of classical music, and three weeks after the conclusion of classical music. Before the study began students answered some survey questions. At the conclusion of the study, students were asked to write reflectively about their own learning and feelings about the experience. The teacher also discussed the experience orally with students. The teacher kept a daily journal of observations.

Research Questions

The following questions guide this study:

1. In what ways does playing classical music during writing influence writing performance of seventh graders?
2. What patterns or themes, if any, emerge from students' writing and responses?
3. What are the implications for writing instruction?

Definition of Terms

Composition—The definition of composition for the purposes of this study is writing about any topic in any form in a seventh grade English classroom.

Classical music—Consists of selections by Beethoven, Vivaldi, Mozart, Bach, Albinoni, Pachelbel, Rameau, Purcell and Tchaikovsky.

The Writing Process—Consists of five steps: (1) Prewriting—the stage in which ideas are generated and organized and decisions are made about the purpose for the writing and the audience to whom the writing will be directed. (2) Drafting—getting the ideas down on paper. (3) Revising—the emphasis in this stage is on refining the content through adding, deleting, and rearranging material. (4) Editing—In the editing stage, teachers and students work together to polish the writing by correcting spelling, usage, punctuation,

and other mechanical errors. (5) Publishing-Sharing the composition in any number of different ways.

Limitations and Assumptions

It is assumed that the subjects are representative of students in many seventh grade English classrooms where the population includes a culturally diverse, middle to upper-middle class community. However, qualitative research does not attempt to generalize. Although research promotes the use of music in the writing process, students are individuals and what works for one student may not necessarily work for another. For example, classical music may appeal to some students but not to others. Therefore, the possibility exists that not every student will improve in writing through the introduction of classical music. This ethnography is also limited in that all observations and conferences are interpreted from the teacher-researcher's background knowledge and beliefs. However, since students actively participated in self-assessment, the conclusions of the investigation are a result of both student responses and the teacher-researcher.

Summary

The use of classical music in the seventh grade English composition classroom may provide a powerful means to motivate students to write-and write more creatively and effectively. It may have the potential to help students with visualization, imagination, description, and expression. Incorporating classical music with writing may also provide teachers with more effective instructional strategies for teaching writing. This study examined two classrooms' discovery and investigation of writing while listening to classical music.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter contains a review of the literature related to the importance of arts in education, music as a creative art, student writing, and the influence of music on such writing. The researcher discusses how music is a part of human culture, the importance of music in daily living, and the value of connecting music with other educational tasks, specifically writing. The review includes three topics: (1) the arts, the mind, and education, (2) music and the mind, and (3) music and writing.

The Arts, The Mind, and Education

Ideas about the arts and learning in general have shifted dramatically during the twentieth century. Interest in the arts as a form of cognition has increased in recent decades. The arts as a form of cognition is based on the idea that the arts have their own symbol systems that involve cognitive processing just as language does. Although the cognitive processes of the arts cannot be easily measured by traditional empirical methods, they still exist. “By utilizing the symbol-making capacities of the mind, perceiving and producing art forms place these activities in the cognitive realm and therefore may play an important role in human development” (Darby & Catterall, 1994, p. 302).

Art, like literature, gives shape or form to ideas and feelings within. The function of art has been described as an organizational process, meaning that the arts deal with our very consciousness, continually sorting, shaping, and clarifying states of feeling that come

into being. Through such arts as dance, music, or sculpture this process involves the transformation of sensory impressions (kinesthetic, aural, tactile, and visual) into images known as aesthetic experience. Language arts abilities such as reading comprehension, vocabulary development, oral reading and creative writing can correlate with such aesthetic experiences. Music for example, is often used as a tool to assist in the acquisition, retention, and transfer of these languages arts skills (Merrion, 1981). The use of choral reading is popular in language arts classrooms, and musical elements such as inflection, tempo, texture, and dynamics lend themselves quite easily to the reading of literature. Norris, Reichard, and Mokhtari (1997) report a study in which they had one group of students (the experimental group) draw before writing, and another group of students (the control group) write without drawing. Significance differences were found between the two groups on all measures used. Not only did they find that overall writing performance was higher but that students who drew before writing tended to produce more words, sentences, and idea units.

Since the 1970's with the publication of Coming to Our Senses: The Significance of the Arts for American Education by the Arts, Education, and Americans Panel, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of the arts in student learning (The Arts, Education and Americans Panel, 1977). According to recent research on the roles the arts play in human development, deleting or decreasing the arts in education may also be decreasing the educational opportunities for many students. As Goodlad (1980) states, "The arts are not an educational option; they are basic" (p. 234). Increasingly, the arts are seen not as luxuries, but as basic educational rights for all students. The curriculum should be personally meaningful to children and their developmental needs. "The arts, by

encouraging many forms of expression, can play an important role in promoting these types of successful learning experiences” (Darby & Catterall, 1994, p. 311).

In her article, “Connections: Arts, Academics, and Productive Citizens,” Hanna (1992) draws on several studies supporting the importance of the arts in enhancing the quality of schooling for all students. She includes a variety of data that link school arts programs to higher academic achievement. Based upon a comprehensive range of research studies, she asserts that the arts encourage students to stay in school, increase literacy, and build confidence encouraging students to take risks in other classes. Hanna (1992) states, “The arts seem to have the power to engage and empower other domains of knowledge. Moreover, these other domains of knowledge provide resources that can fuel artistic creativity” (p. 602). Hanna also cites 1987, 1988, and 1989 data from the College Entrance Examination Board that report higher Scholastic Achievement Test scores from students who complete art courses. She argues that dance programs for example, help students develop in the areas of cognition, social relations, personal development, productive citizenship, and aesthetic appreciation. Hanna concludes, “Indeed, research in the arts and related fields, from Africa to the Americas, demonstrates that the arts can motivate the cognitive, social, civic, personal, and aesthetic growth and development of students” (p. 607).

Csikszentmihallyi and Schiefele (1992) advance the idea that the arts play important roles in enhancing the quality of life. They argue that participation in the arts helps a person answer existential questions, “maintain the cognitive structure of the self,” increase enjoyment, and make life more meaningful. In a five-year longitudinal study of 208 adolescents, beginning as freshmen and sophomores who exhibited talent in the areas of

art, athletics, music, mathematics, or science, Csikszentmihalyi and Schiefele report that adolescents involved in the arts—music, imaginative writing, and visual arts—found the arts more enjoyable than involvement in mathematics and science. An important point Csikszentmihalyi and Schiefele make is that because of the impersonal, linear nature of most academic subjects, especially mathematics and science, many students simply do not want to learn and therefore choose not to learn. Csikszentmihalyi and Schiefele assert that when greater research is concentrated on “emotional and motivational variables” in teaching, “the importance of the arts for the total educational curriculum will become apparent, instead of being overshadowed, as it is at the present, by a naively simplistic reliance on rational-empirical subject matter for the content of instruction” (p. 189). This study supports the theory that the arts interest and motivate students, thereby making the arts important factors in keeping students engaged and in school.

Incorporating creative arts into the language arts classroom is not a new idea. However, with Gardner’s ideas on Multiple Intelligences, educators have come to look at the connections among the creative and language arts somewhat differently. Gardner (1983) states, “When scientists finally unravel the neurological underpinnings of music—the reasons for its effects, its appeal, its longevity—they will be providing an explanation of how emotional and motivational factors are intertwined with purely perceptual ones” (p. 106). Artistic expression is now being seen as a legitimate and important means of communicating and learning. Real value exists for helping students develop understanding not only through reading and writing, but also through movement, music, drawing, talking, and interaction with others (Carroll, Wong-Kam, Chang, & Jacobson, 1994).

Gardner's work on Multiple Intelligences and how children learn adds new insight to curriculum issues. This theory proposes that instead of the commonly held belief that human beings possess (and thus are tested for) one general intelligence, seven intelligences may exist, "intelligence" being defined by Gardner as "biopsychological potential" (1993, p. 36). These intelligences include linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. However, schools tend to stress only logical-mathematical and linguistic intelligences. According to Gardner, recognizing multiple intelligences has important implications for American education because the Multiple Intelligences theory emphasizes potentialities for human growth that may be stunted by the present educational system. Gardner (1991) explains:

Until now, most schools in most cultures have stressed a certain combination of linguistic and logical intelligences. Beyond question that combination is important in mastering the agenda of school, but has gone too far in ignoring the other intelligences. By minimizing the importance of other intelligences within and outside of schools, educators consign many students who fail to exhibit the "proper" blend to the belief that they are stupid, and do not take advantage of ways in which multiple intelligences can be exploited to further the goals of school and the broader culture (p. 81).

Consequently, Gardner's theory recommends a variety of instructional strategies to lead students to genuine understanding, including making schools more like children's museums with hands-on experiences, promoting apprenticeships or apprentice-like relationships with experts in a discipline, and using technological innovations that challenge students' existing preconceptions. Here the arts can play a crucial role in improving students' ability to learn because the arts draw on a range of intelligences and approaches (1991).

Guilford's theoretical model, *The Structure of Intellect*, although somewhat different from Gardner's, also promotes the idea that intelligence consists of several dimensions. These include: (1) content or information, (2) mental operations, and (3) products. Each dimension is then divided into sub-categories consisting of 120 separate entities. Guilford believes that every human being has these three dimensions but not necessarily all of the abilities. However, Guilford believes that in a large population of people, all of the abilities could be identified. But the most important idea underlying Guilford's model, is his multidimensional, multifaceted view of intelligence. He believes that there are many "intelligences" rather than a unitary unit of general intelligence (Maker, 1982).

Taylor's Multiple Talent Approach also promotes the idea of several intelligences, although Taylor uses the term "talents." Taylor's Multiple Talent Approach theory promotes the idea that humans possess six talents. These include: (1) creative talent, (2) decision-making talent, (3) planning talent, (4) forecasting talent, (5) communication talent, and (6) thinking abilities. He believes that the entire educational system should be reformed so that a variety of talents are the focus of all classrooms. Taylor stresses the importance of recognizing and developing many different areas of talent in schools. He believes that focusing only on the narrow range of academic abilities wastes a great deal of talent by allowing it to lie dormant for much of the children's school years (Maker, 1982).

Eisner (1991) also stresses the promise of increased student equity in broadening the limited view of students' capabilities held by many educators. According to Eisner, the arts can help promote equity "because by their very nature learning opportunities involving the arts call for heterogeneity, diversity, idiosyncrasy, works that attest to the distinctive ways in which individual children see, feel, and imagine" and "the fine arts, including

creative writing, are fields in which personal signature is particularly important” (p. 16).

Eisner (1982) believes that students should have access to the fine arts-visual arts, music, dance, and drama-because they cultivate and refine the sensibilities. He believes that the fine arts were developed because of the human need to receive and convey information in forms that capitalize on the use of different sensory systems. Eisner (1982) states, “Human beings become saturated, bored, and eventually withdraw psychologically if the opportunity to alter their state of mind is unavailable” (p. 74).

The study and production of the arts may also lead to greater understanding among different groups of people by allowing room for many voices, many stories, many points of view, and many interpretations. Therefore, multicultural arts programs can provide opportunities for new understandings by offering important ways for students to engage in more democratic opportunities and develop new communities. Taking these ideas a step farther, such an approach-especially when the students are the actual writers and artists-can also provide greater self-awareness, understanding, acceptance, and validation for all students (Darby & Catterall, 1994).

Many creative people have proven to be self-starters and innovators; they also are better at understanding systems such as language or mathematics which makes it easier for them to learn reading and math than those who learn by rote. There is sufficient evidence that contact with the arts was the basis for development of the creative capacities of some of the world’s greatest scientists, mathematicians, inventors, and politicians. “Albert Schweitzer, Albert Einstein, Benjamin Franklin, and Winston Churchill all are examples of outstanding achievers who developed creativity through the arts” (Spillane, 1987, p. 4).

Given the importance of the arts in human knowing, especially in light of Gardner's work on Multiple Intelligences, Csikszentmihalyi and Schiefele's work on involvement with the arts, Guilford's *The Structure of Intellect*, and Taylor's Multiple Talent Approach Theory, a growing body of research and anecdotal evidence seems to indicate that the arts can play an important role in helping all students, including students at-risk and students with special needs. Therefore, according to these theories, a curriculum without the arts is out of balance and limits students' education. The arts seem positively linked to writing as well as other academic areas.

Music and the Mind

Music, one of the basic arts, takes us from the beginning of our lives to the end; from our first lullaby to the requiem Mass, music fills our lives with enjoyment and social structure. Music expresses our deepest emotions and contributes to our cultural stability. Plato once stated that "music is a heaven-sent ally in reducing to order and harmony any disharmony in the revolutions within us" (Storr, 1992, p. 124). Within complex stratified cultures, music can act as a social symbol of group affiliation. For example, a listener's preference for a certain style of music such as country, rock, jazz, or classical is often associated with different socio-economic classes, lifestyles, or ethnic groups. Music's social nature is apparent when we consider that music is "used both as a summatory mark of many activities and as an integral part of many others which could not be properly executed, or executed at all, without music" (Merriam, 1964, p. 218). At birth children are introduced to lullabys, progressing to other children's songs, jump rope jingles, and songs for learning various topics such as the alphabet and multiplication facts. Music continues to infiltrate people's lives as they are surrounded by it on radio and TV. Music

fills the gap when words are absent or ineffective. Music's value emanates from its ability for arousing our auditory experiences and emotions.

Making music appears to be one of the fundamental activities of mankind, as characteristically human as drawing and painting. Scholars from many disciplines, including anthropology, psychology, musicology, and physiology, have long wondered why music, which has no apparent value for sustaining life, should have remained in our behavioral repertoire for thousands of years. Yet music's presence in every culture known to man suggests strongly that it grows out of some fundamental neurological process.

"There is probably no other human cultural activity which is so all pervasive and which reaches into, shapes, and often controls so much of human behavior" (Merriam, 1964, p. 218). Records of early civilizations, indicate that music was attributed with power over physical and mental well-being. In ancient Egypt, priest physicians referred to music as "the physics of the soul," and made chant-therapies a part of their medical practice. In ancient Greece, music was considered a special power over the intellect, emotion, and physical health (Gfeller, 1990). In 600 B.C. Thales was believed to have cured a plague in Sparta using musical powers (Merriam, 1964). Healing shrines and temples included hymn specialists, and even then music was prescribed for the emotionally disturbed.

"Using music to cure mental disorders seems to reflect the belief that music could somehow directly produce emotion and change character" (Gfeller, 1990, p. 63).

Despite the fact that musical sounds have no specific designative meaning, music has long been considered a form of communication. Musicians as well as psychologists and neurologists all support this belief. For example, Pribram (1982) describes music as a

language-like form by which humans express themselves and communicate with each other.

Music has other characteristics that lend themselves to social opportunities. First, music is readily recognized as a social art. Second, music offers unique communication: verbal skills are minimized within musical creation. Thus music gives handicapped individuals with poor verbal skills an alternative for interaction. Third, music is not a “monolithic” skill, but rather a collection of sub-skills (Sloboda, 1985). The individual can participate with a wide range of abilities—from listening to skilled performance. For the individual with no musical skills, involvement is possible through listening activities in which the listener is encouraged to respond. Because of the wide variety of music, most musical preferences can be accommodated to make the experience more meaningful (Gfeller, 1990). Another feature of musical communication is its lack of dependence on rational or intellectual response. Altshuler (1956) in describing the therapeutic uses of music states that “music offers the advantage of encountering few or no intellectual barriers, as words do” (p. 120). Therefore, this seems to suggest that to some extent, appreciation of music may help alleviate pressure from reason and rational thought.

Musical context may allow a normally “reserved” or repressed individual to explore or express feelings of a sensitive or personal nature. Music can evoke feelings as well as offer alternative expression for people who have difficulty with verbal expression. “Examination of primitive cultures shows music to be an emotional outlet. For example, within preliterate tribes such as the Tshui, The Maori, and the Futana, music is used to express emotion” (Merriam, 1964).

Music can enable brain-damaged people to accomplish tasks which they could not master without the aid of music. Music can also make life more livable for those who are emotionally disturbed or mentally ill. Storr (1992) states as follows:

Because music is not so obviously necessary to most of us, we tend to underestimate its significance in the lives of normal people. Yet it is difficult to imagine a world without it. Even if playing music were forbidden, and every device for reproducing music destroyed, we should still have tunes running in our heads, still be using music to order our actions and make structured sense out of the world around us (p. 107).

Rhythmic structure is another important characteristic of music. Humans are basically rhythmical beings. The human body contains rhythm in respiration, heartbeat, speech, gait, etc. (Altshuler, 1948). Musical sound is pleasing to the ear. Sound, repetition, rhythm, and rhyme draw the listener to music. Few people can refrain from the toe-tapping, hand-clapping, body-swaying rhythm music elicits. Rhythm is also created by language being ordered in such a way to form a pattern and provide unity. The rhythmic sounds of certain songs make them perfect for chanting, which enables children to memorize them easily and carry the language with them to use in daily oral or written communication.

Because of music's repetition and rhythm, it has great appeal for children. "Because of this natural appeal, music is frequently used as a motivational aid in the teaching of reading, writing, and other areas of the language arts" (Lane, 1981, p. 2). Since music creates pleasure, it is an excellent medium to connect to other intellectual tasks.

Developing activities directly connected with music to assist in the teaching of reading and the language arts can capitalize on the interest of children and help make learning a pleasant experience. Many educators believe that participation in musical activities

motivates students and helps them to develop essential reading and language arts skills.

“Music can be an effective motivational vehicle for teaching listening skills, literature, oral and non-verbal communication, creative writing, handwriting, spelling and grammar”

(Lane, 1981, p. 2). Music creates a heightened language awareness through a focus on musical rhythm. Playing music in the classroom promotes the development of students’ imaginations. Music can be an acceptable prewriting activity; students are likely to develop something that they can use in their later compositions. Using music to stimulate imaginative thinking is a valid English class activity (Sheaffer, 1982).

While music stands alone as communication, it is also often paired with poetry, prose, or art in serious and popular music as well as in advertising and other media. For example, music is often paired with slide pictures, exercise programs, movies, plays and other forms of drama, advertisements both on TV and radio, games including arcade, video, and computers. “Historically, music has been utilized to intensify the emotional content or text of the art form with which it is paired” (Gfeller, 1990, p. 55) Scholars generally agree that music causes increased arousal in those who are interested in it and who therefore listen to it with some degree of concentration. Arousal means a condition of heightened awareness, interest, and excitement: a generally enhanced state of being.

However, a closer relationship seems to exist between hearing and emotional arousal than between seeing and emotional arousal. This could explain why movie producers insist on using music in their movies (Storr, 1992). One of the reasons why music affects us deeply is its power to structure our auditory experience and therefore to make sense out of it. Both language and music are forms of communication processed by the auditory system. Both systems contain structural similarities in terms of pitch, duration, stress, and

even listener expectations. However, music, unlike speech, does not refer to specific thoughts, ideas, or events; rather it communicates embodied meaning. The extent of association, cultural convention, and images within music can, to a greater or lesser extent, affect specific connotations from auditory stimuli. Ultimately, the listener establishes meaning, based on cultural and individual experiences (Gfeller, 1990).

Since classical music has no words, the listener is free to define meaning, create, imagine, explore, and expand on ideas. Many ideas come from a brief image, a memory, or a flash of insight, as opposed to logical reasoning. Stravinsky (1947) refers to the pleasure gained from unorganized natural sounds, which may be considerable, but which lacks the further dimension provided by music. He states, "But over and above this passive enjoyment, we shall discover music, music that will make us participate actively in the working of a mind that orders, gives life, and creates" (p. 24). Fried and Berkowitz (1979) found that soothing or aversive music could significantly alter a subject's mood. Subjects who listened to soothing, pleasant music showed significantly greater instances of helpful behaviors directly following the listening experience than did subjects who had been exposed to aversive music. These studies suggest that music, even without specifically referring to content, communicates some type of information to the listener that affects human behavior. "Recorded or live music can trigger a response in movement or language; music evokes mood: (Moffett, 1983, p. 189). A number of other research studies have investigated the influence of listener characteristics on musical response; particularly these studies have examined the effect of prior mood and taste or preference on affective response to music. These studies indicate that mood response to music is

dependent upon many factors in addition to musical form, including the listener's mood set and attitude toward the music (Gfeller, 1990).

An individual's psychophysiological response pattern depends on the musical characteristics of the stimulus in addition to personal attitudes toward and associations with the stimulus. Music is used successfully in clinical settings to encourage and lead social interaction among patients. The interaction is perceived in such behaviors as verbalization of thoughts and feelings, contributions to a group effort, cooperation with others, or observing and responding to the needs of others (Ridgeway, 1976).

Clinical experience shows that music evokes mood/emotional responses that can range from pleasure and excitement to sadness, fear, and apprehension, depending on past associations and present symbolic significances. Boehm states, "The search for meaning in the mind occurs through patterning; the brain's natural tendency is to integrate information to create meaning. Emotions are critical to patterning" (1993, p. 16).

Roederer (1974) suggests neurophysiological explanations for the ways in which music evokes meaningful and emotional responses on a psychological level. He proposes that mood/emotional responses are based on neural information processing. Perhaps one of the reasons music is considered so unique and valuable is due to its common association with emotional response. Music, often referred to as the language of emotions, is commonly credited with the ability to transmit information, including emotional messages (Winner, 1982). Through association by contiguity, cultural convention, and structural properties, music functions as a symbol capable of evoking feelings. Music's nonreferential nature renders it capable of manifold meaning and flexibility (Gfeller, 1990).

Music brings order to muscular movement, as well as promoting order within the mind. John Blacking (1987) writes, “The development of the senses and the education of the emotions through the arts are not merely desirable options. They are essential both for balanced action and the effective use of the intellect” (p. 118). Through music people learn to avoid an overload of auditory stimuli by excluding the irrelevant and paying attention to what is important, thus creating order in the world. This is comparable to the order that people get from the explanatory hypotheses of science. Scientific theory creates order and people feel less at the world’s mercy. Making sense of the world gives people confidence. This is a major benefit of music (Storr, 1992).

Lozanov, director of the Institute of Suggestology in Sofia, also found that music brings order to the mind. In the early sixties, Lozanov announced publicly that he could improve a person’s memory more than fifty percent with what he called suggestopedia. Suggestopedia is a very vital branch of a much larger subject, suggestology. Lozanov explains as follows:

Suggestology is a holistic “ology” that weaves together a bundle of techniques to help people reach those reserves of mind and body. Suggestology attempts to get the body and left-brain and right-brain abilities working together as an orchestrated whole to make people more capable of doing whatever they’re trying to do (Ostrander & Schroeder, 1979, p. 16).

Suggestology strives to create a link between the conscious and unconscious. “By harmonizing altered states of consciousness, rhythms of recitation, breathing, and music, people spiral into the reserves of the mind” (p. 92). Lozanov contended that once this connection was made, awareness followed and through this expanded awareness, people could control and select the perceptions they wanted. He announced that with this

tension-free learning system, students could easily learn a language in a month and a year later show very high retention. Lozanov contended that suggestopedia worked for everyone, old or young, brilliant or retarded, educated or uneducated. In addition, the method appeared to improve health and cure stress-related illnesses. He organized what he called “memory sessions.” In one memory session subjects were seated in lounge chairs under subdued lights, listening to quiet music while the teacher read certain material to them. The next day, subjects found they could easily read, write, and speak from 120 to 150 new words absorbed in the previous two-hour session. In the same way, grammar rules were painlessly absorbed. At the end of several weeks, despite many firm beliefs from critics that people couldn’t learn a thing in this effortless fashion, subjects emerged fluent in a foreign language they’d not known before. Not only had they learned faster but the subjects retained the material. Six months later retention was still eighty-eight percent (Ostrander & Shroeder, 1979).

Monitoring equipment used in Lozanov’s meditative sessions revealed subjects’ bodies showed an extraordinary pattern similar to certain kinds of yoga meditation believed to refresh and restore the body. Not only did heartbeat and blood pressure decrease, but at the same time the people relaxed, they were also doing strenuous mental work. They had actually learned much more than would have been covered in a whole day of tough, exhausting immersion language course (Ostander & Schroeder, 1979). “Body processes slowed down to a healthful, optimum level; brain waves slowed to the refreshing alpha level. Subjects reported that even their headaches disappeared during the sessions with the musical memory method” (p. 35) The secret of suggestopedia was a relaxed state and synchronized rhythm. Lozanov observed that a very specific form of

music with a very specific rhythm can induce a relaxed state in the body, but with one very major difference. The music-induced relaxation left the mind alert and able to concentrate (Ostander & Schroeder, 1979). Unlike other forms of meditation, nothing was required but playing the music. One reason for this is that classical music has a steady beat pattern similar to the human heartbeat at rest. The body's metabolism unconsciously slows to match the beat of the music, thus reducing the amount of stress hormones circulating in the blood stream. Music, with its calming effect while at the same time enhancing the mind is a wonderful classroom tool. Hanratty (1997) states that as a result of listening to classical music, "students become calmer and more open to learning" (p. 32).

Given what has been previously stated about the influence of music on the mind and learning, it seems that using classical music in the writing classroom could have a positive impact on students' writing. Research seems to indicate that music has great appeal for people of all ages and intellectual abilities. Studies show that music not only has a positive impact on behavior, but also increases the capabilities of the mind to create.

Music and Writing

Some educators have utilized the benefits of music specifically in the writing classroom. Because music stimulates the brain's synthesizing hemisphere, music is a much better way to get students started on a composition rather than focusing on form and convention. In addition, songs provide another excellent stimulus for writing. Olson (1992) states, "Since music is naturally sequential, it provides excellent motivation for visual-narrative sequence (p.29). Songs merge the melodies and rhythms of words with those of music. The notes and beats of music provide a precise number of syllables in a line, the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables that make up a metrical pattern, which

in turn makes up a larger pattern such as a stanza. Moffett (1983) believes that this metrical structure provides a frame for students to flesh out their own material and often actually triggers the material. When music and language are joined, both are enhanced and hold greater interest for students. Music offers many opportunities for reflective writing. Hanratty (1997) states, "The brain processes music in the same area that it decodes words. This provides a perfect tie-in to creative writing" (p. 32).

One project (Kite, Smucker, Steiner, & Bayne, 1994) used successfully to demonstrate the interconnectedness of music and writing began with program music, since music is an area general educators often overlook. Program music is instrumental music that depicts or suggests a particular scene or story. The goal was to have the students write a children's book based on a story they derived from listening to program music. A list was given to students from which they selected a title. Next, students listened to the music, visualized images that the music suggested to them, and wrote verbal phrases to capture those images. After listening repeatedly to their selected piece of music, students began incorporating language arts, reading, and social studies. Students engaged themselves in the creative process through a variety of approaches. Some wrote first and then illustrated their books, while others did the opposite. Through repeated listening, students became immersed in sounds of the music which allowed them to brainstorm their story line. Their writing was inspired by musical comparatives-high and low, fast and slow, loud and soft-and how these interacted with instrumental timbres and form. The students had studied about each of these elements in previous lessons on the content base of music.

After students had sketched their own story line, their stories were then compared to the composer's intended story line. While not all newly written stories had exact parallels to those of the composers, many correlations did exist of action with sound. From the perspective of language arts, this project required the students to be actively engaged in the writing process. They worked on generating a topic, creating a rough draft, revising and editing, and publishing in final form (Kite, Smucker, Steiner, & Bayne, 1994). In this study, the writing process was enhanced by students immersing themselves in the sound of music. Music provided a means of brainstorming and helped students develop a story line.

In another project (Corey, 1995) classical music was played softly in the background while students wrote. Students became so accustomed to listening to music while they wrote that if the teacher forgot to turn the music on students reminded her. Listening to music help set the mood for the story. One student said that the music from the soundtrack, "Out of Africa," made her feel lonely. The music made her think of her older sister who had recently returned to college after a vacation so she wrote about that. Another student said the music from "Children of Sanchez" made her feel as if she was supposed to be having fun and meeting lots of people. By putting that feeling into a physical setting, the student came up with a tropical island. From there she let her imagination run free and wrote down whatever she saw. From this same selection, another student captured a dance recital. She could see a couple dancing on stage and she imagined how someone would feel who was waiting to perform. She put the emotion she felt into the character waiting to perform. The contrast between the stories was great even though both were influenced by the same music; one student connected to the

pleasurable melody, the other to the tense rhythm. Of course, writers bring their own preferences and experiences to whatever music they hear. Music has such depth and can touch such a wide variety of emotions that it is nearly impossible to listen to music and not be affected (Corey, 1995). This study suggests that music affects mood and triggers different responses in individuals. Music has great depth and touches a wide variety of emotions which tap into a student's creativity.

Dethier (1991) encourages using various kinds of music-popular, blues, jazz, rock-in the language arts class to teach context, images, leads, irony, metaphor, revision, analysis, and artistic influence. He believes using music is a logical way to motivate students, help them make connections, and learn new material more quickly. Dethier encourages using some music students are familiar with because students will feel less alienated. In teaching images, he uses a Beatle song, "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds." He believes students can easily find interesting images in rock songs. To teach revision and to show students how writers revise their own work, Dethier displays the words to Dylan's song, "I Want You" and then plays the original version from the album Blonde on Blonde. Finally he plays the live version of the song on the album, Bob Dylan at Budokan. Dethier believes music can motivate those students who seem to just be passing through life. He states, "If we listen to our students talking in the hall, read the graffiti in their notebooks, or look at their lists of interests, we know that they use the language of music constantly" (p. 76).

Lane (1981) proposes using country music in the language arts classroom. She advocates country music as an effective tool for teaching reading, listening skills, literature, oral and non-verbal communication, creative writing, handwriting, and spelling and grammar. Because country music songs tell stories about peoples' lives, hopes,

dreams, and experiences, Lane believes country music can become the basis for language experience stories, for creative writing, and other language arts skills.

From what educators have discovered about using music in the language arts classroom, music seems to be a powerful tool for unleashing the sub-conscious mind and allowing the creator to become totally involved. The rhythm and rhyme of the music provides a pleasing atmosphere in which students can find words and ideas they never knew they had.

Summary

The arts take us from the beginning of our lives to the end. Many researchers argue for the importance of the arts in the school. They have found that the arts motivate students to learn and improve the quality of life. Music in particular, plays a major role in human life and is essential to every day living. Music evokes feelings, provides pleasure by breaking the daily routine, and the rhythm and patterns are pleasing to the ear. Music is relaxing both physically as well as mentally. Music soothes the muscles as well as brings order to the mind, allowing one to think more clearly. Children enjoy the rhyme, rhythm, and repetition music provides. Because of this natural appeal, music is a great motivator and learning tool for students when paired with educational tasks.

Most academic subjects are too linear, offering little or no opportunity for self-expression. Thus students become bored, stifled, and lose interest. Research indicates that people have many abilities and to focus on half the brain ignores the whole brain, intelligences, and the educational needs of students. The left brain functions with sequence and logic while the right side functions with holistic, intuitive processing. That is exactly what writing is; a mixture of whole and parts, of global ideas and specific details.

Studies in writing and music indicate that music enhances writing by unleashing students' creativity and allowing them to more easily express themselves. Music tends to relax the body while enhancing the alertness of the mind, thus allowing students to be more imaginative and creative. However, more research is needed to learn about how certain kinds of music specifically impact the writing process.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents an explanation and description of the research study. It includes the methodology implemented, the teacher, subjects, setting, curriculum, an example of a typical day, data collection procedures, data analyses, and summary. The focus of this research was to investigate ways that the introduction of classical music into the seventh grade English composition classroom influenced writing performance among seventh grade students.

This was a qualitative study employing an ethnographic kind of approach attempting to examine the effects of music in the seventh grade English composition classroom. Ethnography is one of the oldest field research traditions whose goal is to tell the whole story of a defined group's daily life, to identify the meanings, patterns, and passions of a bounded cultural group. Ethnography studies events as they evolve in natural settings and emphasizes context. The ethnographer learns about the culture by observation, discussion, and reflection. Ethnographers observe what people actually do, examine artifacts, discuss with people what they think, believe, or do and why, and reflect upon the ethnographer's inferences and interpretations. Ethnography requires intense personal involvement (Crabtree & Miller, 1992).

This study lends itself to a qualitative study since the researcher was not looking at statistical differences, the testing of a certain hypothesis, or global generalizations. This researcher was simply interested in if and how music influenced writing in two seventh

grade classrooms. Qualitative research attempts to be naturalistic and takes place in settings where subjects normally spend their time.

Qualitative data is rich in description of people, places, and conversations, and not easily handled by statistical procedures. Questions are formulated to investigate topics in all their complexity, in context. While conducting qualitative research, researchers may develop a focus, but they do not approach the research with highly specific questions to answer or hypotheses to test. In qualitative inquiry, sampling is driven by the desire to illuminate the questions under study and to increase the scope or range of data exposed in order to uncover multiple realities. It allows for development of theory that takes into account local conditions (Crabtree & Miller, 1992). Thus, what happens with music in two seventh grade classrooms cannot be generalized about all seventh graders but may be suggestive.

In education, qualitative research is often referred to as naturalistic because the researcher visits places where the events the researcher is studying naturally occur. Information is gathered by people engaging in natural behavior: talking, visiting, eating, and so on. The researcher starts with a topic of interest. This interest is often about how children learn, how they think about their learning, and how they construct meaning. The researcher's primary goal is to gather information that will ultimately strengthen the curriculum and instruction. This research often takes place in the classroom. The researcher observes students in their natural, everyday setting as they go about their daily routine (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

Naturalistic inquiry differs from traditional in that naturalistic inquiry assumes that multiple realities exist with differences among them that cannot be resolved through

rational processes or additional data. In fact, further inquiry results in greater divergence. Convergence comes only as we connect the interrelationships between all the elements of reality. Because all these parts of reality are interrelated, one can gain an understanding of the whole through studying any portion of it. In the classroom, this allows for an inquiry of human qualities and abilities. It enables the teacher-researcher to study the classroom, the questions that focus the study, analyze the data, reflect on the activities and instruction, and as a result enrich his/her own view of educational theories and strengthen the quality of the curriculum. Multiple realities enhance each other's meanings; forcing them to a single precise definition weakens or destroys meaning (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). Naturalistic inquiry does not attempt to generalize. In this particular study, the researcher was not seeking some wide generalization, but rather what patterns or themes emerged through the introduction of classical music into an English composition classroom. Significant answers to complicated and unique questions cannot necessarily be generalized across different human settings. Realizing the impossibility of generalizing, proponents of naturalistic inquiry accept the deep understanding and explication of social phenomena as they are observed in their own contexts. The traditional scientific paradigm assumes that there is a single objective reality, whereas naturalistic research proposes a reality that is one whole piece, but where all aspects of reality are interrelated. Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, and Allen (1993) state, "The naturalistic paradigm seeks to communicate by expanding meaning, even if new meaning conflicts with former knowledge" (p. 46). The researcher views the study holistically, recording observations, taking notes, and making connections with people and their environment. This researcher was looking for patterns, themes, and/or regularities in an

attempt to enhance understanding of human thought and action in a specific social environment.

Ethnographic research starts with the preference of a topic of interest. The researcher is interested in understanding and describing a specific identifiable group of people from a personal perspective. The researcher in this particular study was interested in how the introduction of classical music into the English composition classroom influenced behaviors and products.

The researcher's focus is on patterns or regularities in an effort to enhance understandings of human thought and action in a social setting. Data is continually being refined as new data is collected and analyzed by the teacher researcher. Patterson, Stansell, and Lee (1990) summarize the benefits of such teacher research:

The real quest of a teacher-researcher is a search for those questions and methods that lead to new insights and deeper understanding. The story of such a quest is one of re-examination, of re-searching, looking again and again at our present understandings, our data, and the methods by which that data was gathered and reflected upon. All teachers have stories to tell and truths to share. Teachers can learn to view children in ways no else can. They can show the ways students learn, and why learning is sometimes difficult for students. The research process can help teachers explore their decisions, find their voices, and tell their stories. Many of these stories that have been based on systematic research have changed the way schools work (p. 1-2).

The Teacher

The teacher, also the researcher in the classroom, had been teaching for seventeen years. During the first ten years of teaching, the teacher-researcher followed the traditional method of teaching. Her first teaching assignment was in 1979 in a third grade self-contained classroom of only ten students at East Enterprise, Indiana. The next year the four elementary schools in the district consolidated, including the school at East

Enterprise, and she was asked to take the Elementary Librarian position which she accepted. After accepting the position as Elementary Librarian for one year, the teacher-researcher returned to the third grade classroom for two more years. During the summer of 1983, she moved to Oklahoma and obtained a position at Collinsville teaching a fifth grade, self-contained, gifted and talented class. After teaching in this position for three years, in 1987 the teacher-researcher accepted a full-time substitute position at Broken Arrow, Oklahoma for one semester. She accepted a full time position in August of 1987 where she stayed for four years teaching sixth grade Communication Skills (English, Spelling, Reading, and Social Studies).

The teacher-researcher received her Masters of Science in Curriculum and Supervision at OSU in the spring of 1988. In the fall of 1991 she accepted a position with Union Public Schools teaching sixth grade in a self-contained setting. She stayed at this position for three years before moving to the Union Sixth and Seventh Grade to teach seventh grade English.

Because of continued educational classes and professional reading, this teacher developed a constructivist approach to teaching and has incorporated it into her curriculum for the past six years. This teacher was introduced to the book In the Middle by Nancie Atwell through a language arts course and this book has had a great impact on changing her views toward teaching. In the Middle is a book about one teacher-researcher's, Atwell's, experiences learning and collaborating through reading and writing with her eighth grade students. Atwell totally transformed her teaching methods after questioning her own assumptions about teaching. The book is a story about how adolescents learn and what they can do if given the time and freedom. Atwell empowered

her students by transforming her classroom into a student-centered one. In the Middle is just one example of the importance of teacher-research.

Since the teacher is the researcher in this study, it is important for the teacher-researcher to guard against biases. However, the naturalistic researcher realizes that total objectivity is an illusion and that methodology cannot be totally separated from those who have created it. In this particular study, the idea of using music with writing came about because of the teacher-researcher's interest in music. The researcher decided on using classical music after learning about studies that had been conducted using classical music and math. The researcher also chose classical music because it has no words. "The naturalistic researcher does not attempt to ensure that observations are free from contamination by the researcher but rather to trust in the confirmability of the data themselves" (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993, p. 34). This means that data can be tracked to their sources, and several sources of data are used and compared.

Subjects

This study involved two of the teacher researcher's seventh grade English classes. These classes consisted of 44 students, consisting of 27 males and 17 females. Different ethnic backgrounds were also represented in these culturally diverse classes which included: two female Hispanic, four male Asian, four female Black, one male Black, and one Native American. All 44 students received parental consent to participate in the study (Appendix A). Data was collected over a twelve week period during January, February, March, April, and May 1998.

Setting

The setting for this study was at the Union Sixth and Seventh grade Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma. This building houses all sixth and seventh grades students in the district. Population at this school is approximately 2,000 students. The social economic status the district serves is primarily middle and upper middle class. Sixth and seventh grade students are divided into teams for their core subjects which for seventh grade include: Science, Math, English, and Geography. Four teachers and approximately 140 students make up a team. Each grade level consists of seven teams. The sixth and seventh grade center is a large two-story building. The media center separates the sixth and seventh grade classrooms on the lower level, with art classrooms, computer labs, and a multi-purpose room dividing the two grades on the upper level. Each grade level has its own gymnasium, but share the cafeteria.

In English class students sat at individual desks to write. Desks were arranged on two sides of the room. One side consisted of six rows of desks with three desks in each row. The other side consisted of four rows of three desks. Two long tables with books, paper and other supplies, and reference materials were along opposite walls (See Appendix J for a classroom map). Students could move to one of the tables to work if they desired. Literature response logs were kept in individual classroom baskets in the classroom. These response logs were used to record weekly readings, completed books, and responses to reading material. Students carried their other supplies with them including two folders, one for English and one for Reading, an English journal, pencils, ink pens, markers, and loose leaf paper. English journals were used for creating various lists,

(verbs, nouns, etc.) journal writing and other classroom projects. Four colorful bean bags also occupied the room. Students alternated using the bean bags during silent reading.

The day began at 7:45 A.M. and ended at 2:15 P.M. Each class was fifty minutes long, with the exception of last hour which was fifty-eight minutes, with a four minute passing period and a thirty minute lunch. Students had six class periods consisting of four required subjects, Math, Science, Geography, and English, and two electives. With the exception of electives, these 140 students had the same teachers for the four required subjects.

In English, students wrote three days a week and read two. Each class began with the teacher presenting a mini-lesson on grammar, an idea for writing, discussing a kind of writing, or class procedures. Students were always encouraged to question and comment after each lesson. After the mini-lesson, students wrote for approximately 35 minutes with the last few minutes reserved for students to share their writing. While students were writing, the teacher conferred with students about their writing individually. On reading days, first the teacher read to students for approximately 15 minutes. A short discussion was held after each reading for students to question and comment. Then students read silently for about 35 minutes and responded to what they were reading in their literature logs. Students were allowed to sit on the floor, a bean bag, or to move to a different seat somewhere in the room.

The Curriculum

Authentic experiences were developed according to the students' needs and interests with a student-centered curriculum. The researcher conducted writing classes using the writing process. Although the researcher presented many different forms of writing as

well as topics for writing, most of the time students were encouraged to write about topics of interest and concern to them and present the writing in whatever form they chose. Students experienced many different kinds of writing, completed puzzle and word games, kept literature and English journals, were involved in writing and literature groups, and wrote and performed various skits that promoted reading and writing. The English textbook, the district adopted textbook for seventh grade, was used as reference only. The book consisted of approximately fourteen chapters, alternating between instruction on grammar and writing. For example, the first chapter introduced nouns and the second narrative writing. The textbook was used when a student needed to know something about grammar. The teacher provided mini-lessons-short five to ten minute instructional sessions at the beginning of the class-based upon students' needs, Oklahoma's PASS requirements, and the local school system's curriculum. Students incorporated grammar into many different kinds of writing. Several books on improving writing were on a table. Examples of how to write certain kinds of writing were also on the table. Many different kinds and colors of paper as well as other tools for coloring, cutting, and pasting were displayed on a table. Cardboard and covering were available for making books.

Students wrote three days a week, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Each class began with the teacher presenting a mini-lesson on grammar, an idea for writing, discussing a kind of writing, or class procedures. Grammatical errors discovered through editing guided many of the mini-lessons. For example, mini-lessons consisted of writing dialogue correctly, avoiding the comma splice, using transitions, identifying parts of speech, etc. Many kinds of writing were discussed including letters, poetry, drama, reports, journals, and narrative, descriptive, expository, and persuasive paragraphs. Ideas

consisted of the teacher reading a story to students and having students use the story as an idea for writing, or several ideas were written on the board. The teacher discussed these ideas with students, but most of the time students were free to write about a topic of their choice. Students were always encouraged to question and comment before and after each lesson. After the teacher presented a short lesson, students wrote for approximately 35 minutes while the teacher visited individually with students about their writing.

For the literature portion of the class, students read two days a week, Thursday and Friday, for approximately 35 minutes from a book of their choice. Students were allowed to sit on the floor or move to a different seat. In addition, students rotated among three bean bags weekly. Students borrowed books from the school media center, the public library, or purchased their own from a book store or the classroom book club offers. Each month the teacher offered students the opportunity to order books from the Scholastic Book Club, Troll, and sometimes Trumpet. The book could be either fiction or non-fiction. One day a quarter was selected for students to read comic books, newspapers, and magazines. Students kept record of what they were reading for the day, wrote a literature response, and kept records of all books read. In addition, periodically students met in reading groups to share literature. The teacher read to students from a selected book each of the two days before students started their silent reading. A short discussion was held after each reading for students to ask questions and comment. Students were exposed to all the genres as well as many different books and authors. For example, the classes discussed fiction and all the categories of fiction such as realistic fiction, historical fiction, science fiction, fantasy and romance. In addition, non-fiction, poetry, and drama were also discussed. In addition to reading two days a week at school, students were

required to read two hours outside school. Students kept a record sheet showing the days of the week and the amount of time they read each day.

The Writing Environment

Students in this classroom began writing using the writing process at the very beginning of the school year. Their exposure to writing in prior years varied as did their attitudes about writing. Students had worked primarily from the English book with some writing assigned periodically. Their writing for the most part centered around teacher directed topics with certain other stipulations such as length with little or no revising and editing. Many of the students had been exposed to journal writing.

The students in this seventh grade class were introduced to the writing process at the very beginning of school. A set of English books were kept on the shelves for reference use only. Each day the teacher taught a mini-lesson followed by approximately thirty-five minutes of writing. Ten minutes was reserved at the end of class for sharing and preparation for the next class. Sometimes ideas for writing were written on the board but students did not have to use the ideas. Students had a lot of choice in writing. They could select their own topics for writing, with the exception of certain activities, determine the length of the piece, and the form in which the piece was written. Although length was not assigned, students were encouraged to write a piece which was interesting to the reader, included an introduction, a detailed and descriptive body, and a conclusion. Students often asked if a piece was long enough or if it was good, and the teacher responded that they were the authors and they needed to decide if they thought the piece was good and interesting to a reader.

While all students could write something at the beginning of the year, proficiency levels varied. While students seemed to understand writing in complete sentences, the wording was often awkward and comma splices were common. Other common errors were overuse of pronouns, and lack of descriptive detail. Students who were slow in getting started to write often stated they couldn't think of anything to write or they were thinking. The teacher offered ideas to students by engaging them in thoughts about their own experiences. Sometimes the teacher had the students do timed writings, called "free writes," in which they would write freely for ten minutes to help generate ideas. One important stipulation during these timed writings was to keep the pencil moving. If students encountered a block, they were encouraged to write, "I can't think of anything to write."

Although students had a great deal of choice in writing, student learning and improvement in written and oral communication was the primary goal. Students not only received instruction through mini-lessons, but in addition, while students were writing, the teacher circled the room visiting with as many students as time allowed discussing individual strengths and weaknesses in writing. Students were also required to follow the writing process. Students had to generate their own ideas or select one proposed by the teacher, write a rough draft, and revise and edit as many times as they felt necessary. Some students would revise and edit two, three, or four times, while others wanted to turn in the first draft. So the teacher required all students to revise and edit at least once before turning the paper in for the teacher to do a final edit. Therefore, no fewer than two drafts on any one piece could be turned in. After the student had revised and edited a piece and submitted it to the teacher, the teacher read the piece and did a final edit. If the paper

was free of errors, points were assigned to the piece and the piece was filed in the student's portfolio which was kept in a file in the classroom. At the beginning of the year the teacher designed a point system for evaluating writing. Basically, points were assigned according to length (Appendix B). Students received full credit if they followed instructions such as placing name, date, and draft on the paper, revising and editing using different colors of ink pens, and submitting at least two drafts. Points were not deducted for content and grammatical errors the teacher marked when editing the paper. However, if the teacher found errors in the writing, the teacher discussed these errors with the student and had the student write a final draft correcting the errors. Then points were assigned to the writing and the piece was placed in the student's portfolio.

As the year progressed, students became very familiar with class procedures and the writing process. Each student competed with only him or herself. Writing was progressive. Students never had to wait on another student to finish a piece of writing. Since students were selecting their own topics and didn't have to wait on anyone else, when one piece of writing was completed, they simply started another. In addition, students never had to wait on the teacher. Since students selected their own topics and knew what they were going to write, they could write before the mini-lesson, while the teacher was taking roll, during any unexpected interruptions, and immediately after the mini-lesson. Time on task was greatly increased.

Data Collection

The purpose of this study was to see if and how music affected writing in the English Composition classroom, if any themes or patterns emerged from the writing, and what

responses the music evoked. The teacher researcher was interested in student behaviors and both oral and written responses.

Data was collected for twelve weeks. The researcher collected data three weeks before the introduction of classical musical, six weeks during the introduction of classical music, and three weeks after the conclusion of classical music. During the six week period of listening to classical music, students wrote, using the writing process, approximately thirty-five minutes three days a week. All observations and data collected took place during the regular class periods. Data was collected the last week of January (which was second semester and the fourth week of the third quarter) beginning on January 26th and all of February with the exception of two interruptions, a professional day on February 16th and enrollment for eighth grade on February 25th. Data collection continued on March 2nd and ended on March 11th to allow a week for achievement testing followed by a week of spring break. Third quarter ended on March 6th. Data collection continued on March 30th, which was the second week of the fourth quarter, and continued through all of April and the first week of May without any further interruptions, ending on May 6th. School ended for the year on May 21st.

Data collected for this study were collected in a variety of ways. The teacher-researcher kept a daily journal of events during the workshop along with observations, individual student writing, and students' written responses. The researcher also took notes about peer interactions and oral discussions. Discussions centered around questions about topics for writing, revising, length of writing, and comments about the music. The teacher-researcher observed behavior, noting if fewer distractions seemed to exist, if students were more engaged, or if they asked different questions. In addition, a survey

(Appendix C) about listening to music at home, classical music, and attitudes about music was given before the study. Following the study, students completed a self-evaluation (Appendix E) and the teacher-researcher conducted a follow-up class discussion about the experience of writing while listening to classical music. Gathering information through a variety of techniques (observation, interviews, events, and documents) is termed “triangulation” and validates such research.

Procedures Used in the Collection of Data

The study was completed by the teacher-researcher in a natural class setting. Daily notes were kept to record mini-lessons, what ideas for writing, if any, were presented that day, student questions and responses, what music was played on a particular day, and other classroom observations. Students completed a survey (Appendix C) at the beginning of the study regarding their thoughts on classical music and writing and how they thought music might affect their concentration and performance in writing. Some responses to the beginning survey can be found in Appendix D. An equal number of positive and negative responses towards classical music were selected.

The researcher collected writing for twelve weeks: three weeks prior to the introduction of classical music with writing, six weeks incorporating classical music and writing, and three weeks after the conclusion of using classical music during writing. The researcher made a copy of each piece during this twelve week period and placed the writing in the appropriate folder. One folder was labeled “Before,” one was labeled “During,” and the third folder was labeled “After.” These folders were then kept in a locked file cabinet in the teacher’s room.

At the conclusion of the six week period of introducing classical music and writing, students were asked to complete a written self-evaluation (Appendix E) concerning their experiences with classical music and writing. Some representative student responses can be found in Appendix F. Again, an equal number of positive and negative responses towards classical music were selected.

Data Analysis

On a daily basis, the teacher-researcher recorded observations and events from both classes. The teacher-researcher recorded comments concerning music and writing, questions asked, behavioral incidents, and overall writing strategies. Students responded to a survey in writing at the beginning of the research and a self-evaluation at the end. The purpose of the beginning survey was to understand how students felt about their performance and concentration while listening to music. In addition, since students would be listening to classical music while they wrote, the teacher was also interested in attitudes toward classical music. The self-evaluation at the end of the study provided insight into how students believed listening to classical music while writing actually helped with writing or was a negative influence. The teacher-researcher also collected all writing for twelve weeks.

Each day the researcher began class with a ten minute mini-lesson. Topics for mini-lessons were generated from student writing and curriculum requirements such as sentence fragments, avoiding the comma splice, writing dialogue correctly, using the verb tenses correctly, revising, etc. After the mini-lesson, students wrote for approximately thirty-five minutes from a topic of their choice or one presented by the teacher. Students were always given a choice in what they wrote and the style in which they presented the writing

although the researcher did ask for variety. For example, if a student had just written a poem, the researcher asked the student to write maybe a descriptive story, letter, narrative, etc. Writing was progressive. When a student completed one piece, they were to immediately start another one. No set number of pieces was required for a nine week period. Data was collected for twelve weeks. The teacher-researcher collected data for three weeks prior to the introduction of classical music. Beginning on the fourth week, and for six weeks in a row, except for an interruption on February 16th for a professional day, February 25th for enrollment for eighth grade, and two weeks of interruptions for achievement testing and spring break, music was played. After six weeks in which classical music was introduced during writing, the music was stopped. However, the teacher-researcher continued to gather data for three more weeks. During the six week period of using classical music with writing, the researcher presented the mini-lesson, which was approximately ten minutes, then played classical music for about thirty-five minutes. At the end of the thirty-five minutes, the music was stopped and ten minutes was saved for students to share writing, ideas, and topics related to writing. Classical music played over the six week period and in order were: Antonio Vivaldi, "LeQuattro Stagioni"; Antonio Vivaldi, "Trois Concertos"; Beethoven, Symphony No. 6 "Pastoral"; Beethoven, "Emperor" Concerto; "Tchaikovsky: Concerto No. 1; Rachimaninoff: Concerto No. 2"; Bach, "Brandenburg concertos"; a collection of works including Albinoni, "Adagio in G minor"; Pachelbel, "Canon and Gigue in D major", Purcell, "Chacony in G minor"; Bach, "Air in D major", "Fugue in E major"; and Mozart, "Symphony Nos. 40 and 41."

The teacher-researcher conferred with students daily, reading and discussing content and/or grammar of the particular piece of writing the student was working on for that day, or discussing an idea for writing. After the student had written the piece and revised and edited, no fewer than two drafts could be submitted, the writing was placed in a basket in the room for the teacher to collect. At the end of each day, the researcher read and edited each piece for grammatical errors then returned the writing the next day (unless it was a reading day) and on an individual basis, discussed any errors the teacher had noted in the writing. The student then rewrote the piece, correcting all errors and turned the piece in to the teacher to be placed in a portfolio. A portfolio for each student was kept in a file cabinet in the room which students could access. Before the teacher placed the writing in the portfolio, the teacher made a copy of the writing. Writing was then placed into three different folders: writing received before music was introduced, writing completed while listening to classical music, and writing completed after the conclusion of classical music. At the conclusion of the study, the teacher-researcher again read and evaluated the writing. First, the researcher re-read all writing that was turned in three weeks before music was played. The teacher-researcher looked for possible patterns, themes, or consistencies. **Categories included: topics the subjects wrote about, length of the writing, variety, detail, description, sentence structure, fluency, creativity, imagination, and general grammatical errors such as incorrect paragraphing, indenting, capitalization, punctuation, run-ons, fragments, and etc.** The researcher recorded these headings on a piece of paper and as the researcher read each piece, recorded under the proper heading the particular pattern the researcher noted. In addition, when other patterns emerged, the researcher also included a heading for that. Finally,

after reading through all the data, the teacher-researcher tabulated the marks under each heading. When looking at topics, the researcher noted whether the student wrote about the idea presented by the teacher, or one the student selected. The researcher also noted whether the student was creative or imaginative in selecting a topic or title. For example, did the student use the exact title placed on the board, or did they change it in some way. A title that was considered creative was, “The Trash Can’s Revenge.” An example of an imaginative story was one a student wrote about the “Lusitania”. This topic had not been discussed in class at all. The student researched the topic, then wrote a story about it placing herself/himself as a character in the story.

Description was measured by how effectively students described the events in terms of the senses. The researcher noted if enough detail was given that the reader understood the story easily. Also the researcher evaluated the writing as being more descriptive if the author showed what was going on instead of telling and used comparisons and analogies. An example of this was instead of saying, “I fell,” the student wrote, “Gravity pulled me down.” Another example of descriptive writing was a comparison a student made about puberty. The student compared puberty to a “toxic brew being mixed into my life.” The researcher recorded whether the piece was a poem, letter, story, play, etc. In evaluating the writing for sentence structure and fluency, the researcher looked at whether the students wrote complete sentences, used compound and/or complex sentences, and whether they avoided awkward writing. After the teacher-researcher analyzed writing before the introduction of music, the teacher-researcher analyzed writing collected while listening to music and writing completed after the conclusion of listening to music. This

writing was analyzed in the exact same way as writing before the introduction of music, using the same categories.

During the course of the study, the researcher kept a daily journal recording comments, questions, and student behavior, noting whether students were more engaged or seem less distracted, whether students remained seated or wandered around the room, or whether they wanted to work alone or with another student. The researcher also recorded whether the students started writing immediately or whether they seemed to have trouble getting started. Questions students often asked about writing prior to the study were: (1) How long does the writing have to be? (2) How many drafts do I have to do? (3) What can I write about? Each time one of these questions was asked, the teacher recorded it in the journal. The teacher-researcher read the journal on a daily basis and again at the conclusion of the study. The researcher noted questions asked and the number of times the same question was asked. The researcher tabulated the number of times behavior was mentioned, and what specific behavior, as well as information about writing, including whether students wanted to work alone or in groups. Comments made about writing and/or music were tabulated in the same way.

The student survey before the study reflected students' thoughts and feelings about music in general, classical music in particular, and whether students believed listening to music helped or hindered their performance in writing and/or concentration in general. The teacher-researcher used this instrument to explore students' attitudes about classical music and their beliefs about whether they performed or concentrated better while listening to music. The teacher-researcher recorded the kinds of music students stated they listened to, tabulating under each heading the number of times the music was

mentioned. To explore students' attitudes about classical music and what they believed about how their concentration and performance in writing was affected, comments were sorted into categories. Attitudes about classical music were categorized in three ways: liked, disliked, O.K., and other. Categories for what students believed about what happened to their concentration while listening to classical music were: helped, did not help, neither, depends on music, and other. Finally, categories for how music affected students writing were: helped, did not help, did not affect writing, don't know, and depends on music. To help the teacher-researcher better understand in what way music helped or did not help, specific comments for each category were then tabulated. An example of a specific comment from a student who believed that music helped his/her writing performance was, "It helped me get better ideas." An example from a student who believed that music hindered writing performance was, "It distracted me."

The student self-evaluation after the study helped the teacher-researcher gain insight into how students viewed classical music and writing after actually experiencing it. Categories for responses to the self-evaluation questions for numbers one through three were: favorable, neutral, unfavorable. For question number four in which students responded to what they thought about using music with writing, categories were: favorable, unfavorable, don't know, and depends on music. The final question in which students were asked to list a specific title they thought was better as a result of listening to classical music, categories included: listed specific title, none, didn't know, helped but no specific title. An example of a favorable response from a student describing the experience of listening to classical music was, "It helped me think of things to write." Another student who believed that music influenced his/her writing in a positive way

responded, "I wrote more because of the music." Two students whose responses to the question, "What do you think of using music with writing?" were categorized as unfavorable wrote, "It is very boring and makes writing dull" and "Not good because it gets distracting." Although the question did not specifically state "classical" music, since the students had just completed six weeks of writing while listening to classical music, their responses seemed to be directed to classical music.

In analyzing the data, it is important for the researcher to guard against biases. However, since the teacher-researcher was involved with the students in her own classroom, total objectivity was difficult. The researcher cannot let the idea of objectivity become a barrier in exploring the data and separating the researcher from human interaction. "To get to the relevant matters of human activity, the researcher must be involved in that activity" (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, and Allen, 1993, p. 15).

Summary

The teacher-researcher employed an ethnographic classroom study to obtain an understanding of the influence of classical music on the writing performance of seventh graders. The teacher kept a journal and collected writing for twelve weeks: three weeks before introducing classical music, six weeks during classical music, and three weeks after concluding classical music. On the beginning of the fourth week, just before introducing classical music, the teacher surveyed students about attitudes on classical music and how they believed music affected their performance in writing and concentration. After writing while listening to classical music for six weeks, students completed a self-evaluation about the experience.

Data collected addressed student learning and generated questions for the teacher-researcher in regards to better instructional programs and her own learning. The teacher-researcher taught a mini-lesson each day followed by thirty-five minutes of writing while listening to classical music, and ten minutes of sharing writing, ideas, and concerns about writing. She initiated discussion, showed examples of writing, discussed ideas for writing, encouraged students to share their writing, and challenged students to experiment with different kinds and genres of writing. The teacher-researcher observed peer interaction, conferred with students individually about content, grammar, and ideas for writing, and read and edited students' writing. Grammatical errors discovered through editing guided many of the mini-lessons. In addition, the researcher kept a journal of classroom observations, students' questions and responses, behavior, and writing patterns.

Qualitative research views an experience holistically but with all the parts of reality interrelated. Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen (1993) state, "Because all the 'parts' of reality are interrelated, an understanding of the 'whole' can begin with a holistic investigation of any portion of it. By 'understanding the whole' we refer to a working comprehension of the interrelationships that give definition to it" (p.14). Patterson, Stansell, and Lee (1990) state that teachers provide a unique perspective to educational problem solving, and along with that teacher researchers bring a theory base and classroom data to support these unique perspectives. Patterson, Stansell, and Lee believe that researchers can become leaders in their profession and that classroom studies can be powerful. They state:

They can lead by reformulating theory in terms of real kids in real classrooms with real teachers. They can lead by showing that theory lives, not just in scholarly texts but in our minds and motives. They can lead by

demonstrating that the best way to improve instruction is to put theory at risk by constantly observing the living data in every classroom. Finally they can lead by realizing that researchers are themselves part of that living data, and by sharing the greater self-awareness that comes from classroom research.

The data comes from authentic classroom settings. The multiple data sources in a classroom and “next door” colleagues, as well as those known only through their professional writing, offer different perspectives, different lenses for exploring our landscapes. Conclusions result from a search for unity and pattern in the data (p.21).

By collecting data through a daily journal, student survey, student self-evaluation, class discussion, and student writing, the teacher-researcher examined student writing while classical music was played in the classroom. By having students produce their own writing as opposed to completing a worksheet, the teacher provided students with the opportunity to create, think, and take responsibility for their own learning. Students of all abilities could take their creative talents to the highest level. The teacher created authentic learning experiences by allowing students to write from topics of their choice without restrictions on length. This allowed students to gain ownership over what they learned. Students proceeded at their own rate, using their own experiences and language. By revising and editing their own work, students increased their knowledge base.

Chapter IV

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of classical music on the writing performance of seventh graders in two classrooms. The teacher-researcher was interested in if and how classical music influences writing. The following questions guided this study: (1) In what ways does playing classical music during writing influence writing performance of seventh graders? (2) What patterns or themes emerge from student writing and responses? and (3) What are the implications for writing instruction?

A Typical Writing Day

A typical class period consisted of the teacher taking roll followed by discussing the agenda for the period, reminding students of future events and/or assignments, and allowing students time to ask questions or make comments. Then the teacher presented a mini-lesson, about ten minutes, after which students wrote something about either a topic of their choice or one assigned by the teacher. While the students were writing, the teacher circulated among the students, conferring with as many students as possible for the thirty to thirty-five writing period. The teacher discussed content and grammar on a particular piece of writing the student was working on for the day or a piece of writing the teacher had edited and was returning for a final rewrite. For those students who expressed concern over not having anything to write about, the teacher discussed ideas for writing.

During the last ten minutes of class, students were offered the opportunity to share writing or discuss topics related to their writing before preparing to leave for the next class.

Writing Before Classical Music

For three weeks prior to the introduction of music, the researcher kept student writing. The researcher was interested in if this writing was notably different from pieces that were written while students were listening to music. The researcher looked at topics the subjects wrote about, length of the writing, variety, detail, description, sentence structure, fluency, creativity, and general grammatical errors such as failure to paragraph, indent, capitalize correctly, punctuate correctly, avoid run-ons, fragments, and etc. The students mostly wrote stories between one and three pages in length, with the exception of one piece that was four pages long. Other pieces submitted included: three poems, one bumper sticker, three acrostics, and one invitation. Most of the topics the students wrote about were of their choice. Very few students chose an idea presented by the teacher, instead opting to write about a topic of interest to them. Common grammatical errors were comma splices, incorrect verb tense, spelling, word choice, overuse of pronouns, not capitalizing the title correctly, and writing dialogue incorrectly. However, the most noticeable deficiency seemed to be the lack of descriptive detail. While the writing was informative, much of the writing seemed to be written like a diary, very sequential and orderly, lacking details and description that appealed to the senses. For example: "When we got on the plane to Russia, we were all having a good time, but we didn't know how much trouble we were getting into. Then suddenly the engine exploded and the plane fell to the earth." Many of the sentences were too abrupt and lack of transitions was also a problem. One student wrote, "This dream really isn't recent, but it wasn't a long time ago

either. When I walked into my house it looked pretty normal.” Awkward wording and run-ons were also a problem. “It had a large walkway if I turned the corner there there’s a long wall right there”.

Problems students had with verb tense were starting out in present tense and switching to past and vice versa. In dialogue, most students did well with quotation marks and punctuation. However, few remembered to start a new paragraph each time a character spoke. Students also had difficulty in using specific nouns. Sometimes so many pronouns were used that it was difficult for the teacher to understand who the character or characters were the writer was talking about. An example of this was: Last summer “we” went to Disney World. Students also used “it” and “there” a great deal to begin sentences.

However, several pieces included great description and action verbs. One student wrote a chapter book on the Lusitania which was extremely descriptive. Reading the story made the researcher feel as if she were in the story. The researcher was also wondering if the title was prompted by the movie Titanic. Descriptive phrases were:

I let my body walk on as my dreamy spirit stayed,

I let my body lead me and awoke somewhere along the journey,

Escape the war inside myself,

Dreamy spirit,

Dragged my body

Pulled away with reluctance.

In addition, the student used many descriptive adjectives: shameful, fanciest fashionable, prettiest, and prestigious. In another piece a student wrote on parenting, the

student described the stress and pressures of adolescence, “It’s like some toxic brew being mixed into your life.” One piece of writing used verbs such as annoyed, slammed, screamed, and stomped. Students’ writing can be found in Appendix G. These samples were selected due to legibility and because they are typical of students’ writing before listening to classical music.

Overall, writing before the introduction of music was informative but very sequential and lacking descriptive language that appealed to the senses. Although some students used vivid adjectives and strong verbs, most of the writing read much like a diary, orderly but lacking descriptive details. The most common grammatical errors were comma splices, incorrect verb tense, word choice, overuse of pronouns, capitalizing the title incorrectly, and writing dialogue incorrectly.

According to the researcher’s journal, several students were very talkative during the three weeks prior to listening to classical music. The researcher noted that almost daily these students had to be reminded to stay on task. In addition, after completing a piece of writing, some students read, worked on a worksheet, or put their heads down on their desks and had to be reminded to start a new piece.

Beginning Survey

Students were given a survey prior to the introduction of classical music in the English composition classroom (Appendix C). Students were asked the following questions: (1) What kind of music do you listen to at home? (2) What do you think about classical music? (3) What happens to your concentration when you listen to music? and (4) How does listening to music affect your writing? An equal number of positive and negative responses to classical music are included in Appendix D. In response to the first question,

not one student responded that they listened to classical music specifically although three students stated they listened to different kinds of music. One student responded that he/she listened to everything except classical and country. The majority of the students stated they listened to alternative followed by rock, rap, pop, Christian, R & B, ska, punk and country. Other kinds of music mentioned were: 70s, sound tracks from movies, and oldies. In answer to the second question, What do you think about classical music?

Responses were as follows:

Liked.....7

Disliked.....21

OK.....12

Other responses were:

Makes me sleepy.

I sometimes like it and I sometimes don't.

It's good to calm down, but not my favorite.

Helps you fall asleep.

Students who responded favorably stated that it "helped them relax," was "calming," "helped them write better," "beautiful," "interesting," "neat," and "pretty." One student stated that classical music was an "artistic outlet." Students who responded that classical music was O.K. did not offer any other explanation. Among the responses from students who disliked classical music the majority stated it was "boring" while others stated it "gave them a headache," they "couldn't concentrate," and because classical music "didn't have words." Although the primary focus of this study was to investigate if and how

classical music influences writing performance, the researcher was interested in how attitudes toward classical music might affect responses and performance.

The third question on the beginning survey asked, “What happens to your concentration when you listen to music?” Results from this question were as follows:

Helped.....	16
Neither.....	2
Depends on Music.....	7
Didn't.....	17
Other.....	2

Other responses included:

It makes me want to sleep.

I get hyped up.

Students who believed that music helped their concentration stated that music “helped them focus,” “relax,” was “calming,” “soothing,” “concentration was more enhanced, and “could work better.” Those who responded unfavorably stated that their “concentration went toward the music,” was “distracting,” and they “lost concentration.”

The fourth and final question asked students: How does listening to music affect your writing? Below are the results:

Helped.....	22
Didn't Help.....	12
Didn't Affect Writing.....	4
Don't Know.....	3

Depends on Music.....3

Half of the students responded that they thought music helped. These students stated that music “opened their minds,” “gave them more ideas,” “helped them write better,” “think more and harder,” “helped them concentrate,” and “use more of brain.” Other responses were “music helps me write down words faster,” “relaxing,” “seem to flow with words and think easier,” “try to write to speed of rhythm,” “calm and soothing,” “helps me write more detail,” “takes my mind off everybody,” and “helps me write more.” One stated that music made her/him “smarter and more energetic.” Several students thought that listening to music did not help their writing. For students who believed that listening to music didn’t help their writing, the most common response was that it was “distracting.” Others stated that they didn’t know if listening to music affected their writing while several others stated that it depended on the kind of music being played.

Although music is popular among seventh graders, particularly alternative, most did not respond favorably to classical music which was the music that was used in the study. Also less than half believed that music helped their concentration. However, since students were not asked specifically if classical music helped their concentration but rather just music, it is difficult to know whether students were responding to music in general or classical music. But regardless of whether students liked or disliked classical music or believed that music helped or didn’t help their concentration, exactly half of the students believed that listening to music helped them write better.

Introducing Classical Music

At the beginning of the fourth week of the study, the teacher-researcher informed students that she would be playing classical music while they wrote. With the exception of

classical music being introduced, the class format remained the same. The teacher taught a mini-lesson, followed by thirty-five minutes of writing, and finally ten minutes of sharing. Classical music was started immediately after the mini-lesson and stopped at the end of thirty-five minutes. The teacher kept a daily journal recording student responses, questions, behavior, and other classroom events. The teacher-researcher selected the music that was played. The piece selected was played from the beginning of the CD to the end. Therefore, the same CD was used several days in a row.

Classical music introduced the first week was Antonio Vivaldi. This same CD was used for two days with another Vivaldi selection being used for the remainder of the three day writing week. Two ideas for writing were placed on the board the first day of the week. These ideas were: (1) Write a letter to Monday in which you discuss your feelings and (2) Write a letter to yourself at 25. Mini-lessons for the week consisted of talking about the ideas for writing, point of view, writing fairy tales from another point of view, and similes. The class format remained the same. After the mini-lessons the teacher started playing classical music. Most of the students continued on as always not responding to the music either way. One particular student laughed and made fun of the music all week wanting to know what it was. Several other students allowed themselves to get caught up in the behavior and laughed at the music. Another student acted like he/she was conducting an orchestra which drew several laughs. On the third day of this week, the researcher recorded that some students were very loud at the beginning of the thirty-five minute writing time. The teacher got the students' attention either verbally or non-verbally and finally they settled down and wrote. One student moved to sit by another stating it "helped him write better." The teacher-researcher noted that the volume

of the music went from high to low frequently, making it difficult to hear the music when the volume went down. When the volume of the music was low, students were more talkative since they could not hear the music.

The second week of using music in the English Composition began with a continuation of the Vivaldi selection of the previous week. This selection was played the first day of the week followed by Beethoven Symphony #6. Mini-lessons consisted of discussing similes, metaphors, adjectives, and pronouns. Two ideas for writing were put on the board which were: (1) What are the most difficult choices people your age have to make? and (2) Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of TV. On the first day of this week several students were so talkative that the teacher talked to them about concentrating on the music so they could respond about the experience of using classical music and writing. After the teacher talked with students, most of them got quiet and started writing. Several students who were talking and not writing stated they “couldn’t think of anything to write.” On the second day, several students were also very talkative and not writing. However, on the third day the researcher observed that after the music started playing, students were very quiet and on task. The teacher’s notes from her daily journal revealed that on days that students were talkative, it was the same students doing the talking.

Music for the third week began with a continuation of Beethoven’s Symphony #6. The teacher noted that the volume of this selection was much more consistent, calming, and easy to hear. This selection was finished on the first day of the week followed by another Beethoven selection, Concerto #5. This selection was played for the remainder of the week. Mini-lessons for the week consisted of dialogue, discussing the different meanings of there, their, and they’re, analogies, contractions, compound words, and

writing essays. Students were very quiet on the first day of this week. The second day they were more talkative until the researcher mentioned that music was playing and they got very quiet. Several students asked questions about writing analogies and cinquains. One student wanted to talk about the music. Students made comments that they would like to listen to a different kind of music. Several students moved about the room sharing their writing with other students.

Mini-lessons for week four were alliteration, homonyms, homographs, active and passive voice, pronouns, adjectives, and adverbs. Ideas for writing for the week were: (1) While walking down a street in your neighborhood, you find a black briefcase clearly marked, "Highly confidential information enclosed. Do not open under any circumstances." What do you do? (2) On a scale of one to ten, with one being very relaxing and ten being very stressful, how stressful is school? (3) If you could break or smash any object against a brick wall whenever you needed to release frustration, what object would you choose? and (4) If you could invent a pair of glasses that would allow you to see an abstract thing (the motive behind someone's actions), what would you want to see? The researcher completed playing Beethoven's Concerto #5 then started music by Tchaikovsky, Concerto #1. One parent whose child had not written for the past two days wanted the child excused while music was playing. This same student stated he "had trouble concentrating when the music was playing but also because he was tired." One student moaned when the teacher started the music. On the third day of this week when the researcher played Tchaikovsky, several students commented on the music. Comments were: "The music you're playing today makes me tired." "How much longer will you be playing music?" "I don't like classical music and when I don't like something, it bothers

me.” “I hate classical music.” Another student stated she “couldn’t work because some were acting like they were directing.” Other comments were: “I like the music.” “It doesn’t bother me.” Two students asked the researcher to play Beethoven or Bach. The student who had asked to be excused while music was playing, decided to stay and wrote the entire time. Questions were also asked about punctuation and spelling. Students seemed to be talkative at first then got very quiet. The researcher noted that Tchaikovsky’s music was fast and inconsistent with the volume alternating from high to low.

Week five began with mini-lessons on idioms, and expository writing. The researcher started a new CD, Bach’s Brandenburg Concertos #1,2,3,4. The researcher recorded that this CD was very nice and upbeat, with consistent volume. Different composers were played each day this week. On the second day the researcher played Adagio Albinoni Adagio, and on the third day Wolfgang Mozart, “Eine kleine Nachtmusik.” Mini-lessons for the remainder of the week were: compound and complex sentences, interviews, and plays. The researcher also presented books to the class on writing detective and comedy stories. On the first day of this week several students asked if the teacher would start playing music. On the second day, several students made unfavorable comments about the music, the same students who had spoken unfavorably about it the previous week. Comments were: “The music distracts me.” “Do we have to listen to that music?” One student asked to go out into the hall. The researcher noted that it was difficult to know if they didn’t really like the music or if they were just being oppositional. After one spoke out against the music, the same few students seemed to join in. Several students worked in groups this week, working on monologues and plays.

Beginning week six, the final week of playing music, the researcher presented mini-lessons on writing horror, fantasy, adventure, and idealistic stories, phase autobiographies, character sketches, comic books, movie reviews, and reports. Music for the week was Mozart's Symphonies # 40, 41. Several students had requested Mozart, and no one made any unfavorable comments. Students were very quiet this week. It was difficult to determine if the quieter behavior was due to the music or the fact that a seventh grade student (from another team) was murdered over the weekend. Students wanted to talk mostly about the student who was murdered.

During the six weeks that the researcher introduced music while students wrote, the researcher noted that overall students were quieter while the music was playing, particularly if the volume of the music was consistent. Students were more talkative if the volume of the music was low because they couldn't hear it. The researcher also noted that the most talkative students were less talkative during the last two weeks of the study. Some students were very talkative for the first five to ten minutes of writing time—talking to peers, making comments about the music, asking questions about the music or writing—then they got quiet and wrote for the remainder of the time. On other days they were quiet and on task the entire time with no questions. On several occasions, to get students quiet and on task, the teacher talked to them about focusing on the music and writing. On most days some students moved around, sharing writing with a peer. Students responded to the music directly by making a positive or negative response, asking for another kind of music, or laughing about it and acting like they were conducting an orchestra.

Students who participated in the study were in second and third hour English classes. The researcher's notes indicated that third hour was more talkative, turned in less writing in terms of actual pieces, and made more unfavorable statements about the music than did second hour. Fourth hour was the lunch period so this could possibly have been a factor in third hour exhibiting more disruptive behavior. In addition, the teacher had reprimanded a certain student several times. The student seemed to be very negative, oppositional, and tried to gather support from peers. Therefore, it was difficult to know if and how much the music influenced students behavior and writing patterns either positively or negatively or if students were influenced by other factors such as: teacher reprimands, personal issues, classroom distractions, moodiness, time of day, peer pressure, Iowa testing, spring break, and a student being murdered.

Writing During Classical Music

For six weeks, three days a week, the teacher-researcher introduced classical music while students wrote. At the end of the six week period writing was evaluated. The teacher-researcher evaluated the writing for topics, description, details, creativity, sentence structure, length of piece, variety, fluency, and general grammatical errors such as paragraphing, indenting, capitalization, punctuation, run-ons, fragments, and etc. The teacher-researcher was also interested in any other themes, patterns, or consistencies that might occur. Samples of students' writing can be found in Appendix H. These samples were selected because of their legibility and also because they are representative of students' writing during classical music.

In analyzing the data, the researcher found more writing was produced in terms of actual number of pieces, there was more variety in the writing, and there were fewer

editing marks for grammatical errors. Length of the stories remained about the same with the exception of three students: one who wrote a 17 page mystery (to be continued), another student who was working on a chapter book and had written four chapters which were nine pages each, and another student who was also working on a chapter book and had written a seven-page chapter. Again, as in the three weeks prior to the introduction of music, more students selected their own topics for writing as opposed to ideas presented by the teacher, with the exception of writing fairy tales and nursery rhymes from a different point of view. Classical music did not seem to have a negative effect on any student's writing during the six weeks that it was played.

Although kinds of poetry had been introduced in the fall (November) a number of students submitted ABC poems particularly on names of people, with some students choosing to write ABC poems on countries, languages, and computers. Again, as in the weeks prior to the introduction of music, narrative stories were the primary kinds of writing, but a great deal of other kinds were also submitted. These included post cards, analogies, a large number of poems (ABC poems, rhyming verse, diamantes, and odes), bumper stickers, jokes, letters, songs, lists, book marks, and a travel guide.

Although students still made some of the same errors during the three weeks prior to the introduction of music, in counting the actual number of errors, the researcher found fewer. Writing in general was much more interesting and creative. Stories seemed to include more descriptive words, more specific details, and more interesting introductions and conclusions. Some responses follow.

One student wrote about two legends his grandmother had told him: **"The Princess of the Andes and Sallona."**

In an adventure story set on an airplane, the student wrote, **“and then I remembered I wasn’t back home in my queen-sized bed with my comforter. My goose feather pillows were no where to be found.”**

In a poem about his dog, **“Bear,”** the student wrote:

**Her fur is black,
she would never attack.
If a robber broke into my house,
Lick him to death she would.**

A poem about **“Good-Bye”** described situations in which we say good-bye.

**Goodbye is what you say if you won’t see anybody again,
Or if you lose a very special friend.**

One student wrote a poem about a favorite basketball player:

**You move on down the wooden court.
For I watch everything you say and do
With eager eyes and a tender heart
Wanting to be like you.**

In the second chapter of the a story called **“Lusitania”** the student wrote:

I was a young lady and young ladies do not do such things as to show the whole town their unfeminine and independent side”.... “I closed my eyes and listened to the water crash and then reside. I felt a great sense of peace bestowed upon me and for once in a long time, I relaxed”.... “My innermost being was overwhelmed. I was leaving for London. Behind me would be everything I despised.

In a poem called **“Blade,”** the student wrote:

**I could hear Blade before I could see him,
Hear his wicked laugh,
So mean and dirty it made my stomach freeze up,
My knees feel squishy.**

In a paper about summer goals in which a student outlined how he intended to earn some money, he wrote, **“Now I bet you’re wondering what I’m going to do with all this cold, hard cash.”**

Modeling after the Dr. Seuss poem, "Green Eggs and Ham," a student wrote a very creative poem called, "Green Chicken and Spam." A portion of the poem follows:

**Will you eat these on the floor,
or in a big chair behind a door
Will you eat green chicken and spam?
Will you eat them Mr. Ham?
I will not eat them on the floor,
or in a big chair behind a door.
I will not eat grean chicken and spam.
I will not eat them, fat I am.**

In a poem on caring, the student wrote, "Caring is when a new person comes to your school and you introduce them to some of your friends. Caring is when someone wants to go somewhere but they can't find a babysitter, and you babysit for them."

An introduction to one story began, "My life is totally sweet (money wise)! I'm rolling in cash! See my Dad told me all the 'proper ways' to manage money, and whenever he gets on a subject that's important he sits and talks FOREVER! I hardly, well never get anything out of his lectures, but the cool thing is I ACTUALLY got something out of this one."

In a poem on snow, a student wrote, "I wish the joy of snow would blanket my heart once again."

Topics for writing covered a wide range. Stories included fantasy, science fiction, romance, personal narratives, realistic fiction, and how to play some games on the computer. Some of the titles students wrote about including songs and poetry were:

Math Teacher

Twisted Dragon

Unsinkable Titanic

Nightmare on Earth

Civilization II

Life in Wackyland

Stupid Things

The Most Wonderful Time of Year

My Best Friend

The Basketball

Schools in the Future

The World Today

Hardest Choice

The Art of Rebounding

Rindercella,

Super Senses

What's Happening to all the Children

My Feelings Right Now

The Knight

Glasses

Come My Children

I Never Knew

Profile of Sarah S.

Taylor G.—Uncovered

One student wrote a series about a place called "**Jezzerville.**" The laws that the Jezzervillians were to abide by in this community were called the "**Code of Jezzerosity.**" This code consisted of eight laws. Number V stated: **Conceal thyself as ye walk the streets. Tis the way to remain pure. If thou refuse to be married, ye must die a virgin.** Number VII stated, "**Be thou forbidden to bring forth the light of betrayal, for it shall be your darkness.**"

In summary, students produced more writing and chose a variety of ways to present the writing during the six weeks that classical music was introduced with writing. Students also demonstrated better writing ability by making fewer grammatical errors. Writing also seemed to include more descriptive words and more specific details. The majority of time, students chose their own ideas for writing as opposed to the ideas presented by the teacher. Behavior also seemed to improve. Students were less talkative and wrote for longer periods of time without interrupting.

Student Self-Evaluations

At the conclusion of the six-week period in which classical music was played, students were asked to respond to five questions on a self-evaluation. An equal number of positive and negative responses to classical music are in Appendix F. The questions included: (1) Describe your experience of listening to classical music while you wrote. (2) How did listening to music influence your writing? (3) How did listening to music help you stay more focused on your writing? (4) What do you think of using music with writing? and (5) What piece of writing could you share that you think is better because of listening to classical music? Forty-four students participated in the study. Results are as follows:

In answer to the first question, 18 students responded favorably. Another student stated, **“I do not like listening to classical music, but I do think it helps with school.”**

Other comments included:

It was Okay, it kind of inspired me.

It was relaxing and peaceful.

It helped me stay focused.

It helped me concentrate better.

At first it got to me and I couldn't concentrate on my work. But after a while I got used to it and it kept me entertained.

It kind of helped. I liked listening. But I'd like to listen to our kind of

music

**I liked it because It make me feel like I was at home.
While I wrote, it inspired me to write and I felt calm.
It calms you down a lot to clear your mind.**

When it was fast I got in a rush, and as it slowed down I wrote peacefully.

I concentrated on the writing more when the music was soft because it was more relaxing.

It helped me think of things to write.

Four students who were neither for or against classical music responded:

It helped me most of the time, but some times it made me forget what I was thinking about.

It sometimes messed me up and sometimes it didn't.

Very relaxing, but I could not think because kids were dancing and it was distracting.

I don't think it had any effect on my writing. It probably made me relax more.

Students who responded unfavorably to the first question wrote:

I could not concentrate.

Annoying. It made me want to talk.

It made me tired, and I couldn't stand it.

No, it was a disturbance.

I didn't like it. I can't stand classical music.

The second self-evaluation question asked students how listening to music influenced their writing. Twenty students responded that listening to music affected their writing in a positive way. Three students stated that the music didn't really affect them either way.

Favorable responses from students included:

It influenced me because it helped me relax so I could concentrate better.

Gave me more thinking.

Well, I wrote more when the music was on.

I got more writing finished.

I thought of more different things to write.

It helped me forget what I was thinking about and concentrate on my writing.

It helped me to write more because I could concentrate better. I had more of a clear mind.

It just calmed me down a little. I felt very comfortable with it.

It gave me ideas and it made me write better.

It gave me more of the feel to my writing, especially Lusitania, and my words flowed.

I found new ideas and wrote longer stories.

Those students who did not think listening to music influenced their writing wrote:

It distracted me and caused me to not write as much as I wanted to.

It didn't really influence my writing at all.

It didn't because I couldn't concentrate.

It kind of distracted me from my writing.

It didn't because I listened to the music and it kept me from writing.

I can't do both at the same time.

Slowed me down.

Do not buy classical ever!

Several students simply responded, **“It didn’t.”**

The next question asked students how listening to music helped them stay more focused on their writing. Four students reported that the music neither helped nor hindered them while twenty students reported that listening to classical music helped them stay focused. Some responses were as follows:

There were a few times I felt that I wrote faster and got ideas faster.

It relaxed me so I could concentrate better.

I couldn’t hear people talking around me. I could only hear the sound.

It relaxed me and helped me clear my mind.

It did, but I’m not exactly sure how.

I could keep writing and writing without stopping and looking or thinking about ideas.

You don’t think about anything else but writing.

I made stories and poems longer by focusing on my writing.

I don’t know. I just started focusing better and thought better.

Listening to music influenced my writing by being able to expand my thinking ability and concentrating.

Most of the twenty students who reported that listening to music didn’t help them stay more focused on their writing simply responded, **“It didn’t.”** Other comments were:

I couldn’t focus cause I can’t listen and write a the same time.

It really didn’t because I don’t like classical music and when it’s playing I can’t stay focused.

I couldn’t focus cause I can’t listen and write at the same time.

It didn’t help me stay focused because it got distracting.

It did not because it was too loud.

Actually listening to the music made me stay more focused on the music than the writing.

It didn't. It made me sleepy.

It didn't. It was annoying.

Because it made me so bored that I wrote.

It didn't. The volume changing of the music from high to low notes and low to high notes caught my attention and took it away from my writing.

The fourth question asked students what they thought about using music with writing.

Twenty students responded favorably about using music with writing without specifying what kind of music. They reported:

I think it is a good idea because you stay focused on your writing.

It helped me a lot. It's not a bad idea. It think I should do that at home.

It think using music and writing is good for me.

I really do think it helps. Usually at home if I'm writing I end up with music on.

I think that it is a very artistic way and it helps you in a way.

I think it's awesome and we should continue it all the time.

I like it. It's like I have to write with the rhythm of the music.

I think that it would help a lot of people concentrate better so they could write better.

I think it is a good idea.

It helped with ideas.

It helped, particularly with poetry.

Eleven students thought that using music with writing was not a good idea primarily because the music was too distracting. Two students stated they didn't know. Eleven other students believed that using music with writing was a good idea if they had a choice in the kind of music. Comments were as follows:

It would be good if we could listen to alternative music.

It would be good I guess if it was a different kind of music.

It depends on what kind of music it is.

Well classical, No Way! But maybe I should try music that I like.

It's good with anything but classical.

It would be okay if there was different music.

It depends on what kind of music.

I think it could be pleasant if you like the music.

It depends on what kind of music. If the tempo is faster or the music more thrilling than you would write according to what kind of music that you were listening to.

The fifth and final question asked students to think of a specific piece of writing that they thought was better because of listening to classical music. Fifteen students responded, "None." Two students stated they **didn't know**, and seven students couldn't really think of a specific title. Twenty students listed a specific piece of writing that they thought was better because of listening to classical music. Some of the titles were:

The Basketball

The Lonely Empire

Lusitania

Goodbye

Bear

The Sallona

The Tortoise and the Hare

The Go Cart Race

Tarah's Promise

My Spring Break

Little Red Riding Wolf

The Art of Rebounding

My Friends

Two students wrote: **“When I wrote a description page on a computer game,”** and **“I have a lot I could probably share, but I can’t think of one.”**

After listening to classical music, more students responded favorably to incorporating classical music with writing. The researcher noticed that one pattern developed. Twenty students responded that listening to music affected their writing in a positive way, that listening to classical music helped them stay focused, that using music with writing was a good idea, and twenty students listed a specific piece of writing that they thought was better because of listening to classical music.

Writing After Classical Music

The teacher-researcher kept and evaluated students’ writing for three weeks after the conclusion of classical music to see if any patterns continued, changed, or stayed the same. The researcher noted that the length of stories remained about the same, with somewhat

less variety in kinds of writing. Students wrote primarily stories, but also a number of poems. Poems were mostly rhyming verse with only one ABC poem and two acrostics submitted. Most of the stories were personal narratives or realistic fiction. Samples of students' writing can be found in Appendix I. These samples were selected due to legibility and because they are typical of students' writing after classical music. However, there was not as much choice in selecting these samples as there was previously because students produced a great deal less writing after classical music. Some creative titles were:

The Blue Cows

The Flying Pickle

The Trash Can's Revenge

The Walking Bagel

With the exception of awkward wording, grammatical errors were fewer than the previous nine weeks. Students also turned in fewer pieces of writing. However, this was not surprising since the last day of school was only two weeks away. Students may have had several first drafts of writing in their writing folder but not had time to revise and edit; therefore, the writing could not be turned in and counted as completed pieces.

In summary, students seemed to follow some of the same patterns as they did while listening to classical music. Students continued to make fewer grammatical errors, with the exception of awkward wording. Students demonstrated creativity and imagination in selecting titles and writing stories. In addition, students demonstrated descriptive writing through poetry. However, students submitted fewer pieces of writing during this time

than while they were listening to music. Being close to the end of school could have been a factor.

Behavior was somewhat worse than when students were listening to classical music. At times students were quiet and on task, but for the most part they were talkative and had to be reminded to stay on task. It was difficult to know whether more talkative behavior was due to classical music not being played, or because students were excited about the end of the school year.

Summary

Analysis of data from the beginning survey indicated that the majority of students enjoy listening to music although classical was not a favorite. As a matter of fact, the majority of students responded negatively to classical music. Students reported the music was “boring” and they “couldn’t concentrate.” In addition, the majority of students believed that music didn’t help and responded that their concentration went toward the music and that music was distracting. Students who did respond that they could concentrate better when listening to music stated that the music helped them focus, relax, and was calm and soothing. Although only sixteen students believed that listening to music helped them concentrate better, twenty-two believed that listening to music while writing affected their writing in a positive way.

Fewer than half the students responded in the self-evaluation questions that classical music helped them write better, that listening to music affected their writing in a positive way, and that listening to music helped them stay more focused. Twenty students believed that using music with writing was a good idea and eleven more believed that music helped them write better specifying , “if they had a choice in the kind of music.”

Student responses were consistent for four of the questions. Twenty students believed that listening to music influenced their writing positively, that listening to music helped them stay focused, that using music and writing was a good idea, and listed a specific piece of writing they thought was better as a result of listening to classical music. Again as in the beginning survey, classical music was not mentioned in all of the questions. Only two of the questions, the first one, "Describe your experience of listening to classical music while you wrote." and the last one, "What piece of writing could you share that you think is better because of listening to classical music?" mention classical music. The other questions simply stated "music." Therefore, as in the beginning survey, it is difficult to determine if students were referring to classical music in their responses or music of their choice. It seemed that since students had just completed six weeks of listening to classical music while they wrote that their responses reflected that experience. Overall, the majority of students preferred listening to music. However, among these seventh grade students, classical music was not a favorite. Therefore attitudes may have affected students' responses and performance. Students indicated they preferred a choice in what kind of music they listened to. The majority of students believed using music with writing was a good idea if students had a choice in selecting the music. Although students did not prefer classical music, writing completed during the six week period of listening to music when compared to the three week period prior to listening to music indicated that students made fewer grammatical errors, produced a great deal more variety, and wrote more in actual number of pieces. Writing also seemed to be more descriptive with more specific details. Behavior was much improved during the six weeks that students listened to classical music while writing. The most noticeable difference was that students wrote for

longer blocks of time without interrupting. Students also seemed to ask fewer questions. Behavior after concluding classical music seemed to deteriorate somewhat. Students were very talkative, seemed to be unfocused, and completed less writing. However, school was close to being out for the summer, so this could have been a factor.

Although teacher research yields great inside into the educational process, being a teacher-researcher can also be difficult. This teacher-researcher found it difficult to instruct, confer with students, and attend to the daily class procedures while at the same time compiling information for the study. At times, this teacher-researcher became so absorbed in conferring with students, that she wondered if she had failed to hear a question or comment, notice a certain behavior, or failed to record a piece of any other relevant information. However, information gained from teacher research far outweigh these difficulties.

Data Summary Table

Forty-four students participated in the study

Beginning Survey Results

What do you think about classical music?

Liked	Disliked	OK	Other
7	21	12	4

What happens to your concentration when you listen to music?

Helped	Neither	Depends on Music	Didn't Help	Other
16	2	7	17	2

How does listening to music affect your writing?

Helped	Didn't Help	Didn't affect Writing	Don't Know	Depends on Music
22	12	4	3	3

Self-Evaluation Results

	Favorable	Neutral	Unfavorable
Describe your experience of listening to classical music while you wrote.	18	4	22
How did listening to music influence your writing?	20	3	21
How did listening to music help you stay focused on your writing?	20	4	20

What do you think of using music with writing?

Favorable	Unfavorable	Don't Know	Depends on Music
20	11	2	11

What piece of writing could you share that you think is better because of listening to classical music?

Listed specific title	None	Didn't know	Helped, but no specific title
20	15	2	7

Chapter V

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of classical music on the writing performance of seventh graders: specifically how listening to classical music while writing might have enhanced their writing, what patterns or themes emerged from students' writing as a result of listening to classical music while writing, implications for writing instruction, and what if any influence music might have on writing behavior. Because the researcher was interested in generating a deeper and broader understanding of a specific identifiable group, an ethnographic study was done.

The teacher-researcher completed a twelve week study on the introduction of classical music into the English composition classroom to two seventh grade English classes consisting of 44 students. The study was interrupted by one day for enrollment for eighth grade, one week of testing (Iowa Test of Basic Skills), and one week of spring break.

Writing was collected three weeks prior to the introduction of classical music into the English composition classroom and for six weeks during classical music. Finally, the researcher collected writing for three weeks after the conclusion of classical music. The researcher was interested in any noticeable differences, patterns, or themes in the writing before, during, and after the introduction of classical music. A survey to find out what students thought about classical music, music in general, and how music might influence students' concentration and writing performance was given on the first day of the introduction of classical music. The teacher-researcher also kept a daily journal for twelve

weeks recording student responses, questions, behavior, and other classroom events. In the beginning survey, students responded favorably to listening to music although classical was the least favorite kind of music among these seventh graders with alternative being the most favorite. Half of the students believed that music helped them write better. No one stated that they specifically listened to classical music and when asked what they thought about classical music, only 7 out of 44 responded favorably stating it was “**relaxing.**” Twelve students responded that classical music was okay. The researcher asked students specifically what they thought about classical music because she was wondering if attitudes toward the kind of music would affect the writing and responses.

The teacher began each day of class with a mini-lesson concerning some aspect of grammar (often something the researcher found through editing the writing that the students needed help with), ideas for writing, kinds of writing, or class procedures. Then the teacher started the music and students wrote for approximately thirty-five minutes. A variety of composers were introduced during this six week period. Although all music played was classical, it varied greatly in tempo, rhythm, and volume. Students were offered ideas for writing, but were free to select their own ideas as well as the form in which the writing was presented although the teacher did encourage variety. No requirements were set on length. However, students were required to follow the writing process. Students were to include an introduction and conclusion and could turn in no fewer than two drafts. Students were allowed to confer with other students about a piece of writing and received instruction by the teacher through mini-lessons and individual conferences during the thirty-five minute writing time. No set number of pieces of writing was required. The teacher simply required that students be on task during the thirty-five

minute writing time. Writing was progressive. When one piece was finished, students were required to start another.

When music was first introduced, some students laughed, made silly comments, and acted like they were conducting an orchestra while others seemed oblivious to it. However, students didn't really exhibit an interest in talking about the music until about the third and fourth weeks when several students asked if they could listen to another kind of music, others stated that the classical music didn't bother them, and still others complained they hated classical music. Two students asked to go out into the hall while classical music was playing. However, as time progressed, students asked fewer questions about the music and seemed to accept it, with the exception of the same few students who had verbally expressed hating the music before. Although during the six week period of listening to classical music while writing several questions were asked about certain kinds of writing, questions about how long a piece had to be diminished. There were still a few students who complained that they couldn't think of anything to write. Concerning the behavioral aspect of listening to music while writing, the teacher-researcher noted that at the beginning of the writing sessions, students seemed to be more talkative, then after a few minutes they got very quiet. On a few occasions when students continued to talk, the teacher mentioned that music was playing and some students were trying to listen to the music and write. When the teacher did this, students got very quiet. Then there were other days when students were extremely quiet the entire writing time asking no questions. Overall, during the time that students listened to classical music while writing, behavior seemed to be improved. Students seemed to be quiet and on task for longer periods of time.

After concluding the twelve week period, the teacher-researcher evaluated the writing that was turned in three weeks prior to the introduction of classical music, writing that was turned in during the six weeks of listening to classical music, and three weeks after the conclusion of classical music. Students also completed a self-evaluation.

In evaluating the writing, the teacher-researcher noted that less writing was turned in with less variety and more grammatical errors during the three weeks prior to the introduction of classical music. However, students selected some very creative topics. During the six week period of listening to classical music, students wrote pieces with more variety, had fewer grammatical errors, turned in more writing, and the writing seemed to be more developed in terms of details and better description. Writing collected the three weeks after the conclusion of classical music still contained fewer grammatical errors. However, students turned in less writing with less variety. Content remained about the same. However, during the entire twelve week study, the researcher noticed that students were more likely to select their own topics as opposed to topics offered by the teacher.

Students were asked to respond to five questions on the self-evaluation concerning their experience with classical music and writing. Eighteen students described a positive experience of listening to classical music and writing. Twenty students responded that they believed that music influenced their writing positively. When asked what they thought about using music with writing, twenty students thought this was a good idea. Eleven students thought this was a good idea if they could select the music. The final question asked students to name a specific piece of writing they thought was better as a result of listening to classical music. Twenty students named a specific title. While a few others believed that music helped, they stated they couldn't think of a specific title.

Implications

Based on the documentation of activities, observation, beginning survey, assessment, and self-evaluation, several implications for using classical music with writing emerged.

1. Listening to classical music while writing did seem to have a positive influence for some students. In the beginning survey half of the students believed that listening to music affected their writing in a positive way. Although only seven students stated they liked classical music in the beginning survey, at the end of the study twenty students believed that classical music helped them focus better, affected their writing positively, thought using music with writing was a good idea, and listed the title of a specific piece of writing that was better as a result of listening to classical music. Research seems to support these findings that music has a positive effect on writing. Researchers believe that classical music provides a programmed path for the brain's neurons, which saves energy for more complex thought. Blacking (1987) proposes that music brings order to muscular movement as well as to the mind. For some students listening to classical music daily may allow the neurons to process information more rapidly and retrieve the information more efficiently, while at the same time providing a calm environment for thinking (Hanratty, 1997). Several students stated the music was calming, relaxing, and helped them think. Research indicates that music joins the logical and emotional centers of the brain. "Not only is it common to speak of musical meaning, but it is also customary to think of music as able to evoke an emotional response" (Winner, 1982, p. 195). Music triggers a response in movement or language and evokes mood (Moffett, 1983). Having students write what the music makes them feel or think of is beneficial in getting students started writing. Moffett (1983) states: "Because music stimulates the brain's synthesizing

hemisphere, it can help students get started on a composition before the more analytic focus on form and convention takes over (p. 189).

Response to the music is dependent upon many factors including the listener's mood set and attitude toward the music. Half the students believed that listening to music affected their writing in a positive way, but before listening to classical music with writing, most had a negative attitude toward classical music. However, after listening to classical music, twenty students responded favorably, believing music helped them focus better, that it was a good idea, and that using music influenced their writing in a positive way. Classical music may not be popular in this particular geographic location or with this age group, therefore, students may have responded negatively toward classical music simply because they were not familiar with it. In addition, mood swings are common during the adolescent years. Students may have responded according to the particular mood they were in on any given day. Ultimately, the listener establishes meaning based upon cultural and individual differences (Gfeller, 1990). Although a great deal of research concludes that music has a positive impact on writing, results from this study indicate that some students may benefit from listening to music, while others may not.

2. Writing collected during the six week period of listening to classical music indicated that classical music may have had a positive impact on writing. Analysis of the writing during this period showed fewer grammatical errors such as punctuation errors, capitalization, sentence fragments, run-ons, comma splices, and etc. than writing before classical music. Although length of the pieces of writing remained about the same as writing collected before the introduction of classical music, with the exception of four students, writing in general seemed to include more specific detail. Students also

produced more writing in terms of actual number of pieces, selected a wide range of topics, and produced a greater variety of writing. Music provides opportunities for reflective writing. Because the brain processes music in the same area that it decodes words, it provides a perfect connection to creative writing (Hanratty, 1997). Gardner (1991) recommends that teachers use a variety of instructional strategies to promote students' understanding by drawing on other intelligences. Music is one tool that seems to be effective for some students.

3. Listening to classical musical music may be a good classroom management device. Notes from the researcher's journal indicated that overall, students were quieter when classical music was playing. On several occasions the researcher noted that for the first five minutes of writing time students were somewhat talkative, but then became very quiet and remained on task the rest of the writing time. A few times when students became talkative during the music, the teacher mentioned that music was playing and some were trying to hear the music. Then students got very quiet. The researcher also wrote several times in the journal that "students were very quiet today." Students also asked fewer questions pertaining to grammar and writing. Researchers (Hanratty, 1997) have found that when classical music is played in the classroom on a daily basis, student disruptions decline. One reason is that classical music has a steady beat pattern similar to the human heartbeat at rest. The body's metabolism unconsciously slows to match the beat, reducing the amount of stress hormones circulating in the blood stream. As a result, Hanratty says, "Students become calmer and more open to learning" (p. 32).

4. Children need to have a voice in their own learning. Many students indicated through both the beginning survey and the self-evaluation that they enjoyed music and

thought it was a good idea to use music with writing but stipulated that “it depended on the kind of music.” Students also demonstrated that choice is important to them through the wide variety of topics they chose and the forms in which they presented their writing. Although some students wanted the teacher to provide ideas, oftentimes students would not use these ideas but select an idea of their own. During the six weeks that students listened to classical music while writing, they turned in a greater variety of writing than the three weeks prior to listening to classical music or the three weeks after the conclusion of classical music. In addition, the majority of students chose their own topics. Graves (1994) states, “When children choose their own topics, I can expect more of their writing” (p. 107). Choice requires responsibility, and responsibility must be taught and learned. Atwell (1998) states, “Freedom of choice does not undercut structure. Instead, students become accountable for learning about and using the structures available to writers to serve their purposes” (p.15). Atwell believes that when students are allowed to choose, they will write for all the same reasons literate people everywhere engage themselves as writers.

Although students completed more writing, their writing was more creative, and grammatical errors declined while listening to classical music, these implications are not proven. Students had been using the writing process since the beginning of school and writing improvement could have been due to continued practice and instruction. Music may not have been a factor.

Further Activities

Developing an effective, positive learning environment that is sensitive to every child’s needs, learning styles, interests, abilities, and demographics is a continuous endeavor for

every educator. Teachers must be actively involved on a continuing basis to keep current professionally in teacher research, professional development, educational reading, attending conventions and workshops, and finding new materials. The following implications for future work are made and based on the documentation in this study and the researcher's journey towards life-long learning.

1. Conduct further research with seventh graders using classical music with writing.

Spending more time discussing the music and making students feel comfortable with the music may be helpful. Playing classical music in the cafeteria as well as in other core classes such as math, science, and geography, may also foster a more positive environment. Since the majority of students' attitudes were unfavorable toward classical music in the beginning survey, it was difficult to know whether students really disliked the music or whether they had had little or no exposure to classical music and were therefore negative toward the music due to the lack of experience of listening to classical music. When students have had little or no experience with something, they will often react negatively towards it. After experiencing classical music, more students responded favorably to it. At the beginning of the study the majority of students had a negative attitude toward classical music. Therefore, it is difficult to know if these negative attitudes affected how much students wrote and how descriptive and detailed the writing was. Attitudes play a big part in learning for students. If they have a positive attitude toward something, they are usually very receptive. However, if they have a negative attitude toward the stimulus, it is often very difficult to get students to perform satisfactorily.

2. Conduct further research with seventh grade students using classical music by selecting music that is consistent in terms of volume. The inconsistent volume of the music seemed to be a distraction that kept students from concentrating and writing. When the volume of the music was low, students started talking, and when the volume was loud, the music seemed to be too much of an interruption, almost irritating while students were conferring with each other or the teacher was conferring with students. The loud music seemed to cause students to lose focus.

3. Develop specific writing activities in which program music is used. For example, there are programmatic pieces based on geographical locations, historical time periods, and nature which paint vivid sound pictures. Some students stated that they couldn't think of anything to write. For students who have difficulty thinking of a topic to write about or have difficulty getting started writing, a focal point or some direction may be necessary. Perhaps by providing a starting place for these students they could be more creative and write more effectively.

4. Complete further studies using music with writing in which another kind of music is used or allow students some choice in selecting the music. Students do enjoy listening to music. In the beginning survey, every student listed at least one kind of music they listened to and some listed several kinds. Therefore, this is a positive step in implementing music with writing in the English composition classroom. Perhaps students could select pieces from a pre-approved list provided by the teacher and listen to the music through headphones while they wrote. Offering students a choice in listening to music would also accommodate individual learning styles. Seventh graders are at an age where they want some input in decision. Allowing them some choice in music would give them some voice

in their own learning. Students indicated that they thought listening to music while writing was a good idea if they had a choice in the kind of music.

5. This study was limited to two seventh grade classes in an urban area. It needs to be replicated in a number of geographical areas, in a variety of school settings, and with a number of diverse socioeconomic and ethnic groups. Classical music may not be a popular kind of music in this geographical location or with this group of people. People in certain geographical settings, socioeconomic groups, and ethnic groups tend to listen to a particular kind of music. The outcome may have been different in an area where classical music was the most popular music.

6. Conduct further research on writing workshop classrooms that use the writing process. Music may have had no real impact at all, but rather the instructional strategy used. Perhaps through practice in using the writing process and allowing students freedom in what they write, students' writing skills would improve anyway.

7. Replicate the study using a jury to look at student writing and having someone else analyze the daily journal, conducting the study at different times of the day and school year, and having an indication of students' music strengths in the beginning.

As teacher-researchers, we are constantly searching for ways to provide an exciting and enriching curriculum and classroom environment. Hopefully, this study will encourage teachers to continue the search for ways to help students improve writing skills.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

PARENT CONSENT FORM

I, _____ give my permission for my child, _____ who is a student in Mrs. Wipf's (Brogan) seventh grade class at the union Sixth and Seventh Grade Center, to participate in the research study: An Investigation of the Influence of Classical Music on the Writing Performance of Seventh Grade Students, conducted by Joann Wipf (Brogan) from Oklahoma State University. I understand that the objective of this study is to see whether classical music might be a valuable tool for enhancing writing ability. I understand that the only change in the class format will be the introduction of classical music with writing. I understand that information gained for this study will be confidential and the identity of my child will remain anonymous. I understand that I have the right to withdraw my child from the study at any time and that the study will result in no cost to me. I understand that I will receive a copy of this form to keep and that my child will be verbally advised of the study. I may contact Joann Wipf (Brogan), Dr. Gretchen Schwarz, (405) 744-8017, University Research Services, 305 Whitehurst Hall, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 74078, or

Gay Clarkson , (405) 744-5700, 305 Whitehurst Hall, Oklahoma State
University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 74078 at any time regarding the study.

Parent Signature

Date

APPENDIX B

Evaluation Point System

Points were assigned according to length.

All writing had to be revised and edited. Therefore, students could turn in no fewer than two drafts. Additional points were added for illustrations and color.

One full page	One-half page	Illustrations	Color
30	15	5	5

APPENDIX C

Beginning Survey

1. What kind of music do you listen to at home?
2. What do you think about classical music?
3. What happens to your concentration when you listen to music?
4. How does listening to music affect your writing?

APPENDIX D
Responses to Beginning Survey

BEGINNING SURVEY

1. What kind of music do you listen to at home?

I listen to Alternative, Metal and Ska.

2. What do you think about classical music?

I don't like it because it is just instruments.

3. What happens to your concentration when you listen to music?

It distracts me because I am not concentrating on work.

4. How does listening to music affect your writing?

I won't be able to write enough, because I will be too busy making fun of the music.

BEGINNING SURVEY

1. What kind of music do you listen to at home? Christian

2. What do you think about classical music? I don't really like it that much.

3. What happens to your concentration when you listen to music? I tend to relax, I love music and listen to it all the time, it helps me concentrate with ease.

4. How does listening to music affect your writing? I ~~didn't~~ seem to flow with my words and think a lot easier.

BEGINNING SURVEY

1. What kind of music do you listen to at home?

rock + soft rock

2. What do you think about classical music?

It makes me bored

3. What happens to your concentration when you listen to music?

I lose concentration

4. How does listening to music affect your writing?

clueless

BEGINNING SURVEY

1. What kind of music do you listen to at home?

I listen to modern rock

2. What do you think about classical music?

I think classical music is slow and boring

3. What happens to your concentration when you listen to music?

My mind goes somewhere else.

4. How does listening to music affect your writing?

I don't get my work the way it should be.

BEGINNING SURVEY

1. What kind of music do you listen to at home?

I listen to any kind of music.

2. What do you think about classical music?

I think that classical music is relaxing

3. What happens to your concentration when you listen to music?

You concentrated better and your mind gets clear.

4. How does listening to music affect your writing?

it helps you relax and have more ideas.

BEGINNING SURVEY

1. What kind of music do you listen to at home?

Christian rap, rock, and normal
Christian music, and the music on the radio.

2. What do you think about classical music?

It's interesting and neat.

3. What happens to your concentration when you listen to music?

Sometimes I start focusing on
the music more than the writing. I'm
working on.

4. How does listening to music affect your writing?

I must admit it seems I can
think of words to write down
faster.

BEGINNING SURVEY

1. What kind of music do you listen to at home?

I listen to Pop

2. What do you think about classical music?

I think classical music is very beautiful and makes you relax and tired.

3. What happens to your concentration when you listen to music?

The music that I listen to sometimes distracts me depending on what I'm thinking about. So when I listen it does help me concentrate.

4. How does listening to music affect your writing?

Since it does help me concentrate sometimes I just write down my feelings and it helps me to put more detail in my writing.

BEGINNING SURVEY

1. What kind of music do you listen to at home?

alternative

2. What do you think about classical music?

It is very relaxing

3. What happens to your concentration when you listen to music?

*My concentration is a lot better with classical
music*

4. How does listening to music affect your writing?

It makes me write better

APPENDIX E

Student Self-Evaluation

1. Describe your experience of listening to classical music while you wrote.
2. How did listening to music influence your writing?
3. How did listening to music help you stay more focused on your writing?
4. What do you think of using music with writing?
5. What piece of writing could you share that you think is better because of listening to classical music?

APPENDIX F

Responses to Student Self-Evaluation

STUDENT SELF-EVALUATION

1. Describe your experience of listening to classical music while you wrote.

I don't think it helped me much
it made me tired

2. How did listening to music influence your writing?

Not a whole lot it stayed the
same

3. How did listening to music help you stay more focused on your writing?

It didn't it made me sleepy

4. What do you think of using music with writing?

Not a good idea but it helped me
with my poetry.

5. What piece of writing could you share that you think is better because of listening to classical music? a poem

STUDENT SELF-EVALUATION

1. Describe your experience of listening to classical music while you wrote.

It was distracting.

2. How did listening to music influence your writing?

It didn't influence me, it only distracted me.

3. How did listening to music help you stay more focused on your writing?

It didn't make you focus on your writing, everyone was too busy talking about how they were listening to it.

4. What do you think of using music with writing?

It depends on what kind of music it is.

5. What piece of writing could you share that you think is better because of listening to classical music?

STUDENT SELF-EVALUATION

1. Describe your experience of listening to classical music while you wrote.

boring. It wasn't entertaining.

2. How did listening to music influence your writing?

helped.

3. How did listening to music help you stay more focused on your writing?

It didn't help me focus on writing.

4. What do you think of using music with writing?

It is very boring and makes writing
Dull.

5. What piece of writing could you share that you think is better because of listening to classical music?

None because
It made writing dull but if

I had to it would be the
Art of Rebounding.

STUDENT SELF-EVALUATION

1. Describe your experience of listening to classical music while you wrote.

It was hard to write because
It was played to high

2. How did listening to music influence your writing? I did not

3. How did listening to music help you stay more focused on your writing?

It did not because it was too
loud

4. What do you think of using music with writing? I don't know

5. What piece of writing could you share that you think is better because of listening to classical music? None of them

STUDENT SELF-EVALUATION

1. Describe your experience of listening to classical music while you wrote.

when it was fast & got in a rush and as it slowed down & wrote peacefully

2. How did listening to music influence your writing?

it gave me more of the feel to my writing, especially in Lusitania, and my words flowed

3. How did listening to music help you stay more focused on your writing?

it blocked everyone else out most of the time

4. What do you think of using music with writing?

& really do think it helps, usually at home if I'm writing & end up with music on

5. What piece of writing could you share that you think is better because of listening to classical music?

Chapter 3 - Lusitania

STUDENT SELF-EVALUATION

1. Describe your experience of listening to classical music while you wrote.
While I wrote it inspired me to write, and I felt calm.
2. How did listening to music influence your writing?
It gave me ideas, and it made me write better.
3. How did listening to music help you stay more focused on your writing?
I could keep writing and writing without stopping instead of stopping, and looking or thinking about ideas.
4. What do you think of using music with writing? I think that it is a really artistic way, and it helps you in a way.
5. What piece of writing could you share that you think is better because of listening to classical music? The Sallona,

STUDENT SELF-EVALUATION

1. Describe your experience of listening to classical music while you wrote.

I think I can write just a little bit.

2. How did listening to music influence your writing? I found

new ideas and wrote longer stories.

3. How did listening to music help you stay more focused on your writing?

I made stories and poems longer by focusing on my writing.

4. What do you think of using music with writing? I think using music in writing is good for me.

5. What piece of writing could you share that you think is better

because of listening to classical music? My favorite piece of writing called, "The Lone Empire", which I have wrote for 6 days of writing.

STUDENT SELF-EVALUATION

1. Describe your experience of listening to classical music while you wrote.

It was relaxing and peaceful.

2. How did listening to music influence your writing?

It helped me to forget what I was thinking about and concentrate on my writing.

3. How did listening to music help you stay more focused on your writing?

It relaxed me and helped me clear my head.

4. What do you think of using music with writing?

I think it's a good idea.

5. What piece of writing could you share that you think is better because of listening to classical music?

Tarah Promise.

APPENDIX G

Samples of Student Writing Before Classical Music

My Likes and Dislikes About Being My Age...

I have some likes and dislikes about being thirteen. My likes about being thirteen are I get to hang out with my eighteen year old sister and her friends every once in a while. Also I'm the baby girl and I get spoiled a lot, and I get to hang around my friends all of the time.

My dislikes about being thirteen are that most of my friends are fifteen and up and it's not fair that they either have their permit and/or driver's license. Furthermore, sometimes I feel left out because my older friends have parties which sometimes have age limits, even though they may make exceptions for me it's not the same.

In addition, some people my age act like they are older than what they really are. Then they

the attitude that they don't hang
around little kids, referring to people
their own age.

But a lot of people are
still nice to me even though
they don't hang out with me
as much as they do my sisters.

Feb 18, 98

If I were Invisible

If I were invisible, I would be able to do anything ten times better than any normal person.

Some of the pros of being invisible are that I would be able to sneak into movies and bars without being detected unless I bumped into something. I would also be able to hide things from people that I don't like. I would also be able to get the answer key from the teacher for the test.

On the other hand the cons are, not being able to carry anything without being seen with it. I would have to watch out for bumping into people or I would be caught.

I think it would still be cool to be invisible but being invisible has its pros and cons.

Parenting?

D-3
2-21-98

If I were the parent of a twelve-year-old daughter, things would be a lot different. She could buy her lunch if she wanted to, cut dye, bleach, or grow her hair if she wanted to. Her room would only have to be clean for company and she could redecorate her bedroom and bathroom any way that she wanted. Trust me, she wouldn't be a rebel, because there wouldn't be anything to rebel against. She could take sports lessons, music lessons, voice lessons and any class she wanted to. She could be in plays and musicals if she wanted. She would have daily exercise, though. I wish my mom had me exercise daily. She could only say certain cuss words at home but none at school.

What my mom doesn't understand about being twelve years old is that you are going through stress, pressure, and puberty which don't mix well. It's like some toxic brew being mixed into your life. You can't go anywhere because you don't have a car. You can't say what you want or do what you want. You can't make your own decisions. You can't make your own life.

What I'm Good At? D-3

I'm good at many things, but mostly at sports. Sports are my favorite subject. My most favorite sports are basketball, football, soccer, and tennis, but the sports I'm the best at are football and soccer. I really like these sports because they require speed, force, power, and intelligence.

I'm good at other things like math, science, and geography. I feel very lucky and proud of myself because I have the ability to achieve many things. I achieve this by working hard, with enthusiasm, and with all of my heart. So everybody should feel proud of who they are, what they have, because there are many kids that wish to have the same opportunities as me. So have the person you are, and be thankful for what you get.

2/2/98

English
D3

City and Country

A hand goes up for the taxi to see

A cow grazes happily.

People talk, and often fib.

A housewife sews a boy's bib.

Busy people all around

Farmers sow and reap the crops in the ground.

Shoppers bustling and mothers hustling

The difference is plain to see

One is in the city, and one is in the country.

When I Was A Little Kid I Tl:

2/3/48
Eng. 3'19
028

When I was about seven we used to go to the bank and my dad would walk up to the ATM and all of a sudden money would appear. I always thought that there was a tiny man inside there and I thought that he was really rich. So he always gave away money on his spare time.

I used to also think that two pennies was more than one quarter. Because I thought the more the better. I sure am glad that I don't believe that anymore or I would be broke.

The End.

APPENDIX H

Samples of Student Writing During Classical Music


Eighth Grade

2-27-98
D-3

I'm looking forward to eighth grade but I'm a little scared. I'm getting older and more mature by the day. Seventh grade is gone by so fast. I don't want it to be over. Eighth grade will be a big step for me. I hope I get classes with some of my friends next year because this year everyone's either downstairs or in a different pod.

I want school to be over so badly, but I still got a ways to go. Sometimes I wish I were my mom. She has the most perfect life. I'm wondering if eighth grade will be a lot different from any other grade since it's only eighth graders.

I hope I get into the classes I want, Teen living or urama. Those classes will be fun I think. I don't want to get butterflies in my stomach the first day, but I do every year. I'll just think I am walking into the sixth and seventh grade center even though it will be in the eighth grade center. Well all I have to say is that I hope I have a great eighth grade year. I guess we'll have to go to find out.



SNOW

I miss the snow, so cold and wet, so pretty and white, so blanketing and shimmering. I miss the snow, the happiness it brings. It can see the smiles on the faces of children as they awaken to a fresh canopy of white covering the earth around them. I love the snow, so inviting and fun. I wish the joy of snow would blanket my heart once again.

2-24-98

Caring

Caring is when you
give money to the
homeless.

Caring is when you
invite people to sleep at
your house when they
don't have any shelter.

Caring is when a
new person comes to
your school and you
introduce them to
some of your friends.

Caring is when
someone wants to go
some where but they
can't find a babysitter,
you babysit for them.

Caring is when
someone needs help
on a problem you
help them with the

problem.

Caring is when someone has a bad grade you help them or you tutor them.

Caring is when someone needs a ride to church you offer to give them a ride.

The True Story of Humpty Dumpty

It stood there, one foot tall, the book entitled The True Story of Humpty Dumpty, it sat in the vault in the basement of the Pentagon next to The Assassination of J. F. K.

Humpty Dumpty was really a real person named Jack Surrows. He worked for the government, the F. B. I. actually. Jack was the man they first tested L. S. D. on. The government thought it would make the enemy delirious, enabling the enemy to tell the government secrets. The government still had to test it. As you guessed it, Jack Surrows was picked. One night when he was at a party, they sneaked some L. S. D. into his cocktail. What they didn't know was that he was allergic to L. S. D. He became bloated, taking the shape of an egg. The government didn't know what to do. Meanwhile "Humpty Dumpty" was becoming famous. Making

talk shows, newspapers, 20/20, and even The Guinness Book of World Records. Then the government had an idea, bring in a sniper.

One day they asked "Humpty Dumpty" to a so-called photo shoot. The last part of it was right, shoot. While Humpty was posing for the camera, the sniper set up. He aimed and fired. Bang!! It bounced off Humpty and ricocheted back. Humpty began to run, but they pinned him down. The sniper loaded with armor-piercing shells this time.

Bang. Bam. Bam!! Three shots and Humpty was in pieces. They cleaned up the murder site and dumped him into a river. Then government made up the children's rhyme to cover up the story.

The End

The Most Wonderful Time of the Year

Christmas is my favorite holiday. I love being with my family and celebrating with them. I like getting presents and eating Christmas dinner and all the homemade goodies.

My family is very loving. It's always fun to get with them because we have a great time! Every night we're up till 1 or 2 A.M. in the morning playing games like "Joker" or "Pictionary". The kids stay up the latest talking, playing games, watching movies, and I bring my Super Nintendo with us play video games. On Christmas Eve though, we usually read the Christmas story and open a few presents.

I like getting presents. I like new clothes, movies, CD, video games, books, and lots of candy. Last year, I got all of that except books. I also got a really big CD player.

We eat Christmas dinner about 1 or 2 in the afternoon. (We eat so late because we want to be hungry for Christmas dinner). My favorite part of Christmas dinner is homemade rolls. There's no butter.

To me, Christmas is a time of love and love with family. For my family,

it also means celebrating the birth of
christ. i love my family and i love
Christmas!

The Lusitania
Chapter 2: My Pursuit
Draft Three

I loved riding my bicycle out into the country side. I cleared my mind of all my problems and pressures and rode away into a world of thoughts and dreams.

The afternoon before I was to depart from America I took a ride. I stopped, though, when I reached the harbor. My mother had let me do this with much reluctance. I was a young lady, and young ladies do not do such things as to show the whole town your unfeminine and independent side. Ladies are to be retained and conservative. That is what mother often said, but I promised I would not be late and would act like a complete young lady even if I was on a bicycle.

There was a great number of ships at the harbor. I did not go out by the water much, but I decided to stop. I sat on a bench that looked out onto the water. In the distance, I saw a ship sail by. I closed my eyes and listened to the water crash and then reside. I felt a great sense of peace bestowed upon me and for once in a long time, I relaxed.

Someone sat down beside me, and I was not sure of whether or not to open my eyes or keep them shut. Of course, my sense of curiosity won out, and I peered to my left. A young man about twenty-five was there. He looked up, and I suddenly became shy and partially gave a sheepish smile. Mother said that was the problem with me, when I need to be feminine and quiet, I am loud and ridiculous, and when I need to be open and friendly, I clam up and act shy. "Hello," he said, "Pretty night." I smiled and nodded. It was dusk and the moon had just begun to shine. The sun was setting over the horizon, and the water looked lovely.

I thought about the beauty. "Every night on the ship it will look like this," I thought. "I'm Leo," he said, extending his right hand. I almost

almost jumped; I had fallen into a daydream. I took the hand and replied, "and I'm Sarah." He smiled, he seemed a bit sorry he had interrupted my thinking, but yet at the same time was polite and a gentleman.

His eyes were brown and shone against his tanned complexion. His light, brown hair swayed as the wind moved up from the shore. The silence was adequate to me. I favored the sounds of the water and the wind. For once, I thought of what Mother was always saying, "Never be too straight forward or too shy." I was certainly not being too straight forward. I liked the silent company of the man, though. For the first time, I felt like living. I did not have to be prim and proper or strike up a conversation. This was the kind of company I liked.

I must have sat there for hours enjoying a few words with Leo and the peace of the harbor. He suddenly stood and said he should be going. I crawled back to reality and said I should be as well, and after asking the time, which was quite late, I bid him farewell.

At home, Mother had been worrying. Father was reading the newspaper. There was an article about the war, but we were interrupted by an unexpected visitor.

Allison burst in the door. "Hi," she said, taking her jacket off and hanging it on the rack. She paraded into the kitchen with a plate of cookies. "These are for Sarah and Aunt Jo," she said giving my Father an imperative look. "ohh, these look wonderful, Alli," I said, slowly pulling off the cover. "Ah, ah, ah, not yet. They are for your trip." I put the cover on and went to sit in the parlor. Allison followed me and sat down at the chair opposite me. "Alli, what is London like?" I asked. "You are going to love it, Dollie," she said using the name that she had always called me, "Its as old as the hills, but for some crazy reason that is what I love about it!" she exclaimed in her petite voice.

"I went to the harbor, tonight," I told her.

"Oh, really? You never go out there; Don't you love it at sunset?" she inquired.

"Oh, it was beautiful!" I went on to explain the water and the sky and their vibrant colors.

Allison stayed a bit longer and then told us good-bye. I slept well that night. When I awoke, I was abounding with energy, and my mother was pleased. My mother sat Aunt Jo and me down quickly and shoveled serving after serving of eggs and biscuits with gravy onto our plates.

When it was time to leave, Father took my luggage to the Model T, and Aunt Jo independently carried her bags. Mother smiled and held back her tears. I hugged and kissed her, and then Father swept us into the new Ford as he took the driver's seat.

It seemed like a century; the ride to the harbor. Father occasionally said something to spark a conversation. I let Aunt Jo carry that business, and trust me, she did. She and Father spoke of every possible subject under the sun as I hung out the window with excitement. Finally, there it was, the Lusitania. Three large smokestacks blew exhaust out on the deck. On the side of the ship was painted carefully, THE LUSITANIA in bold, black letters. Red trim laced the ship.

Father hopped out of the car and began busying himself getting my things. I sat there, though, and did not move a muscle. My inmost being was overwhelmed. I was leaving for London. Behind me would be everything I despised, and only favored thing as would be ahead. A young boy came to help with my father's struggle of my things. Aunt Jo lifted her two, small handbags from the floor of the Model T and followed the bell boy. Father knocked on my car window and smiled, "Come along, now, Dreamer," he said. He had often called me "Dreamer" as a child and up through the years. I slowly climbed out of the car and took the offered arm of my father's. We walked up to the ship, and he hugged me. I laid a kiss on his cheek. I knew it was going to be hard to leave my Father, but I would be following my dream, and I did.

~ Chapter two ~

The dark clouds outside my window made me tired, so soon I fell asleep.

About thirty minutes later I woke-up to the sound of thunder.

Oh, no, I thought, not a storm. I stood up and decided to go to the restroom to freshen up a bit.

As I stood up I grabbed my purse, and squeezed past the people who were sitting next to me.

I reached the restroom, which was unoccupied, so I stepped inside.

I used the restroom and restored my make-up a little bit. As I was freshening my lipstick the floor beneath me began to shake.

The turbulence startled me and I dropped my lipstick in the sink.

My make-up bag fell on the floor and everything spilled all over the floor.

I stood still and grabbed on to the sink. The walls began to rattle and I could hear gasps outside the door.

After quite a time the shaking began to settle down. The walls

Stopped rattling and soon the floors stopped shaking; the turbulence had stopped.

I took my lipstick out of the sink and put the cap on. I bent down and began picking up all my stuff and putting it back in my bag, then I shoved the bag in my purse and took a quick glance at myself in the mirror. I gave my hair a quick flip and unlocked the door.

I walked outside and saw everybody looking around and whispering to their neighbor. I found my seat squeezed through my neighbors and sat down.

As soon as I sat down the pilot came on the intercom and said in his deep demanding voice, "Excuse me for interrupting, but I'm afraid we have and in the future are going to experience some turbulence because of the storm.

Please stay calm, do not panic, and anytime during our turbulence do not stand up. Hold on to your arm rest and buckle your safety belts. Remember, don't panic, hang on to your arm rests, and please do not I repeat do not

Stand up!

Thank you very much."

The click of the innercom turning off left us all silent with amazement and worry.

I buckled my seat belt quickly.

I looked out the window, I could see the rain. The thunder was close now. I could feel the pounding everytime it sounded.

For once in my life I was sorry I had a window seat.

Feb. 24, 97

D31

My Two Dogs

My first dog my dad found at his office in Sugar Land. He came home at lunch and said if it was still there at the end of the day he would bring her home. At the end of the day the dog was still there and so my dad brought her home. My mom and my dad named her Missisy which is short for "Mississippi Mud Pie." Not long after we got her she had puppies. She was too small to take care of them and so they died.

My other dog I found out in the pasture at my grand parents farm house. I was out hunting meadowlarks and this dog came running towards me. I thought it was a fox and ran back to the house and told my dad to get the binoculars and find out what it was. First he looked then I did. I felt so relieved that it was a small beagle. We named her Freckles because her legs were covered in freckles. And that is the story about my dogs.

The World Today

Funerals are about the saddest gatherings to go to in life. When someone close or a family member dies your heart drops, you feel down, and sometimes you feel it's your fault. People begin to question why we die and some blame God on the troubles we have today.

One thing everyone knows is that death and sin are a part of everyday life. People are being persecuted because of racism, war, and sometimes even anger. All these things that happen in the world today have torn us apart. The government says there'll be peace in the world. But no matter how hard people try to make the world peaceful, it fails or results in war.

People complain about the world's conditions, but they do nothing to help. They teach their children to be lazy and not to do anything but sit around. So their children pick up their parents' or other people's ways and may

sometimes make matters worse. So
today: the world is full of complainers
some good, some bad, and some who really
care.

APPENDIX I

**Samples of Student Writing
After Classical Music**

Goldy and Her Problems

Once upon a time there was a girl whose name was Goldy (what a showing name). Anyway, she always disobeyed her mom and got grounded and pouted. She was a spoiled brat, really, but I am trying to tell this story without much negativity, which really is impossible.

There was a family of bears that lived down the street (yeah right). Hey, remember that I am just saying what I was told to by unknown sources. The family of bears, or whatever they were, were having a breakfast of old, rotten oatmeal when for some crazy reason they decided to take a walk in the middle of their meal. (Don't ask why, they are crazy!) So these bears started walking into the woods. Goldy, consequently, was taking a walk too down the street.

She stopped and went to see if Gertrude, (oh, what a name) the Baby Bear, was home. Well, we know he wasn't, but she decided to take

a party. She invited her friends - Silverlylocks, Copper, and Gemery. (Where do people think up these names?) Now, Silverlylocks was always eating. You can imagine the size of a feds! You can also imagine what happened to the oatmeal; it was eaten. Copper and Gemery were these ditzzy brats who sat around all day and watched T.V. They immediately plopped down on the bears couch and watched a ditzzy, bratty show. This part I really don't get. It is rumored that Silverlylocks sat in Baby Bear's chair, and it broke, but come on it's a bear, here.

Goldy, being the little selfish, nosy child that she was wandered around the house looking for a bed. Of course, you know what happened next; she fell asleep, and the bears came back from their walk. They got really mad and sued Silverlylocks for eating their rotten oatmeal, but the bear family (or whatever they were) lived happily ever after anyway, because they got lots of money.

4/29/98

D-2

ROSE

The crimson rose
blooms with grace. It
opens and grows slowly
like a butterfly emer-
ges from its cocoon.
The rose unfolds
with all its glory
until it slowly
reaches its full
growth, rising hopefully
to the sky, reaching
for the sun's warmth.
The sun's rays
shimmer down and
kiss the petals of
the rose. The rose
has bloomed, it
is the ideal
comparisson to
our lives. We
reach, unfold
and eventually
we are wrapped
in the arms of
a higher power.

I can Right today

04
HS
5-1

I can write today because

I can write today because I made honor roll

I can write today because the snow is out

I can write today because my shoes are tied

I can write today because my shoes are cleaned

I can write today because I can sleep in bed

I can write today because there is no school tomorrow

I can write today because I'm happy

I can write today because I'm grounded tonight

I can write today because my parents are proud of it

I can write today because I'm planting a garden tomorrow

I can write today because I feel like it

I can write today just because I want to write

But most of all I can write today because there's still hope for Josh

Dog Attack

3rd hour

03

Final draft

I was walking to my friend's house.

It was an ordinary summer day. I was walking to my friend's house. I usually ride my bike but since it was so nice out I decided to walk. To this day I wonder if I had ridden my bike this incident could have been avoided.

As I was walking I heard a loud growling sound. I looked back and saw a Rottweiler behind a chain link fence. I didn't think much about it so I continued.

But then I heard the bark again.

This time it seemed a lot closer.

I looked back and saw that

the dog had jumped the fence and

was chasing after me. I took off

running. I don't think I have

ever ran that fast, but it was

not fast enough. He jumped on

my back, slashing my back open.

I was defenseless. He was on top of

me and getting ready to bite my throat.

a gunshot, I saw the dogs head
 just fly off. There was blood everywhere.
 The guy that shot the dog probably
 saved my life. I had to get
 Fifty seven stitches on my back.

THE

THE

END

APPENDIX J

Classroom Design

Bookshelf
Professional,
Instructional
material

Computer table
Chair

Two
-file
-cabinets

Table with two chairs.
Supplies for writing are
stored on top-of-the-table.

Beanbag

Stool
Student desk.

Teacher's Desk
and chair.

Student
desk.

Baskets containing students' literature
logs.

Baskets are below chalkboard. Clock and
projector screen are above chalkboard.

Stool
Podium

Shelves with
baskets for
students' writing.

Door

Pencil
Sharpener
Wastebasket

Table with two chairs.
Library books for students
to check out are stored on
top of the table.

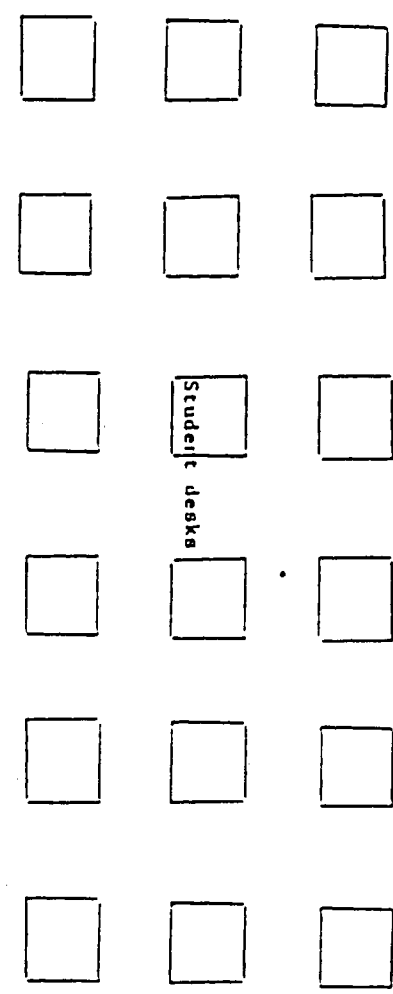
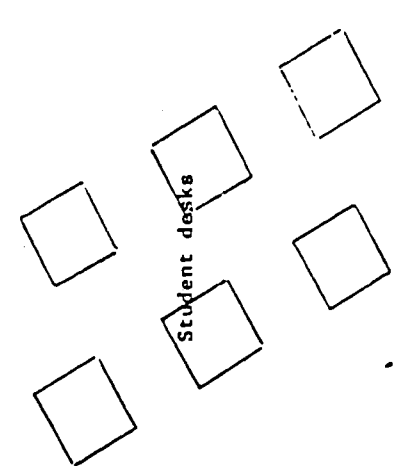
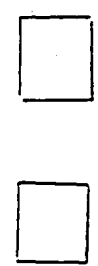
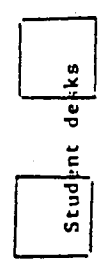
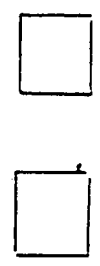
Beanbag

Bookshelf
Contains class set
of literature and
English textbooks,
dictionaries, thesauruses,
and other reference books.

Beanbag

Overhead
Projector

Closet



MURAL

APPENDIX K

IRB Form

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: February 2, 1998

IRB #: ED-98-062

Proposal Title: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF CLASSICAL MUSIC ON THE
WRITING PERFORMANCE OF SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS

Principal Investigator(s): Gretchen Schwarz, Joann Brogan

Reviewed and Processed as: Expedited with Special Population

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

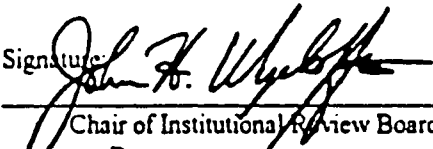
ALL APPROVALS MAY BE SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD AT
NEXT MEETING, AS WELL AS ARE SUBJECT TO MONITORING AT ANY TIME DURING THE
APPROVAL PERIOD.

APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR DATA COLLECTION FOR A ONE CALENDAR YEAR
PERIOD 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 Disapproval are as follows:

Signature:


Chair of Institutional Review Board
cc Joann Brogan

Date: February 20, 1998

2
VITA

Joann Brogan

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF CLASSICAL MUSIC
ON THE WRITING PERFORMANCE OF SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS

Major Field: Curriculum and Instruction

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Madison, Indiana, October 5, 1951, the daughter of Robert and Naomi Coy.

Education: Graduated from Switzerland County High School, Vevay, Indiana, in May, 1969; received Bachelor of Arts degree from Hanover College in 1979; received Master of Science degree from Oklahoma State University in 1988; completed requirements for the Doctor of Education degree at Oklahoma State University in May, 1999.

Professional Experience: Elementary Teacher, Allensville Elementary School East Enterprise, Indiana, 1979-80; Elementary Librarian, Switzerland County Elementary, East Enterprise, Indiana, 1980-81; Elementary Teacher, Switzerland County Elementary, East Enterprise, Indiana, 1981-83; Elementary Teacher, Washington, Elementary School, Collinsville, Oklahoma, 1983-86; Middle School Teacher, Sequoyah Middle School, Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, 1987-1991; Elementary Teacher, McAuliffe Elementary Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, 1991-94; Middle School Teacher, Union Sixth and Seventh Grade Center, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1994 to present.