A COMPARISON OF WRITING PERFORMANCE

OF FIFTH GRADE STUDENTS USING

THE PROCESS WRITING

APPROACH AND THE

SHURLEY METHOD

By

TONI FREDEMAN PANTIER

Bachelor of Science in Education
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, Arkansas
1970

Master of Education
Central State University
Edmond, Oklahoma
1988

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Dissertation Approved:

David Yelli

Dissertation Adviser

Gretchen Schwarz

Diane Montgomery

Wayne B. Powell

Dean of the Graduate College

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CHAPTER I

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Throughout the years educators have had differing opinions as to what should be included on a list of "basic skills" (Colker, 1997; Pomata, 1994). Traditionally the "three Rs—Reading, 'Riting, and 'Rithmetic"—have withstood the test of time as the core of educational curriculum. However, one leg of the traditional education tripod, writing, has remained unbalanced in many classrooms over the years.

Customarily, the conventions of writing known as English grammar have been taught separately from the act of writing. Students have practiced discrete skills in isolated and unconnected sentences through textbook exercises and worksheets along with memorizing rules and lists of words. A far greater amount of time has been allotted for grammar and mechanics instruction than for actual, authentic writing (Warner, 1993), which is writing for real people and for real purposes.

Despite the focus on grammar, many students do not master the rules, and grammar errors have filled their writing. On the other hand, numerous students have memorized the rules successfully, labeled each word in a multitude of sentences with the correct part of speech, corrected and completed thousands of contrived sentences, and passed many grammar tests, but grammar errors have continued regularly in their writing as well. Why? Many researchers (Elley, Barham, Lamb, & Wyllie, 1976; Harris, 1963;

Macauley, 1947; McQuade, 1980; Mellon, 1969) as well as those who have done meta-analyses of research (Amiran & Mann, 1982; Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, & Schoer, 1963; DeBoer, 1959; Hillocks, 1987; Hillocks & Smith, 1991; Holdzkom, Reed, Porter, & Rubin, 1983; Neill, 1982; Weaver, 1996) have concluded that teaching grammar in isolation from authentic writing has little effect on writing improvement. Based on the substantial body of literature, Weaver (1996) explained:

> Overall, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that teaching formal, isolated grammar to average or heterogeneous classes, perhaps even to highly motivated students . . . makes no appreciable difference in their ability to write, to edit, or to score better on standardized tests. (p. 26)

In answer to these findings, alternative approaches to teaching grammar evolved. Educators maintained that rather than the research indicating that we should not teach isolated grammar instruction, it indicated that we must teach discrete grammar skills in a more effective way. In answer to this viewpoint, "Generic Writing Systems," commercially mass-produced writing systems, emerged. On the other hand, other educators grew to support Process Writing where grammar is taught in the context of the student's writing when the need arises.

The ability to communicate effectively with others has become critical in today's technologically complex world. Writing has become a crucial communication skill which we must address as "writing is becoming increasingly recognized as the flip-side of the literacy coin . . ." (Tompkins, 1990, p. 22). Perhaps with a focus on which alternative instructional methods to writing are more effective, a well deserved balance will be added to the writing leg of the "three Rs" tripod.

For more than two decades, the American public, educators, and researchers, have given increased attention to writing as many agree that students, as a whole, do not and cannot write well (Applebee, 1994; Cotton, 1989; Holdzkom, Reed, Porter, & Rubin, 1983; Jones, 1995; Noguchi, 1991; Warner, 1993). In 1982 Neill surveyed 425 school districts in preparation for a report sponsored by the American Association of School Administrators and found 90% of the respondents viewed student writing to be a problem. Forty percent saw writing as a serious problem while 50% felt it was a minor one. Funk and Funk (1989) reported that college and university professors continued asking for writing reform, stating many students had difficulty expressing themselves in writing; industry and government officials disclosed distress at the state of pupils' communication skills; and corporate executives claimed employees' insufficient writing skills diminished productivity and contributed to inefficiency. Furthermore, Neill (1982) stated that some corporations were leaving urban environments due to an inability to find people for clerical jobs that were minimally competent in writing skills. In 1983 the National Commission on Excellence in Education reported that national leaders viewed the current rate of illiteracy as a threat to technological strength and national security.

A decade later the 1992 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), often called the "Nation's Report Card," reported similar findings (Applebee, 1994) to those of the 1980s. The NAEP, the only nationally representative, continuing assessment of what U.S. students know and can do in various subject areas (Calderone, King, & Horkay, 1997), examined the writing performance of 30,000 American schoolchildren in fourth, eighth, and twelfth grade (as cited by Applebee, 1994). NAEP's survey found that

many students at each grade level had serious difficulty in writing effective informative, persuasive, or narrative pieces (Applebee, 1994). For example, researchers gave low ratings to 73% of fourth-graders' informative writing samples (Jones, 1995). Similar finding were reported at the college level. Knudson (1998) stated, "The fact that the writing of many college students does not demonstrate competence is a source of great concern" (p. 13).

In response to the distressing state of students' written communication skills empirical research, which does not support the widespread belief that teaching formal grammar in isolation from writing affects writing improvement (Amiran & Mann, 1982; Braddock et al., 1963; DeBoer, 1959; Elley et al., 1976; Harris, 1963; Hillocks & Smith, 1991; Holdzkom et al., 1983; Macauley, 1947; McQuade, 1980; Mellon, 1969; Neill, 1982; Weaver, 1996), some educators have searched for other ways to improve student writing. In the past two decades a number of theorists and researchers (Atwell, 1987; Bissex, 1980; Elley et al.; Graves, 1983; Routman, 1991; Tompkins, 1990; Weaver, 1996) have agreed that students must be given the opportunity to learn and manipulate grammar skills within the context of their own writing. Hence, students must have the opportunity to gain experience in developing strategies within real-life writing for applying needed grammar skills in place of relying on memory of isolated lists and skills. With this approach, Weaver recommended providing many authentic opportunities to learn and practice grammar in meaningful communication through relevant speaking, reading, and writing. For example, a student might write a letter to a city official in reference to the need of repairs on a neighborhood playground or create a brochure of activities and programs offered in the student's school. However, authentic writing takes

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time to plan, carry out, improve, and complete.

In 1984 the staff of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills reported that "[there is] a distressing lack of classroom time devoted to extended periods of writing" (p. 1). A decade later the cry continued for writing reforms and increased time spent on writing (Hill, 1992). Warner (1993) reported that out of nearly 100 secondary-school educators, 81% felt more writing should be taught and more time should be allotted for it. However, teachers are required to juggle far more activities than the allotted time in the school day allows (Heath, 1983). Administrators and politicians have brought about increasing curriculum demands to our school world. Many have overlooked the possibility of either substituting some of the new ideas for the old ones or adding time to the school day or the district calendar. Many teachers view actual writing, which takes "regular chunks of time" (Atwell, 1987, p. 55), as difficult to schedule in the fragmented daily school schedule. Noguchi (1991) pointed out that less isolated formal grammar instruction would create exactly that—more time for writing itself.

Alternative methods to formal grammar instruction have emerged. One method, Process Writing, focuses on prewriting, drafting, student-centered revising and editing, and sharing. Grammar, usage, and mechanics skills are taught in the context of the pupil's writing as the need arises and based on the individual child's ability. In the writing process, importance is shifted from analyzing finished products to valuing what students think and do as they write throughout the process (DeCarlo, 1995; Tompkins, 1990). Numerous studies (Britton, 1978; Elbow, 1973; Graves, 1975; Hillocks, 1987; Holdzkom et al., 1983; Murray, 1978) and many theorists (Atwell, 1987; Graves, 1983; Hill, 1992; Routman, 1991; Tompkins, 1990) emphasized the need of a process approach

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to writing instruction.

"Generic Writing Systems" (Healy, 1995, p. 20) have emerged as another alternative method for students to successfully use correct grammar and mechanics in their writing. Whether the systems exist locally or nationwide, most "Generic Writing Systems" seem to share several characteristics. One is a focus on training educators in a new approach to skill and drill. The other is teaching the construction of particular forms of texts. Close attention is given to prescribed, incremental steps for groups of students to follow in order to reconstruct a composition. In answer to growing demands for accountability for writing mastery and in search for a quick fix (Healy, 1995), many state, district, or site officials mandate these packaged writing systems while in other cases individuals or groups of teachers instigate the adoption of a system. Healy pointed out, "It is important to note that support and justification for the approach taken by the system is rarely, if ever, sought through the publication of articles inviting response in the pages of professional journals" (p. 20). In other words, "Generic Writing Systems" customarily lack a foundation grounded in research support.

Statement of the Problem

Empirical research does not support the widespread belief that teaching formal grammar in isolation from writing promotes writing improvement (Amiran & Mann, 1982; Braddock et al., 1963; DeBoer, 1959; Elley et al., 1976; Harris, 1963; Hillocks & Smith, 1991; Holdzkom et al., 1983; Macauley, 1947; McQuade, 1980; Mellon, 1969; Neill, 1982; Weaver, 1996). Furthermore, a number of theorists and researchers (Atwell, 1987; Bissex, 1980; Elley et al., 1976; Graves, 1983; Routman, 1991; Tompkins, 1990;

Weaver, 1996) agree that students must be given the opportunity to gain experience in developing strategies for applying needed grammar skills within real-life writing rather than relying on memory of isolated grammatical rules and lists. Despite research conclusions, divergence between research and common practice remains. Grammar is probably the most controversial area of the language arts of listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Farris, 1997; Tompkins, 1995). Much of today's grammar instruction continues to reflect the early Greek emphasis on paradigms concerned with the idea of grammar assigning order to language as well as disciplining and training the mind (Weaver, 1996). Hillocks and Smith (1991) deplored, "Over two thousand years later these are still with us" (p. 591). Although the twentieth century has witnessed a shift away from the attention on grammar as a mental discipline and a shift toward more attention on grammar as an avenue for improving writing, teaching methods of earlier centuries remain widespread (Hillocks & Smith, 1991; Warner, 1993; Weaver, 1996). The tradition of teaching isolated grammar continues in many, many classrooms.

Today formulaic, isolated grammar instruction has new labels which can be categorized as "Generic Writing Systems" (Healey, 1995, p. 20). However, rather than actually offering new methods, the overall approach remains similar to grammar instruction in the past. One such system is the Shurley Method: English Made Easy (Shurley & Wetsell, 1989a), a packaged method for teaching step-by-step grammar identification. Much time is taken for drill and repetition through unison chants, jingles, and "question-answer flows" (Shurley & Wetsell, 1989a) before students are given the opportunity to write.

In light of the lack of research on "Generic Writing Systems" in general and the

Shurley Method in particular, the purpose of this 17-week study was to determine if there were significant differences, over time, in writing performance and writing attitudes among students who a) concentrated on meaning in writing and then on grammar within the context of that writing compared to b) students who were taught discrete grammar skills prior to writing through the particular packaged, formulaic Shurley Method and to c) students who were taught with a combination of a and b. The study addressed the following research question:

Do writing criteria (performance, attitude) of fifth grade students differ as a function of method of instruction (Process Writing; Process Writing/Textbook; Process Writing/Shurley Method; Shurley Method) over time?

Significance of the Study

Despite the current body of research indicating little if any isolated grammar instruction transfers to writing (Amiran & Mann, 1982; Braddock et al., 1963; DeBoer, 1959; Elley et al., 1976; Harris, 1963; Hillocks & Smith, 1991; Holdzkom et al., 1983; Macauley, 1947; McQuade, 1980; Mellon, 1969; Neill, 1982; Weaver, 1996) and research in favor of learning grammar within the context of authentic writing (Bissex, 1980; Calkins, 1980; Elley et al., 1976; Graves, 1983), many educators continue either to follow tradition by teaching as they were taught, or, perhaps, they simply teach in compliance with practices mandated by principals, school districts, or legislatures. Unquestioned faith is placed on the textbook and consumable materials industry, resulting in failure to consider other teaching alternatives. Some teachers indicate interest in alternative methods for teaching writing, but report continued support for teaching

discrete grammar based on a prevailing belief that it will prepare students for the state and national testing to which they as teachers feel bound.

In answer to nationwide attention concerning the unacceptable state of written communication skills (Applebee, 1994; Cotton, 1989; Holdzkom, Reed, Porter, & Rubin, 1983; Jones, 1995; Warner, 1993), recent trends in writing skill assessment have moved away from the traditional multiple-choice test focusing on grammar identification and towards application in authentic writing, using free-response writing tasks (Breland, 1996). A number of national examinations, including major college admissions tests, now include free-response components. In addition, more attention has been given to student writing in state and national language assessments for elementary and secondary students. In almost every state, writing assessments have been added to the achievement tests mandated by the legislatures (Stevens & Clauser, 1996; Tompkins, 1990). For instance, a writing assessment battery is now offered at all grade levels on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), one of the most widely used and accepted standardized, norm referenced instruments to measure student achievement (Lane, 1992). Writing assessments require students to compose a story instead of answer questions about grammar, usage, and mechanics. Furthermore, the eleventh grade level ITBS has become the only ITBS grade level test to ask grammar and sentence structure identification questions (N. Edwards, personal communication, October 7, 1998). Questions now focus on which part of the sentence is incorrect and which sentence states the idea more clearly. This new emphasis on writing content rather than on isolated skills is "clear evidence of the widespread acceptance of the writing process as an important part of the . . . curriculum" (Tompkins, 1990, p. 22).

Nevertheless, exposing teachers and administrators to research findings, convincing them to break from years of tradition, weaning them from a consumable materials approach or textbook-centered, isolated skills approach in grammar, and redirecting the focus of writing instruction continue to prove difficult (Funk & Funk, 1989; Weaver, 1996). In this redirection, prepackaged "Generic Writing Systems" (Healy, 1995, p. 20), disguised as a break from the textbook approach, have emerged and gained acceptance in many schools.

One such packaged method for teaching grammar identification and writing, the Shurley Method: English Made Easy (Shurley & Wetsell, 1989a, 1989b), appeared in 1989. This comprehensive, English curriculum for grades one through seven is a step-by-step program with an emphasis on teaching students the eight parts of speech through assigned sentences, drill and repetition, and unison chants, jingles, and "question-answer flows" (Shurley & Wetsell, 1989a). The method is based on the theory that there is a need for a grammar foundation before the actual training in writing skills can begin (B. Shurley, personal communication, March 12, 1997). Shurley explained, "It is important to study how all the parts of a sentence fit together because students need to understand sentence structure in order to speak and write successfully (Shurley & Wetsell brochure, n.d.).

Even though the Shurley Method embraces a language and writing instruction approach that is in direct opposition with the large body of research findings (Amiran & Mann, 1982; Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, & Schoer, 1963; DeBoer, 1959; Elley, Barham, Lamb, and Wyllie, 1976; Harris, 1963; Hillocks, 1987; Hillocks & Smith, 1991; Holdzkom, Reed, Porter, & Rubin, 1983; Macauley, 1947; McQuade, 1980; Mellon,

1969; Neill, 1982; Weaver, 1996), Shurley Method Instructional Materials are included on the Arkansas, Alabama, Texas, and Oklahoma State Textbook List (B. Shurley, personal communication, May 25, 1999) and the Arkansas Supplemental List (Arkansas State Board of Education, personal communication, October 24, 1997). The method has been added to the Louisiana State Textbook list for the 1999-2000 school year (Shurley Instructional Materials office, personal communication, May 21, 1999). The latest reprint of the Shurley Method Information Packet (Shurley & Wetsell, n.d.) reports that over 400 (of the 549) of the school districts in Oklahoma and over 500 teachers in 231 (of the 311) school districts in Arkansas presently use the Shurley Method. More than 50 districts, numerous home educators, and private schools in 13 other states have adopted the Shurley Method. Moreover, pockets of isolated teachers scattered across the nation in almost every state use it whether it has been adopted by the district or not. Shurley can also be found in private schools and home schools in Canada, missionary schools in Africa, and in schools and home schools in Argentina and Greece (Shurley Instructional Materials office, personal communication, May 25, 1999).

Upon request of existing research on the development, use, and results of the Shurley Method program, the "research" supplied to the researcher by Brenda Shurley and Ruth Wetsell of Shurley Instructional Materials, Inc. was opinion literature from numerous newspaper articles, letters from teachers and parents, and test reports. All lauded the results of the Shurley Method.

The only published study concerning the Shurley Method, unbeknownst to Shurley Instructional Materials, Inc., was an 11-week study of 28 fourth grades conducted by Williams (1998), which compared effects of the Shurley Method on the

writing performance of one class with the writing performance of another class not instructed with the Shurley Method. The sub-scores on content and organization as well as the total scores indicated that the Shurley class did not out-perform the non-Shurley class in any of the four writing samples whereas the non-Shurley class performed significantly better in mechanics on all four writing samples.

In answer to the widespread acceptance of the Shurley Method and the small amount of research on it, this 17-week study sought to extend the knowledge of the effectiveness of the Shurley Method in relation to the performance of authentic writing. The study targeted a larger population over a longer period of time, as suggested by Williams (1998), and compared the narrative/descriptive writing performance of four lower-middle class fifth grade classes receiving writing instruction with one of the following methods: (a) Process Writing, (b) Process Writing/Textbook Instruction, (c) Process Writing/Shurley Method, or (d) the Shurley Method. Since the Oklahoma State Criterion-Referenced Test in Writing examines only fifth graders at the elementary level, the researcher focused on fifth grade students. Lower-middle class student participants were chosen in hopes to target students with exposure to average opportunities in school and in their personal lives. By implementing holistic scoring, as used to rate the State Criterion-Referenced Test in Writing, the writing of each of the four groups was analyzed to compare the writing performance of each group at the beginning and the end of the 17-week observation period.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions were used:

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1. Formal/Traditional Grammar: Grammar is a description of the syntax of a language, the set of prescriptions or rules for using language, and suiting syntax to such structures as the meaning, audience, genre, voice, and intended pace of a text (Weaver, 1996). The prescriptions include (a) the eight parts of speech: nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, interjections, and conjunctions, (b) the function each part plays in a sentence, and (c) sentence elements and structures, usage, sentence revision, and mechanics and punctuation.

2. Process Writing: Process Writing is a multi-step cycle through which students learn how to gather and organize ideas for writing, how to write a rough draft, and how to refine and polish that piece of writing" (Tompkins, 1990, p.15). Each student progresses through the steps of prewriting, rough drafting, revising, editing, and publishing at her/his own pace, revisiting steps as needed. Peer interaction to improve writing is encouraged, grammar skills are taught through student/teacher conferencing when the need arises within the writing piece, and writing is celebrated by sharing it with others. Graves (1994) describes the process as the process of voice, which is the driving force that underlies every part of the writing process.

3. Shurley Method: The Shurley Method is a sequential, repetitious, method of teaching grammar that uses a concrete set of questions about each word in given sentences to teach how all the parts of the sentence fit together. The philosophy of the method is that the student must learn sentence structure prior to writing (Shurley & Wetsell, 1989a).

4. Writing Workshop: For the purpose of this study, Writing Workshop is defined as "a predictable, uninterrupted time set aside in the school day, preferably at least an

hour" (Calkins, 1994, p. 188), for students to have time to (a) think, (b) write, (c) participate in mini-lessons, (d) confer with peers in paired and group discussions, (e) conference with the teacher, (f) share work with the class, and (g) write again and again.

5. Mini-Lesson: A mini-lesson is a brief whole-class or small group meeting conducted by the teacher to suggest, explain, or demonstrate a new method or technique that may be helpful to students. "The purpose is to teach into the students' intentions" (Calkins, 1994, p. 193).

6. Accelerated Reader: A pre-packaged reading program containing a book list categorized by grade level increments, such as 5.2 and so on. The accompanying computer program contains a 10 question quiz for each book. Students select books based on their determined grade level proficiency, then move through the program if mastery is shown on each quiz.

7. Narrative/Descriptive Writing: Narrative/Descriptive writing refers to a writing piece told in story form using the technique of describing or picturing in words.

8. Holistic Scoring: Holistic scoring refers to a guided procedure for assessing writing pieces. Scoring of the writing passage is based on its overall effectiveness, as a whole, rather than by considering its individual features such as word use, grammar, punctuation, style, and organization in isolation. A rubric which describes each writing characteristic serves as a scoring guide (Cooper & Odell, 1977).

Statement of the Hypotheses

Although positive newspaper articles and opinion letters to the Shurley Instructional Method Company existed, only one small ($n = 28$) research study

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(Williams, 1998) on the Shurley Method of Teaching English to fourth graders was found. Public opinion from Arkansas, Louisiana, Alabama, Texas, and Oklahoma parents and, from home-school parents, and from pockets of teachers from Canada, Africa, and Greece supporting the method and the acceptance of the Shurley Method on the State Textbook Lists in the mentioned states led the researcher to test the following hypotheses:

H1: There is significant difference between the writing sample means of the Process Writing group, the Process Writing/Textbook group, the Process Writing/Shurley Method group, and the Shurley Method group as measured by holistic scoring.

H2: There is significant difference between the writing attitude means of the Process Writing students, Process Writing/Textbook students, Process Writing/Shurley Method students, and Shurley Method students as measured by an writing attitude scale.

Organization of the Study

This study is composed of five chapters. Chapter I provides introductory information for the study. Chapter II reviews the related literature pertaining to types of grammar, learning and language acquisition, traditional grammar instruction practices, traditional writing instruction practices, and the effects of teaching traditional grammar on student writing. The chapter also reviews the related literature on alternative methods of teaching writing, Process Writing, and the Shurley Method. The methodology used, including the sampling procedure, participants, instructional setting, instrumentation,

research design and procedure, and analysis, is described in Chapter III. Chapter IV

presents the results of the study, and a discussion of the findings is provided in Chapter

V.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In order to understand how children learn grammar as well as how they learn to write, it is necessary to examine how learning takes place and how children acquire language. This chapter will discuss related literature pertaining to interpretations of the meaning and systems of grammar, the process of learning and how children acquire language, traditional grammar instruction practices, and traditional writing instruction practices. In addition, Chapter II will review studies in written language, the effects of teaching traditional grammar on student writing, and alternative methods of teaching writing such as Process Writing and the Shurley Method: English Made Easy.

The merit of traditional grammar instruction is one of the most massively investigated problems in teaching writing (Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, & Schoer, 1963; Weaver, 1996) and the most controversial area of language arts (Tompkins, 1998). Despite research conclusions, disagreement persists within the ranks of administrators, parents, state officials, and teachers. For more than a century, educators have debated the impact of the traditional approach, formally teaching grammar rules and practicing them in isolation, on writing.

In 1906, Hoyt (as cited in Rose, 1989) conducted the first empirical study to ascertain if traditional grammar instruction improved the quality of writing. Neither

Hoyt's results nor the majority of the results of similar studies (Amiran & Mann, 1982; Braddock et al., 1963; DeBoer, 1959; Elley, Barham, Lamb, and Wyllie, 1976; Harris, 1963; Hillocks, 1987; Hillocks & Smith, 1991; Holdzkom, Reed, Porter, & Rubin, 1983; Macauley, 1947; McQuade, 1980; Mellon, 1969; Neill, 1982; Rosen, 1987; Weaver, 1996) carried out over the next ninety years were encouraging. Many researchers documented the ineffectiveness of teaching grammar in isolation from students' actual writing, warning that learned grammar skills did not transfer to writing. Braddock et al. (1963) summarized:

> In view of the widespread agreement of research studies based upon many types
> of students and teachers, the conclusion can be stated in unqualified terms: the
> teaching of formal grammar has a negligible . . . even harmful effect on the
> improvement of writing. (p. 37)

Why, then, do many administrators, teachers, parents, and state officials continue to support formal grammar and still believe it improves student writing? One reason may simply be tradition. "Institutionalized traditions die hard" (Warner, 1993, p. 78). Weaver (1979) summed it up by saying, "The idea that grammar is good for a person has become a hallowed part of our cultural mythology" (p. 4).

With the mixed messages and widespread controversy on grammar instruction, teachers face much contradiction. Questions posed by educators over the past few decades have included: What purpose does grammar instruction serve when learning to write? How does grammar instruction, in and out of context, influence writing performance? What is the most effective method for teaching writing?

In search for answers to these questions and others, much has been learned about

writing and grammar. In 1982 T. R. Smith concluded, "Much is known about which practices in teaching the writing process are effective, [but] several of these findings are in conflict with widespread practices in the schools" (p. 3). In 1999, the situation remains much the same. Despite the flood of public interest in the need for writing improvement, the grammar wars continue. If any semblance of agreement can ever come about to bring peace to the subject of grammar instruction, educators, politicians, and parents must become familiar with current research findings.

Interpretations of Grammar

The term "grammar" is used in many ways and "is something of a chameleon, taking on different meaning in different contexts" (Weaver, 1979, p. ix).

Meaning of Grammar

In any given setting, a group of educators might offer a wide range of definitions for grammar to include the following: (a) parts of speech, (b) usage, (c) mechanics such as correct punctuation, (d) correct sentence structure such as subject-verb agreement, (e) syntactic structures such as phrases, clauses, types of sentences, or (f) sentence structure. Weaver (1996) categorized and explained a similar list of meanings of "grammar." A summarized version includes:

1. Grammar is synonymous with sentence structure and syntax, which refers to word order, function words, and grammatical endings.

2. Grammar is synonymous with usage. We refer to good grammar, meaning the use of socially prestigious grammar, and bad grammar, meaning the use of

grammatical forms that are not prestigious.

3. In a linguistic sense, grammar is a description of the syntax of the language.

4. In a psycholinguistic sense, grammar is a description of the processes by which sentences may be comprehended and produced.

5. In a schoolbook sense, grammar examines usage, description of sentence structure, and processes to comprehend and produce sentences.

In summary, grammar can be viewed as descriptive or prescriptive. When considering parts of speech and syntactic structures, grammar may be viewed as descriptive (Weaver, 1996). By analyzing words and sentence formations, descriptive grammar addresses the way people use language. Moreover, it provides an explanation of the way we are able to produce, structure, and understand sentences in our language (Chomsky, 1977). On the other hand, grammar may be viewed as prescriptive when the focus is on rules for using language (Weaver, 1996). Sentence structure, punctuation, mechanics, and usage all deal with correctness and appropriateness. While Chomsky (1957) called grammar a prescription for structuring language, Weaver (1996) described it as the "description of the syntax or structure of the language and the prescriptions for its use." In contrasting grammar and usage, Tompkins (1998) explained that grammar involves principles of word and sentence formation whereas usage is correctness, using appropriate words and phrases in a sentence. Fraser and Hodson (1978) summed up the distinction between grammar and usage by explaining, "Grammar is the rationale of a language; usage is its etiquette" (p. 52). Farris (1997) combined the idea of grammar and usage as simply "writing conventions" (p. 310), which are similar to spelling. Grammar does not enhance the meaning of writing, but rather helps the reader to better understand

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what the writer is saying.

Systems of Grammar

Besides many different definitions existing for grammar, three different grammatical systems have emerged over the years to classify or categorize how the English language works (Weaver, 1996). All three systems, traditional, structural, and transformational grammar, have influenced grammar instruction during the 20th century.

Traditional Grammar. Traditional grammar provides rules for socially correct usage. Dating back to medieval times, this perspective is rooted in the study of Latin. It focuses on labeling parts of speech and parts of sentences and prescribes rules for correct usage, mechanics, and sentence structure. Traditional grammar presents skills in isolation and uses predetermined phrases and sentences for repetitious practice in applying the skills. Both Noguchi (1991) and Weaver (1996) supported that traditional grammar most often represents grammar as a combination of descriptive and prescriptive grammar, although it is usually described as prescriptive in nature. Today, the type of grammar taught in many schools is traditional grammar (Noguchi, 1991; Tompkins & Hoskisson, 1995; Wolfram, 1995).

Structural Grammar. Unlike traditional grammar, structural grammar is descriptive. Structural grammar describes how language is actually used. The patterns of sentences unique to our English language fall within seven fundamental sentence patterns. The basic sentence consists of nouns, verbs, and complements, with the noun serving as the subject of the sentence and the verb serving as the predicate. Modifiers are

added and connectives join words, phrases, and clauses.

Transformational Grammar. The third and most recent explanation of grammar is Chomsky's (1968) transformational grammar. Like traditional grammar, transformational grammar has precise rules. Transformational grammar describes both how language works and which cognitive processes we use to produce that language. The two levels in transformational grammar are surface structure and deep structure, which explain how meaning in the brain (deep level) is transformed into the sentences we speak and write (surface level). The idea of transformational grammar has led many educators to find ways to operationalize it for classroom use. One drawback to the transformational approach is that it is difficult for elementary students to apply the rules.

Learning and Language Acquisition

Despite the lack of agreement on a definition of "grammar" or which grammar system is most beneficial, it is undeniable that grammar is embedded in language. Hence, examining how children initially learn and acquire language should serve as a guide to a sound approach in developing grammar competency in school and applying it to student writing.

Learning Acquisition

Two of the prevailing views found in education today (Smith, 1992) on how learning takes place are the behaviorist view, a traditional view of learning, and the developmentalist view, an alternative view. An examination of the two should be beneficial in determining effective approaches in helping children learn to write.

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Behaviorist View. For decades, the behaviorist theory of learning, a tradition view of learning where teachers pass on existing knowledge to passive learners who the knowledge in and regurgitate it back for evaluation, has directed education. Frei (1972) described the behaviorist view as the banking approach where the teacher ma deposit of knowledge in the students' brain and withdraws it at examination time. Tl banking approach forces learners into a passive role of receiving, memorizing, storir and transmitting a fixed body of information back to the teacher.

Similarly, Barnes (1976) referred to it as transmission teaching where the tea transmits existing knowledge to passive learners who receive the knowledge. In the transmission model, activities are teacher directed and involve isolated skill teaching the most part, prior knowledge is ignored. Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know by Hirsch (1987) supported the transmission concept in the name of giving learners a basis for equality of knowledge.

Smith's (1992) official view of learning, or school-based view, described learn as the memorization of pieces of information in isolated, artificial settings and with deliberate intention by the learner. Such approaches leave little room for learners to reconstruct new knowledge and eventually to "own" (Dillon et al., 1995, p. 192) their learning. Indeed, the ownership of the knowledge clearly remains with the teacher, wh "rents" (Dillon et al., p. 192) it to the learners.

Developmentalist View. In contrast to the behaviorist view, the developmenatli view of learning emerged as an alternative view. Developmentalists examine how children grow and learn on their own. Although developmentalists do not agree on ever point, they share a fundamental orientation, which includes an interest in inner growth

and spontaneous learning.

Piaget created a theory that radically changed conceptions of child development and learning (Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992) when he suggested the idea that there was a process of unfolding from inside each child. Strongly believing that the "environment nourishes, stimulates, and challenges the child, but children themselves build cognitive structures" (Crain, 1992, p. 123), Piaget theorized that learning was a direct result of children modifying cognitive structures as they interacted with and adapted to their environment. If learners made understandings through their own efforts in constructing knowledge, then the learner internalized learning, gaining ownership of it.

Piaget (1969) concluded that elementary age students were concrete thinkers and best learned through active involvement. The source of knowledge and intelligence was in action (DeVries & Kohlberg, 1987). Piaget described the element of interest as the "fuel of the constructive process" (DeVries & Kohlberg, 1987, p. 25). Therefore, he felt intriguing situations most encouraged learning. DeVries and Kohlberg explained:

> In general, 'intriguing situations' for young children do not include lectures,
> repetition in drills, programmed instruction, or audio-visual or teacher
> demonstrations. Piaget has criticized such approaches as not active enough. (p.
> 25)

Smith (1975) agreed that students learn by way of experience, the most basic and concrete means of learning. Described as the informal view of learning by Smith (1992) and spontaneous learning by Vygotsky (Bredekamp & Rosengrant, 1992), it is automatic, unconscious learning that occurs from responses to everyday life (Smith, 1978). In addition, Smith stressed the importance of language, an obvious ingredient for success for

a learner in a social situation, and pointed out the need for observation as well.

The constructivist view of learning is an extension of the developmentalist view. Although developmentalists agree that much information for hypothesizing comes from the feedback of others around them as learners negotiate knowledge within a social context, the constructivist theory believes that ultimately the learner should be responsible for what is learned. Constructivism is the process of the learner building knowledge about self, everyday experience, school, and society through reflecting and meaning making (Shor, 1992). According to the constructivist model, when presented with new information, an individual uses existing knowledge and prior experiences to help make sense of new material. Constructivist theories endorse the adage that the best way to learn something is by doing it. In constructivism, the opportunity for inquiry opens boundaries for learners rather than the learner displaying unquestioned acceptance of knowledge presented by another. Many years ago, Dewey viewed this type of learning as the "empowerment of the learner in a social situation" (Hirtle, 1996, p. 91). Later, others described "constructivism" in closely related ways (Devries & Kohlberg, 1987; Kamii, 1985; Shor, 1992).

Constructivist theories emphasize the importance of student independence, autonomy, and choice—referred to as ownership of one's own learning which assures internalized, or long-term learning (Dudley-Marling & Searle, 1995). Constructivism offers students (a) directed learning, (b) uses prior knowledge of students, (c) generates knowledge, (d) offers intrinsic motivation, (e) supports the belief that learners have a wealth of prior knowledge, (f) logically links pieces of knowledge, communication, and experiences, and (g) social interactions are encouraged. In constructivism, the teacher's

role changed to facilitator, guide, and coach.

Similar to constructivism, Vygotsky's beliefs supported that "learners are moved forward through stages of cognitive development through socially mediated situations" (1986, p. 34). However, Vygotsky (as cited by Crain, 1992) disagreed with Piaget on the extent to which development should be entrusted to the child. Unlike Piaget who was critical of the teacher-directed instruction that occurs in most schools, Vygotsky felt spontaneous development was important, but not all-important. In Vygotsky's view, children also benefited greatly from knowledge and conceptual tools handed down to them by their cultures. He valued instruction and believed it moved children's minds ahead to help them grasp material that they would not understand on their own. Vygotsky argued that instruction in abstract concepts provided children with broader frameworks in which to put the spontaneous concepts.

Interrelationship of Frameworks of Learning. Although different views of learning help educators conceptualize the nature of learning, Bredekamp and Rosegrant (1992) emphasized the interrelationship of learning types within real life experiences in this way:

> For instance, in becoming literate, children do not construct their own language
> system; even their most inventive writing reflects principles of the language of
> their culture. What they personally construct is their understanding of the
> relationships that constitute the reading or writing process. (p. 14)

Bredekamp and Rosegrant (1992) posited that arguments over child-initiated versus teacher-directed instruction reflected an artificial dichotomy between spontaneous, constructed learning and school-related learning. Since children construct important

learning through child-initiated, spontaneous activity and they also learn much from adults, Bredekamp and Rosegrant concluded that the nature of the learning should determine the teaching practice, and learning and teaching should be an interactive process.

<u>Language Acquisition</u>

Understanding the overall picture of how children learn leads to a better understanding of how they specifically acquire language. Since grammar is embedded in language, examining natural language acquisition should serve as a guide to a sound approach in acquiring grammar competency. Thus, a sound approach to writing instruction should follow. Over the years, a number of theories emerged to explain the process of language acquisition.

<u>Behaviorist View</u>. Skinner, a behaviorist and environmentalist, recognized that children enter the world with genetic endowments, but concentrated on how the environment controlled their behavior. Skinner's theory (1957) supported the idea of the blank slate, the idea of imitation where verbal behavior was influenced and learned from the environment. The theory also upheld the idea that people learned to interact with others in order to obtain social rewards. Skinner supported that learning represented a gradual process whereby an organism's response was shaped slowly by consequences. The Skinnerian view of early language acquisition is sometimes known as the "babbleluck theory" (Crain, 1992, p. 309). Babies babble until, by luck, they produce a sound that resembles a word, which is reinforced by the parent. Skinner (1957) recognized that such careful shaping of each utterance would be much too slow a process

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to account for a child's rapid language development. Consequently, Skinner supported

the idea that children generalize their learning to new situations when taught specific

linguistic behaviors, which leads to overregularizations by young children such as

"mans" for "men."

Imitation View. In the early 1960s, Bandura (as cited by Crain, 1992), a social

learning theorist, offered the idea that people often learned more rapidly by simply

observing the behavior of others in social situations; language came from the modeling of

language through imitation. With the belief that people acquire new behavior all at once

through observation with no trial learning came the idea that young children were passive

receptors of language, developing speech by imitating sounds and then words heard in

their environment. Along with the idea of learning language by imitation came the idea of

the "storage bin" theory of language learning (Brown & Herrnstein, 1975, p. 444). For

years many people believed in the "storage bin" theory where children imitated others,

acquired many sentences, stored the sentences in their heads, and reached in for the

appropriate sentence when the need arose.

Innatist View. We moved away from the simple explanation of "storage bin" oral

language development with studies by Chomsky (1957), a linguistic theorist, who

showed that the storage bin view was incorrect. Chomsky's ideas about innate language

acquisition came to be known as the Innatist Theory. His studies led us to view children

as actively engaged in creating and inventing their own language.

Chomsky demonstrated that language was based on a complex set of syntactic, or

grammatical, rules for relating the sounds of language and meaning. He believed that

normal use of language was not a habit or a skill, but a creative endeavor. According to Chomsky, we do not learn a set number of sentences, but rather routinely create new sentences, using learned words in many, many different orders. Obviously we cannot be producing the myriad of sentences that we do by habit (Chomsky, 1995).

Unlike Piaget's belief that children spontaneously created mental structures and developed concrete operations needed to have basic linguistic transformations, Chomsky (as cited in Crain, 1992) believed that language was structured by children themselves, from an inner design, and was wired into their genes. Chomsky maintained that to know a language was to have mastered a system of rules and principles, and children acquired this knowledge because of a rich biological endowment (Chomsky, 1995). In other words, children have an innate knowledge of universal grammar. Chomsky (1957) warned that since a child mastered language when she or he heard it and then learned it spontaneously, adults should not correct the child's speech, but provide a correct model of speech. Furthermore, he believed that social interaction would improve language and the thought processes that accompanied it.

Social Learning Views. Since oral language development appeared rule-governed, other researchers began to investigate how young children created or learned those rules. Unlike Chomsky's views on innate speech, several language learning theories focused solely on social interaction (Harste, 1990; Heath, 1983; Piaget, 1952; Vygotsky, 1978). Piaget (1969) maintained that children construct their own knowledge via repeated experiences involving interaction with materials and people. Likewise, Vygotsky (1978) supported the importance of interaction and social contact, believing that individuals learn by internalizing social relationships. Vygotsky theorized that external, social speech

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gradually internalizes to inner speech, becoming a resource the individual could use for problem solving and thinking.

Harste (1990) referred to language acquisition as a social event, summarizing that, based on his studies, early language is learned through use rather than through practice exercises about how to use language. The more frequently the child is exposed to language, the more successful the child produces that language. A young child learns to talk without formal instruction by immersion in a language-rich environment; children learn language interactively.

In turn, language provides an avenue for socialization. Children learn how language works by hearing language and participating in conversation (Newman, 1985). Therefore, a partner is necessary in order for the child to become proficient at listening and speaking.

Wells and his coworkers (1980) determined that the relatively smooth flow of conversation with a young child owes much to the adult's skill in tracking the child's utterances. Their research showed that parents' main concern was with making communication work instead of simply trying to "teach" their children to talk. In order to decide the child's intended meaning, the parent must interpret the situation and draw on knowledge of the child's interests, desires, needs, and linguistic abilities. Having made such an interpretation, the parent comments on what the child uttered and then expands and elaborates on the meaning that the parent assumes the child is expressing. Consequently, children enlarge their communication resources and understanding of the world from the parents' role, which is to "lead from behind." Feedback plays a large role in language development. Through feedback children learn which utterances work and

which ones do not. By participating in conversation, children select, from parent demonstration of adult language, the elements which help them say what they want to communicate. Chomsky (1995) elaborated on this fact when he stated:

> If a child is placed in an impoverished environment, innate abilities will not develop, mature, and flourish. . . . Language development, like all human development, will be heavily determined by the nature of the environment, and may be severely limited unless the environment is appropriate. A stimulating environment is required to enable natural curiosity, intelligence, and creativity to develop, and to enable our biological capacities to unfold. (p. 331-332)

Language develops from the gross to the specific and from the concrete to the abstract. Within three or four years, the child acquires a sizable vocabulary and knowledge of grammar through socialization. By age three, children speak from 900 to 1200 words and by five years old a child's vocabulary more than doubles to about 2500 words. By age five many children are free from infantile speech and have replaced it with environmental speech and environmental grammar (L. Ivey, personal communication, November, 1997). As children learn to speak, they learn English grammar intuitively. Much of the learning process of grammar intricacies is completed by the time they enter kindergarten (Crain, 1992). However, most young children have not become consciously aware of grammatical rules. Instead, they have gained a working knowledge of grammar rules on an intuitive level. When children enter school, they bring with them a functional command of grammar and needed grammatical constructions. "Children 'know' grammar, even though they don't 'know about' grammar" (Weaver, 1996). Such an appreciation of a young child's linguistic sophistication is relatively recent.

Language development is fundamental to learning, and it requires social interaction. Educators must not underestimate the importance of social relationships to cognitive development (Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992). According to Vygotsky (1978), the development of higher order mental functions begins in social interaction before it is internalized. Many times, we find ourselves in situations where we have to discuss something with others in order to process it and really understand it. At other times, we find ourselves explaining a concept to someone else before we feel we have internalized it. This type of learning through social interactions is important throughout our lives, but crucial for children (Bredekamp & Rosegrant).

Traditional School View. Several contradictions exist between what research indicates about children's natural oral language development through interaction with others as they construct their own knowledge with practice and the way children often experience language development in a school setting (Newman, 1985), which is based on a more behavioristic approach. Oftentimes language is experienced differently once a child enters school (Newman). Children are no longer treated as partners in conversation once they arrive in many classrooms. Rather than talking and learning developing out of common, practical everyday activities, much of the talk in school environments centers on relatively abstract contexts of which many children have little, if any, prior knowledge. Rose (1989) upheld that the traditional language curriculum was especially troublesome for the "underprepared" (front book flap) children of our nation who were not exposed to situations in their homes to examine language in this dissected, unnatural way. They are the children who speak English as a second language, the children of mobile families who fall out of lockstep curriculum, and the children who simply do not

see the sense in such analysis. Consequently, many students discover that their language learning strategies developed at home are not effective for them in the classroom environment.

Furthermore, many teachers initiate questions and then repeat the children's answers (Dillon, 1988). The discussion moves from teacher to child to teacher rather than from child to teacher to child. The teacher waits at strategic points for the students to offer a particular word or phrase instead of giving opportunity for discussion of concepts. The exchanges amount to guess what the teacher is thinking. The search for one word or brief expected answers, along with lack of permission to engage in discussion among students, limits rather than expands student language learning (Johnson, 1995).

Rather than learning with workbooks and charts, children learn to talk in the short period of three or four years using a natural, immersion approach, speaking first in one-syllable words and then in two-syllable words. Therefore, Tompkins and Hoskisson (1991) questioned, "Why should teachers use an entirely different method to help children learn to read and write only a year or two later?" (p. 18). How children learn to talk before they enter school should have important implications for how children learn communication skills, reading, writing, and grammar in school. However, traditionally that has not been the case.

Traditional Grammar Instruction Practices

Throughout history traditional school grammar instruction had two primary aims (Weaver, 1996). The memorizing of grammar rules disciplined and trained the mind as well as taught acceptable forms and word usage considered correct and socially

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prestigious. Although grammar was taught to enable lower classes of people to better themselves for the purpose of moving more easily into a higher class, it was suspected that it actually gave the middle and upper classes an excuse for regarding themselves as superior (Noguchi, 1991).

Grammar instruction for schoolboys dated back to Greece in the second century BC with the first grammar text, published by Dionysios of Thrace late in the century, becoming the standard until the twelfth century AD. During the Middle Ages, when the idea of grammar training the mind reached its peak, grammar was considered the foundation of all knowledge (Weaver, 1996). Until the eighteenth century, grammar was synonymous with Latin grammar, which was thought to be the most logical language. Latin was a means to social advancement.

With the Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth century creating a new middle class, traditional school English grammar books became more important and more numerous. Mastering the rules set out in these books, based on Latin grammar, aided the new rich in gaining social acceptance.

English grammar has been one of the core subjects taught in United States schools since the late 1800s. The Massachusetts legislature passed a law in 1789 requiring schools to instruct in "orthography [spelling], reading, writing, grammar, English language, arithmetic, and decent behavior" (Woods, 1986, p. 5). As early as 1795 school children memorized and recited parts of speech and laws of sentence construction using best-selling books like Lindlay Murray's <u>English Grammar</u> as they "parsed" sentences to learn detailed descriptions of grammar.

During the post-Revolutionary War period, formal English grammar grew even

more popular as a means of Americanizing the immigrant population to create a compatible work force. Sentence diagramming replaced parsing in the late nineteenth century. Both methods, parsing and diagramming, were based on the premise that knowledge of grammar rules led to improved language performance (Funk & Funk, 1989; Tchudi, 1991). During the latter half of the nineteenth century, grammar textbooks introduced exercises to promote active learning. Students answered questions in writing, wrote sentences to illustrate grammatical conventions, and sometimes rearranged or combined sentences. By the end of the century, grammar was considered a means of writing improvement. Even so, grammar continued to be known as a mental discipline and social refinement within the new context of writing improvement (Woods, 1986).

As long ago as 1936 the Curriculum Commission of the National Council of Teachers of English recommended that "all teaching of grammar separate from the manipulation of sentences be discontinued . . . since every scientific attempt to prove that knowledge of grammar is useful has failed" (Encyclopedia of Educational Research, 1950, p. 392). In 1950 the Encyclopedia of Educational Research (p. 392-396) summarized available research and concluded that there was little or no relationship between grammar and composition or between grammar and literary interpretation based on results from tests in grammar, composition, and literary interpretation. Furthermore, the retention of grammatical knowledge was found not to last (Encyclopedia of Education Research, 1960).

Over the years, a considerable body of research findings (Amiran & Mann, 1982; Braddock et al., 1963; Elley et al., 1976; DeBoer, 1959; Harris, 1963; Hillocks, 1987; Hillocks & Smith, 1991; Holdzkom et al., 1983; Macauley, 1947; McQuade, 1980;

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Mellon, 1969; Neill, 1982; Rosen, 1987; Weaver, 1996) suggested that grammar instruction consisting of contrived sentences and fill in the blank usage activities did not help people to write or read better. A closely related body of research told us that our students could neither write nor read as effectively as they should (Applebee, 1994; Cotton, 1989; Holdzkom et al., 1983; Warner, 1993).

Other educators agreed that though the traditional approach to teaching grammar appeared to be ineffective, the approach should not be ruled out (Vavra, 1993). They remained convinced that formal grammar instruction did help or should help if only taught correctly. Rather than attacking the place of grammar in the curriculum, they attack the instructional methods. Warner (1993) noted:

> Because grammar study is seldom addressed in teacher training or in literature, it appears many English educators teach grammar the only way they know—the way they were taught. (p. 78)

In response to Warner's (1993) frustration over the widely used traditional approach to grammar, Vavra (1993) pointed out that the current philosophy that traditional grammar should not be taught has not erased the teaching of grammar. Instead, it has almost silenced professional debate about alternative approaches and methods to teach it more effectively. "What we need, is not less professional discussion of grammar, but more, much more" (Vavra, 1993, p. 82). Rather than attack the place of formal grammar in the curriculum, these educators attack the instructional methods.

Rief (1992) reported that over the years she frequently asked teachers and administrators to list the things they wanted students to be able to do as writers, readers, speakers, and listeners by the time the students left their classroom. In spite of support for

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teaching formal grammar, no educator ever answered with "identify a particular part of speech, find it, or diagram a sentence."

Nevertheless, grammar teaching is expected in our society; the public views it as part of the basics and believes students who are not learning parts of speech and diagramming sentences are not mastering English. Many in our society desire to preserve intellectual and cultural heritage while others uphold the common conviction about grammar that "if it was good enough for us, then it is good enough for our kids." Various reasons for the teaching of grammar have been offered. Weaver (1979) summarized them in this way:

1. The study of grammar is important simply because language is a supreme (and perhaps unique) human achievement which deserves to be studied as such.

2. The study of grammar can be an important vehicle for learning to study something as the scientist does.

3. The study of grammar will help people think more clearly, since grammar is a reflection of thought.

4. The study of grammar will help people master a foreign language more readily.

5. The study of grammar will help people master the socially prestigious conventions of spoken and/or written usage.

6. The study of grammar will help people become better users of the language, making them more effective listeners, speakers, readers, and writers. (p. 3)

Weaver (1979) concluded that many of the reasons given for studying grammar are based

on the idea that "grammar is useful in attaining some other goal" (p. 3). Moreover, others accept the decision for mandating grammar instruction unquestioned while others reluctantly teach grammar and do so only because it is mandated by the administration. Some attempt creativity in teaching it while others avoid it when possible.

Just how many educators continue to teach traditional grammar? Warner (1993) constructed an informal questionnaire covering when, why, and how often traditional grammar was taught and how grammar instruction affects instruction in writing. Nearly 100 West Virginia secondary-school educators responded. Fifty-nine percent identified their school setting as rural, 26% as urban, and 15% as suburban. Sixty-six percent reported the English curriculum as traditional. Warner found that 60% of the teachers reported teaching grammar as a separate subject, devoting more than 30% of the total instructional time to it. The teachers also reported that two out of three of their students did not retain knowledge of grammar and much of the grammar teaching was a reteaching of concepts from previous years.

Today, over 200 years after the inception of grammar as one of the core subjects taught in United States schools, grammar instruction still reflects the 2nd century Greek emphasis on imposing order on language. First graders learn that a sentence must be about someone or something and that it must have action. Sixth graders do the same thing; they identify the subject and the predicate of a sentence. The same activity occurs in all of the grades in between. Warner (1993) asked the reader to "imagine a math or science curriculum where the same material is presented and drilled year after year as is the case in grammar textbooks" (p. 77). Most children are not cognitively ready to approach such an abstract task although they are continually requested to do so.

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Traditional practices for writing instruction were behavioristic in nature. Formal practice placed an emphasis on the act of the written letters and rules. At the turn of the century textbooks contained many exercises in forming letters, and the spelling bee was a popular exercise in school and community life (Graves, 1994). Since few people went to college, a well-educated person was judged by neat, well-formed handwriting, correct spelling, and proper grammar.

As early as 1870 progressive educators like Frances Parker, John Dewey, Hughes Mearns, Rudolf Steiner, and Laura Zirbes argued that the traditional approach to language arts had placed too great an emphasis on studying rules and laws (Tchudi, 1991). These men and women contended that "English instruction ignored the needs, interests, and developing skills of the child, and that it ignored the organic unity of language, which flows naturally from reading to writing to listening to speaking" (p. 6). These educators called for a developmentalist view of learning grammar and writing.

In 1935, Hatfield (as cited in Tchudi, 1991) wrote the most influential curriculum document of the progressive movement, An Experience Curriculum in English, which threatened traditional curriculum that was based on formal grammar instruction. Hatfield emphasized learning by doing. Additionally in 1935, A Correlated Curriculum, written by the National Council of Teachers of English, discussed how language could be linked to other school disciplines (Tchudi, 1991). Tchudi reported that this volume was the forerunner of today's language-across-the-curriculum movement. The progressive movement met with little success in displacing the traditional approach of teaching formal grammar skills in isolation from the curriculum. Once World War II began the

attention and energies of educators shifted to matters of war and away from the
progressive movement.

In the 1950's, composition was created as students were instructed on rules of
effective writing and assigned practice on set theme topics. "These student compositions
were used by the teacher to discover errors. . . . The infamous 'red pencil' came into
common use during this period as a tool for highlighting students' grammatical and
rhetorical failings" (Tchudi, 1991, p. 5). This approach to a writing curriculum placed
importance on grammatical correctness, not the communication of meaning (Rose, 1989).
"By its tedium, the curriculum teaches them that writing is a crushing bore" (p. 211).

Tchudi (1991) reported that in the 1960s as language arts experienced a time of
reassessment of curriculums and teaching methods, the Project English movement was
born. Project English centers, sponsored by the federal government, were created to
design new programs. A thorough examination of the history of the English curriculum
produced evidence confirming that the traditional approach to grammar instruction was
ineffective. Dozens of studies attempted to connect grammar instruction with improved
writing, but little proof of improvement was found. Likewise, studies found that the
teaching of paragraph structures, expository themes, and research papers did not yield
good writers.

Traditional writing instruction remains in many classrooms. The instruction takes
place in a teacher-controlled setting in which the teacher assigns the writing, the student
writes a response, and little if any opportunity for revision is provided. In traditional
writing instruction, writing is grammatical, mechanical, and synonymous with evaluation;
it is not seen as a vehicle for communication. The purpose of the writing usually is to

display academic mastery, and the teacher writes evaluations directly on the piece. In addition, people continue to scrutinize others by surface features when they first encounter someone's oral and written speech. Educators feel public pressure from concerns about handwriting, spelling, and grammar. Parents fear that their children will be deemed socially unacceptable by the educated class. "Yet rarely do parents complain about the inability of their children to formulate and express ideas in a clear and logical fashion" (Graves, 1994, p. 32).

Studies in Written Language

In the mid-1970s the first studies dealing with the use of written language by children appeared. The results of Clay's studies (1975) indicated that children's early writing began before any formal reading and writing instruction. This fact helped some educators accept non-conventional spelling approximations as important for writing development. Case studies by Bissex (1980) and King (1982) revealed the functionality of children's early literacy efforts as well as the communicative nature of the efforts. The importance of experimentation was highlighted in both studies.

As a result of investigations of the reading and writing of three-, four-, five-, and six-year-olds, Harste, Burke, and Woodward (1981, 1983) defined literacy development, not in terms of stages, but in terms of four specific language strategies—text intent, negotiability, risk-taking, and fine-tuning language with language. Even the youngest children in the study used these four strategies as they read and wrote. First, Harste et al. discovered that all of the children studied expected written language to make sense. The children also demonstrated cognitive flexibility and ingenuity by commenting on words

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or numbers found within words such as the number 11 in the two "l"s in the word vanilla. Third, the children were willing to take some risks as they grew more comfortable with writing. Written mistakes often arose when children took a risk to write lengthier texts in order to communicate more information. Lastly, the researchers observed that the children learned from language encounters that became a resource for subsequent language situations.

Ferreiro (1981), a collaborator of Piaget's, researched Mexican preschool children of illiterate parents. Results pointed to the universality of young children developing awareness of print. In the study, young children interacted with print in the same rule-governed ways as children from more advantaged environments.

In a later study, Ferreiro and Teberosky (1985) reported children's written language learning coincided with Piaget's stages of learning. In a year long study of 108 Argentinean children from four to six years old, the participants were asked to write their own names, write the name of a friend or family member, write certain words that traditionally are used to begin school learning, write words that they normally would not be taught, and write a particular sentence. Four developmental levels of writing surfaced from the writing samples. At the beginning level, the children produced written strings of wavy lines, squiggles, that looked very much alike or they produced separate graphic characters consisting of curved and/or straight lines. These attempts at writing were assumed to represent the two basic forms of writing, cursive or print. At this level, writing was not viewed as a way of communicating. Instead, children believed that one could understand one's own writing but not the writing of others. A four year old explained, "People know what they write and I knew what I was writing" (Ferreiro &

Teberosky, 1982, p. 180). At the second level, the children's writing indicated that in order to write different words, the words must be written differently. Therefore, a limited number of graphic forms were used in various sequences to represent different words. The third level, called the syllabic hypothesis level (Kamii, 1985), was characterized by each letter representing one syllable. Kamii referred to this level as a major achievement since it represented the first attempt for a child to make connections between the parts of a written word and the sounds uttered. The fourth level, called the alphabetic hypothesis level (Kamii), marked the passage from one symbol for each syllable to children beginning to write syllables with several letters. Many times the writing was logical representations of the actual sounds found in the words. Kamii pointed out that the fifth level, the conventional alphabetic writing, came next in the progression of levels. Children benefit most from phonics when they reach this level. In traditional schooling, teachers begin teaching reading, writing, and phonics on the assumption that children are at this last level (DeVries & Kohlberg, 1987).

Ferreiro and Teberosky (1985) witnessed children forming their own hypotheses about writing. Although the hypotheses were incorrect, the children were constructing their own knowledge about writing, level by level, as they progressed in understanding writing. The findings supported Piaget's view that children's "incorrect" ideas about the world are valuable experiences in that they constantly realign their thinking with added information. DeVries and Kohlberg (1987) concluded that no matter what the content domain, young children think differently from older children and adults. This difference in thought must come directly from the child in his or her effort to make sense out of an experience and, therefore, the child constructs knowledge. Constructive errors are a

natural product of experimentation and necessary for mental development (Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992). The incorrect ideas indicate the developing attempts of children to understand relationships and form concepts based on their present experiences. In forming their own hypotheses and continuing to try them out during mental actions and physical manipulations, children observe results, compare findings, ask questions, discover answers, and make adjustments. Such valuing of erroneous ideas was revolutionary because it directly opposed the approach to teaching correct facts through teacher/social transmission (DeVries & Kohlberg, 1987).

Based on their research and their Piagetian backgrounds, Ferreiro and Teberosky (1985) concluded, "Progress in writing coincided with progress in operational stage" (p. 248). They went on to say that a regular progression through the sequence of Piaget's levels existed, with or without the intervention of schooling. In summary of Ferreiro and Teberosky's (1985) studies, Kamii (1985) reflected, "These levels illustrate what to me is the most important point of Piaget's theory, namely constructivisim" (p. 5).

Kamii (1985) explained that constructivist and maturationist is not one in the same. Maturation, such as becoming able to sit up, is a biological process whereas the construction of knowledge is mental activity. Children are learners who actively try to understand the world and formulate answers to the questions that the world poses. Rather than wait for someone to transmit knowledge, they learn through their own actions and mistakes and construct their own thoughts while trying to make sense of their world. These thinking children play an active role in learning written language.

Ferreiro and Teberosky (1985) pointed out the absurdity of believing that preschool children who constantly wonder, ask difficult questions, and construct all sorts

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of theories, grow up with print surrounding them without developing ideas from this print until they sit before a teacher in school. Therefore, Ferreiro and Teberosky supported the idea of putting the child at the center of the learning process with activities that promote and stimulate the constructive process rather than assigning the central focus on what supposedly directs the learning, the method or the person who carries out the method.

Since children learn to talk because of interactions with others, it makes sense that they learn to read and write through interactions with literate people as well. Language, learning language, and writing language are social activities, not solitary activities, which occur best in situations that encourage a sharing of knowledge and ideas through discussion (Newman, 1985). Goodman (as cited by Wilde, 1997) explained that language learning takes place through an interaction between invention and convention. Invention requires risk taking and is necessary to learning. However, if language were only invention, we would each speak our own language. We switch to convention as we hear others use words in a conventional way. As children focus on convention, error is inherent in the process. In language acquisition, the language learner often makes errors as more sophisticated conversation is attempted. Actually, the errors are a sign of progress rather than of regression because they indicate that the child has become aware of important rules in the English language.

The same is true in writing. For example, a beginning writer, who previously writes one or two correct sentences, may write more sentences all of a sudden, but grammar errors begin to occur. Likewise, as children attempt to write more complex sentences, they may get lost in the structure of their sentence and the sentence may not completely make sense or perhaps punctuation suddenly seems unimportant to them.

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Although children develop a strong control of oral language by the time they enter school (Wilde, 1997), research showed that the syntactic maturity of their written sentences typically did not catch up with the syntactic maturity of their spoken sentences until somewhere between the fifth and the eighth grade (Loban, 1976; O'Donnell, Griffin, & Norris, 1967).

Based on Piaget's theory that individuals experience sequential levels of cognitive development, studies indicated that approximately half of the adolescent and adult population reached the highest levels of formal operational thinking. This may be the level of abstraction necessary to grasp the fundamentals of traditional grammar (Reimer, Paolito, & Hersh, 1983). Hudson (1987) found that only 14% of the middle-school students tested were at the formal operations stage of development, and failure rates on grammar tests were much higher for these students. Based on these facts, Warner (1993) concluded that the reason many students do not retain grammar instruction is that developmentally they cannot. Nevertheless, the less capable students are exposed to the most grammar instruction year after year. "There is something profoundly wrong if the same thing has to be taught every single year in the first six grades" (Kamii, 1985, p. 8).

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The Effects of Teaching Traditional Grammar

on Student Writing

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Understanding how children learn and particularly how they learn language should determine how educators teach writing. Rose (1989) stated:

Writing and reading are such private acts that we forget how fundamentally social they are . . . . The curriculum I saw drained the life out of all this, reduced literacy

to the dry dismembering of language—not alive, not communicative at all. The children's textbooks were . . . grammars that analyzed language down to its smallest parts and invented a meticulous, even finicky, classification system to containing them. . . . It was an exercise that was 'all analysis and no synthesis.' (p. 110)

Many English teachers can confirm a negative correlation between studying grammar and motivation (Warner, 1993). Student aversion to grammar spreads to a dislike of literature and writing as students begin to assume incompetence to language study in general. Weaver (1996) suggested that, "indeed, formal instruction in grammar may have a harmful effect, partly because it tends to alienate students . . . ." (p. 89). Over the past 50 years, many researchers (Amiran & Mann, 1982; Elley et al., 1976; Harris, 1963; Hillocks & Smith, 1991; Holdzkom et al., 1983; Macauley, 1947; McQuade, 1980; Rosen, 1987; Weaver, 1996) have examined the question of whether or not the teaching of traditional grammar improved writing.

Lack of Grammar Transference to Writing

The 1947 Macauley study in Scotland strongly suggested that despite many years of grammar study, students achieved little ability to identify the function that the basic parts of speech serve in sentences. Macauley first examined 12 year old students. Although Macauley felt the student could score 11% correctly simply by guessing, he used a 50% correct score as a standard of success. The mean score for the 131 students was 27.9%, with only one student scoring 50% or better on all five parts of speech. In Macauley's second examination of twelve year old subjects entering a junior secondary

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school, the scores were lower, 26.3%. Next Macauley administered the tests to students who had spent two years in the junior secondary school and had continued to receive grammar instruction. The mean score for the 397 students was 35.4% and only 4 students scored at least 50% on all five parts of speech. Finally, Macauley administered the test to students in a senior secondary school for the academically elite who had received continued intensive grammar teaching. No class scored above 40% the first year. By the third year, after more than half of the students had dropped out, only 41.5% of the remaining students scored 50% or higher. Macauley concluded that intensive and extensive grammar teaching might not be warranted.

In a meta-analysis of research, DeBoer (1959) showed agreement with Macauley's conclusion as he stated the following:

> The impressive fact is . . . that in all these studies, carried out in places and at times far removed from each other, often by highly experienced and disinterested investigators, the results have been consistently negative so far as the value of grammar in the improvement of language expression is concerned. Surely there is no justification in the available evidence for the great expenditure of time and effort still being devoted to formal grammar in American schools. (p. 417)

Similarly, the conclusion of Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer's (1963) meta-analysis of research on the teaching of grammar ended with this widely quoted statement:

> In view of the widespread agreement of research studies based upon many types of students and teachers, the conclusion can be stated in strong and unqualified terms: the teaching of formal grammar has a negligible or, because it usually displaces some instruction and practice in actual composition, even a harmful

effect on the improvement of writing. (pp. 37-38)

Some of the first researchers to examine the effect that studying transformational grammar had upon students' writing were Bateman and Zidonis (1966). In this study the experimental group studied transformational grammar during ninth and tenth grades, and the control group studied no grammar during the same grades. Unlike Macauley's study, Bateman and Zidonis reported that the experimental group wrote with fewer errors than the control group and used sentence structures characteristic of older writers. However, the difference was mainly due to four student scores, which represented about a fifth of the experimental group, and the difference was not statistically significant.

McQuade (1980) investigated the effect that an Editorial Skills class had on 11th and 12th grade students and determined the following:

1. Students showed the same amount of gain on their Cooperative English Test whether they had taken the Editorial Skills class or not.

2. The Editorial Skills class made no difference in preparation for the CEEB Achievement Test: students who had not taken the course showed the same difference between the SAT and the later Achievement Test as students who had taken the course.

3. The class average on the pre-test was higher than the average on the post-test.

Noyce and Christie (1983) conducted a study to compare a curriculum that focused exclusively on writing with a curriculum they designed to introduce students to complex syntactic structures by integrating listening, speaking, writing, and reading activities. Sixty-three subjects in three third-grade classrooms in a middle-class urban community were assigned randomly to one of three treatments: an Integrated Sentence-

Modeling Curriculum, a writing sentence-modeling curriculum, and a control group that received the language arts curriculum. Since Hunt (as cited by Noyce & Christie, 1983) evidenced that intermediate-grade students rarely use complex syntactic structures of subordinate clauses, the ISMC class studied subordinate clauses beginning with "who," "as," "if," "before," "when," and "that" through listening, speaking, writing, and reading activities for 12 weeks. Subjects in the writing sentence-modeling class were taught the same six subordinate structures during activities that stressed writing. Students in the control group were taught traditional grammar instruction with parts of speech. Pre- and posttest writing samples were collected. The ISMC subjects' adjusted posttest scores were significantly ($p < .05$) higher than the scores of the other two groups with the scores of the writing and control group not showing significant difference. However, the subjects' target structure scores did not reveal a significant group effect although the results approached significance.

Hillocks (1986) and Hillocks and Smith (1991) presented a thorough review of research on the teaching of grammar since the early 1960s. The relevant research included studies comparing the effects of teaching structural or transformational grammar with the effects of teaching traditional grammar as well as studies comparing the effects of teaching traditional, structural, or transformational grammar with the effect of teaching no grammar. Hillocks concluded the summary by stating:

> None of the studies reviewed for the present report provides any support for
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> teaching grammar as a means of improving composition skills. If schools insist
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> upon teaching the identification of parts of speech, the parsing or diagramming of
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> sentences, or other concepts of traditional grammar (as many still do), they cannot

defend it as a means of improving the quality of writing. (p. 138)

Several investigations (Folsom, 1983; O'Rourke, 1983) of undergraduate students and recent graduates indicated teacher preparation courses should include more in the area of "how to teach grammar." O'Rourke reported 15 out of 17 graduates reported that after one semester of teaching, the one preparation they wished the university would have offered in their undergraduate work was a course in how to teach grammar. Similarly, Folsom (1983) surveyed teachers and prospective teachers and found, by far, the teaching of grammar was the top-ranked item needing most strengthening at the undergraduate level. It is quite logical to assume that most, if not all, of these students were products of traditional grammar instruction rather than process writing (Folsom). In addition, it leads one to believe that the lack of confidence in teaching grammar rests in the fact that these students did not master grammar instruction earlier in life. In Killian's (1983) survey of cooperating teachers concerning the quality of preparation in grammar, literature, and composition, grammar received the lowest rating, which was comparable to a "less than adequate" (p. 139). Many teachers explained it by saying, "You can't teach what you don't know" (p. 139).

In summary, these studies "indicate there is little pragmatic justification for systematically teaching a descriptive or explanatory grammar of the language, whether that grammar be traditional, structural, transformational, or any other kind" (Weaver, 1996, p. 23). Based on widespread research findings over the years, the National Council of Teachers of English passed a resolution at the 1985 Annual Business Meeting stating:

On Grammar Exercises to Teach Speaking and Writing RESOLVED, that the

National Council of Teachers of English affirm the position that the use of

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isolated grammar and usage exercises not supported by theory research is a

deterrent to the improvement of students' speaking and writing and that, in order

to improve both of these, class time at all levels must be devoted to opportunities

for meaningful listening, speaking, reading, and writing; and that NCTE urge the

discontinuance of testing practices that encourage the teaching of grammar rather

than English language arts instruction. (p. 103)

Dissenting Voices

In contrast to the large body of evidence that training in formal grammar does not

transfer significantly to writing, a few dissenting voices emerged. Christensen (1978)

maintained the following:

What we must be concerned with is improving their control of the language and

syntactic resources of the language, with expanding their range and enhancing

their power. Whatever experiments may have tested this and found no correlation

still have not disproved the utility of grammar but the futility of a particular

application of it. (p. 163)

Similar to Christensen's belief, DeBeaugrande (1984) pointed out that since

numerous definitions of grammar exist, the research studies, although they suggest that

the traditional approach to grammar does not help, cannot predict that effect on other

approaches to grammar. DeBeaugrande concluded, "Thus, the respondent brings forward

no evidence at all that we cannot teach or use 'grammar' in the broad sense for improving

writing" (p. 344).

Vavra (1986) pointed out that research findings indicating that grammar should

not be taught had not erased the teaching of grammar; rather it had almost silenced professional debate about alternative, better approaches and methods to teach it more effectively. Although Vavra (1993) agreed that the current, traditional approach to teaching traditional grammar was ineffective, he offered, "What we need, is not less professional discussion of grammar, but more, much more" (p. 82). Vavra (1986) charged the National Council of Teachers of English with appearing biased against the teaching of grammar by not publishing articles or books on new approaches to teaching grammar. Charging that most educators misinterpreted the research findings on the effects of grammar instruction, Vavra concluded that research simply did not support the conclusions drawn from it. Nevertheless, Vavra did not support his statement or offer any research of his own. Believing that grammar has been "wounded by the research and by the generally negative attitude of NCTE periodicals" (p. 1), Vavra offered that grammar instruction probably does more harm now because it is taught with less enthusiasm. Teachers have begun to doubt grammar instruction resulting in "dull drill and senseless memorization" (p. 1).

Vavra (1993) suggested a psycholinguistic model to teaching grammar, which is a study of how the brain processes language. Within that study, the developmental appropriateness of sentence patterns required at different grade levels was highlighted. According to Vavra, many grammatical constructions are introduced too early and "are truly harmful because they violate the natural order of syntactic development" (p. 84).

In an attempt to show that NCTE was closed to any serious discussion of the teaching of grammar, Vavra (1986) surveyed NCTE journals and books from 1982-1985. According to Vavra, only two articles in the three-year period concerned a method of

grammar instruction. Moreover, both articles were limited in scope. One article was concerned with avoiding errors such as fragments, comma-splices, and run-ons by identifying subordinate clauses (DeBeaugrande, 1984) and the other with a five column chart to help college students analyze the style of sentences (Herrington, 1984). On the contrary, Vavra (1986) noted that thousands of articles that concentrated on attacking grammar instruction were published in that same three-year period.

When asked the question, "Does grammar study have any effect?" Krashen (1992) answered that the research indicated grammar learning does have an effect, but the effect was marginal and weak. Krashen argued that conscious knowledge of grammar only serves as a means to monitor or edit language and optimally is used only when application of the conscious rules avoids interference with personal communication. Pienemann (as cited by Krashen) claimed that when timed exactly with the acquirer's level of development, direct instruction has positive effects. However, Pienemann based much of the case on one student as one rule was taught and little data was offered.

Although the majority of research (DeBoer, 1959; Hillocks, 1986; Hillocks & Smith, 1991; Macauley, 1947; McQuade, 1980) that addressed the transfer of isolated grammar skills to writing stated that there was no justification in spending great amounts of time and effort on formal grammar, a few theorists questioned the design and results of some of the studies. DeBoer (1959), for example, reported that "a close examination of some of the reports of investigations of the effectiveness of grammar instruction might reveal flaws in research design or conclusions not fully warranted by the evidence" (p. 417). Likewise, Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer's (1963) meta-analysis indicated awareness of design and implementation weaknesses of some of the research studies.

However, they concluded, "The teaching of formal grammar has a negligible or . . . even harmful effect on the improvement of writing" (p. 38).

In a critique of many of the research summaries that addressed the transfer of isolated grammar skills to writing, Kolln (1981) expressed opposition with the conclusion of the widely quoted Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer study (1963) concerning the fact that the teaching of formal grammar had a reported negligible or even harmful effect on writing improvement. Despite the fact that the Braddock team's report had indicated certain weaknesses in some of the studies, Kolln noted weakness in the design and implementation of some of the studies summarized by the Braddock team. Although basically Kolln (1981) echoed what had already been reported, one wonders why these hints of flawed research studies did not inspire more skepticism about their conclusions" (Weaver, 1996, p. 15).

Vavra (1986) agreed with Kolln's criticisms of the Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer meta-analysis. In addition, Vavra (1997) pointed out that the 1965 Hunt study effectively invalidated the conclusion of the Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, Schoer (1965) report. Hunt demonstrated that before his work there was no valid unit of measurement of growth in surface structure. Hunt devised the T-unit, a minimal terminable unit, which is the smallest unit into which a piece of writing can be divided without leftover fragments of sentences. The unit consists of one independent clause, plus the dependent clause(s) or phrase(s), if any, that are attached to or embedded within the independent clause. "Hunt's T-unit has been almost universally accepted as the first valid measure of syntactic growth" (Vavra, p. 18).

In addition, Vavra criticized the limited length of time of most documented

studies. Rather than refer to studies that covered a span of one or two years to convince educators that grammar has no effect, Vavra suggested lengthier studies where students are followed for many years in school. Based on Hunt's idea that syntactic development is an extremely slow process, Vavra suggested a study with the experimental group receiving no formal grammar instruction during first through ninth grade. However, in the past 10 years since Vavra's suggestion, there is no record that he or anyone else has attempted such a study.

Besides pointing out problems in the Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer (1963) research summaries, Kolln (1981) also noted that some of the conclusions in Meckel's research summaries (1963) of the same studies during the same year contrasted with those of Braddock and colleagues in some important areas. Like many, Meckel reported that there was no research evidence that grammar, as traditionally taught in the schools, has any appreciable effect on the improvement of writing skill. However, Kolln reminded that Meckel also pointed out that the time allotted for the transfer studies had been comparatively short, and the amount of grammar instruction had been minimal. Meckel went on to say that there was no conclusive research evidence that grammar had no transfer value in developing writing skill.

Unlike Braddock et al. (1963), Meckel indicated the need for more research on the kind of grammatical knowledge that may be expected to transfer to writing such as teaching students how to apply grammatical principles that are taught. In addition, in contrast to the Braddock studies, Meckel stated that research did not justify the conclusion that grammar should not be taught systematically. He explained by saying that the systematic teaching of grammar did not have to be the isolated or unapplied study of

grammar. Besides the conviction that the research indicating the ineffectiveness of teaching grammar for writing improvement was not completely valid, Kolln (1991) drew attention to the idea that grammar study in conjunction with direct application may have more success than grammar study alone. Kolln's convictions were in direct opposition with O'Hare's (1973) study on sentence-combining as well as the Elley et al. study (1976) and the 1991 Hillocks and Smiths' analysis, to name a few.

Alternatives to Teaching Writing

As educators searched for a more productive approach to teaching writing, a large body of research documented the fact that there was little or no transfer of learning from isolated, formal grammar drills to the quality of student writing (Amiran & Mann, 1982; Elley et al., 1976; Hillocks & Smith, 1991; Holdzkom et al., 1983; McQuade, 1980; Neill, 1982; Rosen, 1987; Weaver, 1996). To put it simply, students do not necessarily write more effectively when they can label all parts of our language. A "new English" emerged (O'Neill, 1989), as an outgrowth of the 1960s project English movement's quest for new curriculums and teaching approaches. In 1966 American and British English teachers held a seminar at Dartmouth College where John Dixon of the United Kingdom rejected the concept of practice exercises, or as he called them, "dummy run" (as cited in Tchudi, 1991, p. 11).

Personal Growth Model

Out of the Dartmouth seminar came plans for the personal growth model, a curriculum of frequent student writing for self-selected and assigned purposes. This

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model extended the personal growth philosophy practiced in some British infant schools since the 1930s and the Deweyan progressivism found in United States education. The personal growth model incorporated recent research on the relationships between learning and thinking studied by Lev Vygotsky, James Moffett, and James Britton. Tchudi (1991) summarized the central features of the personal growth model in the following seven ways:

[It] looks to the students' language as the starting point for instruction;

[it] allows for natural progression of language skill development instead of prescribed sequences;

[it] builds skills developmentally, meshing instruction with students' cognitive and linguistic growth;

[it] organically connects language and literature;

[it] integrates the various components of language arts—reading, writing, listening, and speaking;

[it] uses youngsters' own experiences with life as the entry point for reading and writing; and

[it] treats language as a whole, rather than dividing instruction into discrete components (p. 12)

Various names, which represented examples of the central features, were given to the model such as: (a) language experience, (b) integrated, (c) student centered, (d) developmental, (e) naturalistic, (f) organic, and (g) whole language. The personal growth model was recognized in 1979 as one of the three major curricula approaches in U.S. schools along with the traditional skills approach and a cultural heritage approach

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(Tchudi, 1991).

Other researchers (Holbrook, 1983; Sealey, 1987; T. R. Smith, 1982) found evidence that grammar instruction that related directly to students' writing could improve writing achievement. "Grammar instruction that is concrete, relevant to the students' own writing, and focused on the process of writing develops mature writers" (Sealey, 1987, p. 2). However, Tompkins (1990) reminded that since the concepts of grammar and usage are abstract, teaching these concepts to elementary students probably would not eliminate errors in their speech or writing.

Hillocks (1984) published a meta-analysis of over 500 studies on instructional practices of written composition conducted between 1963 and 1982. The study identified and described the effectiveness of three major instructional modes of writing found in classrooms—presentational, natural process, and environmental. The noted characteristics of the presentational mode of writing instruction were: (a) clear and specific objectives, (b) lecture and teacher-led discussion, (c) the study of models and other materials which explain and illustrate concepts taught, (d) specific assignments involving following patterns and rules previously discussed, and (e) teacher response to students about their writing. Although the presentational mode was in direct conflict with research findings, Hillocks found it the most widely used approach to writing instruction. Moreover, it proved to be the least effective of the three approaches studied.

In the natural process mode, instruction was characterized by (a) general objectives, (b) free writing on topics of interest to the students, (c) writing for peer audience, (d) positive feedback from peers, (e) opportunities for revision, and (f) much student interaction. Hillocks (1984) found this mode to be 50% more effective than the

presentational mode.

The environmental mode was characterized by (a) clear and specific objectives, (b) materials or problems targeted to engage students with one another in specific processes important to a particular aspects of writing, and (c) activities generating high levels of peer interaction relative to specific tasks, such as small group, tasks centered on a problem. "In contrast to the natural process mode, the concrete tasks . . . make objectives operationally clear by engaging students in their pursuit through structured tasks" (Hillocks, 1984, p. 122). For example, a task might be to write about one of twenty rocks so that someone else could select the particular rock described. The environmental mode proved to be over four times more effective than the traditional presentation mode and three times more effective than the natural process mode.

Creative Writing Approach

From the findings and beliefs of research, the teaching of writing composition received more emphasis in many classrooms. In an initial attempt to replace pre-designed textbook sentences with a more student generated approach to writing, many classroom writing activities fell under the heading of "creative writing" (Tompkins, 1990). The teacher provided an open ended story starter for students to complete. Students could apply their own life experiences to some topics such as "One rainy night as I reached the top of the stairs, the lights flickered and then went out. Suddenly I heard . . .." Other story starters were based on imagination only, such as a person shrinking to two inches tall or it raining chocolate.

The "creative writing" approach proved unsatisfactory oftentimes. If students

wrote poorly developed stories, teachers misread these unsuccessful writing experiences to be an indication that students needed more instruction in the mechanics of language. In reality, the creative writing approach simply provided writing practice, but failed to instruct students in how to write and use grammar successfully within their stories. Moreover, writing compositions were still judged by a hunt for errors. Again, teachers misread grammar and mechanics errors to be an indication that students needed more of isolated instruction in the mechanics of language. The insistence on correctness inhibited students and reduced their willingness to experiment and invent (Cotton, 1988). When grammatical correctness is the writing purpose instead of communication and meaning, "by its tedium, the curriculum teaches them that writing is a crushing bore" (Rose, 1989, p. 213). The search for better writing methods continued.

Writing Movements

As educators developed more successful methods for writing instruction over the past two decades, writing movements emerged (Tchudi, 1991). Three of the major movements were linked to the theory of growth-through-English: (a) Whole Language, (b) Language Across the Curriculum, and (c) Writing as a Process. All three supported a similar view on the skills of language (listening, speaking, reading, or writing) which were holistic in nature implying that language must be examined in "chunks" large enough to convey meaning (Stevenson, 1995). Meaning was the focal point of the holistic approach. The approach embraced the idea that the skills of language support one another and apply across all subject areas. The foundation of the philosophy was respect according to Willinsky (as cited in T. R. Smith, 1992):

respect for language (which should be natural and authentic, not contrived) and

respect for learners (who should be engaged in meaningful and productive

activities, not in pointless drills and rote memorization. (p. 440)

Today many teachers continue to support Whole Language, Language Across the

Curriculum, and Writing as a Process.

Whole Language Movement. The Whole Language movement is a philosophy

that supports the integration of oral language, reading, and writing. Whole Language

educators view schooling as profoundly social, posing and solving problems, thinking

critically, offering issue rich content to encourage critical thinking and learning language

through authentic use, actual use, like babies learn it, embedded in a social context. The

essential belief in Whole Language is that reading and writing must be learned through

actual reading and writing and not through isolated exercises (Edelsky, Altwerger, &

Flores, 1991). Rather than learning skills of language out of context, students are

instructed in the parts of language while they experience authentic reading and writing

activities. Reading promotes the acquisition of grammatical structures in speech and

writing (Weaver, 1996). Since students are given the opportunity to write early and often,

invented spellings, the spellings young children devise as they learn to write, are accepted

to encourage concentration on making meaning as they write and not diminish

enthusiasm for writing (Willis, 1995).

By exposing students to a variety of high-quality children's literature, teachers

capture students' interests and motivate them to become competent readers and writers.

Whole Language concentrates on meaning rather than the component parts of language.

Getting each word right is far less important than understanding the meaning of the words

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in combination.

Whole language was an offspring of several progressive educational movements. One such movement was the language experience approach. Language experience teachers teach beginners to break the code and individualize reading using the student's own oral language (Edelsky, et al., 1991).

Another progressive educational movement related to whole language was the concept of open education. Open education, characterized by physically open classrooms, is rich in environment, organized around centers, and concerned with the process. Although open education shares many features in practice with whole language, it differs in some ways. Open education lacks developed theory about the nature of language, language acquisition, and literacy. Reading and writing are treated as subjects. Exercises are assigned to teach writing and reading skills. In open education, the learners are treated as individual, selecting options from centers. In contrast, the Whole Language philosophy views the learner as a social being practicing in a community of learners. Whole language relies more on the Vygotskyian idea of emphasizing social interaction and believing that more can be done collaboratively.

Language Across the Curriculum. Although Language Across the Curriculum, another powerful writing movement, was initially researched in England in the early 1970s, the movement grew rapidly in the United States (Tchudi, 1991). Language Across the Curriculum came from the belief that English is naturally interdisciplinary. Whether the content is science, math, social studies, or any other subject area, teachers in the other disciplines can use techniques such as writing workshops or journaling, for instance, to enhance learning.

Writing as a Process. A third writing movement, Writing as a Process, grew out of the need to help students with the actual process of getting the composition down on paper rather than simply concentrating on the product. Without question, the teaching of composition has been the most successful development in English language arts instruction (Tchudi, 1991). The stimulus behind the increase in composition instruction has been the concept of writing as a process, which dates back as early as 1963 when Wallace Douglas of Northwestern University wrote An Introduction to Some Lessons in the Basic Processes of Composition. Rather than writing about the motor skills of penmanship and the final written piece, Douglas wrote about the complexity of writing as one finds ideas, forms topics, considers an audience, and revises the work. Instead of teaching students the traditional pieces to the composition puzzle, Douglas supported the idea that if students learned the processes of how to create a composition, they would naturally discover the needed characteristics of written products.

Generic Writing Systems.

Another alternative approach to writing is the "generic writing systems" (Healey, 1995, p. 20). A generic writing system is a pre-packaged, skill and drill approach to teaching grammar disguised as an interactive break from the traditional isolated skills approach. Careful attention is focused on prescribed and unvarying steps regardless of individual ability and development within the classroom. Controlled writing situations are assigned once the student is exposed to the formulaic sentences and drills. These systems are rarely, if ever, supported by research (Healey), but are accepted by educators as a quick fix to grammar and writing problems.

An Examination of Writing as a Process

Let us look more closely at one of the alternative methods to teaching writing. Writing as a Process, better known as Process Writing, was described in a U.S. Department of Education booklet (1986) as "the most effective way to teach writing" (p. 27). In a process approach to writing, students make their own choices about what they write, discuss the craft of actual authors, actively participate in creating and responding to "whole" texts, and practice reflective evaluation (Routman, 1991). In some classrooms, constructivist beliefs transformed literacy instruction in the United States. As the process of learning and language acquisition was reconsidered, many teachers embraced the ideas of influential writing process supporters, such as Atwell (1987), Calkins (1983, 1986, 1994), Graves (1975, 1983, 1994), and Murray (1968, 1978, 1984) to name a few. Some moved from the traditional, systematic teaching of grammar in isolation, which reflects a behaviorist theory of teaching and learning, to a constructivist theory of learning and teaching where the student takes more control in the process of writing and selected aspects of grammar are taught when the need arises within that writing. As a result, many educators turned away from a limited, skills-based approach to writing in favor of an approach that is holistic and constructivisit in nature (Ames & Gahagan, 1995).

The Process of Writing

The earliest research on the written language of children focused on surface features such as the number of words or sentences a child wrote. The only conclusions reached were that older children wrote longer pieces with longer sentences and had a wider vocabulary than younger children have (Weaver, 1996). Subsequently, researchers

began to examine the process of writing.

Britton, Burgess, Marin, McLeod, and Rosen (1975) examined the purpose of writing. Writing is a means of expressing and clarifying thoughts and emotions; a means for understanding; a means of sharing and communicating; and means of creating by giving artistic shape to thoughts and ideas. Britton et al. labeled the functions of writing as expressive, transactional, and poetic.

Beginning writers seem to operate under the assumption that writing is expressive, written mainly to express ideas for the satisfaction of the writer and occasionally for the satisfaction of a trusted peer or adult. Expressive writing is a natural result of the child's egocentrism in the pre-operational stage of intellectual development. The child assumes the meaning expressed is understood automatically although referents are unclear. In contrast, transactional writing is directed toward someone else and, therefore, the audience varies. As children move into the transactional function of writing, both expressive and transactional functions are present. Most of the writing done by children in the elementary grades is likely to be expressive or transitional between expressive and transactional and much expressive writing is evidenced in secondary writing as well (Britton, 1975). Therefore, if for most children the natural function of writing is expressive, teachers must re-examine the role of "correct" mechanics in children's writing (Weaver, 1979). Such expectations are contrary to the natural development of writing.

Since the young writer's concern is with expressing ideas rather than conveying ideas to others, the concept of adapting to the needs of an audience by modifying what is written so that it is clear to the audience and so it meets certain standards of correctness

prove to be a difficult focus. Britton's (1975) studies raised questions about the relationship between writing development and instruction.

As an extension of Britton's (1975) studies, Wilkinson, Barnsley, Hanna, and Swan (1980) examined narrative, autobiographical, explanatory, and persuasive writing samples of 7-, 10-, and 13-year-olds. Although with age the students were able to demonstrate increased awareness of audience, objectivity, understanding of a topic, and less imitation, their development was not uniform in progression. The researchers determined that the complexity of any particular child's writing was influenced by the reasons for writing, instructional background history, amount of reading, and cultural and social background.

Emig's (1971) study of 12th-grade writers shifted research from product examination to observing writing in action. When Emig asked students to verbalize whatever came to mind as they wrote, the recursive nature of writing emerged from this dialogue. They started, stopped, and contemplated their writing. The students made decisions about selecting and orchestrating parts for the writing piece. They spoke of correcting, revising, and rewriting by adding or deleting portions and reordering sentences and paragraphs.

Graves (1983) extended Emig's research to elementary students. Graves found a continuous transaction between emerging text and thought as students talked, drew, wrote, and read. However, these activities did not occur in any particular sequence. The research also found that when children were trying a new writing dimension, they many times lost control over areas of writing that they had previously handled correctly, but managed to maintain their focus of the story. Moreover, Donovan (1990) reported that a

child must be able to think in abstract terms in order to understand the conventions of grammar. Since most children do not possess this cognitive skill before age 11 or 12 or later, forcing these concepts on children before they are developmentally ready may result in a disinterest in the subject resulting in reluctance to write. The conventions of language become more difficult, not less difficult, as children progress through the grades because their thought processes become increasingly more complex (Farris, 1997).

What implications do these research findings have for writing? Learning to be a writer "involves the refinement of many aspects of the process simultaneously" (Newman, 1985, p. 26) in order to make sense. "Writing is a process, and only secondarily a product" (Weaver, 1979, p. 87). Many studies (Elbow, 1973; Hillocks, 1987; Holdzkom et al., 1983; Murray, 1978) emphasized the necessity for a process approach to writing instruction. Donald Murray of the University of New Hampshire revolutionized writing with his 1968 book, A Writer Teaches Writing, which provided strategies for teaching the stages of the process of composing. Donald Graves followed in 1983 with research based strategies for a process approach to writing in Writing: Teachers and Children at Work.

Writing Steps

Over 25 years of research on the development of writing abilities exists. Although there is a lack of agreement on "best approaches," certain beliefs about teaching writing have been acknowledged by most researchers in the field (Healy, 1995):

The importance of the responsive context in which one writes, the differences in students' composing processes, the primary role the students' intentions play in

the selections of topics and their satisfactory completion of papers, the importance

of teacher intervention during the writing process, the relative efficacy of

teachers' responses to writing, praise for what has been achieved instead of

correction of errors only—all of these factors have been determined as

instrumental in developing writing ability and are continually discussed at

conferences and in journals and research reports. (p.23)

Probably there are as many models of developing writing abilities based on process

writing as there are writers. Teachers as well as writers individually develop a

personalized process over time as teaching and writing ability matures.

Graves (1975) spoke of three steps within the writing process: (a) prewriting, (b)

composing, and (c) postwriting. In the prewriting stage the writer selects topics and

gathers ideas, the composition is written in the composing stage, and the writing is shared

in the postwriting stage. Murray (1978) described the writing process differently with

four steps: (a) rehearsal, (b) drafting, (c) revision, and (d) editing. Writers collect

information through the five senses, they focus on pre-gathered information that has

particular meaning, they order bits and pieces of information for meaning to evolve, they

begin drafting what they have to say, and they clarify, trying to understand what has been

learned, said, and felt. The process is recursive. The writer might go back to any or all

steps while drafting a piece of writing. Flower and Hayes' (1981) three stages to the

writing process differed. When college students were interviewed to determine their

thought processes while writing, the three common activities were (a) planning, (b)

translating, and (c) reviewing. During planning writers set goals as guides to their

writing. The plans were put into writing during translating, and then the writing was

evaluated and revised in the reviewing stage. Like Murray (1978), the study also found writing to be a recursive act.

Tompkins (1990) agreed that the process is "cyclical, involving recurring cycles" (p.72) as she defined a five-stage writing process for children: (a) prewriting, (b) drafting, (c) revising, (d) editing, and (e) sharing. Another format for the process of writing was outlined by Atwell (1987) for middle-school students. The steps were: (a) rehearse (find an idea), (b) draft one, (c) confer, (d) draft two /revise, (e) confer, (f) decide the content is set, (g) draft two/revise, (h) confer, (i) decide the content is set, (j) self-edit, (k) teacher-edit, (l) final copy/go public. Unlike some of the others, Graves' (1975), Tompkin's (1990), and Atwell's (1987) last stage takes the writing to an audience. Still others spoke of circling out and circling back, collecting and connecting, or prewriting, writing, and rewriting. Lamott (1994) used the terms the downdraft where the writer gets the ideas down, the updraft meaning fixing the writing up, and the dental draft meaning checking it all out. Giacobbe (1986) offered a simplified version that concentrated on three basics: time, ownership, and response. No matter how the process is defined or labeled, in essence, the steps are the same philosophical approach to writing. With time, the stages begin to "merge and cycle" (Tompkins, 1990, p. 72) as students become a part of the writing process.

Grammar, spelling, and handwriting are simply tools for writers and courtesies for readers according to Graves (1983) and Tompkins (1990), who professed that these alone will not produce a memorable writing piece. In the past, "when our students resist writing, it's usually because writing has been treated as little more than a place to display—to expose—their command of spelling, penmanship, and grammar" (Calkins,

1994, p. 13). Through the stages in process writing, students are given repeated opportunities to improve writing. Error-hunting is reserved for editing as students try to make their papers "optimally readable" (T. R. Smith, 1982, p. 5) in the end.

Writing Workshop

In process writing the classroom becomes a writing workshop. Unlike traditional writing instruction, a writing workshop provides many opportunities for students to engage in and practice the craft of writing by determining topics, audiences, purposes, and forms of writing in order to develop an individual voice. In the past decade the works of Atwell (1987), Calkins (1983, 1986, 1994), and Graves (1975, 1983, 1994), emphasizing student ownership, have had a profound effect on writing instruction in American and Canadian classrooms (Dudley-Marling & Searle, 1995). The workshop approach breaks the traditional teacher-dominated pattern. "In place of a traditionally inauthentic, fault-finding teacher audience, workshops promote an authentic, meaning-finding one; and peers are a significant part of that audience" (Lensmire, 1995).

Writing takes time and requires a different pace from that usually found in American education. Writers must be afforded time to run into problems in their writing, to ask questions, to solve dilemmas (Calkins, 1980). When time is allotted for these things, then skills can be learned in context. Atwell (1987) suggested setting aside "chunks of time" (p. 17) for middle school students, at least three hours a week, for writing while Tompkins (1990) recommended elementary students to write each day. Murray (1990) stressed writing at the same time every day. How to find the time for writing has been a concern of teachers for years. Murray recommended taking a little

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time from reading, handwriting, spelling, and language "since writing produces gains in all of these subject areas" (p. 90).

Hughes and Martin (1992) investigated the amount of improvement in the quality of student writing over the course of an academic year. They also examined whether the amount of improvement would be associated with the amount of time allotted for writing experiences across the curriculum. A pilot study suggested that the quality of writing assignments was more important than the number of writing assignments students were given. Findings also suggested that the gains in writing quality increased according to the amount of instructional writing experience given.

Murray (1984) went on to suggest making varied writing materials such as paper, pencils, pens, typewriters, word processors, white out, paper clips, file folders, dictionaries, and thesauruses available to the students. In order to help students to develop an autonomous approach to writing, Murray suggested setting aside a quiet place for focusing on thoughts and feelings as well as a different place for sharing and collaborating.

Autonomy

Many writing theorists have long stressed the benefits of students exercising control over their writing topics (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1986, 1994; Graves, 1983). Calkins (1994) wrote:

there is a world of difference between "motivating writing" and helping people become deeply and personally involved in their own writing. So I spent most of my time conjuring up motivating activities, all based on the assumption that my

students would write only if I jump-started them. Now I believe that this is a devastating assumption for a teacher of literacy to hold. We cannot teach writing well unless we trust that there are real, human reasons to write. (p. 12)

Writing must be made personal. Keeping a notebook or a journal provides "seed beds out of which rough drafts grow" (Calkins, 1994, p. 24). The teacher's job is to create awareness in children that they have a wealth of topics to write about simply based on memories. Writing must tap into what the student already knows, has developed an interest in, or has experienced.

In a survey of American secondary schools, Applebee (1981) discovered that many times teachers have assigned writing topics that could fill a book, a series, or perhaps a library, resulting in life long research. Elementary teachers follow suit assigning general topics and showing disappointment when many students do no write in their own words. Teachers must capitalize on real-world reasons to write. Students must be given choices (Five, 1995). The purpose of the writing must be authentic. Initially, constraints must be set aside so writers can be encouraged to simply write, let it flow, to see what might emerge (Newman, 1985).

Almost three decades ago Macrorie (1970) alerted educators to the harm of giving students little control over their writing. However, since non-direction likewise failed to improve writing substantially, Macrorie challenged education with a third way in which teachers increased students' responsibility for writing while continuing to provide direction with sufficient support through student-teacher conferencing. Dudley-Marling (1995) pointed out that there is a fine line in creating a balance. Too much teacher support resulted in taking control of learning away from the student. However, without it

the student is denied opportunities to access voices that support intellectual growth and development as well as the ability to take responsibility for personal learning. Ownership allows students opportunities to develop their own voice through talking and writing about what is meaningful to them.

Dudley-Marling (1995) suggested that although the argument that "what is learned in a simulation may not transfer to instances of authentic reading and writing" (p. 11) existed, school reading and writing may never be truly authentic since children are in school by law and not voluntarily. Therefore, it is even more important for students to exercise some control over the decisions of what they write. "There is good evidence that students without a personal stake in their writing will not write very well" (p. 11) and "may not discover the power of reading and writing to affect their lives" (p. 12).

In Process Writing, selecting a topic is guided by writers reflecting on their own experiences first, on leads that will grab the reader, on whether or not a particular audience will understand their chosen message, and on appropriate feedback to offer others. This reflective process produces thinking at higher levels.

Many writing theorists (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994; Tompkins, 1990) share the belief that "language skills develop through genuine, purposeful use and not through artificially contrived exercises . . . their power comes from using them to create meaning" (Calkins, 1994). Students choose topics that are meaningful to them. Then with practice and exposure, students learn to write in different ways for different reasons. For example, Langer (1985) discovered that by third grade, children responded differently to report assignments than to story writing. The organization, elaboration, and information differed, depending on the form.

Mini-lessons

To avoid absorbing too much valuable writing time, mini-lessons were recommended by process writing advocates (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1983; Harwayne, 1992; Routman, 1991; Smith, 1982; Tompkins, 1990; Weaver, 1979). Mini-lessons are brief whole-class or small group meetings conducted by the teacher to demonstrate a new writing method or technique that may be helpful to the students. Five to seven minute mini-lessons were suggested so time would be left for the students to practice the new method or technique in their own authentic writing.

Atwell (1987) based small group and whole class mini-lessons on four skill areas: format, punctuation, usage, and spelling whereas Calkins (1994) suggested offering short mini-lessons to the group with the intent to inspire and/or instruct to help writers better communicate with readers. Harwayne (1992) proposed that mini-lessons should capitalize on discussions about weak writing. On the contrary, since it is rare that students in an entire class will all need a particular type of assistance at a given time, Weaver (1979) viewed large group mini-lesson instruction as inevitably unproductive. Consequently, Weaver suggested instruction in response to a need recognized by the individual student.

Many agreed (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1983; Routman, 1991; Smith, 1982; Tompkins, 1990; Weaver, 1979) that relating grammar instruction directly to the students' writing needs enhances writing achievement whether the instruction is done in class, small group mini-lessons, or student/teacher conferencing. Moreover, when students are given plenty of opportunity to write, especially in the expressive mode, they

may feel freer to experiment with more mature syntactic constructions such as sentence-combining (Weaver, 1979).

Collaboration

Since writing requires social interaction, much of what education has done in the name of writing instruction, writing in isolation without sharing, has resulted in decreased writing proficiency (Newman, 1985). As researchers recognized the fact that writing involved collaboration rather than student isolation, different forms of conferencing emerged: peer conferences, teacher-student conferences, and the teacher's writing class. Conferencing, the heart of the Writing Workshop, plays a role in giving writers control over the process of writing, ensuring that they retain ownership of their texts. Calkins (1983) described two kinds of peer conferencing: informal peer conferencing and formal sharing meetings. Informal peer conferencing is student initiated, one-to-one conferencing interwoven throughout the process of writing whenever the need arises. For informal conferencing to be effective, it is essential that a classroom climate where children can share freely without fear of being censured must exist. The major difference in informal peer conferencing and formal sharing meetings is that sharing meetings are set up by the teacher for the writer to share work in progress as well as completed drafts during whole class meetings.

Teacher-student conferencing can occur at any time during the writing of a writing piece. Primarily, the purpose of the conference is to help the writer maintain a focus on meaning. Only secondarily is the conference concerned with the correctness of the writing as the piece reaches the final draft stage (Graves, 1983). During teacher-

student conferencing, the teacher can focus directly on needs of students on an individual basis by asking questions that help them learn to judge their own writing efforts. Open-ended questions such as "Where are you with your writing right now? Where do you need to go with it? What are some things you wrestled with and how did you solve the problem? What reactions about your piece did you get from your partner? What are some of the strengths you see in this piece?" address the stage of the writing process that the student is engaged in or encourage the student to reflect on a finished piece.

The secondary purpose of teacher-student conferencing is editing. Tompkins (1990) suggested ignoring some errors. Correcting too many errors may give writers the message that their language is inferior or inadequate. Only the most important skill or skills needed by the student should be addressed. Conferencing enables the teacher to "seize the teachable moment when students want or need to learn a particular language skill to communicate effectively in writing" (Tompkins, p. 20). Routman (1991) explained, "In other words, a skill—no matter how well it has been taught—cannot be considered a strategy until the learner can use it purposefully and independently. . . . The learner must know how and when to apply the skill; that is what elevates the skill to the strategy level" (p. 135).

In a study of 34 participants in two third-grade classrooms during student-teacher conferencing, Calkins (1980) found writers with no formal instruction in punctuation could explain an average of 8.66 kinds of punctuation. On the other hand, students who had studied punctuation through class work and drills but had rarely written explained 3.85 kinds of punctuation. Moreover, the writing students liked punctuation because it made their writing sound better.

In peer conferencing as well as in "author's chair," conditions are created in which learning can happen by encouraging students to ask questions of themselves and of others. The two create conditions for them to notice, to wonder, to connect, and to inquire. Problem-finding and question-asking are encouraged. It "scaffolds more thinking" (Calkins, 1994, p. 486) creating an environment of student voice and of how to say it more clearly. Graves (1983) supported that students who do not have control over their writing are less likely to revise and edit their work and to discover their voices as writers. Conferencing encourages and values student self-evaluation. "Teaching becomes a response to learners" (Five, 1995, p. 113).

Peers as collaborators in revision and editing or as an audience can offer friendship, trust and "social energy" (Dyson, 1989, p. 198) that is empowering to a writer. Reading and writing are social. Therefore, learning must involve collaboration, feedback, and exchanging information (Newman, 1985). However, Lensmire (1995) warned that peers also bring teasing, risk, and conflict to the process. For a school year Lensmire examined how children's experiences and writing are influenced by a peer culture with gender divisions and informal hierarchies of status in a third grade classroom. The children's texts reflected differences in status and power among children. Therefore, Lensmire suggested that teachers develop an awareness of the peer culture and social relations among children and the meanings and values they assign to one another and to each other's writing. A second goal was to celebrate the varied speaking and writing voices of children including their social and personal intonations and evaluations. DuCharme, Poplin, and Thomas (1995) added that unless educators "become acutely conscious of differences in discourse styles across cultures, we will fail to notice gifts

that students bring to a writing group, and we will miss the special needs that they may have for instruction" (p. 157).

In a study on the problems of low motivation and poor writing quality (Gomer, 1992), peer tutoring by conferencing and writing constructive criticisms were used as a method for encouraging students to help one another correct and improve their writing. Fifty underachieving 9th-grade students in a basic skill class were assigned nine essays to write in a three-month period. Each student had the opportunity to work with different partners, groups, and with students from other classes. Analysis of the data revealed that self-esteem was enhanced when students worked together causing writing attitudes and abilities to improve.

Another study, developed to improve process writing skills of 16 7th-grade at-risk students by increasing interest though the use of the computer, word processing software, and telecommunications technology for collaboration, indicated improvement in holistically scored written communication skills as well as improvement in overall attitudes towards writing (Zoni, 1992). The participants and the teacher also conferenced weekly, sharing and responding to writing pieces, making suggestions, and offering new writing ideas.

Revision

Anyone who encounters a writing piece, writer or listener, takes the responsibility of revision. Calkins (1994, p. 7) described revision as "seeing again," "using words as a lens for re-seeing the emerging subject" (p. 129), adding details, valuing precise nouns and verbs. Revision takes on more meaning for students with self-selected topics and

when the writing is generated for authentic audiences. According to Weaver (1979), mechanics instruction is most effective in the rewriting stage, especially when the instruction is a direct response to a need recognized by the student. "What should never be forgotten, however, is that the force of revision, the energy of ownership, is rooted in the child's voice, the urge to express" (Graves, 1983, p.64).

In a 7-month study of 257 University of Alberta freshman who were enrolled in a one-year emergency course designed to train teachers for the Alberta schools, Buxton (1959) examined the improvement in writing skill produced by three divergent methods of writing instruction. One method required students to simply write weekly essays and the instructor to note positive written remarks whereas a second method corrected mistakes, assigned a grade, made adverse comments, and allotted time for revision. The control group was not assigned weekly essays. The revision group showed significant gains over the writing group in significance of material, title, and introduction and over the control group in title, introduction, variety, fluency diction, and figures of speech.

In another 7-month study of teaching writing as a process to 15 second-graders and 17 fourth-graders, Jones (1990) implemented a writing workshop for students and a parent education program. The parent program consisted of surveying parent attitudes, offering two evening writing workshops for parents, and featuring parent and student writing in a "Celebrate Writing" night. The 2nd-graders showed significant gains in willingness to revise and the 4th-graders reported revising more often.

Assessment

The assessment of process writing focuses more on the process that students use

than solely on the product. Teachers originally compared the quality of one student story to another or counted the numbers of errors in a writing piece. Newman (1985) referred to this as the "compulsive marking habit" (p. 65). The "find the mistakes" approach did not successfully teach students how to make their writing better. Newman suggested a role shift from being a mistake corrector to a demonstrator of acceptable writing through written teacher responses concerning student mistakes. In other words, assess writing by writing. Holistic scoring is an example of such an assessment method.

In holistic scoring, "the whole of a piece of writing is greater than the sum of its parts" (Myers, 1980, p. 1). Therefore, holistic scoring entails reading and scoring a paper on the overall quality, the total impact a paper makes on the reader, rather than by error counts alone reflecting competency levels. This overall impression is created by both the content and the characteristics of the essay such as organization, appropriate sentence structures, correct spelling and punctuation, use of language (Dyer, Thorne, & Gump, 1994). General impression marking, based on predetermined criteria compiled within a rubric and practice in scoring sample papers, can be done without requiring the evaluator to be a grammar technician.

Cooper and Odell (1977) listed seven types of holistic evaluation: essay scale, analytic scale, dichotomous scale, feature analysis, primary trait scoring, general impression marking, and "center of gravity" response. However, they reported general impression marking as most widely used at the elementary level.

Writing theorist White (as cited by Burley, 1996) maintained, "Holistic scoring is the most successful method of scoring writing in quantity that is now available." Educational Testing Service (ETS) has used holistic scoring for many years (Dyer et al.,

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1994; Freedman, 1991). ETS (1989/1990) stated the following:

> To score an essay holistically is to score it for the overall impression it makes
> with the reader. This overall impression is created by both the content the
> characteristics of the essay including organization of ideas, use of language,
> appropriate sentence structure, proper spelling, punctuation, and syntactic variety.
> (p. 9)

The holistic scoring methodology begins with a carefully chosen writing prompt, a precise writing assignment to stimulate fluent writing. The prompt must be direct, simple, and easily understood. Students write, addressing a prompt, for a given time with the understanding that, due to the time limitation, the writing is not in polished, final draft form. Each paper receives an identification code number in place of the student's name.

All writing pieces are sent to a central location for scoring. The most reliable scoring of writing samples takes place when graders are trained together and score together in the same room with common direction (Myers, 1980). McLean (1992) reported a study in 1934 in which Stalnaker demonstrated the improvement of inter-reader reliability with training. Reliability improved from a range of 30% - 75% to a range of 73% - 98%. All graders assemble at one time and place for training. Optimally, to create reliability, a homogeneous group of readers with similar backgrounds who are open to judging writing with a prescribed method of scoring is selected as graders (McLean).

Graders are trained to assign scores to papers by using a scoring guide of comparative categories, sometimes called a rubric, based on predetermined criterion. The guide is a clearly worded description of papers falling into each scoring level on the

scale. Traditionally, four to six comparative categories are used to define performance levels in holistic scoring.

Example papers, which are referred to as anchor papers, are used to train the graders. Anchor papers are selected before the grading session. First, a sampling of papers is ranged by high, medium, and low in a ranging session. Later, in an anchoring session, the ranged papers are divided further. A clear example paper is determined for each of the grading points listed on the scoring rubric. These examples serve to develop a consensus of what constitutes each grading point. Anchor papers are discussed at length and can be referred to throughout the actual grading if needed.

Once graders feel confident with each grading point, they are instructed to read papers quickly and assign a score based on their total impression of the general quality of the paper. Graders are instructed not to reread papers. All papers are scored based on their resemblance to the specific anchor papers. Two graders read each paper, and the second grader is unaware of the first score assigned until determining the second score. Scores are considered consistent if they are the same or different by only one point. Scores that differ by more than one point are considered inconsistent. A third reader, an arbitrator, resolves inconsistent scores.

If standards are clarified with a clearly defined rubric and graders adhere to it in assigning scores, an increase in fairness and efficiency results (Holt, 1993). Without carefully developed rubrics, training, and adherence to rubrics, and teamwork, holistic scoring is not reliable. By placing a series of constraints on the scoring process, holistic scoring enables instructors to achieve high levels of reliability (White, 1985).

For example, in a study done with ninth and tenth grade students, Egolf (1994)

reported 92% of the essays only required two readers. In another study of 35,333 compositions written by 6th and 9th grade students, Masters (1992) determined an overall agreement rate of 94%. Likewise, Dyer et al. (1994) conducted a 2-year study on holistic scoring in two undergraduate accounting courses. When responses to questions on essay tests were scored holistically, 94% of the papers were awarded scores varying by no more than one point. Similarly, Holt (1992) reported a study conducted by Brelan at East Texas State University where never less than 95% of the papers received contiguous scores. Following a school-district study, Cooper and Odell (1977) obtained agreements between two raters of 80%, 100%, and 100% in choosing the better essay from 30 pairs of pre- and posttest essays in three types of writing.

Furthermore, the reported average time spent on scoring essays in two undergraduate accounting courses was two to three minutes on answers ranging from 60 to 400 words (Dyer et al., 1994). The Brelan (as cited in Holt, 1992) study closely compared with reported averages of 33 narrative papers per hour and 46 expository papers per hour. Brelan reported persuasive papers taking longer—17 papers per hour.

Although holistic evaluation has been used for many years in some educational areas, only recently has it become widely used in the assessment community for placement and research. Since holistic scoring is time efficient, often it has been used in situations involving large numbers of writers. The unique combination of speed, reliability, and validity has made holistic scoring popular. However, holistic scoring has not been used solely with large numbers (Fisher, 1993; Gomer, 1992; Jackiewicaz, 1995; Zoni, 1992).

Fisher (1993) reported holistic scoring 47 writing samples drawn during a pilot

study of limited English proficient American Indian high school students in preparation for developing local norms from the entire school district. In a study of writing motivation, Gomer (1992) reported 50 underachieving 9th-grade students in basic skills classes were graded holistically each time an essay was written. Sixteen 7th-grade at-risk students were graded holistically on eight different essays written on a computer in a language arts class (Zoni, 1992). Elementary studies reported holistic scoring as well. In Jackiewicz's (1995) 3-month study of two 4th-grade classes from one elementary school in New Jersey, one class produced handwritten samples while the other class was taught to use the computer as a writing tool. All samples were scored holistically. In a study of the usefulness of graphic organizers, two 3rd-grade classes from two different schools in the same New Jersey district, reported holistically scoring creative writing over a 13-week period.

In referring to researchers and state and national assessors, Cooper and Odell (1977) stated the following:

> They need not settle for frequency counts of word or sentence elements or for machine-scorable objective tests. A piece of writing communicates a whole message with a particular tone to a known audience for some purpose: information, argument, amusement, ridicule, titillation. At present, holistic evaluation by a human respondent gets us closer to what is essential in such a communication than frequency counts do. (p. 3)

Najimy (1981) listed several advantages for holistic scoring, adapted from Basic Skills Assessment: Manual for Scoring the Writing Sample and published by Educational Testing Services:

1. The criteria treat writing as a whole product, rather than as a set of separate components.

2. Having more than one evaluator score each paper leads to a fairly accurate assessment of student's overall writing ability.

3. During the pre-scoring session, evaluators have opportunities to gain new insights into writing through discussion of strengths and weaknesses or sample papers, and through sharing of ideas about writing. These insights often carry over into classroom teaching practices.

4. Emphasis is usually placed on strengths of paper.

5. Many papers may be read and scored in relatively short time. (p. 11)

The only disadvantage listed for holistic scoring was that the scoring allows no opportunity for an evaluator to address specific comments to the writer concerning the overall effect of the writing piece or errors in grammar, mechanics, or usage within the writing.

Professional Development

Batteries of achievement tests mandated by state legislatures have been added recently to writing assessments, which require students to develop a sample writing piece in an allotted time rather than to answer questions concerning grammar and usage. In the new writing assessments, students are called upon to apply their grammar knowledge. This approach requires a higher level of thinking. Consequently, many teachers are now realizing the need for teaching students how to write instead of merely providing opportunities to write.

With the need for teaching students how to write came the need for staff development. The National Writing Project, created out of the desire of teachers to improve the quality of writing instruction at all levels, evolved in 1974 (Cotton, 1988). Led by James Gray, it began as the Bay Area Writing Project at the University of California, Berkeley. The success of this staff development approach led to it spreading to every state (Cotton). In summer workshops on campuses around the nation and in several foreign countries, affiliate groups of teachers meet to write, exchange ideas about teaching writing, discuss theory and research that support these ideas, and develop in-services for fellow teachers that spread the word on new writing approaches. The National Writing Project along with the state writing projects have had an enormous impact on focusing attention on writing instruction for kindergarten through college age students.

An Examination of the Shurley Method

Despite research findings and the energy put forth in favor of process writing over the past two decades, traditional grammar and textbook-centered approaches remain dominant in many American schools. In search for alternative methods of teaching grammar, new approaches to skill and drill grammar exercises, sometimes called "Generic Writing Systems" (Healy, 1995), have emerged. Hence, the seesaw of formal grammar instruction and writing skills emphases continues. Let us look more closely at one such writing system , the Shurley Method: English Made Easy.

Brenda Shurley, a teacher from Cabot, Arkansas, experienced frustration that her eighth graders who had spent a whole year learning English neither retained language

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skills by the end of the school year nor applied what she had worked so hard to teach. Furthermore, students retained little of the grammar instruction over the summer.

Traditionally, Shurley taught grammar skills in a sporadic way covering one part of speech and then another throughout the year. Finally, she concluded that students should not be expected to maintain a skill without daily opportunities to discuss and apply it. First, Shurley experimented with different teaching techniques to support memory retention. Out of a desire to provide needed daily practice with previously learned skills while new skills were being added, Shurley gradually designed a system for teaching English grammar to high school students. As a result of 25 years of experience in the classroom where the learning needs of students were taken into consideration to develop the English program, the Shurley Method was devised.

The Shurley Method teaches grammar by providing daily practice to reinforce and promote permanent retention of previously developed skills while new skills are being added to the students' knowledge base (Shurley & Wetsell, 1989a). Shurley created jingles to teach definitions in a rhythmic, easy-to-remember way. She also devised a Question-Answer Flow, in which a class, led by the teacher or a student, asked and answered a series of concrete questions that analyzed functions of words, phrases, and sentences. The method also taught language mechanics, usage, and word exchange to improve or completely change sentences.

After perfecting the method over the years, Shurley began to share it with interested elementary through high school teaching cohorts, writing down each step for them. Teachers requested that she add punctuation, writing, and study skills to her method. These requests prompted Shurley to call on Ruth Wetsell, a teacher as well as a

parent of a 4th-grade student in her class, to help her put her ideas on paper. What followed was the first edition of a complete language program for first through sixth grade, The Shurley Method: English Made Easy (1989a, 1989b). Later the two added a 7th grade program.

Following the consideration of answers to questionnaires sent to Shurley Method teachers, Shurley and Wetsell completed revised editions for level 4 through 6 in early 1997 (B. Shurley, personal communication, March 12, 1997). Level 1 through 3 and level 7 editions were revised and level 8 was created in late 1997 (Shurley Instructional Materials office, personal communication, May 21, 1998). Shurley and Wetsell added over 200 pages of vocabulary, library skills, and more writing related skills to the teacher's manual. Because of the teacher's manual updates, Shurley felt a substitute teacher could come in and enjoy success with the method.

The structure of the English language is at the heart of the lessons. The introduction to the teaching manual, The Shurley Method: English Made Easy (Shurley & Wetsell, 1989a), points out that the method supports effective instruction in English grammar based on an understanding of how the eight parts of speech work together in a sentence. The Shurley Method philosophy is grounded in the belief that before a student could take a sentence apart to repair it, the student must first understand how every part fits together to make a good sentence. "The Shurley Method teaches the students where to go, what to ask, and what to expect of every word in a sentence" (Shurley and Wetsell, 1989a, p. vii). By using a concrete set of questions about each word in a sentence, the program teaches how all the separate parts of speech and all the parts of a sentence fit together.

<u>Sentence Patterns</u>

The Shurley Method teacher's manual initially presents the sentences in simplest form, a one-word subject along with a one-word verb, which is known as Pattern One sentence structure. Sentence structures progress in complexity in following lessons from Pattern One to Pattern Five. Table 2.1 shows the sentence structure progression of these sentence patterns.

Table 2.1

<u>Shurley Method Sentence Patterns</u>

Pattern One	subject noun, verb
Pattern Two	subject noun, verb transitive, direct object
Pattern Three	subject noun, verb transitive, indirect object, direct object
Pattern Four	subject noun, linking verb, predicate noun
Pattern Five	subject noun, linking verb, predicate adjective

Sentences in each lesson only contain concepts already taught in previous lessons. Once a concept is introduced, it always appears in every set of sentences from then on. "It is the consistent repetition and daily practice of all skills taught that make this program successful" (1989a, p. viii).

<u>Question-Answer Flow</u>

According to Shurley (personal communication, March 12, 1997) the method is "very traditional, but done in a very untraditional way." Whole-class chants teach

definitions and jingles teach the eight parts of speech. Students participate in a rhythmic, unison question-answer flow (Shurley, 1989a), a chant-like recitation that asks a series of concrete questions and whose answers tell how to label the parts of speech and the role each word plays in prescribed sentences written on the chalkboard. As the class recites the flow, the teacher or a student labels each part of speech as well as its job in the sentence. For example, the 5th-grade level sentence, "A big black snake crawled slowly over the rotten log," (Shurley & Wetsell, Information Packet, p. 10), would be written on the board. The class would read the sentence in unison and then chant:

1. What crawled slowly over the rotten log? Snake—subject noun (SN)

2. What is being said about snake? snake crawled—verb (V)

3. Crawled how? Slowly—adverb (Adv)

4. Over—preposition (P)

5. Over what? log—object of the preposition (OP)

6. What kind of log? rotten—adjective (Adj)

7. The—article adjective (A)

8. What kind of snake? Black—adjective (Adj)

9. What kind of snake? Big—adjective (Adj)

10. A—article adjective (A)

11. Subject Noun Verb—Pattern 1—Check (SN V P)

12. Over the rotten log—prepositional phrase ( )

13. Period—statement—declarative sentence (D)

14. Go back to the verb. Divide the complete subject from the complete predicate. (/)

15. Is there an adverb exception? No

16. Is this sentence in a natural or inverted order? Natural—no change. (p. 10)

During the chant, a student or the teacher would label the statement (found within the parenthesis) based on what the class chanted. There are many different question-answer flows. Each flow adds steps to what previously has been learned.

Effectivenes of the Method

According to Shurley and Wetsell (1998), the effectiveness of the method as a teaching technique is based upon several important elements:

1) Each part of speech is analyzed within the context of the whole sentence. Parts of speech are never studied in isolated units.

2) Once a concept is introduced, it is never left behind. The Shurley Method learning is cumulative. As each concept is learned, it is repeatedly applied in daily exercises throughout the year.

3) Much of the students' work is done in a group environment. This approach provides immediate feedback to the students in a non-threatening way. Students are able to learn using not only visual but also auditory and kinesthetic learning styles. When students see, hear, and say their answers, retention increases. (p. 1)

Since "grammar is the vocabulary for writing" (Shurley, Information Packet, p. 8), Shurley professes that there is a necessity for a grammar foundation that her method provides before actual training in writing skills can develop. Shurley explains in the Information Packet booklet:

Traditional programs typically emphasize the learning of isolated facts about

language. Students are seldom given the opportunity to see the function of each

part of speech within a sentence. Thus, such programs have majored on

conceptual knowledge, leaving students knowing 'things' about language without

being able to relate these concepts to writing. (p. 40)

Shurley states that what sets this skill-based method apart from the rest is it teaches

students how to merge the strong skill foundation with the writing process.

Philosophy

Although the teaching of writing is structured at all levels (Shurley, 1989a), the

program for grades one through six covers the writing process, creative writing, journal

writing, letter writing, 2- and 3- point paragraph writing, narrative and descriptive

writing, expository writing, and editing. Maintenance of skills through repetition drills is

taught to keep the degree of proficiency needed for automatic thinking to occur during

editing. "Creativity is encouraged, but kept within the structure of the Shurley Writing

Method until students master enough skills to transcend the boundaries of the Shurley

structure" (1989a, p. viii). Consequently, younger students are given little writing

freedom. The second edition spreads writing throughout the year and provides meticulous

steps to sentence structure, sentencing in paragraphs, and paragraphs becoming

developed essays. Titles based on situations, instead of prompts, are provided to initiate

student writing.

Shurley's philosophy is that a student should not be allowed to "declare boredom

with this English method" (Shurley & Wetsell, 1989a, p. xii). Although students may

have had the method in previous years, they should be reminded that just like an athlete,

practice must occur repeatedly in order for a skill to become second nature so careless mistakes won't be made. Shurley suggests that these students will have no trouble making good grades and will make excellent tutors. In the teacher's manual Shurley reminds the reader that it never hurts the class to get a review if weaker students need to spend more time to build a good foundation. "Repetition is the heart and soul of being good at anything they do in life!" (1989a, p. xii).

Reports

Although several researchers have contacted Shurley and Wetsell for information regarding the Shurley Method, Shurley Instructional Material, Inc. was unaware of any completed formal research at this time (personal communication, May 25, 1999). An upcoming study in which Southwestern University plans research of remedial college English students using the Level 7 Shurley Method has been discussed for the past two years. However, much opinion literature concerning the Shurley Method exists. Shurley provided the researcher with numerous copies of newspaper articles and personal letters reporting success stories about grammar proficiency.

A Kansas reporter explained that a special education aide in Texas told that the Shurley Method was responsible for mainstreaming children back in the regular classroom. The article went on to say that in a Liberal, Kansas, school, the principal reported that Hispanic students, representing 86% of the school, showed amazing benefits in language acquisition (Groves, 1996). The reporter continued that a Trenton, Texas, teacher, whose husband was the superintendent, reported that 100% of her students made top scores in a writing exam. A Texas editor reported a positive impact on student

retention of parts of speech and how they are used in a sentence (Parsons, 1996). In Louisiana a reporter credited the Shurley Method with improving writing overall and related the rise in California Achievement Test scores in one parish to the method, which had been implemented earlier that same semester (Daigle, 1997). Another Louisiana reporter cited the enthusiasm elementary students displayed towards the chants and jingles (McNeill, 1997). Reporters from several states (Gillham, 1992; McNeill) supported that the Shurley Method taught children the foundation of how to construct a sentence as well as gave a foundation for improved writing. A northeast Arkansas paper reported a teacher applauding the Shurley Method for producing better writers than in the past who had not had the Shurley Method as well as junior high teachers noticing a "dramatic difference" (Holland, 1996) in the English skills of Shurley Method students. A Florida teacher, who presented Shurley workshops, reported students were writing more interesting sentences (Knoer, 1996).

In personal letters to Shurley, teachers claimed the method developed a positive attitude about self and school in students (M. Casteel, personal communication with B. Shurley, July 15, 1991; A. Wilson, personal communication with B. Shurley, June 22, 1992). Newspaper articles echoed the claim (Gillham, 1992; Groves, 1996). Letters and newspapers reported Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas teachers noticing positive attitudes rising in learning disabled students as well (C. Duncan, personal communication with B. Shurley, April 30, 1990; D. Curtis, personal communication with B. Shurley, March 3, 1992; C. Maham, personal communication with B. Shurley, June 15, 1994; Eslinger, 1994; Groves, 1996; Holland, 1996).

Others from Oklahoma and Florida reported noticeable improvements in

standardized test scores (J. Raper, personal communication with B. Shurley, August 1990; Knoer, 1996) for students who used the Shurley Method for two years. A learning disabilities teacher from Oklahoma stated that since her students had used the Shurley Method, they were capitalizing and punctuating short reports, paragraphs, answers to comprehension questions, and journal entries and using descriptive words and phrases. These were skills her students had never been able to accomplish (C. Duncan, personal communication with B. Shurley, April 30, 1990). Others praised how Shurley students were helping older siblings with English homework (G. Feland, personal communication with B. Shurley, June 6, 1987; S. Luebke, personal communication with B. Shurley, April 9, 1996; Groves, 1996). Most common of all were the reports in newspapers and personal letters of student excitement and enthusiasm (G. Feland, personal communication with B. Shurley, June 6, 1987; L. Wilson, personal communication with B. Shurley, October 5, 1989; Dr. W. Beck, personal communication with B. Shurley, October, 1989; Gillham, 1992; C. Maham, personal communication with B. Shurley, June 15, 1994; Groves).

Shurley also provided the researcher with "research" from schools, which were charts with reported test scores. In Cliff, New Mexico School District, the scores on the New Mexico Writing Test of 17 fourth grade students, taught without the Shurley Method, were compared to the scores of the same students, (taught with the Shurley Method second semester) in sixth grade (Houghton, 1995b). The results showed a 1.7 average gain over a two-year period for the seventeen children that were tracked. The same class reported a 12.7 percent increase in average national percentile ranks on the language section of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (Houghton, 1995a), although the researcher calculated it to be 11.8. No information was given to calculate previous

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average gains, and no mention was made of progress of writing scores in earlier years on the ITBS.

In a middle school in Moulton, Alabama, scores on the language section of the SAT for all students in grades 4 through 7 were examined over a 2-year period (Moulton, 1997). The school reported that the only variable in the curriculum was the addition of the Shurley Method as the primary method of teaching English. The following table was presented in the report:

Table 2.2

Moulton Middle School - SAT Language Section

Grade	May 1995	1996	1997
	(w/o Shurley)	(w/ Shurley)	(w/ Shurley)
4th	48-5	59-5	63-6
5th	49-5	50-5	62-6
6th	39-4	51-5	62-6
7th	44-5	64-6	77-7

Table 2.2 appeared to document 5th-grade scores, for example, each year rather than follow a group of students through several years. Again, no mention was made of scores in previous years. Furthermore, the report listed analytic scores over the same 2-year period for 5th and 7th-grade. In 5th-grade, writing mechanics scores rose 9% the first year and 4% the following year; sentence formation scores rose 11% the first year and 4% the second year; and grammar usage scores rose 3% the first year and 12% the following year. The 7th-grade writing mechanics scores rose 0% the first year and

29% the second year; sentence formation scores rose 1% the first year and 27% the second year; and grammar usage scores increased 5% the first year and 24% the following year. Since no background information was included pertaining to scores from former years of 5th and 7th graders or former years with the reported groups, the only deduction that can be made from the report is that little or no improvement was shown by 7th-graders during the first year of Shurley Method implementation as opposed to much greater improvement indicated during the second year. However, the report described the findings as "dramatic positive results" (p. 1) and students were reported to "soar in English" (p. 1).

The "research" also included a five year written report of total language scores from Roff Public School (1995), a 1st through 8th-grade elementary school in a small rural district in Oklahoma. The 1990 to 1992 scores reflected a "traditional method of language instruction" while the 1993 and 1994 scores reflected scores after the Shurley Method was adopted. Roff Public School wrote, "We feel that our test scores reflect significate [sic] increases since 1990 and that utilizing the Shurley English method the past three years has stabilized our scores at an acceptable level." However, a look at the average scores per grade level contradicts that statement. The most significant gains in test scores occurred before implementation of the Shurley Method, with scores for grades 1st through 8th rising an average of 16.125 from 1990 to 1991 and 18.875 from 1991 to 1992. In contrast, after the Shurley Method was adopted, scores rose an average of 3.875 in 1993 and 6.625 in 1994. Seven out of eight grade levels reported scores that actually had fallen since implementing the method. The name of the specific test was not given. Additionally, the district also supported that the students' desire to learn English had

increased 100 percent.

Despite contradictions and inconsistencies in information, the Shurley Method was credited with classroom gains in all of these reports.

St. Mary's School (1998) in Orange, Texas, summed the Shurley Method up on an electronic home page in this way:

The Shurley Method has four basic ingredients that make it so successful in

meeting students' needs:

1. Skills are presented in a logical learning order.

2. There is a step-by-step method for teaching concepts that reaches the visual,

auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles of students.

3. There is enough repetition to master each concept taught.

4. The final success of any programs depends on the teacher. A teacher's

enthusiasm, involvement, and commitment will make this program a success.

(Spalding Phonics, page 2)

Conversely, two teachers using the method for more than five years (C. Stoddard, personal communication, May, 1997; J. Cook, personal communication, September, 1997) cited their personal observations to the researcher. The two teachers felt their students "loved" the verbal Shurley exercises, but, little, if any, transfer of the grammar knowledge was reflected in student writing.

Research

Although Shurley Instructional Materials, Inc. was unaware of formal published research, in an eleven week experimental-control group study, Williams (1998) compared

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the effects of the Shurley Method on the attitude and writing performance of 12 4th-grade students with the attitude and writing performance of 16 4th-grade students who were not instructed by the Shurley Method. The school district in which the Shurley Method classroom (Shurley English group—SE) was located had used the Shurley Method for several years before it was adopted as the official language program for the 1996-1997 school year. Most of the students in the SE group had received instruction with the Shurley Method since the first grade. Language instruction in the SE group consisted of the Shurley Method boardwork, Shurley Method worksheets, and supplemental exercises taken from a language textbook and a reading workbook. Reading and writing were treated as separate subjects with the study of discrete skills, basal readers, and workbooks emphasized. Once a week, the teacher selected writing topics or structured practice in different types of sentences. The non-Shurley group (non-Shurley English—NSE) was involved throughout each day in authentic reading and writing. A literature-based approach was used as students read and wrote across the curriculum. Textbooks were used as resources. Students collaborated on many activities, wrote in various response journals and logs, and read daily for various purposes. Much pleasure reading was encouraged.

Williams collected data during five meetings with the SE group and the NSE group. To determine group differences in the knowledge of discrete grammar skills, a criterion-referenced test, the Shurley Method pre-test for 4th-grade, was administered at the onset of the study and the Shurley Method posttest for 4th-grade was given at the close of the study. The tests required labeling words in a sentence according to the part of speech, answering specific questions about adjectives and adverbs, and correcting

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punctuation in sentences. The SE group scored significantly higher (Mean = 67.93 and Mean = 65.74) than the NSE group (Mean = 33.66 and Mean = 19.83) on both tests, with the NSE group performing "exceptionally poorly overall" (Williams, 1998, p. 68).

Four different writing prompts were used to generate writing samples over the course of the study. The writing samples were scored analytically on Content, Organization, and Mechanics by a team of judges. Analysis of variance was used to compare the writing proficiency between the two groups. A significance level of alpha = 0.05 was used.

Despite the NSE group showing little ability in identifying parts of speech on the criterion-referenced test, the NSE group outperformed the SE group on the Mechanics sub-scores of all four writing samples. The only significant difference in the Content subscores was on the fourth writing sample. The NSE scores rose on the last sample to 8 (out of a possible 10) while the SE scores went down to 5. The Organization subscores showed the NSE group scoring significantly higher than the SE group on the first and fourth writing samples; the two groups scored similarly on the second and third samples. The Total scores were similar to the Organization subscores. In summary, the SE group did not outperform the NSE in any of the four writing samples for any writing sub-score. Moreover, the SE group did not outperform the NSE group in overall writing ability. Furthermore, the NSE group consistently outperformed the SE group in Mechanics subscores.

Williams' (1998) Writing Attitude Survey showed little discrepancy among the participants. One group did not indicate having a more positive attitude about writing than the other group.

As Williams hypothesized, the results of the study indicated that the grammar study approach of the Shurley English method did not result in better writing performance than that of the non-Shurley English method. Moreover, Williams' Writing Attitude Survey indicated that both groups had similar attitudes about writing.

Summary

This chapter presented a review of the literature pertaining to types of grammar, learning and language acquisition, traditional grammar instructional practices, and the effects of teaching traditional grammar on student writing. Chapter II also addressed alternatives to teaching writing, such as Process Writing and the Shurley Method.

Since this research study examined the traditional grammar approach, the Shurley Method of Teaching English, and Process Writing as avenues to better writing for children, it seemed critical to determine if the professional literature offered justification for using the traditional sequential, isolated skills approach. A substantial body of literature existed on how learning takes place and how language is acquired. Much of the literature indicated that real learning occurs continually as a result of observations, active experiences and social interaction and not necessarily through the transmission of isolated information. The literature supported the acute need for educators to use knowledge of how children acquire learning and language as a foundation for curriculum and instructional strategies. Therefore, educators must not underestimate the importance of action and social relationships to cognitive development.

Research indicated that oral language acquisition is learned almost effortlessly through active involvement in communication. Many writing theorists, therefore, posited

that knowledge of how oral language develops might give insight into how to more efficiently facilitate the learning of written language.

Many researchers (Elbow, 1973; Hillocks, 1987; Holdzkom et al., 1983; Murray, 1978) supported Process Writing. Likewise, many theorists (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1986, 1994; Graves, 1975, 1983, 1994; Harwayne, 1992; Macrorie, 1984; Routman, 1991; Tompkins, 1990; Weaver, 1996) lauded Process Writing for successful writing improvement. The Shurley Method: English Made Easy claimed that writing skills improved rapidly with the understanding of the parts of a sentence. The Shurley Method Information Packet (Shurley & Wetsell, n.d.) stated, "Knowledge of grammar and how it relates to writing is now at a very high, functional level, and the success they are experiencing gives them the opportunity to achieve beyond their expectations" (p. 5). Based on Shurley's claim and with the wide acceptance of the Shurley Method, it is critical to determine if competent language use in writing does, in fact, occur as a result of instruction through the Shurley Method. This study, therefore, investigated the effect of traditional grammar instruction, Process Writing, and the Shurley Method on the written language of 5th-grade students.

Chapter III presents an overview of the experimental design regarding the participants involved in the experiment, the format of the treatment, and the instruments used for data gathering.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

This study was designed to determine over a period of time if there were significant differences in the narrative/descriptive writing performance as measured by holistic scoring as well as the writing attitudes of students who learned grammar within the context of writing compared to students who were taught discrete grammar rules prior to writing. Four different fifth grade groups, representing different writing approaches, were used over a 17-week period: (a) the Process Writing group (PW), (b) the Process Writing/Textbook group (PW/T), (c) the Process Writing/Shurley Method group (PW/S), and (d) the Shurley Method group (S). A description of each approach to teaching writing follows:

1. The PW group wrote, revised, edited, peer and teacher collaborated in conferences, published, and shared writing pieces in author's chair each day. Grammar instruction was taught in the context of daily authentic writing and reading opportunities. Writers were encouraged to concentrate on meaning in writing and then on grammar.

2. The PW/T group implemented steps from the writing process, but spent little time collaborating about revising and editing. Writers often shared their writing with partners. Some were given the opportunity to share with the whole class. Grammar instruction consisted of learning discrete grammar skills and mechanics

predominately from an English textbook. Work sheets supplemented the textbook when a skill needed to be reinforced.

3. The PW/S group supplemented Process Writing with a generic writing system, the Shurley Method: English Made Easy, every other week. The first two steps of the writing process, pre-writing and drafting, were addressed. Revision consisted of whole group collaboration after author's chair; editing was the responsibility of the teacher.

4. The S group followed the Shurley Method, a pre-packaged, explicit, step-by-step method of learning isolated grammar rules prior to writing, four days a week. Worksheets from an English basal supplemented the grammar program. One day a week the teacher assigned a topic for students to write about which required a certain number of parts of speech.

The comparison of writing produced from the four methods of instruction provided insight into the age-old question of whether or not the memorizing and practicing of isolated grammar rules and skills result in knowledge that transfers to writing, thus helping to determine the value of a current writing system, the Shurley Method: English Made Easy.

In this chapter, a description of the sampling procedure, teachers, students, and the instructional setting are described. In addition, the instrumentation, research design, data collection, and analysis procedures are discussed.

Sampling Procedure

The four classes examined for this study were: a) a Process Writing class, b) a

Process Writing/Textbook class, c) a Process Writing/Shurley Method class, and a d) a Shurley Method class. Besides studying a Process Writing class and a Shurley Method class, the researcher felt it was important to examine classes that were taught grammar and writing in a combination of methods since that approach appeared to be most prevalent after polling the fifth grade teachers in one school district.

Following consent from a school district Director of Elementary Instruction for a study on grammar and writing, the district Language Arts Curriculum Coordinator polled the fifth grade teachers with an inquiry letter to generate a list of teachers who used the Shurley Method. Additionally, the coordinator compiled a list of fifth grade teachers known to implement Process Writing.

The researcher explained the purpose of the study and the procedure during a telephone conversation with each teacher suggested from the poll and the list. After a discussion of teaching philosophy and classroom practices, a teacher from one building seemed to implement a Process Writing/Textbook approach to teaching writing and a teacher from another building seemed to represent a Process Writing/Shurley Method approach. The Language Arts Coordinator agreed that targeting two different elementary schools within the district was necessary to observe the best examples of these two instructional methods. The two teachers volunteered to participate in the study and the two principals gave telephone permission.

Since the above telephone conversations with the initial list of teachers indicated none of them used solely the Shurley Method or Process Writing, the director of one of the state Writing Projects (J. Alberts, phone conversation, November, 1997) recommended a fifth grade Process Writing teacher in a nearby school district. By

telephone, the principal of the suggested teacher approved the study and the teacher agreed, pending permission from the District Curriculum Director. Additionally, following a telephone interview, Brenda Shurley supplied a list of Shurley Method teachers from surrounding towns and nearby states that she had observed personally. After telephone interviews with three of the suggested Shurley Method teachers, the researcher determined that the schools were too distant for consideration. Word of mouth led the researcher to a school in a nearby district that had adopted the Shurley Method seven years ago and whose students recently presented a demonstration program of the method for principals and teachers. In a telephone conversation, the principal agreed to the study if any of the fifth grade teachers expressed interest. One teacher volunteered.

The purpose of the study and an explanation of the procedure were explained by telephone to these two teachers. A discussion of teaching philosophies and classroom practices indicated that the teachers implemented the Process Writing approach and the Shurley Method.

All district Curriculum Coordinators/Directors of Elementary Instruction were contacted for final district permission. Two of the coordinators gave telephone consent for the study. The third district requested a district research request proposal to be submitted (see Appendix B). The research request was presented and accepted.

Next, personal after school visits were made to meet the teachers. Teacher education, teaching experience, teaching philosophy, individual techniques for literacy instruction, and classroom procedures were discussed (see Appendix C). Each teacher signed a teacher consent form (see Appendix D). The selection process ended with classroom visitations during a language arts lesson to view the four approaches to

teaching writing in action. After a discussion of the researchers' findings from the interviews, the district Language Arts Director and the researcher determined that a clear representation of the following instructional methods was evident: Process Writing (PW), Process Writing/Textbook (PW/T), Process Writing/Shurley Method (PW/S), and Shurley Method (S).

Follow up letters were sent to the district Curriculum Coordinators/Directors of Elementary Instruction (see Appendix E) and principals (see Appendix F) describing the purpose of the study, the details of the research procedure, and the confidentiality of the names of students, teachers, schools, and districts. Copies of all forms and correspondences for the research study were included. Teachers received copies of all forms and correspondences as well.

Student Participants

The student sample population consisted of 64 students from four lower-middle class (determined by free lunch count) fifth grades representing three school districts in communities located in central Oklahoma. Each class engaged in the study was an intact group before the study. Each school considered its class to be heterogeneous in overall ability and cultural balance at the beginning of the school year. The building principals had assigned students to the four groups at the beginning of the school year without considering the study.

Sixteen student participants represented the Process Writing group (PW). Instruction was based on writing across the curriculum with many varied opportunities for daily writing about relevant issues in the students' lives, teaching grammar skills

within the context of student writing, daily author's chair, much student collaboration about shared writing pieces, and freedom for student autonomy to construct knowledge. Most student participants came from previous classrooms that placed importance in Process Writing. The PW group included 7 males (44%) and 9 females (56%). The group was represented by 1 African student (6%) and 15 Caucasian students (94%). One student participant qualified for the gifted program, but chose not to participate. None of the PW students were served in Reading Lab; one student participant was served in a Learning Disabilities Lab. Parents denied the participation of two students in the study (a male Native American Indian student and a female African American student). These students were not included in the reported student participant numbers.

The Process Writing/Textbook group (PW/T) represented a classroom that provided varied opportunities for writing in different subject areas throughout the week, encouraged partner editing as well as teaching specific grammar skills to the class from a textbook, and provided time for sharing writing pieces on many occasions. The 19 student members in the PW/T group represented 9 males (47%) and 10 females (53%), including 2 African American students (11%), 16 sixteen Caucasian students (84%), and 1 Hispanic student (5%). No student participants qualified for the gifted program; the school served 1 student participant in Reading Lab and 1 student participant in Learning Disabilities Lab. One parent denied student participation in the study (African American male), 1 student moved before the study ended (Caucasian female), and 1 student joined the group after the study began (Caucasian male). These three students were not included in the reported student participant numbers.

The 12-member Process Writing/Shurley group (PW/S) represented a classroom

that provided opportunities for writing stories as well as recitation with the Shurley Method: English Made Easy grammar drills and workbook pages. Instead of incorporating the Shurley Method writing segment, the teacher designed writing prompts to generate creative, narrative/descriptive stories similar to the prompts used in the State Writing Assessment. Sometimes the students read writing pieces to the class, and members of the class commented on what they liked about the story or what they would omit. The teacher provided written input on some writing pieces and simply read others to make certain the assignment had been completed. The student participants in the PW/S group included 5 males (42%) and 7 females (58%), with 1 African American student (8%) and 11 Caucasian students (92%). One student participant was served in a gifted program one day per week; none of the student participants were served in Reading Lab or Learning Disabilities Lab. Seven parents denied student permission to participate in the study (2 males and 5 females; all Caucasian); these students were not included in the reported student participant numbers.

The Shurley Method group (S) was comprised of 17 student participants who were taught grammar in isolation through the Shurley Method: English Made Easy with oral drills, chants, question-answer flows with explicit board sentences, and follow up workbook pages four days of the week. A period was set aside on Fridays for an assigned writing task. The writing tasks included the 3-point paragraph suggested in the Shurley Method manual, assigned topics requiring a specific number of a particular part(s) of speech to be included, and two informational papers generated from an assigned beginning sentence about a specific topic in social studies or science that had been studied in the textbook. Group S consisted of Caucasian student participants, 11 males

(65%) and 6 females (35%). Five students participants qualified as gifted; no students were served in Reading Lab, and 1 was served in Learning Disabilities Lab. All students participated in the study.

A description of the participants in the Process Writing group, the Process Writing/Textbook group, the Process Writing/Shurley Method group and the Shurley Method by age, gender, race, and special learning needs is provided in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Fifth Grade Participants

	PW	PW/T	PW/S	S
Number	16	19	12	17
Ages	10-11	10-11	10-11	10-11
Male	44%	47%	42%	65%
Female	56%	53%	58%	35%
African	6%	0%	0%	0%
African American	0%	11%	8%	0%
Caucasian	94%	84%	92%	100%
Hispanic	0%	5%	0%	0%
Native American	0%	0%	0%	0%
Gifted	6%	0%	8%	29%
Reading Lab	0%	5%	0%	0%
LD Lab	6%	5%	0%	6%

School Districts

The student population of the PW group's school district was 5,539, with six
elementary schools, kindergarten through fifth grade, in the district. The district, located
in a town of approximately 37,500 people, was in close proximity to one of the major
cities in the state. The PW group's school enrollment was 492 students served by 41
teachers, which included all elementary special needs teachers in the district. A federally
subsidized reading program was provided. The district was considered predominantly
lower-middle class, based on a free and reduced lunch count, according to the director of
food services (telephone conversation, November 1997).

Student participants of the PW/T group, located in a town with a population of
55,000, were from a suburban school district that combined two connected towns and two
townships resulting in a student population of 15,520. The PW/T group's school was one
of 17 kindergarten through 6th grade elementary schools in the district. Twenty-seven
teachers served the 340 students enrolled in the school. The school provided a federally
subsidized reading program for students in kindergarten through third grade.

Student participants in the PW/S group were from a nearby school in the same
school district and town as the PW/T group with a student enrollment of 500 and 23
teachers and 6 teacher assistants. This school also had a federally subsidized reading
program, but it was for students in grades first through fourth. The district was considered
predominantly lower-middle class, based on a free and reduced lunch count, according to
the director of food services (telephone conversation, November 1997). Although the

surrounding neighborhood appeared to be middle class, the Director of Elementary Instruction considered the students predominantly in the lower range of middle class, based on the number of children living in outer lying apartment dwellings and lower income housing.

The S group's student participants were from a town consisting of 12 square miles, but with a school district area reaching 77 square miles into a nearby city. Although the population of the town was 12,000, the student enrollment of the school district was 26,000, with five elementary schools, kindergarten through fifth grade. The S group's school included 473 students in grades 1 through 5 and 38 teachers. The school housed the only federally subsidized reading lab in the district. Socio-economically, the principal considered the students in the S group in the lower range of middle class based on a free and reduced lunch count.

Intact groups create differences even before a study begins (Gay, 1992). Knowing this weakness of intact groups, the researcher made every effort to select equivalent groups. Equivalence was established by considering school enrollment, class size, classroom teacher/student ratio, socio-economic level, cultural diversity, school lunch assistance, and teacher/student rapport, which was evaluated by direct informal classroom observations and a teacher interview. Since the socio-economic status and overall writing abilities of groups can vary somewhat, the January writing sample at the beginning of the study was used to examine the effects of differential selection.

Teachers

All four female teachers held a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education and

represented exclusively elementary level teaching experiences. When asked to describe the teaching ability displayed by the teacher being considered for the study, each principal referred to the teacher as a "master teacher."

The teacher of the PW group had completed 20 graduate hours towards a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction and was presently completing requirements for the National Teaching Certificate. Her 11 years of teaching included pre-kindergarten, first, second, fourth, and fifth grade and elementary students who were educable mentally handicapped. When the researcher entered the PW classroom, the teacher was never obvious. She inconspicuously moved from student to student or group to group or modeled writing by quietly writing somewhere in the room as the students wrote. When she gave directions or explanations, she usually sat with the class. For the most part, teacher and students exchanged ideas as if simply in conversation with one another. Student autonomy was at the center of the curriculum, which was guided by a constructivist philosophy.

The PW/T group's teacher had 7 years of teaching experience in fifth grade. Unlike the other teachers, she received her degree later in life after her own children were older and, therefore, felt she brought much personal experience with children to the profession. Twenty hours of graduate work toward a Masters in Education had also been completed. Although she taught from the front of the classroom, informal classroom observations revealed that she often traveled along the rows of desks, checking to see if students were on task. In her awareness of student needs, she seemed extremely focused on helping children succeed. Many discussion questions were open and geared to the student putting themselves in someone else's shoes. The teacher often asked thought-

provoking questions to students having difficulty beginning a task instead of telling them how to begin and what to do. The teacher's demeanor was very respectful and "easy" with the students.

The teacher of the PW/S group had 17 years of teaching experience in second, fourth, and fifth grade as well as a year as an elementary counselor. She earned a Masters in Guidance and Counseling plus 30 additional hours of graduate work. Informal classroom observations indicated that PW/S teacher taught sitting at her desk, instructing students to come to her with questions or to turn in assignments. During a Shurley Method lesson, she sat in front of the class on a tall director's chair.

The S group's teacher had 13 years of experience in third, fourth, and fifth grades and had completed 18 hours towards a Masters in Education. Informal classroom observations revealed that she taught from the front of the room, using the chalkboard often. Sometimes she walked up and down the rows of desks as she led the discussion. The teacher was very encouraging and respectful as she asked many answer specific questions. Her focus was to prepare students for state testing.

Each teacher completed a questionnaire to describe teaching philosophy based on the following categories: basal/skills approach, literature-based approach, interdisciplinary approach, a combination approach, and an autonomous approach (see Appendix G). The PW teacher described herself as a literature-based, interdisciplinary teacher who provided much time for her class to operate as autonomous learners. She focused on students writing across the curriculum and taught isolated information with a mini-lesson approach, using textbooks only for resources. The push towards state testing was never mentioned. The PW/T teacher characterized herself as a teacher moving more

and more toward literature-based instruction for different subject areas, using textbooks and drill when necessary to prepare students for the District and State Criterion-Referenced Tests. When possible, she incorporated Process Writing. The PW/S teacher also described herself as a literature-based teacher in reading, using audio taped stories from the reading basal one day a week and classroom sets of novels the other days. Rather than use the English textbook, she incorporated the Shurley Method oral drills and some of the Shurley Method workbook pages. Some Process Writing steps were implemented to practice for the State Criterion-Referenced Test in Writing. The S teacher depicted herself as a combination teacher, using literature-based instruction by incorporating novel units with comprehension questions, vocabulary, and oral class reading after students had a chance to practice reading to themselves. Lessons also came from the Reading textbook and workbooks. The teacher had participated in the schoolwide implementation of the Shurley Method for the past seven years. Her curriculum was skill-based to prepare students for the State Criterion-Referenced Tests.

Classroom Environment—PW

Bulletin boards without captions consisted of posters of famous art, enlarged pictures of children, quotes, or children's work. No prepackaged room decoration materials were used. Displays around the room featured poetry, famous artists, and magazines. Many bookshelves of different sizes and shapes containing a variety of books used as resources and literature for pleasure reading lined the walls. Children sat in self-chosen clusters of desks or at tables. A couch and an easel with a large flip chart for class collaborations created an area in the room for class "team time."

The teacher described the curriculum as a reality based curriculum connected to real life using real world resources instead of limiting information gathering to books only. A family-to-classroom connection was stimulated through activities that supported interaction between the two.

The teacher characterized the writing opportunities as "based on relevant connections to each child's life." In being exposed to a variety of literature on a continual basis, the students had the advantage of experiencing many other people's writing. Much of the students' day was filled with relevant writing opportunities. The teacher encouraged the students to use writing in a variety of meaningful ways for varied audiences. When asked to describe the qualities of good writing, the teacher listed "the 4 Cs—content, cohesiveness, clarity, and creativity."

Student autonomy was at the hub of all activities. Each morning the students planned the daily schedule. They consistently set aside much time each day for writing, student booktalks, planning sessions, and small group discussions. Rather than prompts to induce writing, student choice was at the center of the writing experience. Each school day began with a "Good Morning Journal" entry. The students individually formulated journal topics or they referred to the list of 100 journal-writing ideas they generated the first day of school. Students selected writing topics by either developing favorite journal entries into stories or creating new topics. Books, personal experiences, art, questions, and family life added to the possibilities of writing prompts. The teacher capitalized on many reality-based opportunities for writing. Students wrote intercom commercials for the school fund-raisers, poetry and stories about current events, letters to the teacher about student misunderstandings and gripes, notes for student mail, concerns about

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substitute teachers, booktalks, class presentations, and letters to classroom guests and resource people. Students wrote quietly with no teacher direction for long periods of time. Pairs of students eagerly collaborated in a whisper, seeking or giving suggestions to revise and improve a writing piece. Peer editors applied for the classroom job and made themselves available for editing conferences. Small groups met on occasion for revising.

Sometimes the teacher used a rubric to assess student writing and other times the piece was simply read and returned. Individual student/teacher conferences were held regularly to provide verbal feedback from the teacher; student writing was discussed and the teacher offered ways to improve the piece. Grammar was taught in the context of the student's authentic writing and the teacher and student agreed on a new skill for the writer to practice. The teacher conducted class or small group mini-lessons, as needed, with the purpose of presenting ideas and writing skills that would enhance writing.

Many students signed up each day for author's chair, which was a beauty shop chair in the center of the room. Writing pieces did not have to be final drafted before sharing. Spelling words came from words students selected from their reading that they found to be interesting and felt would be helpful in their writing.

Self-appointed teams taught science. The teams selected a subject from the science themes the class had listed the first day of school. The teams investigated many resources, took notes, designed illustrations, planned presentations, and presented the lessons. Team members varied depending on presentation topics.

The class collaborated during team time in mini-lessons about poetry, reality math, current events, upcoming science presentations, and other activities. An interdisciplinary approach was obvious as subject areas intertwined in any one activity.

The students also addressed class problems during team time.

Classroom Environment—PW/T

The PW/T group represented a combination of both Process Writing and the English textbook approach. Along one side of the classroom, a variety of books for pleasure reading filled a large greeting card display case and two tall bookshelves. Pre-packaged posters explaining the Writing Process decorated the walls. Student desks were lined end to end in three different rows. The teacher wrote the daily assignments in a permanently marked subject-by-subject chart on the side chalkboard.

In the PW/T group, a literature-based approach to reading prevailed with reading response logs for various purposes within novel units. The teacher felt reading trade books as a group created an "equalizer in the classroom that balanced the program" between trade books and basal readers. She found that reading as a group drew even the low ability children into reading, giving them a sense of accomplishment. Vocabulary from the reading basal was taught through independent morning reading to prepare students for District Criterion-Referenced Tests. Additionally, the vocabulary words from the basal story comprised the majority of the week's spelling list. Students read books from the classroom library and the school library. The teacher encouraged students to free read from the Accelerated Reader list and gave high priority to allowing the class computer time to answer the prepackaged comprehension questions accompanying the Accelerated Reader program.

Many different types of writing were employed based on the students' parallel personal experiences similar to the characters' experiences in the novels. Freedom was

encouraged within the guidelines given for writing. Partners and small groups collaborated on revision and editing although the teacher felt most students had difficulty helping others improve writing pieces. Some students eagerly shared their writing pieces standing at the front of the class. The English textbook supplemented by work sheets was used to teach discrete grammar skills and mechanics. Students referred to the science basal for resource information, learning process skills through experiments and discussions. The teacher taught math and social studies as separate subjects using textbooks with some historical fiction supplementing the social studies. Opportunities for journaling were provided within math and social studies.

The environment was relaxed. Students seemed to feel free to ask the teacher quietly for help or help each other quietly without specific permission.

The teacher assessed student writing by correcting some grammar errors and misspellings and assigning a letter grade. She also wrote questions to pinpoint details that should have been included in the piece.

Classroom Environment—PW/S

In the PW/S classroom, desks were lined end to end in groupings of two or three. A small bookshelf in the back of the room served as the classroom library. On the chalkboard at the back of the class, a movable discipline chart indicated consequential steps for each student's marker. Throughout the classroom, all bulletin board space and posters referred to writing in some way. Some were pre-packaged and some were not. A word of the day was posted and the past words of the day were arranged along the ceiling for students to refer to in their writing. A Shurley Method bulletin board in the front of

the class labeled the parts of speech with a description of each.

A combination of both the Process Writing and the Shurley Method was used on by alternating weeks. The students had first used the Shurley Method during the last few weeks of school the year before. During Shurley Method lessons, each student referred to a 'Shurley folder" reproduced by the teacher that contained all needed information for oral responses. The students and teacher read the four types of sentences aloud, recited jingles, definitions of parts of speech, chants, flows, and songs. Once the students became familiar with the question-answer flows, students, rather than the teacher, took turns labeling sentences on the board as the class chanted together telling how to label each word. Many times the teacher would stop speaking and the class would easily continue without her. Most students participated in all the oral sessions observed, but in a rather mechanical way that required teacher prompting such as "Come on guys." As the class chanted the question-answer flows, different students took turns labeling the information above the sentences written on the board. Occasionally, as needed, the teacher reproduced the workbook pages to supplement the daily lesson or to review a previously taught skill.

During process writing weeks, the teacher offered writing prompts to generate creative stories. Students concentrated on pre-writing and rough drafting since the State Criterion-Referenced Test in Writing spoke to those two writing steps. Volunteers read stories to the class. Students could make suggestions if they followed with a compliment. The teacher sometimes graded the writing pieces by correcting the grammar, misspellings, and mechanics and assigning a letter grade.

The PW/S teacher implemented a literature-based approach to teaching reading

skills through various classroom sets of novels. The teacher stated that, "to keep the story moving," either the teacher or the better readers read aloud. Comprehension and getting to know the characters in the novels were the central focus. Commercial novel units guided vocabulary, comprehension questions, and some enrichment activities. Once a week the class listened to a reading basal story on tape. Students were encouraged to select books for pleasure reading from the Accelerated Reader List and to answer the computer-generated questions following completion of a book.

Math, social studies, and science were taught from textbooks. The teacher demonstrated science experiments when possible. Writing assigned in these subjects consisted of answering questions at the end of the chapters in science and social studies and sometimes making up math word problems.

Classroom Environment—Group S

In the S group, the desks were clustered in groups of fours during the teacher/researcher personal interview. However, by the time the researcher observed the class in a language lesson, the teacher had arranged the desks in traditional rows, which remained until the last few weeks of the semester. The teacher commented that she felt she had more control over the students with the row arrangement. A large bookshelf and a couch created a reading area. Many wooden accessories and artificial flowers decorated the room. The walls, wallpapered in bulletin board paper to cover marred brick, displayed many pre-packaged bulletin board materials. Posters with the State Objectives for each subject area lined one wall.

The school district in which the S group was located adopted the Shurley Method

seven years ago. Therefore, according to the teacher, most of the students in the S group had learned English grammar and mechanics with the Shurley Method since first grade. Although some teachers in various elementary schools throughout the district failed to implement the Shurley Method, the principal of the S group required all teachers in the school to use the Shurley Method for language instruction each day.

The teacher followed the systematic teacher's manual for fifth grade as well as the student workbook pages. At least thirty minutes a day for four days a week was set aside for Shurley Method instruction. The first four parts of speech chants were introduced and practiced at the first of the school year. The teacher led the oral question-answer flows pertaining to sentences written on an overhead projector, and a student labeled the sentences reflected on the board as the class chanted together telling how to label each word. The volume of the student voices was low. Some students seemed to only "mouth" the chants and fidget. From time to time, the teacher stopped leading the flow and the voices of the class members became even weaker.

For more reinforcement of discrete grammar skills, the teacher supplemented Shurley Method workbook pages with worksheets from various previously adopted workbooks. In writing the teacher concentrated only on the Shurley Method three-point paragraph in the past, but she had decided recently that the opportunity for writing in ways that were less structured was the missing element in the curriculum. Consequently, with this she continued with the Shurley Method question-answer flows and workbook pages four days a week, but added a "creative writing" element on Fridays. The Shurley Method Teacher's Manual (1989a) suggested the following:

Try to find some uninterrupted class time specifically for creative writing. . . .

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You might want to provide titles or lead-in sentences of your own to get them

started. You can also choose from several different kinds of creative writing ideas

that have been provided on the following pages. . . . If you have time, you may

want to establish time to share selected stories. (p. xv)

Therefore, the teacher chose to provide her own topics for writing as well as requirements

for the story such as a set number of adjectives, adverbs, and/or similes. Two bulletin

boards were made from informational writing about science and social studies at the end

of the semester. Each writing piece began with a mimeographed lead in sentence. This

change in writing instruction was made in an attempt to prepare the students for the State

Criterion-Referenced Test in Writing. In the past, the teacher felt the open-ended writing

prompts on the State Writing Test had been difficult for the students. The teacher graded

classroom stories with letter grades, concentrating on parts of speech, usage, and

mechanics.

Writing was seldom integrated into other subject areas. All subjects were

addressed separately and taught traditionally. Reading was taught with the basal reader,

emphasizing isolated skills. Students first read the story silently and then the class took

turns reading it aloud. The teacher felt it was difficult to evaluate the workbook pages

that included questions that generated open opinion answers. Therefore, she and several

teaching cohorts created comprehension question worksheets about each basal story.

Vocabulary and skill exercises were assigned in the accompanying workbook. Four

purchased novel units supplemented the reading basal through the year. First, the class

silently read a chapter. Next students took turns reading the chapter aloud to the class and

discussed comprehension questions and vocabulary words. The S group also participated

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in the Accelerated Reader program. The class silently read for a 30-minute period each day. Students also read Accelerated Reader books if they completed an assignment early. Upon completing a novel from the Accelerated Reader list, students answered questions about the book on the three computers available in the classroom, receiving points for correct answers. The students were assigned a particular time to use the computers during the week.

Instrumentation

The researcher collected data during one interview session with each teacher and seven classroom visits with each group, spaced throughout the 17 weeks of the 1998 spring semester. The data collected included (a) a teacher philosophy questionnaire (see Appendix G); (b) student writing samples gathered over time (see Appendixes P, Q, R, and S); and (c) two different student attitude measures about writing gathered over time (see Appendixes H and I). Although informal observations of routine classroom activities took place during the introductory session and at the time of each data collection session, three additional informal observations were conducted at times other than scheduled data collection sessions to allow the researcher to substantiate previously gathered information from the teachers about teaching philosophy, practice, and classroom routines.

Teacher Philosophy About Writing

The researcher asked the four teachers in this study to respond to a Teacher Philosophy Questionnaire (see Appendix G) at the beginning of the study. The questionnaire inquired about the teachers' philosophical approach to teaching language

arts. This information was used to describe the teachers in the previous section.

Student Attitude About Writing

Atwell (1987) reported, "Learning is more likely to happen when students like what they are being asked to do" (p. 38). Furthermore, Smith (1982) suggested that an environment must be provided in which a child will have the desire to write, adding "writing is learned by . . . perceiving oneself as a writer" (p. 199). Students must see themselves as authors with something important to say and as "writers with the power to initiate texts that command the attention of others" (Graves, 1994, p. 44).

For the above reasons, the researcher collected student data about attitude toward writing during two sessions, in January 1998 and in May 1998. Data included: (a) a measure of attitude about writing from an informal multiple choice survey, adapted from Atwell (1987), Rief (1992), and Williams (1998) (see Appendix H) and (b) a 20-question Likert scale writing attitude survey by Reigstad and McAndrew (1984) (see Appendix I).

The informal attitude survey designed by the researcher consisted of six questions in multiple choice format that inquired about the students' feelings about writing, reasons for writing, and frequency of writing. In addition, the survey inquired if students perceived themselves as a writer.

No writing attitude scales were found for elementary age students. After examining attitude scales designed for junior high to college age students (Daly & Miller, 1975; Emig & King, 1979; Matheson, 1980; O'Neal, 1984; Reigstad & McAndrews, 1984; Thompson, 1980), the Reigstad and McAndrews' Writing Attitude Scale (1984) for students (see Appendix I) was selected. The Reigstad and McAndrews' Writing Attitude

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Scale was adapted from the Daly-Miller Attitude Scale (1975), which was developed

from similar tests of attitude in speech communication (Thompson, 1980). The Daly-

Miller Attitude Scale was constructed to deal with some form of apprehension about

writing: anxiety about writing in general, teacher evaluation of writing, peer evaluation of

writing, environments for writing, and professional evaluations. Following analysis of 63

items, 26 items, composed into a Likert-type scale format, each with five possible

responses, were kept. The reliability of the Daly-Miller instrument was .940; re-test

reliability over a week was .923.

After closely comparing the Daly-Miller Writing Attitude Scale and the Reigstad-

McAndrew Writing Attitude Scale, the researcher determined the Reigstad-McAndrew

Writing Attitude Scale was more appropriate for elementary children due to subject

matter and length. The Reigstad-McAndrew Writing Attitude Scale included twenty

statements which students responded to on a five point Likert-type scale, ranging from

strongly disagree to strongly agree. Statements dealt with anxiety about writing in

general, teacher evaluation of writing, peer evaluation of writing, and self-evaluation of

writing and its worth. Eleven of the statements on the Reigstad-McAndrew Scale (R-M)

(# 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 15, 16, 19, 20) are identical to statements on the Daly-Miller Scale

(D-M). Two of the statements on the D-M are almost the same (#3—"I look forward to

writing down my ideas" and #10—"I like to write my ideas down"); R-M omitted one of

them (#10). Two statements on the R-M are similar to two statements on the D-M (R-M

#3—"I hate writing" is similar to D-M #1—"I avoid writing"; R-M #12—"In my major

or field of future occupation, writing is an enjoyable experience" is similar to D-M #17

"Writing is a lot of fun") Two R-M statements are worded as direct opposites to two D-M

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statements (R-M #13—"I seem to be able to write down my ideas clearly," D-M # 16—"I never seem to be able to clearly write down my ideas"; R-M #3—"I hate writing," D-M # 17—"Writing is a lot of fun"). Eight statements on the Daly-Miller Scale were not included in the Reigstad-McAndrew Scale. One statement dealt with composition course work, one with submitting writing for publication, and the others were miscellaneous statements about handing in compositions and writing well or poorly.

Writing Samples

Many studies (Finkelstein, 1992; Hughes & Martin, 1992; Jackiewicz, 1995; Meyer, 1995; Thompson, 1991; Williams, 1998) reported collecting a writing sample at the beginning and the end to measure writing performance improvement over time. Therefore, each participant was asked to write two descriptive/narrative writing samples. The researcher collected the January sample in the second week of the study during a 50-minute writing period. Likewise, in May at the close of the 17-week study the researcher gathered the second sample in the same way. The writing sessions were designed and conducted like the Fifth Grade State Criterion-Referenced Test in Writing (N. Edwards, personal interview, March 12, 1997).

Since children sometimes find it difficult to respond to a given topic if it does not tap into personal knowledge or interest (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994), careful attention was given to designing separate open-ended writing prompts geared towards interests of fifth grade students. The purpose in the prompts was to elicit narrative/descriptive writing, eliminate obstacles of subject matter, stimulate immediate student writing, and allow for flexibility. Although bound by a prompt, the students could

control the direction of the story, basing it on a true experience or creating a fictitious storyline. This flexibility enabled them to draw from personal knowledge, interests, and experience (Harwayne, 1992; Rief, 1992; Tompkins, 1990).

To ensure instrumentation validity (Gay, 1992; Keppel, 1991), prompts were made as parallel as possible to assure the consistency of measurement. The validity of the prompts was evaluated on consistency of difficulty as well as level of student interest by (a) a school district Language Arts Curriculum Coordinator, (b) a university language arts specialist, and (c) the researcher. Due to the nature of the writing tests, the potential interactive effect of the two writing samples was not a factor.

Research Design

A quasi-experimental design was used since randomization was impossible. Four fifth grade classes were studied. The experimental treatment groups consisted of fifth grade students taught writing through (a) Process Writing (PW), (b) Process Writing/supplemented with English textbook instruction (PW/T), (c) Process Writing/supplemented with the Shurley Method (PW/S), and (d) the Shurley Method (S). The independent variables were the method of instruction (group membership) and time of sample (samples collected from each participant at two different times). The dependent variables were the writing performance scores and attitude scores taken from the Writing Attitude Scale (see Appendix I). In addition, each student was given an informal Writing Attitude Survey (see Appendix H) to determine if she/he perceived her/himself as a writer.

Two repeated-measures analyses of variance (ANOVA) were used to

analyze: (a) narrative/descriptive writing performance data collected from writing samples generated by two separate prompts over time (January and May, 1998), which were scored holistically (see Appendix O) and (b) the Writing Attitude Scale for students (see Appendix I), gathered over time (January and May).

Data Collection

The study consisted of separate interviews with the four teachers and seven classroom visits to each of the four classrooms. The teacher interviews were based on focus points from the Teacher Information form (see Appendix C) to discuss teaching philosophy, literacy beliefs, writing curriculum, and general information about the students. Teachers completed the Teacher Philosophy Questionnaire (see Appendix G). The first classroom observation was an hour-long visit during a writing lesson or a Shurley Method lesson. Next, a 30-minute introductory visit was made to each class to explain the study, handout information, and explain consent forms. The third visit was a 90-minute data collection session. First, students completed the student Writing Attitude Survey (see Appendix H) and the student Writing Attitude Scale (see Appendix I). Students took a brief break after the attitude measures. Next students were given 50 minutes to write a narrative/descriptive sample based on a given prompt (see Appendix M). The fourth, fifth, and sixth visits allowed for informal observations concerning the overall role that writing and language instruction played in the class curriculum, teacher philosophy displayed in teaching methods, and student attitudes evidenced towards writing and language within the school day. Each observation session lasted approximately one hour. The seventh visit was another 90-minute data collection session.

Students completed the same multiple choice Student Writing Attitude Survey and the student Writing Attitude Scale. After a short break, the students were given 50 minutes to complete a narrative/descriptive writing sample based on a different given prompt (see Appendix N). The researcher conducted all visits separately in the students' classrooms. Data collection procedures for all sessions were identical for all four groups (see Appendix P).

Teacher Interview Session

The researcher met for an hour with the four teachers separately in their classrooms to explain the procedures for the study in detail. The Teacher Information form (see Appendix C) was followed to interview the teachers. Each teacher discussed her teaching philosophy pertaining to grammar and literature and described the literacy instruction in the classroom. The student makeup of the class was also discussed. Each teacher was asked to complete the Teacher Philosophy Questionnaire (see Appendix G).

Student Introductory Session

The researcher met for 30 minutes with the four classes separately to explain the purpose and procedure of the study to the students. The fact that participation was voluntary and the confidentiality of names of students, teachers, schools, and districts was stressed. Time was allowed for the researcher to address student questions and concerns. Each student received the parent/guardian information letter (see Appendix J), explaining the purpose of the study, method for testing and data collection, assurance of confidentiality, and the right to deny permission for the child to participate in the study.

Additionally, two copies of the research consent form for parents/guardians (see Appendix K) requesting permission to survey writing attitude, collect two writing samples, and use student comments in the research report was distributed to the students. The parents/guardians were requested to sign one copy of the form and save one copy for reference. Students were asked to discuss the study with parent(s)/guardians(s) before signing the research assent form for students (see Appendix L) in the company of the adult. The purpose of the assent form was to make the students feel important and to make them feel they had a voice in the process.

January Writing Sample Collection Session (Second Week)

During the second week of the study, the researcher met with each class as early in the morning as schedules allowed. At the beginning of the first writing session, student participants randomly drew identification numbers. The identification numbers kept the students' identity anonymous. Confidentiality was achieved by using these identification numbers on the writing samples and the writing attitude instruments.

Next, the entrance Writing Attitude Survey for students and Writing Attitude Scale for students were administered. Both were read aloud by the researcher to allow for differences in reading abilities among participants. After a short break, each student received a packet (see Appendix M) with a cover sheet, a written prompt designed to elicit narrative/descriptive writing, space for planning ideas, and five numbered pieces of lined paper. Students wrote their assigned numbers on their packet. After reading explicit instructions for the writing sample to the class (see Appendix P), the researcher read the following prompt to the class as the class read silently:

Imagine that you find a package sitting on your front porch. It has a large tag with your name printed in bold letters. Write a story about what is in the box and what happens after you receive it.

Research by Atwell (1987), Calkins (1994), and Graves (1983) suggested providing "chunks of time" (Atwell, 1987, p. 55) for writing as well as unconstrained time for students to work through each step of the writing process: (a) prewriting, (b) rough drafting, (c) revising, and (d) editing. The process includes much peer response for additional ideas, revision, and editing. Although the steps to process writing were not practical for this study, students were encouraged first to plan their story by gathering ideas on the "Ideas" page of the provided writing booklet, write their story draft on the lined pages, and make needed corrections once the story was completed. The steps to process writing were not named in the oral directions since not all classes had been exposed to them. The researcher stressed that the final piece would be in rough draft form due to the time limitation given.

Fifty uninterrupted minutes were allotted to respond to the prompt in the quiet of the classroom. No longer than 10 minutes for planning ideas and at least 40 minutes for actual story writing was suggested. During this time, the teacher and researcher did not speak with the students, except to inform them when 10 minutes and then 5 minutes remained. The two time announcements were given in hopes that students would allow time to reread stories and make needed corrections. At the end of the 50 minutes, students were asked to cease writing. Cover sheets containing student names and numbers were removed for student confidentiality. The researcher kept the cover sheets in a sealed envelope to hand back to the students during the May data collection if a student forgot

an assigned number. The writing packets were shuffled before taken from the classroom. Once the writing pieces from each of the four classrooms were collected, writing packets were shuffled into one large stack to ensure blind grading, which would conceal the identity of the students and eliminate rater bias during holistic scoring.

Informal Classroom Observations

Between the January and May writing sample collections, three informal classroom observations, spaced about four weeks apart, were made at different times during the day. Qualitative research including narrative inquiry methodology in the form of "field jottings" (Vockell and Asher, 1995, p.201) was used. These notes were taken "on the spot to avoid the problems of forgetfulness and selective memories" (p. 201). During each one-hour visit, classroom interactions were documented in anecdotal form in a journal. Direct quotes and specific activities were included. The purpose of the visits was to give the researcher an overall picture of the role writing and language instruction played in the curriculum during a day as well as to observe students' actual attitudes towards writing and language within the classroom environment. Observations also aided the researcher in making connections between teaching philosophy of each teacher and the actual educational environment created in the classroom by the teacher.

May Writing Sample Collection Session (Last Week)

At the close of the 17-week period, the researcher met with each class as early in the morning as schedules allowed. Students wrote their assigned numbers on the Writing Attitude Survey (see Appendix H), the Writing Attitude Scale (see Appendix I), and the

final writing packet (see Appendix N). Except for a different prompt, identical steps were taken to administer the survey and the scale and the same instructions (see Appendix P) were read for the writing sample. The prompt for the second writing sample was:

On the way home from school, you notice that an animal is following you. Write a story about what happens.

Once writing pieces from each of the four classrooms were collected, all writing packets were shuffled into one stack to ensure confidentiality of classrooms for the holistic scoring session. An experienced scoring team graded all writing samples. After the study was completed, the writing samples were returned to the teacher. If the teacher chose to return the writing samples, scores were removed and the cover sheets were replaced. Writing samples were not used for any type of assessment within the classroom. No student surveys or student scales were returned to the teachers.

Analysis

The purpose of this study was to determine over a period of time if there were significant differences in the narrative/descriptive writing performance and writing attitudes of fifth grade students receiving writing instruction with one of the following methods: (a) Process Writing, (b) Process Writing/Textbook, (c) Process Writing/Shurley Method, or (d) Shurley Method. Writing performance was measured by holistic scoring (see Appendix O).

Writing Samples

Scores on writing samples were determined by a holistic scoring team. Holistic

scoring entails a team reading and scoring a paper on the overall quality, the total impact a paper makes on the reader, rather than by error counts alone reflecting competency levels (Dyer, Thorne, & Gump, 1994). Scoring is based on a predetermined criteria compiled within a rubric.

In light of the extensive amount of research supporting the reliability of holistic scoring (Cooper & Odell, 1977; Dyer, et al., 1994; Egolf, 1994; Holt, 1992; Masters, 1992; McLean, 1992), the researcher selected overall impression grading over separately measuring content, organization, and mechanical usage. Although ranging, anchoring, reviewing, and scoring sessions were time consuming, holistic scoring was chosen to increase validity and reliability of the study. The possibility of extreme scores using holistic scoring was unusual although regression was not controlled due to lack of random assignment.

All writing samples were scored by a pre-existing six-point Fifth Grade Writing Assessment Holistic Grading Rubric for Narrative/Descriptive Writing (see Appendix O). The rubric had been adapted from the state assessment writing rubric for the State Criterion-Referenced Test in Writing for a yearly practice criterion-referenced test in one of the school districts participating in this study.

Writing samples were scored holistically by experts within a week after the collection of the May writing samples. Three elementary teachers with fifth and sixth grade experience and a school district Language Arts Coordinator, with a background as a high school English teacher, met to score all writing samples. All scorers were experienced in holistic scoring for upper grade elementary writing from serving on a holistic scoring committee for district-wide practice criterion-referenced tests in writing.

Since the Language Arts Coordinator had served on the state writing assessment team and had chaired the district practice criterion-referenced writing assessment committee for four years, the coordinator was asked to chair this scoring team. One team member had a bachelor's degree, two members had completed graduate work beyond the master's level, and one was a doctoral candidate. The team represented over sixty years of teaching. Teachers whose classes participated in the study were not on the scoring team.

Session I—Range Session. First, the Language Arts Coordinator and the researcher met for a range session. Both scorers read papers quickly and only once for an overall impression. Each scorer read for high, medium, and low papers, selecting at least two papers from each category. Next, the scorers reviewed the holistic grading rubric which described six categories with a "1" being the lowest score and "6" being the highest. Guided by the grading rubric, scorers re-read the selected papers to determine an example of a "1" paper and a "2" paper from the low stack, a "3" paper and a "4" paper for the medium stack, and so on. Then, the two scorers exchanged selected papers and scored each one without knowing the score the other scorer had assigned. If consensus was reached on a paper, it was selected as an example of that score point. If consensus was not reached, the paper was discussed. Following the discussion, 10 papers were agreed upon to represent range papers in order to have an ample number of papers for scoring practice in the next session, the anchoring session. At least one paper for each of the six rubric categories was represented and half of the papers represented each prompt. The papers were duplicated into packets to be used as range guides in the anchoring session.

Session II—Anchoring Session. Next, all four graders met for an anchoring

session. Each grader read the packet of 10 writing pieces selected in the Range Session

and scored each according to the rubric. Discussion followed. If all four scorers agreed on

a score, the paper was considered a valid example of that score. If all four scorers did not

agree, the piece was discussed to see if a consensus could be reached. The group met with

consensus on at least one paper from each of the six rubric categories. Consensus papers

became the anchor set.

Session III—Scoring Session. All remaining writing samples were divided into

two stacks. Two of the scorers read from stack A and two from stack B during the first

reading. During the second reading, the stacks were switched. This procedure ensured

that no scorer read and scored the same paper twice.

On the back page of the writing packet, the first score was written in the lower

left-hand corner. On the front page of the writing packet, the second grade was written in

the lower right hand corner. During the second reading, scorers did not look at the first

score until they assigned the paper a score. Scorers were encouraged to refer to the

anchor set and the grading rubric as needed during the grading session to maintain the

correct focus.

Once the second scorer read a paper, the two scores were combined and recorded

at the bottom center of the first page if they were no more than one point apart. When two

scores were more than one point apart, a third scorer arbitrated, first making certain that

they had not already scored the piece. Once the third scorer read the paper and decided on

a score, one of the original two scores was crossed out and the scorer wrote the new score

in its place. The student was given the benefit of the doubt. For example, if the two scores

were 3 and 5 and the third scorer gave the paper a 4, the 4 and the 5 were combined for a score of 9. However, if the third scorer gave the paper a 3, then the scorer added it to the other 3 and the paper received a combined score of 6. In order to monitor inter-rater reliability, the researcher recorded the total number of arbitrations.

Writing Attitude Scale

The Writing Attitude Scale (Reigstad & McAndrew, 1984) (see Appendix I) included 20 statements which students responded to on a Likert-type scale, ranging from a one, which showed strong disagreement with the statement, a three, which showed uncertainty, and a five, which showed strong agreement. Following Reigstad and McAndrews's directions for scoring, the Likert-number marked for responses to the positive items 1, 2, 4, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, and 19 were added; then responses to negative items 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 16, 17, and 20 were subtracted. Scoring the responses to the positive and negative statements produced a numerical representation of the students' attitudes, ranging from -40 to +40, with higher scores representing better attitudes and zero representing a neutral attitude. Following scoring of the January and May writing attitude scales, a repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze group writing attitude data collected. From these results, conclusions were made about whether a difference in writing attitude of students receiving a particular method of writing instruction existed over the 17-week period.

Writing Attitude Survey

In the six questions on the informal Writing Attitude Survey for students (see

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Appendix H), a range of answer choices allowed for calculation of the frequency of a

particular response for each group concerning the students' feelings about writing,

reasons for writing, and frequency of writing. When percentages to each answer were

compiled for each class, comparisons about each group's attitude concerning writing

were made. The researcher felt that the correlation of attitude and writing performance as

well as any marked changes indicated by any or all the attitudinal items were worth

noting and might provide a direction for further research.

Analysis of Variance

Following scoring of the writing samples and the writing attitude scale, two

separate repeated measures of analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to analyze group

writing performance data and writing attitude data collected from the January and May

collection sessions. From these results, conclusions were made about whether or not a

difference existed in the narrative/descriptive writing performance and writing attitudes

of students receiving writing instruction with Process Writing, Process Writing/Textbook,

Process Writing/Shurley Method, or the Shurley Method and if groups improved in

writing performance or writing attitude over the 17-week period. Chapter IV will present

the results of the study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Data were obtained in four ways. First, two narrative/descriptive writing samples, generated by different prompts (Appendix M and N), were collected from each student in each treatment group at the onset (January 1998) and the close (May 1998) of the 17-week study. All writing samples were scored in the same session with a holistic scoring rubric (Appendix O) adapted five years ago from the Oklahoma State Department of Education 5th Grade State Writing Assessment by one of the school districts participating in this study. Next, writing attitudes were examined with a Writing Attitude Scale (Appendix I), developed by Reigstad and McAndrew (1984), and a Writing Attitude Survey (Appendix H), adapted by the researcher. Each of the students in each group were given both attitude measures in January 1998 and again in May 1998 to see if a connection between the participants' attitudes about writing and writing performance existed and to see if the writing attitudes improved over time. Lastly, informal classroom observations were made throughout the study.

The small sample size of the study (Process Writing group n = 16; Process Writing/Textbook group n = 19; Process Writing/ShurleyMethod group n = 12; Shurley Method group n = 17) was due to class size and parental permission. In order to have a large sample, a number of different groups would have had to participate in this study. At the elementary level, this would normally require several different teachers to participate

in each writing approach. In an effort to control for differences in teaching methods within each treatment, one class was selected for each of the four writing approaches. Additionally, teachers were selected that seemed equally bonded and nurturing to their students. These opinions were based on a personal interview without the students present and a classroom observation before the study began. As a result of these considerations, the researcher felt that writing instructional methods could be compared instead of teachers.

The writing samples were scored holistically. During holistic scoring, scores are considered consistent if the two readers score the writing sample the same or different by only one point. Scores that differ by more than one point are considered inconsistent. This inconsistency must be resolved by a third reader called an arbitrator. The arbitrated score is added to one of the original scores. The student is given the benefit of the doubt. If the arbitrated score is the same as one of the original scores, the two scores are added. Otherwise, the arbitrated score is added to the higher of the two original scores. Writing samples which must be arbitrated are evidences of the inability of scorers to utilize the holistic scoring scale exactly the same way and are, thus, indications of unreliability in scoring. According to Meyers (1980), inter-rater reliability should fall at 5% or less for total arbitrations. In this study, 3 out of 128 writing samples called for arbitration. This is 2.3% of the total number of writing pieces.

Data were analyzed using two repeated-measures analyses of variance (ANOVA) with group treatment (Process Writing—PW; Process Writing/Textbook—PW/T; Process Writing/Shurley Method—PW/S; Shurley Method—S) and time of sample (January 1998 and May 1998) as independent variables and writing sample scores and

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attitude toward writing scores as dependent variables. A significance level of alpha = 0.05 was used. In addition, informal classroom observations were analyzed.

Writing Performance

Repeated-measures are the most common experimental design for studying learning, transfer, and practice effects (Keppel, 1991). Collecting data at different points in time from the same group of subjects reduces error variablity and, thus, increases the power of the experiment (Hatcher & Stepanski, 1996; Keppel, 1991; Shavelson, 1988). We should also expect some increase in our power to detect group differences, which is important because of the rather small sample size.

In this study, students produced a narrative/descriptive writing sample generated from a prompt (Appendix M) in January and then another narrative/descriptive writing sample generated from a different prompt (Appendix N) 17 weeks later in May. Mean writing performance scores from January and May were compared within each group to determine if differences existed between groups in writing performance.

A score of zero is not an option in holistic scoring. Instead, a no score (NS) is assigned when either there is no evidence that the participant saw the prompt or attempted to respond to it or the writing is so illegible that it cannot be read. When a NS was assigned to either writing sample for any participant, the participant's scores were not included in the analyses of Table 4.1. The PW group had 2 no scores on the January writing sample and 1 no score on the May writing sample ($n = 16 - 3$); the PW/T group had 1 no score on each writing sample ($n = 19 - 2$); the PW/S group had zero no scores ($n = 12 - 0$); the S group had 1 no score on the May writing sample ($n = 17 - 1$). No

student failed to address the prompt on both writing samples.

Table 4.1 shows means and standard deviations for both writing samples for each treatment once any participant with a no score was eliminated.

Table 4.1

Means, Standard Deviations for Writing Performance

Group	n	-----------JAN. SAMPLE-----------				---------MAY SAMPLE---------			
		Mean	SD	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
PW	*13	6.46	2.44	2	10	6.15	2.64	2	10
PW/T	*17	7.00	1.84	4	11	6.59	1.73	4	10
PW/S	12	6.25	1.82	4	10	7.92	2.50	5	12
S	*16	6.63	1.36	4	10	7.00	3.06	3	12

*Note: Participants with "no scores" not included.

Observation of the data in Table 4.1 suggests that there is little difference in writing performance between groups for either the January or May writing sample. Table 4.1 also indicates that scores changed little over time. Scores on both writing samples consistently represent a wide range in each group on the January and May writing samples as shown in Table 4.1.

Results of a repeated measures ANOVA is presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Repeated Measures ANOVA Results

Between Subjects Effects

Source	df	SS	MS	F	Pr>F
Group	3	7.94	2.65	0.39	0.7626
Error	54	369.31	6.84		

Table 4.2 continued

Repeated Measures ANOVA Results

			Within Subjects Effects		
Writing	1	3.10	3.10	1.04	0.3116
Write x Group	3	17.91	5.97	2.01	0.1239
Error	54	160.65	2.98		

The repeated measures ANOVA analyses presented in Table 4.2 confirms that the writing scores evidence no statistically significant group effect ($F_{(3,53)}$ = 0.39, p = 0.7626), and no statistically significant change in performance between January and May ($F_{(1,54)}$ = 1.04, p = 0.3116). In addition, there were no statistically significant interaction effects between time of sample and group in writing performance ($F_{(3,54)}$ = 2.01, p = 0.1239).

Results suggest that the Process Writing group was able to write effectively even without the specialized training in isolated parts of speech, which textbooks support and which the Shurley Method claims is necessary before a student can perform well in writing. Based on these findings, it would seem that perhaps each writing method was equally effective in producing similar narrative/descriptive writing with fifth grade students.

Writing Attitude Scale

The Writing Attitude Scale (Appendix I) by Reigstad and McAndrew (1984) was completed by all 64 participants (PW = 16; PW/T = 19; PW/S = 12; S = 17) in January

and in May. The scale included 20 statements which participants responded to on a Likert-type system from 1 through 5, with one showing strong disagreement with the statement, two showing disagreement, three indicating uncertainty, four showing agreement, and five indicating strong agreement. Scoring the responses to the positive and negative statements produced a numerical representation of the participants' writing attitudes ranging from –40 to +40. Zero indicated a neutral attitude whereas higher scores represented attitudes that were more positive and scores below zero represented attitudes that were more negative toward writing. Student attitude ratings from the January and May attitude scales were tabulated individually and by group. The mean score and standard deviation for each group on the January and May scale is shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Means, Standard Deviations for Attitude Measures

| | | ----------JAN. ATT---------- | | | | ----------MAY ATT---------- | | | |
Group	n	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
P	16	9.88	10.68	-1	25	11.25	15.77	-20	37
P/T	19	8.58	13.29	-24	27	3.63	17.13	-23	29
P/S	12	15.17	11.30	-11	26	15.17	15.59	-25	34
S	17	11.06	12.81	-29	26	10.06	11.30	-19	28

Based on the 80 point scale ranging from –40 to +40 with a score of 0 indicating a neutral attitude, Table 4.3 suggests that most students began the study with a mildly positive attitude toward writing, and attitude scores remained mildly positive. However, observation of the data in Table 4.3 indicates there is variability in group writing attitude means for the January and May scale. Table 4.3 also indicates that scores consistently represent a wide range in each group.

Table 4.4 presents the results of a repeated measures ANOVA.

Table 4.4

Repeated Measures ANOVA Results for Attitudes

Between Subjects Effects

Effect	df	SS	MS	F	Pr>F
Group	3	1236.51	412.17	1.43	0.2439
Error	60	17336.67	288.94		

Within Subjects Effects

Effect	df	SS	MS	F	Pr>F
Attitude (Time 1/Time 2)	1	40.63	40.63	0.46	0.5008
Att x Group	3	194.27	64.76	0.73	0.5375
Error	60	5314.35	88.57		

As the repeated measures ANOVA analysis in Table 4.4 shows, there were no statistically significant differences between groups in writing attitude ($F(3, 60) = 1.43$, $p = 0.2439$). Likewise, there was no statistically significant change in writing attitude between January and May ($F (1, 60) = 0.46$, $p = 0.5008$). In addition, there were no statistically significant interactions between time of sample and group in writing attitude ($F(3, 60) = 0.73$, $p = 0.5375$). In table 4.3 and 4.4, though differences between groups and across time are evident, the high amount of variability present suggests that these may in fact be chance differences. These results indicate that all four writing approaches elicited similar attitudes toward writing. Based on these findings, it would seem that each writing method was equally effective in producing positive attitudes toward writing.

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A Writing Attitude Survey was given to complement the Writing Attitude Scale in hopes of giving a richer overall picture of how students perceive themselves as writers and what place writing plays in their lives, both at school and outside of school. Table 4.5 shows the percentage of responses per question from each group on the six question questionnaire completed by all groups at the beginning and again at the close of the study.

Table 4.5

<u>Writing Attidue Survey Results (percentages)</u>

		PW		PW/T		PW/S		S	
		Jan.	May	Jan.	May	Jan.	May	Jan.	May
1.	Are you a writer?								
	a) Yes	37.5	37.5	21.1	21.1	25.0	25.0	17.6	11.8
	b) Sometimes	37.5	43.8	47.4	42.1	41.7	50.0	41.2	52.9
	c) Not really	18.8	0	15.8	10.5	8.3	0	5.9	11.8
	d) No	6.3	12.5	5.3	5.3	0	0	0	0
	e) Only in school	0	6.3	10.5	21.1	25.0	25.0	35.3	23.5
2.	Why do you usually write?								
	a) My teacher makes us write.	6.3	18.8	15.8	21.1	33.3	16.7	17.6	1.8
	b) I write to help myself learn things and remember things.	6.3	6.3	15.8	10.5	8.3	16.7	17.6	0
	c) I like to communicate with other people in writing.	18.8	12.5	5.3	10.5	16.7	16.7	5.9	5.9
	d) I know I need to practice writing.	6.3	0	15.8	5.3	8.3	8.3	0	5.9
	e) Other	62.5	62.5	47.4	52.6	33.3	41.7	58.9	76.5
3.	How often do you write?								
	a) Almost every day	43.8	56.3	15.8	15.8	41.7	25.0	5.9	11.8
	b) Often	12.5	6.3	26.3	26.3	8.3	41.7	23.5	17.6
	c) Sometimes	31.3	18.8	21.1	15.8	16.7	16.7	41.2	35.3
	d) Not very often	0	0	21.1	10.5	8.3	0	11.8	17.6
	e) Only when I have to	12.5	18.8	15.8	31.6	25.0	16.7	17.6	17.6

Table 4.5 continued

Writing Attitude Survey Results (percentages) continued

		PW		PW/T		PW/S		S	t
		Jan.	May	Jan.	May	Jan.	May	Jan.	May
4.	When you write, how do you feel? (*One student did not respond.)								
	a) Bored	12.5	*20.0	5.3	0	8.3	0	5.9	0
	b) Nervous	6.3	* 6.7	5.3	21.1	16.7	0	0	0
	c) Relaxed	50.0	*53.3	63.2	52.6	33.3	58.3	70.6	76.5
	d) Happy	6.3	* 6.7	15.8	5.3	33.3	25.0	17.6	5.9
	e) I wish I could do something else.	12.5	*13.3	10.5	21.1	8.3	16.7	5.9	17.7
5.	In general, how do you feel about what you write? (*One student did not respond.)								
	a) I feel frustrated because it usually doesn't turn out as well as I would like for it to.	* 6.7	0	31.6	15.8	8.3	25.0	5.9	7.7
	b) I enjoy expressing my ideas.	*33.3	25.0	10.5	15.8	8.3	8.3	17.6	11.8
	c) I feel scared that I won' write well.	* 6.7	18.8	0	15.8	0	16.7	11.8	0
	d) I feel satisfied with my writing.	*26.7	6.3	26.3	31.6	16.7	33.3	17.6	23.5
	e) Usually I really like what I write.	*26.7	50.0	31.6	21.1	66.7	16.7	47.1	47.1
6.	What does a person have to do in order to be a good writer? (*One student did not respond.)								
	a) Use correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization plus use words (like verbs) correctly	*20.0	20.0	73.7	36.8	25.0	58.3	41.2	41.2
	b) Write neatly	* 0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	c) Use descriptions	* 20.0	20.0	0	5.3	16.7	0	0	5.9
	d) Make good grades in writing	* 0	0	0	5.3	0	0	5.9	11.8
	e) Other	*60.0	60.0	26.3	52.6	58.3	41.7	52.9	41.2

Table 4.5 shows that the majority of the participants in all groups in January and

May answered "yes" or "sometimes" when asked if they perceived themselves as a writer

in question #1. Furthermore, the Process Writing group answered "yes" much more often

than the Shurley Method group. Only the Process Writing group had a low percentage to answer "only in school." Few participants in all groups answered "no." In response to question #2, when asked for the reason why they usually write, most students answered "other" (instead " the teacher makes me," "to learn," "to communicate," or "to practice"). For question #3, more members of the Process Writing group indicated that they wrote "almost every day." The answers to question #4 were similar in all groups, with the majority of all groups indicating they felt "relaxed" or "happy" when they wrote. In answer to question #5, the majority of the Shurley group said, "I really like what I write," on both surveys whereas the majority of the Process Writing group indicated the same only on the May survey and the Process Writing/Shurley group only on the January survey. Few indicated that they felt "scared" that they would not write well. On question #6, when asked what a person has to do in order to be a good writer, except for the Process Writing group, a large percentage of the groups answered "use correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization plus use words correctly." No participants answered to "write neatly" and only a small percentage answered to "make good grades in writing." In all groups, a large percentage answered "other."

The results of the writing samples and the writing attitude measures were analyzed to determine potential connections between attitudes and writing proficiency. Overall participants demonstrated satisfactory writing ability (score of 6) and a mildly positive attitude towards writing in January and May.

Informal Classroom Observations

An informal classroom visit was made during a writing lesson or a Shurley

Method lesson before writing samples and attitude measures were taken to ensure the actual instructional methods for writing were valid examples. Between the January and May writing sessions, three other classroom observations, spaced approximately four weeks apart, were made at different times during the day in each classroom. The purpose of the one-hour visits was to give the researcher an overall picture of the role writing and language instruction played throughout the curriculum as well as to observe students' actual attitudes towards writing and language within classroom activities. During each visit, classroom interactions were documented as "field jottings" (Vockell & Asher, 1995, p. 201) for later reference. Specific activities, direct quotes, and student interaction within the activities were included.

Process Writing Group

The students in the Process Writing Group were verbal and their behavior was much more spontaneous than the other groups. Student voice and autonomy was the center of all classroom activities. The students freely interacted with each other and the teacher as they collaborated on projects, asked questions, and shared ideas. Students sat wherever they chose in desks grouped together in no particular pattern. They moved about the room freely for supplies or to ask questions of the teacher or others students. Students visited much of the time, but voices were always low. They were allowed to sit or lay wherever they chose to read or write as long as it did not bother someone else.

The students were busily writing when the researcher arrived for the first observation. The teacher was writing also. If the students talked, they whispered quietly as they asked another student questions pertaining to their writing or they read an excerpt

from their piece. Some partners worked together on revision and editing. When students were told to put their writing away, they asked for at least five more minutes. During author's chair, each student who had signed up earlier in the day, excitedly took a turn, followed by anyone else who decided to share writing.

Then the group discussed upcoming science presentations. At the beginning of the year, the class had brainstormed a lengthy list of science topics. Students working in groups or partners taught lessons on the selected topics throughout the year. This particular time their mission was to work in partners. Students chose partners based on interests; every group signed up for something different. Next, the partners eagerly discussed the options they had for approaching the lesson. The students busily conferred with each other and wrote down plans. Most students began to gather needed information from resource books in the well-stocked classroom library, taking notes and sharing findings with each other. Two groups asked to go to the school library. Everyone was on task and engaged.

The students were independently reading when the researcher arrived for the first writing session. Normally the group gave booktalks at this time and expressed disappointment about skipping them. After some discussion, the teacher suggested that they could give booktalks with partners to conserve time. The class voted and agreed to share in pairs. Most of the students were engrossed in the booktalks. However, three students continued to read. When asked to join the booktalks, they adamantly insisted they could not put the book down just then. Students were obviously passionate about reading.

When the study was explained, the group was verbal whereas the other three

groups quietly listened. Many students in the Process Writing group commented among themselves about the study, but asked few questions of the researcher. When reference was made to the 5th Grade State Writing Assessment in the spring, the class turned almost in unison to the teacher and asked what it was. She answered, "It's a writing test we have to take. Don't worry. You'll do fine." The other groups were very knowledgeable about the State Writing Assessment and often talked about preparing for it.

When the first writing session began and the writing prompt was explained, one student immediately asked if the writing prompt had to be used. When told yes, several students commented among themselves that they did not want to use the prompt. One student already had an idea for a story and wanted to write about that. Another student quickly wrote a paragraph and asked to be excused to the computer lab to finish a story that was already in progress. Three students fidgeted and could not get past a few sentences for almost 10 minutes. Several students shared ideas, talked with neighbors about their pieces, or read parts of their stories to each other throughout the writing session. When students were informed that 10 minutes remained, three participants told neighbors they did not want to write an ending yet because they had more ideas for the story. The other three groups in the study obediently found a stopping point for their stories when time was called. Two students feverishly wrote until the end of the session writing without stopping to revise. Once the 50 minutes elapsed, six students asked to have their stories copied so they could continue them. No other class took ownership of their stories by expressing interest in keeping them. Some of the stories began with "Chapter 1" and continued with "Chapter 2" and so on. No other class divided stories into

chapters.

During another visit, the group had just begun a French lesson with a visiting teacher. The students settled down quickly and participated attentively. They appeared to enjoy interaction. Next during a social studies lesson, the teacher read a non-fiction book to them. Students seemed restless, but obviously listened based on the brainstorming list they created afterwards entitled "What did I learn?"

A student presentation on a science topic followed. A student, who struggled in school, had chosen to work alone. The student worked for weeks, according to the teacher, researching the topic and working on posters at home. Throughout the study, the student had excitedly shared information about the topic with the teacher and friends. The presentation included a table display of books, posters to explain the concepts in the lesson, an outdoor game on the topic, and five pages of notes. When the student stumbled on words or did not seem to explain a concept well, the other students politely offered the correct word or would ask, "Do you mean _____."

During another observation, the class divided into three groups to debate a novel they had completed the day before. Students chose whether they wanted to be on the pro or con side of the debate or participate as a judge and write questions for the two teams. As the judges prepared questions, they eagerly thumbed through their books looking for ideas, certain passages, and reminders of the chain of events. At the same time, the pro and con teams discussed the characters in the book and offered hypothetical ideas of what questions and issues they might debate. Everyone was engaged in the activity.

The PW group was even more social during the May writing session. By the time the 50 minute session ended, almost every student had complained about having to write

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from a prompt. Many of the students displayed difficulty focusing on the task. The ones that did get started stopped often to visit with neighbors about the writing and about the fact that they were unhappy having to write about something they had not selected. Two students wrote a paragraph and finished within 10 minutes. Many students squirmed, sighed, and visited about unrelated topics with their neighbors throughout the writing session.

No other class reacted in this way during writing collection sessions. The others followed the procedure step-by-step without questioning the format, visiting with friends, or attempting to interact with the researcher or the classroom teacher. Considering the instructional setting of the Process Writing group, two questions come to mind. Did the setting for drawing a piece of writing in a particular amount of time about an assigned topic without collaboration with peers place too many boundaries on some students? Do writing prompts hinder some students? It seems the answer is yes to both questions. "There is good evidence that students without a personal stake in their writing will not write very well" (Dudley-Marling, 1995, p. 11). Graves (1976) said that giving a child a prompt to generate writing is like placing the child on writing welfare. These students were obviously unused to "writing welfare" as well as boundaries being placed on writing. Writers must be given time to run into problems in their writing, ask questions, solve dilemmas, and share what they have produced (Calkins, 1980). Writing requires social interaction (Newman, 1985). In addition, writing takes time (Atwell, 1987). This group was accustomed to collaborating, sharing, helping one another revise, and selecting their own writing topics. They followed these recursive steps by habit and appeared to react with discomfort and disinterest when the setting failed to provide them freedom in

writing.

When asked about the writing process, the PW group expressed that they liked the opportunity to select topics that they wanted to write about. They also liked the freedom of collaboration. In their words, this made "writing fun."

Process Writing/Textbook Group

Students in the Process Writing/Textbook Group worked at their desks, lined side-by-side in four different rows. They were attentive and cooperative. Occasionally They would quietly visit with someone who sat nearby, but worked independently for the most part.

During the researcher's first visit, students quietly wrote true stories from their point-of-view, keeping in mind that they would write the same story from another character's point-of-view in the story the following day. Next, students were asked to conference in partners, looking for the beginning, middle, and end of the story as well as offering suggestions to make the story clearer. Students offered little to one another during conferences.

When the study was explained to the group during another visit, students listened attentively and asked many questions. One student was insistent about not wanting to be a part of the study. Several others questioned if they should be in the study because they were "not a good writer."

Most of the students seemed eager to write when the researcher arrived for both of the writing sessions. As soon as the prompt was read, everyone began writing immediately for both writing samples. Since all students wrote during each writing

session and only the writing of students who had parental permission was collected, the student who did not want to participate in the study did write, knowing that the piece would be added to a writing portfolio. After reading the prompt, the student said, "I have a good idea for this one!" and eagerly began writing. After writing for the entire 50 minutes, the student asked permission to participate in the study.

Over half of the class wrote for the entire 50 minutes during the first writing session, and everyone looked over her/his writing when the last 10 minutes were announced. Six participants wrote the entire time during the second writing session, and most of them read over their work, revised, and edited. Many more of this group revised as they proofread their pieces than the other groups did. During the second writing session, the participants asked to discuss question #4 (When you write, how do you feel?) on the Writing Attitude Survey (see Appendix H). One student commented that people feel differently about writing at different times. The student went on to explain that when the teacher was going to grade the writing, people usually feel nervous, but when a story was written for the class and would not necessarily be graded, people feel relaxed. Everyone agreed. The other classes did not inquire about question #4, but the Process Writing/Textbook class' comment indicated the need for an explanation for #4 or more concise wording in the survey.

During another observation, the PW group wrote as if they were children portrayed in a video from a Cherokee tribe in 1800. When a student asked how to spell a word, the teacher answered, "Don't get hung up on spelling; get hung up on getting stuff down. Get your ideas down." Many of the students stopped from time to time to read what they had written and then continued. When the teacher asked them to stop writing,

many children did not want to end their stories. Eight students volunteered to stand in front of the class to share what they had written. The girls' stories were nurturing, filled with emotion and concern about the welfare of the others. On the other hand, the boys' stories were about building teepees, hunting for food, guns, and strict soldiers. Their stories were factual and realistic. Next, a class discussion followed, comparing and contrasting the social studies textbook and the video. Students eagerly offered ideas. Everyone agreed that "the video brought boring social studies to life" because they could get to know the people and better understand what they had endured. Following the discussion, the students asked for time to add more to their stories.

Although the teacher integrated writing into many math lessons, no writing took place in the observed math lesson. Instead, the students took turns giving the answers to the previous days' homework and the teacher told them if they were correct. Only the problems that the students had a question about were worked on the board. The teacher would say, "Pick a problem that you would like for us to do." Next, the teacher introduced a short cut for adding fractions. First, the class worked together and then they worked a problem alone, checking it together on the board. Finally, the students began working alone, but were free to ask for help or help each other. The teacher, moving around the room from student to student, seemed very committed to helping them succeed. No one appeared frustrated with math.

On another classroom visit, the students read independently from the social studies text and created their own dictionary. On their own, they were to decide which terms were the most important ones in the lesson. An alphabetized and illustrated dictionary on the chapter was due at the end of the week. Students seemed engaged in the

assignment, working quietly alone, but sometimes stopping to ask another student or the teacher if what they were thinking was correct or if a certain way to explain a term would be a good way to say it. The lesson closed with a discussion from an outline on the board about a major issue covered in the chapter. From time to time one of the students would comment to another, "I used that in my dictionary."

Process Writing/Shurley Group

The students in the Process Writing/Shurley group remained in their desks, lined up in side-by-side rows of three or four desks, and worked independently. They reacted much like the PW/T group—attentive and cooperative, occasionally visiting quietly with a nearby student.

On the initial visit, a Shurley Method lesson was observed. First, the different chants and jingles were reviewed. The teacher led them from a director's chair at the front of the classroom. The students and teacher read the unison parts from reproduced pages in their "Shurley folders" that the teacher had created. The class read the jingle about the description of the four types of sentences in unison. Then the teacher read the definition of a subject noun and the student read about what the subject noun does. The lesson continued with jingles and chants about Pattern I sentences and the parts of speech. Next, a student labeled the first sentence on the board as the teacher led the class in the question-answer-flow. A second and third student labeled the next two sentences. The students seemed disinterested in the process and spoke the unison parts without energy or expression.

When asked about the Shurley Method, the students explained that part of it had

been introduced to them at the end of the year before. One student commented that the Shurley Method was "kind of boring" but it was "better than using an English book." Another remarked that it was difficult to remember all the "stuff to say" so the teacher made folders for them with "everything in them."

The teacher expressed concern to the researcher in private about whether or not the time taken to use this method was worthwhile. She questioned if it was "carrying over to writing." Additionally, the teacher shared feelings of confusion on what was the best way to teach grammar and if it "should even be taught in isolation anymore."

On the second visit, students listened attentively as the study was explained, and then asked a few questions. During the first writing session, three students had trouble beginning their story. They fidgeted, looked around, and watched the clock. Two students busily wrote the entire 50-minute period, the others wrote, gazed around the room, wrote, and gazed. During the second writing session, two students wrote for most of the time and the rest only spent about 20 minutes writing.

On another visit the students went to the computer lab and self-selected what to do. Only one student chose to write a story. The others played math games, practiced typing, or played miscellaneous thinking games. All students worked enthusiastically, but were extremely social. When the group returned to the classroom, they began a math lesson in dividing by decimals. The teacher demonstrated a few problems, and then assigned 10 students at a time to work one on the board. The teacher told students if they were right, and helped them make corrections. Once each student had worked a problem on the board, a math sheet with similar problems was assigned for the students to complete independently.

During DEAR (Drop Everything And Read) time on another visit, students began reading at their desks right away. Everyone was absorbed in a book. Some students were reading a book assigned in the after school book club, where students read a different book each month selected by the sponsoring teacher. Since students had to purchase these books, they highlighted passages for reference during the book club meeting. Although the length varied from 20 to 45 minutes, time was allotted for DEAR time everyday.

Students were taking a multiple choice social studies test on two chapters during another observation. When they completed the test, they began defining vocabulary words for the next lesson. In science, the lesson consisted of defining terms in the book from the chapter they had completed the day before. When the vocabulary was completed and turned in, students worked on a chapter review sheet published by the textbook company. The page number of where the answer was in the chapter was required in addition to the answer. The students busily worked on both of these assignments.

Shurley Method Group

The students in the Shurley Method group sat in rows for most of the study. They were consistently attentive, quiet, and cooperative. They did not move around the room unless they were turning in a paper or going to the computer for their assigned computer time. They listened to the teacher, complied if the teacher gave a direction, and worked on assignments independently. Students appeared to be serious about assigned tasks, beginning them immediately and working on them quietly. Once an assignment was completed and turned in, students quietly read a library book at their seat. As a group, they would best be described as orderly, respectful, and well managed. The students

they would best be described as orderly, respectful, and well managed. The students seemed comfortable in their environment, and the teacher was patient and encouraging with them.

When the study was explained, few questions were asked. During the first writing session, once the prompt was read aloud, there seemed to be an intense need for discussion. One student asked, "You mean we can write about anything as long as we mention the prompt?" Many students gave the researcher an idea about what direction their story could follow, and then asked if that was alright. Several students asked if the story had to contain a certain number of adjectives or direct objects or other particular part of speech. Once the students were convinced that they actually could write about anything they wanted to as long as they addressed the prompt, everyone seemed surprised and eager to begin. Several students commented to each other, "This is going to be fun." All participants were writing within the first few minutes. Most of the students were smiling as they wrote. Three students wrote the entire 50-minute period. Some of the students looked over their story, but little revision and editing occurred. At the end of the session, several students commented that they liked "prompts like that" or "that was fun."

During the second writing session, students again had to be assured that they could write anything they wished as long as it was in the bounds of the prompt. Students seemed to enjoy writing from the second prompt also, although several finished in 20-25 minutes. When they stopped writing, several of them whispered to their friend about their storyline and seemed pleased.

A hall bulletin board held examples of the students' writing. The writing appeared to be final drafts of social studies stories, which were written on a reproduced sheet with

displayed received an "A." Spelling tests and math papers with high scores were displayed in the classroom.

During a Shurley Method lesson, the teacher led the oral question-answer flow for the sentences while a student labeled the sentences as the class chanted together, telling how to label each word. The volume of the students' voices was low. Some students seemed to "mouth" the chants and fidget. Student voices trailed off when the teacher stopped leading the flow. Several times the teacher stopped the flow and explained a particular part of speech in her own words.

When asked about their opinion regarding the Shurley Method, the students commented to the researcher that they were "tired of the Shurley Method" because of "doing the same thing over and over" which "was really boring." One student added that the method was fun at first, but "after five years of it, it gets really old." Another student explained that they were weary of doing the repetition of the question-answer flows, jingles, and chants. When further questioned about how the Shurley Method influenced their writing, one student commented, "What good does it do me that I know what a direct object is?" The student went on to explain that knowing what a direct object was did not make him write stories that are more interesting. Then the student added, "When I write, I don't think to myself, hmmm, think I'll use a direct object here now."

When the teacher was asked privately about her opinion regarding the Shurley Method, she reported that during the first few years after adoption of the Shurley Method, student enthusiasm and motivation was high. Early on, she noticed a rapid improvement in grammar knowledge among her students. However, now that her students had learned grammar by this method for several years, they displayed less and less enthusiasm for the

oral interaction in the method and exhibited little energy in the oral portion of the lesson. Despite student complaints, since the principal required the Shurley Method, the teacher felt she must continue implementing it on a daily basis. The teacher also expressed concern about the grammar learned in the Shurley Method transferring to student writing. She commented that the State Writing Assessment seemed difficult for the students and in previous years, the students had not scored as high as she had hoped. The teacher also talked about how new students that come to her class during the year reacted to the program. If the students was average or above in ability, catching up on the Shurley Method did not seem to present a problem. However, slower students did not seem to catch up easily and seemed overwhelmed.

During one observation, the teacher showed the students how to draw a dinosaur from a step-by-step art book. The students followed each step carefully. After discussing point-of-view, the students were assigned the task of writing about the life of a dinosaur based on a story they had read earlier in their basal reader. The teacher reminded them to include as much information as they could from the basal and to label the beginning, middle, and end of their stories. Although the desks had been moved into clusters of three or four since the last visit, the students wrote in silence after a few minutes were allotted to exchange ideas for a storyline with a tablemate. Next, the teacher assigned partners to read stories and circle unclear parts and misspelled words. Then students turned their drafts in for a grade.

The students were also observed learning test taking procedures in preparation for the state test for Priority Academic Achievement Skills (PASS). As the teacher discussed process of elimination in selecting an answer, she moved around the room to make

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process of elimination in selecting an answer, she moved around the room to make certain each student was on the correct question and marked the answer correctly. No one worked ahead.

Following the PASS lesson, students were assigned four pages to read in the social studies textbook. Next, the students took turns reading aloud a paragraph from the same pages. Then the teacher reread important sentences as the students highlighted the passages in the book. The highlighting seemed to keep the students engaged in the text. The teacher shared additional information about the subject and asked questions that required specific answers. Three students asked thought provoking, open-ended questions, such as "I wonder what happened when . . . ." The teacher answered with her ideas.

The students were also observed beginning a Science Fair project. Each student was asked to select a topic from a folder of experiments that had been reproduced from a book. Two students selected an experiment quickly and quietly talked together with excitement about their projects. The rest of the group browsed and said little as they looked over each experiment carefully. Three students asked if they could do a different experiment. The teacher instructed them to select from the ones in the folder. Many of the students took a long time to decide which one to select.

Summary

The analyses of the January 1998 and May 1998 writing samples indicted no differences in group performance on writing proficiency. The two groups using the Shurley Method, in tandem with another approach (P/S group) or in solo (S group), did

not outperform the other two groups.

The Writing Attitude Scale showed that all four groups had mildly positive attitudes about writing at the beginning of the study. Attitudes changed little by the close of the study.

The Writing Attitude Survey did not indicate that one group's attitude was more positive than another group's attitude. The survey did indicate that most of the writers in all groups considered themselves to be writers. However, the Shurley Method group appeared to spend less time on writing whereas the Process Writing group indicated that they wrote more often. Only the Process Writing group expressed that a person does not have to spell, punctuate, and capitalize correctly and use correct words in order to be a good writer.

Informal classroom observations indicated the PW group was more verbal and interactive than the other groups. Observations also indicated that the S group expressed excitement with the freedom to be creative with the writing prompts whereas the PW group did not like the boundaries that prompts set on their writing.

Results of this study indicated that the method of teaching writing did not seem to have a significant impact on the writing performance of student participants. Moreover, the writing attitudes did not seem to be significantly influenced by the instructional method. Chapter V will discuss these findings. In addition, implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research will be considered.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This study revealed important findings associated with four main data collection procedures. The first finding indicated that at the beginning of the study, the writing performance of the Process Writing (PW) group was similar to that of the other three groups: the Shurley Method (S) group, the Process Writing/Shurley Method group PW/S), and the Process Writing/Textbook group (PW/T). Furthermore, the writing performance of the four groups changed little over time.

Next, the responses to the Writing Attitude Scale pointed to two conclusions. The results indicated that at the beginning of the study, the PW group, the PW/T group, the PW/S group, and the S group had similar attitudes toward writing. All groups indicated a mildly positive attitude. At the end of the study, overall group attitudes remained similar to attitudes at the onset of the study.

Thirdly, the responses to the Writing Attitude Survey revealed even more. The majority of the participants in all groups on both surveys perceived themselves as writers, with answers varying from "yes" to "sometimes." The survey also suggested that the majority of all the groups felt "relaxed" or "happy" when they wrote. In addition, findings indicated that the PW group and the PW/S group might have had more opportunities to practice writing, but with a larger percentage of participants in the PW group writing almost every day.

Finally, the informal classroom observations revealed that writing prompts were perceived as a hindrance by some students and as a well received springboard for writing by others. Furthermore, the observations indicated that collaboration among some students had become a way of learning and processing.

<center>Performance on Writing Samples</center>

This research study examined the writing performance of four fifth grade classes for 17 weeks during second semester of the school year. In the PW group (n = 16), grammar instruction was embedded in daily authentic writing and reading opportunities. Writers were encouraged to concentrate on meaning in writing and then on grammar as student participants worked through all steps of the writing process. Grammar instruction in the PW/T group (n = 19) was predominately from an English textbook supplemented by work sheets to teach discrete grammar and mechanics. Students spent little time on collaboration about revising and editing in the writing process. In the PW/S group (n = 12) and the S group (n = 17), grammar was explicitly taught prior to writing through the packaged, formulaic Shurley Method. Revision in the PW/S group consisted of whole group collaboration after author's chair. Editing was the responsibility of the teacher and only done sometimes. The S group did not implement steps in the writing process. The teacher corrected writing assignments. This study sought to find out if one method(s) would outperform the other(s) in writing performance.

Using repeated measures of ANOVA to compare writing performance between groups, the scores of two narrative/descriptive writing samples taken in January 1998 and May 1998 were analyzed (Tables 4.1 and 4.2). As explained in Chapter III, writing performance scores were determined from a holistic scoring teams' consensus in

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response to a set writing assessment rubric (see Appendix O) adapted from the Oklahoma State Writing Assessment. Examining the writing samples with holistic scoring was considered vital to the study. In the past "writing has been treated as little more than a place to display—to expose—their command of spelling, penmanship, and grammar" (Calkins, 1994, p. 13). Since the purpose of writing is to communicate meaning (Farris, 1997), rather than to examine the parts of the writing (content, organization, and mechanics), it seemed crucial to examine student writing as a whole—the overall quality, the overall impression the paper makes on the reader created by content, organization of appropriate structures, correct spelling and punctuation, and use of language (Dyer, Throne, & Gump, 1994). Grammar, punctuation, spelling, and handwriting are simply tools for writers and courtesies for readers to help the reader better understand what the writer is saying (Farris; Graves, 1983; Tompkins, 1990; Wilde, 1992). Looking at the writing samples from the PW group (see Appendix Q), the PW/T group (see Appendix R), the PW/S group (see Appendix S), and the S group (see Appendix T), one can see the value of meaning judged by considering overall impression of a writing piece as opposed to valuing a piece solely for correct grammar, mechanics, and usage.

Although writing performance consistently represented a wide range within each group, overall writing performance showed little difference between the PW group, the PW/T group, the PW/S group, and the S group on either the January or the May samples. Moreover, writing scores indicated little change over time between the January and May samples. In opposition to the hypothesis stated in Chapter 1, results indicated that participants did not perform differently when instructed with different methods in writing. One may conclude from these results that one method did not contribute more

significantly than another in producing greater writing improvement. Based on the findings, each writing method appears equally effective.

Findings from the writing sample scores were congruent with the large body of research conclusions (Amiran & Mann, 1982; Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, & Schoer, 1963; DeBoer, 1959; Elley, Barham, Lamb, & Wyllie, 1976; Harris, 1963; Hillocks & Smith, 1991; Holdzkom, Reed, Porter, & Rubin, 1983; Macauley, 1947; McQuade, 1980; Mellon, 1969; Neill, 1982; Weaver, 1996) which have shown that teaching grammar in isolation from authentic writing "makes no appreciable difference in their ability to write" (Weaver). One may conclude from these results that the PW group was able to write as effectively and equally as well as the other groups, without explicit teaching of grammar, which the textbook method and the SHurley Method approaches claim as necessary

Writing Attitude Scale

The results of the Writing Attitude Scale (see Appendix I) were similar for all four groups, indicating that one group overall did not appear to have a more positive attitude about writing than the other. Responses indicated that most participants began the study with a mildly positive attitude toward writing and ended the study with mildly positive attitudes. Based on these findings, it would seem that each writing method was equally effective in producing positive attitudes toward writing. However, the wide range of scores within groups, between groups, and across time on the January and May scales draw attention to the fact that the differences in scores quite possibly are chance differences. Based on this information and the fact that no published attitude scales

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designed for elementary students were found, the researcher questions whether elementary age children have developed the constructs about writing attitude in order to perform a valid rating of themselves.

Additionally, the S group indicated on the Writing Attitude Survey (see Table 4.5) that in January 53% of the group and in May 52.9% of the group answered that they wrote only "sometimes" or "not very often." It seems that if students seldom wrote, they would not develop negative attitudes about writing, which might explain why the S group reported mildly positive attitudes about writing.

Writing Attitude Survey

The Writing Attitude Survey (see Appendix H) indicated that the majority of all four groups perceived themselves as writers, which indicates that one group did not appear to have a better attitude about being a writer than the others. However, the PW group answered "yes" to question #1 ("Are you a writer?") more often than the other groups, but particularly the S group. Of the PW participants, 37.5% of the group answered "yes" on both the January and May surveys compared to 17.7% and 11.8% of the S group.

In addition, the responses to question #3 deserve attention. It was on this question about the frequency of writing that the groups showed the greatest difference. When asked "How often do you write?" the PW group indicated 43.8% and 56.3% on the two surveys that they wrote almost every day, while 15.8% of the PW/T group answered the same on both surveys, 41.7 and 25.0 of the PW/S group, and 5.9% and 11.8% of the S group. One may hypothesize that the greater amount of time spent in writing by the PW

group may have contributed to a higher percentage of the PW group perceiving themselves as writers. Calkins (1983) suggested that children who have frequent opportunities to write gain a better understanding than those who are simply taught the rules and, therefore, write better.

Finally, the majority of all four groups indicated they felt "relaxed" when they wrote which correlates to the overall mildly positive attitudes indicated in the Writing Attitude Scale (Table 4.3 and 4.4).

Implications for Educators

The findings of this study include important implications for grammar instruction, writing instruction, and research. These implications are connected not only to instructional methods for writing that promote increased writing performance and writing attitudes, but also they are related to the way children learn and acquire language.

Implications from the Research Findings

How children learn to talk before they enter school should have important implications for how children learn other communication skills such as writing and grammar in school (Tompkins & Hoskisson, 1995). Many researchers agree (Goodman, 1986; Harste, 1990; Heath, 1983; Kamii, 1985; Piaget, 1952; Vygotsky, 1978) that children learn by constructing their own knowledge through exploration, inquiry, and social interaction, using prior knowledge to make new connections. Therefore, it stands to reason that school curriculum decisions should center on these findings. Based on research, instructional strategies should include student interaction (Goodman, 1986;

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Harste, 1990; Piaget, 1952; Vygotsky, 1978), within student-centered, authentic activities (Goodman, 1986; Harste, 1990; Heath, 1983) instead of the teacher simply transmitting knowledge. Rather than teaching grammar and writing in the artificial world of English grammar exercises and structured writing assignments in decontextualized settings, grammar and writing should be taught in the context of speaking and writing on a daily basis (Farris, 1997).

Another issue to be cognizant of is the idea that the linguistic concepts of grammar are too abstract for younger students. Warner (1993) posited that possibly the reason many students do not retain grammar information is that they cannot. According to Piaget (1969), elementary students are concrete thinkers and are not at the developmental level to think in abstract terms. Yet, we, as educators, call upon our students to think in abstract ways in the study of grammar.

Many students find the study of formal grammar "at best, dry and, at worst, tedious and boring. Such sentiments are not without cause if we consider the usual way grammar has been presented" (Noguchi, 1991, p. 5). It seems that the Shurley Method was an attempt to make the study of formal grammar more interactive and, therefore, less boring. However, the jingles and chants have not covered up the fact that the "item-by-item definitions, the rote memorization of construction and their patterns, and the seemingly endless drills and exercises" (p. 5) are the center of the program. The Shurley Method does not show consistency with the knowledge of how learning and language acquisition take place. Instead of student-centered learning, the Shurley Method stresses that the classroom teacher is the key to the success of the program (Shurley & Wetsell, 1989a). With the lengthy, formulaic descriptions of exactly what teachers and

students should say and do as well as the prescribed exercises and the rigid sequence of lessons, it seems that the Shurley Method program is in charge of the thinking, not the teacher or the student. Furthermore, the jingles that aid in memorization, the isolated grammar exercises, the question-answer-flows about each sentence, and the structured writing assignments, only after the students learn the language of grammar, lead one to question the rigid boundaries placed on the students and the teacher.

The Shurley Method seems to assume that children are passive receivers of knowledge instead of socially interactive inquirers, constructing their own knowledge. In the Shurley Method lessons, questions are closed rather than open, work sheets are fill-in-the-blank with a predetermined answer, writing assignments are formulaic and step-by-step rather than open-ended to tap into a child's prior knowledge and creativity, and the only student interaction in the program is the unison jingles and chants. In contrast, Newman (1985) supported that children learn how language works by hearing language and participating in it within conversation. The Shurley Method hardly supports conversation. Chomsky (1995) elaborated, "A stimulating environment is required to enable natural curiosity, intelligence, and creativity to develop, and to enable our biological capacities to unfold (p. 332).

In addition, the Shurley Method appears to disregard the differentiation needed for students with varied knowledge bases and abilities (Tomlinson, 1995). Repetition is the focus of the program. All students are required to participate in the same activities, at the same time, in the same order, and in the same way. This approach implies that student needs are identical. In fact, Shurley explained in the teaching manual (Shurley & Wetsell, 1989a) that students should not be allowed to "declare boredom with this English

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method" (p. xii). Shurley went on to compare the repetition in the method to that of an athlete practicing a skill in order for it to become second nature so that careless mistakes could be avoided. Shurley indicated that the students who feel they already have mastered the grammar concepts should be content knowing they will make good grades and will have the opportunity to tutor other classmates. Conversely, Harste (1990) stated, "For curricula to be dynamic, children need to be our curricula informants" (p. 318). It seems as though boredom should indicate a need for curriculum change, rather than a need for suppression. Although Shurley claims that "repetition is the heart and soul of being good at anything they do in life" (Shurley & Wetsell, 1989a, p. xii), it seems that the additional repetition in tutoring would add frustration to many students, not to mention waste their time when they could be learning new concepts or better yet—be writing. Weaver (1979) explained that when students view grammar as boring and irrelevant, the dislike often turns into distaste for the other aspects of English—literature and composition.

If the Shurley Method is not a solution to writing improvement, what approach should be considered? Methods exist for offering an awareness of standard usage and mechanics without employing systematic, traditional grammar instruction. Grammar instruction, which relates directly to student writing and is in response to student need, can enhance writing performance (Holbrook, 1983; T. R. Smith, 1982). "Grammar instruction that is concrete, relevant . . . and focused on the process of writing develops mature writers" (Sealey, 1987, p. 2). Process Writing allows for the above. It exemplifies instructional methods supported by research which encourage student interaction and authentic activities as well as relevancy to the student. In Process Writing, students can develop an awareness of the uses of grammar through collaborating with peers,

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conferencing with the teacher, and mini-lessons during Writing Workshop (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1986, 1994; Graves, 1994) as well as immersing themselves in good literature (Atwell, 1987).

Implications from the Study

The four main findings of this study are: a) writing samples indicated no differences in group performance on writing proficiency, b) all four groups indicated mildly positive attitudes about writing and perceived themselves as writers at the beginning of the study and attitudes changed little over time, c) prompts were perceived as a boundary for the Process Writing group, who wrote more often, and a springboard for creativity for the Shurley Method group, who wrote less frequently, and d) collaboration had become a mode of learning for most students in the PW group.

The study indicated no differences in group performance on writing proficiency. The Process Writing group wrote as effectively as the other groups without specialized training in isolated parts of speech. If Process Writing is in alignment with research findings on how children learn best, why did Process Writing not improve writing performance more than methods incorporating or concentrating solely on grammar skills in isolation in this study.

A partial explanation could be the inconsistency of writing programs found from class to class in most schools. One year a student is taught explicit grammar and the next year the student works through the steps in the writing process, and perhaps the following year the student works in a combination of the two. Writing might be approached

differently each year. The continual change of instructional methods possibly delays the maturation and solidification of student writing.

A second reason Process Writing did not improve writing performance more than the other methods could be the fact that the years that grammar is presented in isolation is time lost from authentic writing. Noguchi (1991) contends that less time spent on formal grammar instruction means more time for actual writing to discover the power of the written word and "to gain a healthy awareness and appreciation of language and its uses, not just of limits but also of possibilities. In the end, less is more" (p. 121).

A third reason that none of the instructional methods improved writing performance more than any of the others could be that the teacher's personality and attitude affect learning as much or more than the method does. If a teacher is nurturing and passionate about what is taught, possibly students will be as motivated or more motivated than simply by the method of instruction that is incorporated.

Another implication to consider is that all four groups indicated mildly positive attitudes about writing at the beginning of the study and attitudes changed little over time. Although the PW group expressed preference for the choice that process writing affords, overall attitude towards writing was only mildly positive. On the other hand, although the two groups receiving instruction with the Shurley Method (PW/S and S) expressed dislike for the oral and written Shurley Method exercises when they were interviewed, they, too, expressed a mildly positive attitude towards writing. Moreover, since the S group indicated on the attitude survey that they did not write often, it makes sense that they would not dislike writing. Moreover, the PW/T group, the PW/S group, and the S group indicated a larger percentage of students answering that they were writers "Only in

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school" and the PW group was the only group that saw writing as occurring everywhere and not just in school. Although the groups saw themselves as writers in different situations, they all perceived themselves as writers. Considering these facts in combination with the fact that the writing attitude scores indicated a wide variability in range leads the researcher to question if elementary age students are conceptually mature enough to self assess writing attitude validly.

Another implication is that writing prompts were perceived as a boundary for the PW group and a springboard for creativity for the S group. Some students with experience in writing needed freedom of choice for self-expression and viewed the prompts as limiting while others with less experience in writing and writing choices welcomed the direction the prompts elicited once they were reassured about the openness of the assignment. For some, the prompts possibly hampered writing performance and attitude.

Collaboration among students is another implication to consider. The students in the PW group were given the opportunity to collaborate with peers in order to make sense of their learning. Collaboration became such a part of their thought processes that it seemingly happened automatically. Although research supports interactive learning and children constructing their own knowledge (Goodman, 1986; Harste, 1990; Heath, 1983; Kamii, 1985; Piaget, 1952; Vygotsky, 1978), the freedom to discuss and explore ideas with others is not always an option in today's classrooms.

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations exist in this study. The principal limitations are the length of

the study and the small sample size. In addition to the small sample size, the Shurley Method group had more students not participating in the study, which resulted in even smaller numbers for that particular group. A longer study may have produced different results. Furthermore, with so few subjects, results of the study cannot be generalized to another population.

An effort was made to select as similar instructional settings, student backgrounds, and socio-economic status as possible. However, the four classrooms represented four different schools and three different school districts. The different locations may have affected the results.

Additionally, the Shurley Method group had five participants who qualified as academically gifted in their school district (see Table 3.1). This may have affected the group results. Another point to consider is the writing ability of each class at the beginning of the school year was undocumented.

The predetermined writing prompts may have limited the writing performance of some students. Some children find it difficult to respond to a given prompt if it does not tap into their personal knowledge or interest (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994). If participants were not interested in the particular subject of the prompt or if they were unaccustomed to the boundaries of writing from a prompt, the prompts may have limited writing performance.

In addition, although the graders scored all papers in one sitting to increase reliability between the assessments of the two samples, natural maturation was not controlled. Furthermore, the method chosen to score writing samples could have affected the results.

Lastly, within the mixed groups (PW/T and PW/S) possibly it is difficult to pinpoint what could have accounted for the writing performance scores. The variability may have contributed, in part, to the lack of statistical significance.

Recommendations for Future Research

Findings of this study indicate that instruction with the Shurley Method does not result in more noticeable writing improvement than other instructional methods. These findings are consistent with the wide body of research (Amiran & Mann, 1982; Braddock et al., 1963; DeBoer, 1959; Elley, Barham, Lamb, and Wyllie, 1976; Harris, 1963; Hillocks, 1987; Hillocks & Smith, 1991; Holdzkom, Reed, Porter, & Rubin, 1983; Macauley, 1947; McQuade, 1980; Mellon, 1969; Neill, 1982; Rosen, 1987; Weaver, 1996) indicating that formal grammar instruction does not add to the quality of writing performance. However, since there is little research on the Shurley Method, it is recommended that further research studies examine the connection between grammar instruction taught with the Shurley Method and writing performance. In addition, it is suggested that researchers examine the impact that other "Generic Writing Systems" (Healey, 1995, p. 20) might have on writing performance and writing attitudes.

Future writing research studies should span a much longer time frame, preferably at least a school year, to draw a clearer picture of the role writing instruction plays in writing improvement as students mature as writers. It is also suggested that participants represent the same school district. Additionally, a larger number of participants representing each instructional method should be considered to improve population validity (Gay, 1992, p. 307). Furthermore, the end of a study should be planned before

the last month of the school year when many students seem to disengage with the learning process.

It is recommended that future research might examine a totally different population such as students that speak English as a second language or students displaying particular intelligences such as verbal-linguistic or musical-rhythmic. Control for student aptitude might be another consideration.

Since studies did show that exposing students to sentence-combining (Elley et al., 1976; Mellon, 1969; Noyce & Christie, 1983; O'Hare, 1973; Smith & Hull, 1985) improved the quality of student writing, it is recommended that educators not discount a search for other possible areas of language instruction that might improve writing quality. Vavra (1986) described this as an investigation for alternative, better approaches and methods to teach grammar more effectively rather than completely discarding it.

It could be beneficial for future studies to take a closer look at the effectiveness of using writing prompts as a springboard for writing. Some students complain that they are at a loss as to what to write about and wish to be relieved of the burden of selecting a topic (Tompkins, 1998). Others feel stymied by the boundaries that prompts or story starters place on them. Graves (1976) explained that choosing a topic for writing can lead to the downfall of student writing because students become dependent on teachers to supply topics, coining the phrase "writing welfare" (p. 645). Therefore, writing samples that are gathered in less controlled sessions are recommended. Although it would be difficult to ensure complete fairness with holistic scoring with such a varied selection of writing, future studies might examine writing produced in much less controlled settings. For example, writing could be taken from journals, reading logs, stories generated from

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the student's ideas. These writing pieces would reflect a truer picture of the child's typical approach to writing. A writing portfolio of all samples kept throughout the study could contribute a piece written at the beginning of the study, at the end, and in between. However, this would present a problem with classes that seldom write. Teachers would have to agree to collect writing at least at particular times of the study.

In considering the on-going collaboration found with the PW group, another future study might focus on thought influenced by talk. Similar to reading results with literature versus phonics where students verbalize and elaborate about books and writing more when they are given opportunities to read and write, results of student collaboration about writing should be examined.

Additionally, studies should examine whether or not elementary age students are developmentally ready to validly assess their writing attitudes. If so, the creation of a reliable writing attitude scale to measure the writing attitudes of elementary age students is recommended.

Summary

It seems that in education there is, on the one hand, a tremendous body of knowledge from grammar and writing research and, on the other hand, an enormous body of people who remain uninformed about the research. In order for students to be served in the best possible way, educators, parents, and politicians must become better informed. Areas of focus should include language acquisition, grammatical concepts, and research evidence that grammar taught in isolation does not transfer to writing improvement.

At best, grammar instruction in isolation makes good grammar students; it does not transfer to make them better writers. Does that mean that grammar should not be

taught at all in our schools? It depends. If it means labeling words or parts of sentences, completely separate from actual writing, we should re-evaluate the validity of teaching grammar (Warner, 1993). Few people will ever care if students become competent labelers of sentences. On the other hand, if 'teaching grammar' means helping students recognize and use standard American English, we have an obligation to teach it" (p. 79). In this way, students can become competent writers and communicators. "Language is learned through use rather than through practice exercises on how to use language . . . Language is a social event" (Harste, 1990, p. 316-317).

Weaver (1996) suggested, "It is time we tried teaching less grammar in the name of good writing, and undertook more research to determine the effectiveness of that general strategy" (p. 28). Warner (1993) asked, "Can any of us imagine a math or science curriculum where the same material is presented and drilled year after year as in the case in grammar . . . ?" (p. 77).

Kamii (1985) projected the following:

The public knows that today's medicine and engineering are not what they were 30 or 40 years ago because it knows that science does not stand still. While the public does not tell physicians and engineers to go back to the basics of 40 years ago, it proudly tells us to go back. . . . Back to basics is bound to fail because it is based on wrong, outdated assumptions about how human beings construct knowledge. . . . Whether education will then go forward or backward on another bandwagon depends on us and our willingness to be scientifically more rigorous, both about how we define our objectives and about how we try to

achieve these objectives. (p. 8-9)

To make matters worse, the guidelines handed down by administrators and politicians get in the way of creative teaching and creative learning, both critical in reaching children at their many different entry points (Heath, 1983). "If our teaching is too complicated, we focused on our lesson plans rather than on our students" (Calkins, 1994, p. 34). The result is teacher failure to make a positive impact on children, which is usually translated by educators as student failure.

In developing literacy, we must continue experiences with all aspects of language—reading, writing, speaking, and listening, not grammatical analysis (Warner, 1993). When educators teach for grammatical correctness rather than for communication and meaning, it teaches that writing is a "crushing bore" (Rose, 1989, p. 213). An anonymous person once said, "Children who are denied the power of expression, learn to express power." Once balance is created in the educational tripod of the "three Rs— Reading, 'Riting, and 'Rithmetic" by focusing on alternative instructional methods for writing, perhaps well-deserved balance will be added to the writing leg of the tripod. This balance can be brought about through the quest for ways to teach less grammar, more efficiently and in ways that will have greater impact on student writing (Weaver, 1996). With this balance, perhaps teachers will learn to compare and honor individual student growth and guide students into discovering, valuing, and celebrating their voices in writing. Only then will writing take its intended place as a crucial communication skill in the new millenium (Tompkins, 1997).

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

INSTITUITONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR

HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH FORM

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: 01-05-98   **IRB #: ED-98-049**   .

Proposal Title: .**A COMPARISON OF WRITING PERFORMANCE OF FIFTH GRADE STUDENTS USING THE PROCESS WRITING APPROACH AND THE SHURLEY METHOD**

Principal Investigator(s): David Yellin, Toni F. Pantier

Reviewed and Processed as: Expedited (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 _____   Date: January 6, 1998

Chair of Institutional Review Board
Cc: Toni F. Pantier

APPENDIX B

RESEARCH REQUEST

Rese
Research Request/Proposal Attachment
written by Toni Pantier

1. Purpose of Intended Study:

The purpose of the study will be to determine if there are significant differences over a five month period in the writing performance and attitudes about writing among fifth grade students who concentrate on meaning in writing and then on grammar within the context of that writing compared to students who are taught discrete grammar rules prior to writing.

2. Specific Objectives:

- To gather two writing samples generated from prompts from four fifth grade classrooms receiving writing instruction with one of the following methods: (a) the Process Writing approach, (b) the Process Writing approach combined with instruction from a basal, (c) the Process Writing approach combined with the Shurley Method, and (d) the Shurley Method.

- To gather information concerning attitudes about writing of students taught by the four methods mentioned above.

- To compare the narrative/descriptive writing performance, scored holistically, of students taught by the four methods mentioned above.

- To compare the writing attitudes of students taught by the four methods mentioned above.

- To gather data to add to the small body of existing research on a writing system (the Shurley Method) that presently is embraced in over half of Oklahoma's school districts and that is on the State Textbook List.

- To determine the most efficient way (in regard to the four methods mentioned above) to transfer the knowledge of proper grammar to writing

- To target the elementary grade level that is assessed in writing by the state.

3. Target Populations:

The study will focus on middle to lower-middle class fifth grade students near central Oklahoma whose school districts are not located in a city. The _____ fifth grade class from _____'s class will represent a strong Process Writing class. Three other fifth grade classes from two other similar districts have already agreed to participate as well, representing the other three methods of writing instruction.

4. Research Conditions:

Time: The study will last for five months (January through May of 1998). The researcher will meet with the targeted classes six times. The researcher only will interact with the students during three of the meetings.

1. Introductory session - 30 minutes to get acquainted with the class, establish rapport, explain the study, and answer questions and concerns. Information letters and consent forms for parents/guardians and students will be distributed.
2. Pretest session - 65 minutes to complete a writing attitude survey and write on a given prompt
3. Observation sessions - three sessions/1 hour each to observe students and teacher in their daily activities. No interaction with the researcher.
4. Posttest session - 65 minutes; same activities as the pretest session

Space requirements: N/A

5. Instrumentation:

A copy of the Teaching Philosophy Questionnaire, Student Writing Attitude Survey, two writing prompts, and a holistic scoring rubric are attached.

The **Teaching Philosophy Questionnaire** will be given to the participating teachers to complete at the onset of the study. It will be used to help determine if the teachers represent the desired instructional settings. Also, the questionnaire will be used to describe the teachers in Chapter III of my dissertation.

The **Student Writing Attitude Survey** will be used as a pretest and a posttest. The six questions are constructed with a range of answer choices to allow for calculation of the frequency of a particular response for each group concerning the participants' feelings about writing, reasons for writing, and frequency of writing. Percentages to each answer will be compiled for each class, and comparisons about each group's attitude concerning writing will be made.

The **writing prompts** will be used to generate student writing. They have been agreed upon by a District Language Arts Coordinator, a university language arts professor, and the researcher.

The **Writing Assessment Holistic Grading Rubric for Narrative/Descriptive Writing** was generated by one of the participating school districts for a yearly practice criterion-referenced test in writing. This rubric is adapted from the state assessment writing rubric for the State Criterion-Referenced Test in Writing. The rubric will be used by a team of four teachers and a District Language Arts Coordinator who all are experienced in general impression marking holistic scoring of upper grade elementary writing. Classes will be compared on writing performance. Any data desired by Stillwater district is available upon request.

6. Confidentiality Procedures:

Participants will receive a pretest writing packet and a pretest writing attitude survey with identical numbers on both. Students will fill in their names, schools, and teachers on cover sheets to the writing packet. The cover sheets will be removed before packets are collected to serve as a record. Teachers will keep the cover sheets.

Furthermore, writing packets will be shuffled before taken from the classroom. Once all writing samples from all four groups are collected, the packets will be shuffled into one stack to ensure confidentiality of classrooms for the holistic scoring sessions.

Original cover sheets will be distributed to the students before the posttest session so the students can copy their assigned numbers on the posttest writing packet and the posttest writing attitude survey. Again cover sheets will be collected by the teacher to be used at the close of the study to return all writing pieces to the students.

Parents/guardians will receive a letter and a consent form stating Oklahoma State University's policy on confidentiality. The letter and consent form are attached. OSU will not permit the names of students, teachers, principals, districts, and towns to be mentioned in my dissertation. Students' names will be unknown to the researcher.

7. Research Design:

A quasi-experimental equivalent control group design will be used. Multivariate analysis of covariance will be used to analyze writing performance data collected from a pre- and post- writing sample from each fifth grade participant. The pretest scores, determined by holistic scoring, will be used as the covariate to adjust for initial differences of written language ability among students. The experimental groups will be made up of students who are taught one of three writing systems: (a) Process Writing/supplemented with basal instruction, (b) Process Writing/ supplemented with the Shurley Method, and (c) Shurley Method. The control group will be students who are taught writing through Process Writing. The independent variables will be the method of instruction (group membership) and time of sample (two different samples collected form each participant at two different times over a five month period). The dependent variables will be the attitude scores measured by the Writing Attitude Survey and the writing performance scores of the participants as measured by holistic scoring.

8. Utilization of Results:

The results of the study will be used in my dissertation to fulfill OSU requirements for a doctoral degree. My dissertation committee has already asked me to submit pertinent results for publication in a language arts or reading journal and at the National Council of Teachers of English national meeting next fall with another colleague who has just completed a small study on Shurley Method and non-Shurley Method classes.

This study will benefit the Stillwater School District by creating a body of research to indicate a more efficient way to instruct children in writing to best enhance writing performance. Although a large body of research indicates teaching grammar in isolation does not transfer to writing, over 300 out of 549 school districts in Oklahoma presently use the Shurley Method, which is on the State Textbook List. Only one piece of Shurley research, a small study done in Oklahoma consisting of 28 students, exists to date. Researching how Oklahoma's children respond to different methods of language instruction will indicate to us all what direction we must consider. Research points to teaching grammar in the context of the students' writing. Process writing, the method that Andrea Rains embraces, does just that. Will the Shurley Method, an oral chants and jingles method that teaches the separate parts of speech and how each word is used in pre-determined sentences, point researchers in a different direction? Your district can help me answer that question.

_____ **Public Schools**
ADDITION TO
Research Request/Proposal
written by Toni Pantier

5. Instrumentation

The **Composition Opinionnaire** will be given to teachers at the onset of the study. The opinionnaire is designed to elicit the respondents' attitudes toward four, ten-statement areas of composition instruction: the importance of standard English usage, the importance of defining and evaluating tasks, the importance of student self-expression, and the importance of linguistic maturity. Teachers will respond on a Likert-type scale, with 1 representing strong disagreement with the statement, 3 uncertainty, and 5 a strong agreement. Scores will be added with number responses to some items being reversed for scoring: Section I, statement 10; Section II, statement 10; and Section III, statement 6, 7, 10. The results of the teachers' responses will be tabulated and reported for each section. Results will be compared to the responses on the teaching Philosophy Questionnaire.

Along with the Writing Attitude Survey, the student **Writing Attitude Scale** will be administered at the entrance and exit of the study. The scale includes twenty statements which students respond to on a Likert-type scale, ranging from strongly disagree, to uncertain, to strongly agree. For scoring, responses to items 1, 2, 4, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, and 19 will be added; then responses to items 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 16, 17, 20 will be subtracted. Totals will range from –40 to +40, with higher scores representing better attitudes and zero representing a neutral attitude. Students' attitude ratings, from the entrance and exit scales, ill be tabulated individually and by class and reported by class. Class scores will be arranged by percentage increase.

APPENDIX C

TEACHER INFORMATION

TEACHER INFORMATION

Name:

Gender:

Teaching experience:

> # years

> grade levels/subjects

Education:

Categorize self in terms of teaching philosophy:

> Basal/skills approach

> Literature based

> Combination

Feelings about literacy/literacy instruction:

School district:

> Person in charge of Elementary Instruction

> Language instruction mandates/texts

> Socio-economic class - Lower/lower-middle/middle, etc.

Targeted class:

    How students assigned to this class?

    Self-contained?

    Specific make-up of group

        Male
        Female

        Caucasian
        African American
        Hispanic
        Asian
        Native American
        List combinations (if any)

        Age range of students

        Learning disabled
        Reading lab
        Gifted

    Socio-economics - Lower/lower middle/middle, etc.

APPENDIX D

RESEARCH CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS

RESEARCH CONSENT FORM
FOR TEACHERS

I, _____, hereby authorize Toni Pantier to conduct research with my fifth grade students. Each student's participation will be contingent upon parent/guardian permission. The investigation, entitled "A Comparison of Writing Performance of Fifth Grade Students Using the Process Writing Approach and the Shurley Method," will serve as the requirement for a doctoral dissertation at Oklahoma State University. Four fifth grade classes will represent four different approaches to grammar instruction: Process Writing, Process Writing in combination with a language textbook, Process Writing in combination with the Shurley Method, and the Shurley Method. The purpose of the study is to determine if there are significant differences over a five month period (January - May, 1998) in the writing performance and attitudes about writing among fifth grade students who concentrate on meaning in writing and then on grammar within the context of that writing compared to students who are taught discrete grammar rules prior to writing. I understand my classroom will represent the _____.

Process Writing is a multi-step cycle that incorporates grammar instruction in the student's authentic writing when the need arises through student/teacher conferencing. The skill is taught when the student needs to make use of that skill in her/his writing. Peer interaction to improve writing is encouraged. The steps to Process Writing are brainstorming, rough drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Students revisit the steps of the process at a self-paced rate based on need.

The Shurley Method is a step-by-step method of teaching grammar, which teaches students the parts of speech and how the parts fit together in a sentence. Definitions are memorized through rhythmic jingles and repeated question-and-answer style chants during an oral interaction between the teacher and the class provide the information for labeling the parts of sentences on the board. Worksheets follow the oral lesson.

I understand that participation in the study is voluntary. Neither participation nor non-participation will in any way affect the students' class assessment at any time. I understand that at the onset and the close of the study, each student will be asked to write a narrative/descriptive story generated by a prompt. Writing performance will be holistically scored by a team of experienced scorers. I agree not to serve on the team that will score the writing samples.

I agree not to use individual writing scores as a means of student assessment for report cards. If the student does not have permission to participate in the study, he/she will be asked to write the two stories, but will file them in his/her classroom writing portfolio. No assessment will be made by the teacher or the researcher on the two writing pieces of students who do not have permission to participate in the study. Students with permission to participate in the study will complete a Writing Attitude Survey and a Writing Attitude Scale at the beginning and the end of the study. The surveys will be scored by the

researcher and withheld from the teacher. Comments collected from the study will in no way affect the students' classroom assessment at any time.

Further, I understand that the researcher will inform my students of the nature of the study in a thirty minute session. I am aware that both data collection sessions last 90 minutes. They will include about 10 minutes to complete a writing attitude survey, 10 minutes to complete a writing attitude scale, and approximately 50 minutes to write from a given prompt. I am aware that the researcher will visit the class for three one hour observation sessions to observe classroom procedures, method of language instruction, student attitude towards writing and instructional method, and student interaction. The researcher will schedule all classroom visits ahead of time at my convenience.

I understand that information gained from this study will be confidential, the identity of participating teachers, students, schools, districts, and towns will remain anonymous. My students will be known to the researcher and scorers by number. I also understand that there will be no cost to me or to my students.

I may contact Toni Pantier at (405) 844-9957 or 427-6926 or tpantier@aol.com any time I wish further information. I may also contact Dr. David Yellin, Department of Curriculum and Instruction in Education, Room 254, Willard Hall, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078 at (405) 744-7125 or DY24314@okway.okstate.edu or Gay Clarkson, Institutional Review Board Executive Secretary, 305 Whitehurst, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078, (405) 744-5700 or gay@okway.okstate.edu.

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me to keep on hand for reference.

Date: _____   Time: _____(am/pm)

Signed: _____

School: _____

Witness: _____
(Signature of another adult)

I certify that I personally have explained all elements of this form to the teacher before requesting a signature.

_____
Toni Pantier, Project Investigator

APPENDIX E

LETTER TO THE DISTRICT CURRICULUM COORDINATOR

Letter to the District Curriculum Coordinator

113 Hortense Avenue
Edmond, OK 73034
Date: _____

Dear _____:

This is to confirm our phone conversation concerning permission to engage 5th grade class(es) from your school district in research for my dissertation for Oklahoma State University entitled A Comparison of Writing performance of Fifth Grade Students Using the Process Writing Approach and the Shurley Method. _____
has/have agreed to participate in the study. This study has been approved by the four members of my doctoral committee and by the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board for human subjects.

Although there is little research documented on the Shurley Method, several entire school districts, entire schools, or isolated teachers, depending on the area, embrace the Shurley Method since it is on the State Textbook List. I am anxious to gather data and examine the results of the study. Upon completion of my dissertation, I will share the results and conclusions with you. Hopefully, this study will benefit school districts, in general, and elementary children, in particular, by indicating the most efficient way to transfer the knowledge of proper grammar to writing.

Enclosed are copies of the written communications and instruments I plan to use with the participating classes in this study: letter of consent to teachers participating in the study, letter to principals, letter to the parent/guardian, parent/guardian consent form, student assent form, teacher philosophy questionnaire, teacher composition opinionnaire, student survey on attitudes towards writing, student writing attitudes scale, and writing prompts.

Thank you for your cooperation and support.

Sincerely,

Toni Pantier

APPENDIX F

LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL

Letter to the Principal

113 Hortense Avenue
Edmond, OK 73034
Date: _____

Dear _____ :

This is to confirm our phone conversation concerning permission to engage one of your 5th grade teachers in my research for my dissertation for Oklahoma State University entitled A Comparison of Writing Performance of Fifth Grade Students Using the Process Writing Approach and the Shurley Method. Andrea Rains has agreed to participate in the study. This study has been approved by the four members of my doctoral committee and by the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board for human subjects.

Although the Shurley Method is included on the State Textbook List, there is little documented research on the method. Therefore, I am anxious to gather data and examine the results of the study. Upon completion of my dissertation, I will share the results and conclusions with you. Hopefully, this study will benefit at least the participating school districts by indicating the most efficient way for children to transfer the knowledge of grammar to writing.

The study will examine four methods of teaching writing: Process Writing, Process Writing/ Basal combination, Process Writing/ Shurley Method combination, and Shurley Method. Before each of the four classes was chosen for the study, I observed during a language lesson to insure the class was, in fact, a clear representation of the said method.

Enclosed are copies of the written communications and instruments I plan to use for this study: letter of consent to teachers participating in the study, letter to the parent/guardian, parent/guardian consent form, student assent form, a teacher philosophy questionnaire, teacher composition opinionnaire, student survey on attitudes towards writing, student writing attitude scale, and writing prompts. The letter to the parent/guardian outlines my mission as well as the procedure for gathering the data. In compliance with Oklahoma State University's Guidelines for Review of Research Involving Human Subjects, I will collect data only on student's who return a signed parent/guardian permission form. In reporting data, all school districts', schools', teachers', and subjects' names will be kept confidential.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Toni Pantier

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questions inquire about your philosophical approach to teaching language arts:

1. How would you describe your reading and writing programs (literature-based, interdisciplinary, process writing, autonomous learning, traditional basal, skills based, combination, etc.)?

2. What reasons can you cite for choosing your type of language program? What choices do you have, or is your program dictated by the school district or building principal?

3. What are the qualities of good writing?

4. What do you think a good writer needs to do in order to write well?

5. In what ways do you respond to student writing when it is handed in to you to read?

6. How do you decide which pieces of student writing are the good ones?

adapted from Atwell (1987), Rief (1992), and Williams (1997)

APPENDIX H

STUDENT WRITING ATTITUDE SURVEY

WRITING ATTITUDE SURVEY
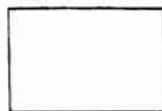
There are no right or wrong answers to the following questions about writing. Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible. Circle the one letter after each question that is the best answer for you.

1. Are you a writer?
    a) Yes
    b) Sometimes
    c) Not really
    d) No
    e) Only in school

2. Why do you usually write?
    a) My teacher makes us write.
    b) I write to help myself learn things and remember things.
    c) I like to communicate with other people in writing.
    d) I know I need to practice writing.
    e) Other

3. How often do you write?
    a) Almost every day
    b) Often
    c) Sometimes
    d) Not very often
    e) Only when I have to

4. When you write, how do you feel?
    a) Bored
    b) Nervous
    c) Relaxed
    d) Happy
    e) I wish I could do something else.

Please turn the page.

5. In general, how do you feel about what you write?
   a) I feel frustrated because it usually doesn't turn out as well as I would like for it to.
   b) I enjoy expressing my ideas.
   c) I feel scared that I won't write well.
   d) I feel satisfied with my writing.
   e) Usually I really like what I write.

6. What does a person have to do in order to be a good writer?
   a) Use correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization plus use words (like verbs) correctly
   b) Write neatly
   c) Use descriptions
   d) Make good grades in writing
   e) Other

Adapted from Atwell (1987), Rief (1992), and Williams (1997)

APPENDIX I

STUDENT WRITING ATTITUDE SCALE

WRITING ATTITUDE SCALE

There are no right or wrong responses to the following statements about writing. Please answer as honestly as possible how you feel about each statement on the scale provided. One shows strong disagreement with the statement, three shows uncertainty, and five shows a strong agreement. Circle your answers.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
1.	I look forward to writing down my own ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I have no fear of my writing being graded.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I hate writing.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	If I have something to say, I would rather write it than say it.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I am afraid of writing when I know what I write will be graded.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	My mind usually seems to go blank when I start to work on a writing piece.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Expressing my ideas through writing seems to be a waste of time.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I don't like my writing pieces to be evaluated.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I see writing as having no more value than other ways to communicate.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix I

Appendix I

| 10. | I feel confident in my ability to express my ideas clearly in writing. | Strongly disagree
1 | Disagree
2 | Uncertain
3 | Agree
4 | Strongly agree
5 |

| 11. | I see writing as an outdated, useless way of communicating. | Strongly disagree
1 | Disagree
2 | Uncertain
3 | Agree
4 | Strongly agree
5 |

| 12. | In the field of my future occupation, writing is an enjoyable experience. | Strongly disagree
1 | Disagree
2 | Uncertain
3 | Agree
4 | Strongly agree
5 |

| 13. | I seem to be able to write down my ideas clearly. | Strongly disagree
1 | Disagree
2 | Uncertain
3 | Agree
4 | Strongly agree
5 |

| 14. | Writing is a useful skill. | Strongly disagree
1 | Disagree
2 | Uncertain
3 | Agree
4 | Strongly agree
5 |

| 15. | Discussing my writing with others is an enjoyable experience. | Strongly disagree
1 | Disagree
2 | Uncertain
3 | Agree
4 | Sttrongly agree
5 |

| 16. | I have a terrible time organizing my ideas in an essay. | Strongly disagree
1 | Disagree
2 | Uncertain
3 | Agree
4 | Strongly agree
5 |

| 17. | When I have something to say, I'd rather say it than write it. | Strongly disagree
1 | Disagree
2 | Uncertain
3 | Agree
4 | Sttrongly agree
5 |

| 18. | An ability to write will be worthwhile in my occupation. | Strongly disagree
1 | Disagree
2 | Uncertain
3 | Agree
4 | Strongly agree
5 |

| 19. | I enjoy writing. | Strongly disagree
1 | Disagree
2 | Uncertain
3 | Agree
4 | Strongly agree
5 |

| 20. | I'm not good at writing. | Strongly disagree
1 | Disagree
2 | Uncertain
3 | Agree
4 | Strongly agree
5 |

Appendix I

Note: For scoring, add the responses to items 1, 2, 3, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, and 19; then subtract the responses to items 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 16, 17, and 20 (Reigstad and McAndrew).

APPENDIX J

PARENT/GUARDIAN LETTER

_____, 1998

Dear Parent or Guardian,

As a doctoral student at Oklahoma State University, I am conducting an investigation in different approaches to teaching grammar and how these approaches improve student writing. With the permission of the school principal, your child's classroom teacher has agreed to participate in the study. As a participant, your child will be invited to:

1.) Complete two surveys of the study on attitudes towards writing

2.) Write two narrative/descriptive stories from two given prompts

The above tasks will be completed in two sessions, one at the beginning of the study and one four months later at the close of the study. Each survey will take about ten minutes to complete, and each writing session will last for about an hour. In addition, the researcher will observe the group for three one hour sessions during different classroom periods.

All stories will be scored by the same procedure used to score the 5th Grade State Criterion-Referenced Test in Writing. Class writing performance will be calculated statistically and reported. Direct student quotes from classroom observations made during the four month period may be included in my dissertation to describe student attitudes towards writing. However, **no names of school districts, schools, teachers, or students will be used in reporting data. Numbers will be assigned to replace all student names on all written work at all times to insure strict confidentiality. There will be no discomfort, risk, or cost involved.** Parents/guardians of all participants will receive a letter at the close of the study stating a comparison of class performances (improvement) of the four instructional methods to writing that will be studied in this project. Principals and teachers will be notified of the results and conclusions of the study.

Participation is voluntary, and there is no penalty for refusal to participate. If your child does not have permission to participate in the study, he/she will be asked to write each story and file it in his/her classroom writing portfolio.

Please read the Research Consent Form for parents/guardians carefully. On one of the forms, please print your first and last name in the first blank, circle either that you <u>do authorize</u> or you <u>do not authorize</u> participation in the study, and print your child's first and last name in the blank provided. Please sign the form at the bottom of the page and return it to your child's teacher as soon as possible. The second form is for you to keep and refer to if necessary. Your child will be given the opportunity to personally agree to or decline participation on a student assent form. Please discuss this with her/him.

In order for this to be a worthwhile contribution to the field of education and to examine fairly each of the writing approaches targeted, it is necessary to have as many participants as possible. Your child's participation will greatly enhance the study, providing valuable information. Please consider allowing your child to participate in determining the best way to reach children in writing improvement.

Thank you for your time in reading this letter and completing the enclosed form. Please do not hesitate to call me if you have additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
Toni Pantier, Project Investigator

APPENDIX K

RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

RESEARCH CONSENT FORM
FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

I, _____, hereby <u>do authorize</u> or <u>do not authorize</u> (please circle one) Toni Pantier to perform the tasks described in the attached letter with my child, _____.

This investigation entitled "A Comparison of Writing Performance of Fifth Grade Students Using the Process Writing Approach and the Shurley Method" serves as the requirement for a doctoral dissertation at Oklahoma State University. The purpose of the study is to determine over a five month period which approach to grammar instruction is a more efficient way to transfer the knowledge of grammar to student writing. Writing performance will be compared among four participating classes, representing different approaches to grammar instruction. The approaches are: Process Writing, Process Writing in combination with a language textbook, Process Writing in combination with the Shurley Method, and the Shurley Method.

Process Writing is a multi-step cycle that incorporates grammar instruction in the student's authentic writing when the need arises through student/teacher conferencing. The skill is taught when the student needs to make use of that skill in her/his writing. Peer interaction to improve writing is encouraged. The steps to Process Writing are brainstorming, rough drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Students revisit the steps of the process at a self-paced rate based on need.

The Shurley Method is a step-by-step method of teaching grammar, which teaches students the parts of speech and how the parts fit together in a sentence. Definitions are memorized through rhythmic jingles and repeated question-and-answer style chants during an oral interaction between the teacher and the class provide the information for labeling the parts of sentences on the board. Worksheets follow the oral lesson.

I understand that participation in the study is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I am free to withdraw my consent and my child's participation in this project at any time without penalty after notifying the project director. Also I am aware that my child will be given the opportunity to personally decline participation. Neither participation nor non-participation nor any kinds of comments collected will in any way affect the student's class assessment at any time.

Further, I understand that my child will be verbally informed of the nature of the study by the researcher. I am aware that my child will be requested to complete two surveys at the beginning and the end of the study and write two stories. I know that each survey will take about ten minutes to complete, and each writing session will last approximately one hour. The researcher will observe the class several times throughout the study to observe classroom procedures, method of language instruction, student attitude towards writing and instructional method, andstudent interaction. I understand that information gained from this study will be confidential, the identity of my child will remain anonymous, and there will be no cost to me.

I may contact Toni Pantier at (405) 844-9957 or tpantier@aol.com should I wish further information. I may also contact Dr. David Yellin, Department of Curriculum and

Please turn the page.

Instruction in Education, Room 254, Willard Hall, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078 at (495) 744-7125 or DY24314@okway.okstate.edu or Gay Clarkson, Institutional Review Board Executive Secretary, 305 Whitehurst, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078, (405) 744-5700 or gay@okway.okstate.edu.

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me to keep on hand for reference.

Date: _____   Time: _____(am/pm)

Name of child: _____

Signed: _____
(Parent/guardian signature)

Witness: _____
(Signature of an adult other than the parent or guardian)

I certify that I personally have explained all elements of this form to the participant before requesting her/his parent or guardian to sign it.

_____

Toni Pantier, Project Investigator

APPENDIX L

RESEARCH ASSENT FORM FOR STUDENTS

RESEARCH ASSENT FORM
FOR STUDENTS

I, _____, hereby agree to
(Please print your name.)
help Ms. Pantier with her research on fifth grade student writing. I understand that she
will ask me to:

    a. Fill out two surveys on how I feel about writing at the beginning of the
       study and and two surveys five months later at the end of the study. The
       teacher will not see my answers.
    b. Write two narrative/descriptive stories, one at the beginning of the study
       and one at the end of the study.
    c. Use a given prompt for each story.
    d. Do my best.
    e. Not worry about any scores.
    f. Try to have fun with this research.

I understand that if I participate in this study, I will be helping teachers to decide the best
way to instruct children in writing improvement. I understand that participation is
voluntary and that there is no penalty if I do not participate. I also understand that
nothing that I write for this study will be graded for my report card. I will be given an
assigned number to use in place of my name on all papers for this study to insure
confidentiality. Ms. Pantier might quote me directly in her study, but she will never use
my name since only my number will be on my work.

I have asked Ms. Pantier any questions that I might have, and I have discussed this study
and the assent form with my parent(s)/ guardian(s). I fully understand the assent form,
and I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me to keep in case I have
questions during the study.

Date: _____, 1998

Signed: _____
                 (Student's signature)

_____
    Toni Pantier, Project Investigator

APPENDIX M

WRITING SAMPLE PACKET

PROMPT #1
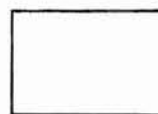
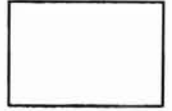# Fifth Grade
Writing Sample #1

Student _____

School _____

Teacher _____

Prompt

Imagine that you find a package sitting on your front porch. It has a large tag on it with your name printed in bold letters. Write a story about what is in the box and what happens after you receive it.
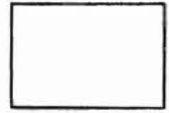
Ideas

Appendix M

Begin writing on this page.

_____

_____

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_____

Appendix M

APPENDIX N

WRITING SAMPLE PACKET

PROMPT #2

Fifth Grade
Writing Sample #2

Student _____

School _____

Teacher _____

Prompt

On your way home from school, you notice that an animal is following you. Write a story about what happens.

Ideas
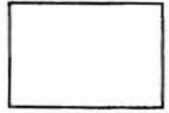
Begin writing on this page.

_____

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_____

_____

APPENDIX O

WRITING ASSESSMENT HOLISTIC GRADING RUBRIC

Writing Assessment Holistic Grading Rubric
Narrative/Descriptive Writing

1 -   These responses demonstrate that the writer saw the prompt and attempted to respond to it. Some papers have so little writing that there are few details to sequence. There are few descriptive details with little or no extension. Other responses are longer but with severe language control problems which interfere with meaning and make it difficult to follow the story.

2 -   These responses establish a narrative sequence but may be difficult to follow. Some responses many be controlled but are skeletal, presenting few details to sequence little and description. Other papers demonstrate severe rambling, lack of clarity, interruptions, and/or disjointed ideas, disrupting the progressing of the narrative.

3 -   These responses present a narrative sequence which is generally not difficult to follow. There is a limited amount to description included in the paper. Some responses are organized and controlled but with few details. Other papers may have interruptions, gaps, or abrupt, unexplained shifts in the narrative. Some papers are repetitive or rambling, lacking transitions, and weakening the progression of the narrative.

4 -   These responses demonstrate a sustained sequence of events with a logical progression of ideas and a moderate amount of description. Some papers are organized and controlled and add details to the events of the story. Other papers are somewhat rambling and/or redundant. Transitions in these papers may be weak, and details are uneven and general.

5 -   These responses have a detailed sequence of events with a generally strong progression of ideas and a substantial amount of description. Details are even and varied and some vividness may be present. Transitions are effective but may not be sophisticated. Some specificity of word choice and varied sentence structure is evident.

6 -   These responses are complete and unified and present clear, well organized, developed description. They are characterized by control of the progression of ideas and effective word choice, sentence structure, and transitions. In addition, some responses are vivid and demonstrate strong attention to detail.

N -   A paper will receive no score for one of the following reasons:
- -The writing does not address the prompt. There is no evidence that the writer saw the prompt or attempted to respond to it.
- -The writing is so illegible that it cannot be read.

APPENDIX P

INSTRUCTIONS FOR WRITING SAMPLES

INSTRUCTIONS FOR WRITING SAMPLES

1. I would like to invite you to have fun with this writing prompt. Remember that the writing that you do for me will not count as a grade in this class. Please write the best story about this prompt that you can think of on the pages in this packet.

2. (Hand out the writing packets.) You have received a stapled packet. Please follow these steps:

    1) On the cover sheet please write your first and last name, your school, and your teacher's name in the blanks. The box at the top right corner of the page has a number written in it. That is the number that has been assigned to you so the scorers won't know your name.

    2) On the next page there is a writing prompt for you. Read the prompt to yourself as I read it aloud. It says . . . (Read prompt in booklet.)

    3) When we begin writing, you will think about what you could include in your story. Then you will jot down your ideas in the blank section below the prompt labeled "Ideas." You could gather your ideas in the form of a list of words or phrases, a web, a storywheel, or by any other method you find helpful.

    4) When you have your ideas gathered, you will begin your story on the first lined page which is numbered page 1. There are 5 numbered pages of lined paper provided. If you need more paper, raise your hand and I will bring you more. Notice the reminder to not write on the back page of this packet.

    5) Don't forget to mention the prompt at the beginning of your story.

    6) Please write in pencil so you can erase changes that are needed. You may print or use cursive writing, whichever works best for you.

    7) Remember that your story will need a beginning, a middle, and an end.

    8) When ten minutes are left in the writing session, I will announce, "You have ten more minutes." I will also announce when you have five minutes left. Try to plan your time so that you can reread your story and make any needed corrections to make your story more clear during this time.

    9) Altogether you will have 50 minutes to write. Use no more than 10 minutes for planning your story ideas, at least 30 minutes for your actual writing, and you will want to save time for making corrections the last 5 or 10 minutes.

    10) Your finished piece will be in rough draft form. Do not worry about copying it over. I do not expect it to look like a final draft.

2. Your teacher and I will not speak with you during your writing time. Please keep your story until the end of the writing session.

3. I would like to invite you to do your best planning and writing.

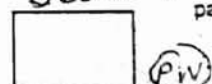4. Have fun with this writing prompt.

5. You may begin.

APPENDIX Q

PROCESS WRITING

WRITING SAMPLES

Chapter 1

Begin writing on this page.

SCORE: 7   page 1

(PW)

Once I came home from the store and there was this square shaped box on the front porch. So I walked up to the front porch and I saw this big brown box.

I wonder what it could be I said

Then Mom said why don't you just pick it up, Then put in the living room and then come back out. So you can help carry in croshies.

OK, I said. Then I tried to pick it up but it was to havey. So my dad helped me carry it in to the living room.

Katie Mom said can you come and help me carry the groshies in please.

Yea be there in a secand.

OK hurry up in there.

Dad, When can I open up i Box.

Oh, in a little bit. After you help mom bring the groshies in. If it is all right with her.

Mom, dad said that when I help
You bring in the groshries in I
can open that box up. That is
if it is all right with you.
Yea it is. But you have to help
put them up. then you can open it
OK mom where does this go
it goes in that cabin't over there
Mom where does this go in
the refriahiater -
OK Katie You can
open the box now I
I can yes. I wonder what
it could be. Oh cool, a
new stearo and some C.d.s
Thanks mom, Thanks dad.
But we didn't give it
to you.
Then who did?
I don't know. Who
would give it to me than.
I don't know may be a
friend gave it to you.
Why would one of my friends
give me a cool stareo.
Maybe because they wan'te

To be nice and so they gave
it to you..

Chapter 2/
Well in the morning we
can try to figer out who got
it for you OK.
OK See you in the morning
good night, I Love you. Sleep good
The next morning I
woke up and woolked to the
Kitchen and all I could smell
was pancakes, Bacon, eggs, and
toast. There was Orange juice
on the table and Milk. I walked
In the door and Mom was hummin
then the door shut then She
jumped. Oh you scared me.
Oh I'm sorry mom I didn't
mean to scare you.
Oh thats all right.
Riing, Riing I get said Katie
Hello
Hi said the Boy on the phone
Oh Hi.
IS Katie There
Yea this is her Speaking

May I ask who is speaking
Yea This is Curby
did you get my present I
got you
No
Well it was in a big, Brown, heavy
Box
oh you got it for me you
Shouldn't have
But I wanted to know if
you would want to go out
together some time
I would love to OK
meet me at the movies
tonight at 7:00 sharp
OK see you there by

Chapter 3
Well I went on my date
and we had fun We are
now Boyfriend and Girlfriend
and we are dating alot It is
almost valintines day and he
gave me a ring. Well got
to go on my date with Curby.
Bye

Read The rest of the Series Katie and friends Join Katie next time on her mystrys and adventers.

APPENDIX R

PROCESS WRITING/TEXTBOOK

WRITING SAMPLES

SCORE: 7   page 1
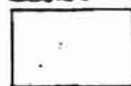
(PW/T)

On Saturday the 6th of May I was walking
home from school and I was hearing
foot steps. I stopped and looked back, there
was nothing. I just kept walking. I
heard the foot steps again. There in the
middle of the road was a puppy. I
picked her up and took her home. With
me. My mom and I decided to name
her Jazzman. (Jazzers is what I really
call her.) Day after day, week after week,
month after month, I would come
home and feed her and water her.
Pardon me, sorry for not introducing
myself. My name is Heather Freeman
with a family of four. I live in
mid west city, Oklahoma. Anyways
Jazzman loved me, and I loved her.
But one day Jazzman and I were
playing tug a war, when Jazzman
all of a sudden she bit me. My
mom took me to the emergency room
to see if the dog had rabies. Jazzman
did not have rabies but I had to
have 10 stiches in my hand. The
first thing mom said was, we are.

getting rid of Jazzman when we get home. I said no over and over again, and told my mom that I still loved her even tho she bit me. But my mom just insisted that we get rid of her. Then one day I came home from school and found that Jazzman was gone, then I knew she was gone forever. I was bitter for the next month. I finally got over it. Then one day I was walking home from school and I heard footsteps behind me. I turned around and there was nothing there, so I kept walking and turned around again and it was a ppppppp. That's another story!

APPENDIX S

PROCESS WRITING/SHURLEY METHOD

WRITING SAMPLES

Hi my name is Necole. I'm eleven years old I live in a two story house. My friend name is Tiffeny she has black hair thr..on eyes. Okay I will get to the point know...

One sunny Friday Tiffeny and I were walking home one day from school We saw a animal following us home. We stoped to see what it was but it was to far to see, so we keep on walking Tiffeny turnd back around to see if she could see it. When she did it was running at us. She bite me and told me to run around. So I did. I could finlly see what the animal was it was a monkey. It looked like a baby monkey that ran away from the Midwest city zoo. I stop and told Tiffeny to stay still. The monkey keept on coming it finally caught up to us. I picked it up and karryed it to my house. Tiffeny and I went up stears went into my room we sat it on my bad. I wonder where

it came from I told my self.

I went to my dresser and picked up the phone. I called my mom at work I told her what happen. She could not believe it.

"My mom told me that she would home in a little bit," I told Tiffeny.

"What time will she be home?" Tiffeny asked me.

"At 5:00 okay" I replied

"Where can we put it until you mom gets home? Tiffeny asked

"In this box okay," I added.

"So we set it in the box. We put a black it and a baby below. It went to sleep. My mom walk in the door at 5:00 p.m. My mom "said where is the monkey."

I brough it down to her with cinnoji to write it up

Nicole you and Treseny get in to that car might know-I will be there in a just a little bit. We are going to take that animal back to the zoo. It will be safe there then here.
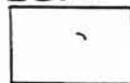
We take it back to the zoo. The zoo person was really glad that we brought it back because his mom was really sad with out it. I will give you a free pass to the zoo.

After that we went there every day to vist him. It was a blest.

The
END

APPENDIX T

SHURLEY METHOD

WRITING SAMPLES

Appendix T

page 1

I was home from school one day and I saw their was a package sitting. it had my name on it. It said from China and before I could pick it up it started to move. It it shock like after a dog got wet. And then the paper frame off and a little panda roled out, a baby panda. I picked up the panda and saw inside. I bet your hungry coming all the way from China. So, we don't have any bamboo. Come on ol' Buddy. ol' Pal, we have to go to the ____ to buy some bamboo. Hmm, thats a good name Buddy. Come on Buddy!

We're here Buddy come on let's go find some bamboo. You can't live here, ___ I can't go buy food every day. I've got to get you back to China. Let's go sit down on that bench. What's that noise I said Buddy slow down Buddy was running twords the sound. It was another panda. Gotcha, I've got to get you on an airplane back to China.

The next day on the porch was another box it said from Australia. and then the box hoped ____ in the air. (Utah!)

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APPENDIX U

PARENT/GUARDIAN LETTER

FOR CLOSE OF STUDY

May 14, 1998

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Thank you for allowing your child to participate in the writing investigation this semester for my dissertation. The students wrote from a given prompt in January and a different prompt in May. They also completed two attitude surveys at the beginning of the study and the same two surveys at the close of the study to see if their attitudes about writing changed over the course of time. Observing the classroom at different times during the day for about an hour a month gave me an overall picture of how writing fits into the daily curriculum.

On May 19 a committee of three upper grade teachers and a District Language Arts Coordinator will meet to holistically score all writing samples. All four of these people have had two to five years of experience with holistically scoring large numbers of writing pieces.

By the end of the summer I will complete the statistics on the results of the study. When school resumes, your child's fifth grade teacher will have a letter for you stating a comparison of class performances (improvement) of the four instructional methods to writing that were studied in this project. I am quite anxious to determine the results and come to conclusions about the most efficient way(s) to teach writing to fifth graders. You may contact me at (405)844-9957 or tpantier@aol.com or Dr. David Yellin, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, at (405)744-7125 or DY24314@okway.okstate.edu if you have further questions.

Your child's participation greatly added to the success of this study. Thank you for your support.

Have a most enjoyable summer.

Sincerely,

Toni Pantier
Project Investigator

VITA

Toni Fredeman Pantier

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: A COMPARISON OF WRITING PERFORMANCE OF FIFTH GRADE
STUDENTS USING THE PROCESS WRITING APPROACH AND THE
SHURLEY METHOD

Major Field: Curriculum and Instruction

Biographical Sketch:

   Personal Data: Born in Little Rock, Arkansas, March 4, 1948, the daughter of
      Frank and Rosalind Fredeman.

   Education: Graduated from Hall High School, Little Rock, Arkansas, in May
      1966; received Bachelor of Science in Education degree in Elementary
      Education from the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas, in
      January 1970; received Master of Education degree in Elementary
      Education from Central State University, Edmond, Oklahoma, in July
      1988. Completed the requirements for Doctor of Education degree at
      Oklahoma State University in July 1999.

   Professional Experience: Employed as a 4th grade teacher at Ponderosa
      Elementary School, Fayetteville, North Carolina; a 5th grade teacher at
      Reilly Road Elementary School, Fayetteville, North Carolina, and
      Lorraine Elementary School, Fountain, Colorado; a 6th grade teacher at
      Amboy Elementary School, North Little Rock, Arkansas, at Westfall
      Elementary School, Choctaw, Oklahoma, and at Country Estates
      Elementary School, Midwest City, Oklahoma; a 1st-6th grade teacher at
      the Academic Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; an 8th and 9th grade
      English teacher at Dauphin Junior High School, Enterprise, Alabama; an
      adjunct instructor at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma; co-
      director of the 1999 Oklahoma State University Writing Project Summer
      Institute, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Professional Memberships: National Council of Teachers of English, National Association for Gifted Children, Oklahoma Association for Gifted, Creative, and Talented; Oklahoma State University Writing Project; National Writing Project.