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ABSTRACT

Exploring what happened in the classroom as a teacher used a whole language approach with her culturally varied, urban fourth-grade students, this report tells the story of a unit on personal, narrative writing which occurred from April to June. The report describes how the teacher established routines to make the unit work, and how the teacher felt that whole language teaching was exhausting yet personally rewarding and effective. The report also notes that the students reinforced the teacher's perceptions--they enjoyed the experience and were discovering how to compose and what it means to be authors. The report provides a formal analysis of students' writings to give a developmental picture of their writing abilities. The report suggests that students progressed in their writing abilities because the teacher provided support and scaffolding for their learning by reinforcing achievements in writing and helping students extend their ideas. A discussion of the importance of the involvement of school faculty in the study, a description of the expressive autobiographic interview, the interview schedule, writing prompts, students' advice sheets, and transcripts of students' writings are attached. Contains 53 references.
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WRITING IN AN
ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

RESEARCH REPORT



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**WRITING IN AN
ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM**

by
Kathleen B. Whale
Sam Robinson
Carol Lockhart

S.S.T.A. Research Centre Report #93-07
September, 1993

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DEDICATION

Life holds no greater joy or meaning than to be thought by your colleagues, your students, and your friends as a great teacher. Kathleen (Kay) Whale was such a teacher. Those of us who had the distinct advantage to work with her as a supervising teacher, undergraduate, or graduate student came to know her as a consummate educator. Kay nurtured the growth of intern teachers. She encouraged and coached. She used her extensive knowledge of teaching strategies to expand the horizons of both interns and supervising teachers.

In the classroom, Kay had quiet authority. She outlined clearly her expectations. Her scholarship was thorough and fastidious. She expected as much from all her students; yet she did not expect them to get there alone. She provided suggestions and methods to achieve excellence in scholarship.

As a scholar and writer Kay was meticulous. Her research and writings speak to the devotion she had to quality education.

Kay's relationship with students often moved beyond the classroom. Her constructive and honest response to the learning of students opened doors to friendships that lasted long after classes were over. An afternoon cup of tea, a personal telephone call, or a short note cultivated friendships.

Kay Whale was a colleague and a friend, but most of all she was a teacher who modelled a love of students, writing, and teaching. We honour her memory.

Carol Fedrau-Ens

ABSTRACT

This is the story of Ms. Goold and her grade-four students. Ms. Goold used a whole language approach with her students, who were a culturally varied group in an urban setting. What is told in this report is the story of a unit on personal, narrative writing which occurred from April to June.

Ms. Goold became a researcher-colleague of Dr. Kay Whale, and together they explored what happened during this unit. This report gives the results of their joint work. It considers the theory base for whole language teaching, an application of constructivist learning theory. It describes what happened during this writing unit -- how Ms. Goold established routines to make this unit work. It gives the personal meaning that the writing unit had for both students and teacher. For Ms. Goold, whole language teaching was time-consuming and exhausting, and she felt a lack of support and appreciation from colleagues. Yet she found this approach to language arts teaching personally rewarding and effective. Students' comments about their experience reinforced Ms. Goold's perceptions. They enjoyed their experience; they were discovering how to compose and what it means to be an author.

This account also provides a formal analysis of students' writings to give a developmental picture of their writing abilities. Through this analysis, the reader will see that the students progressed in their writing abilities because Ms. Goold provided support and scaffolding for their learning by reinforcing achievements in writing and helping students extend their ideas. This analysis stands in contrast to a more traditional way of teaching writing in which teachers are encouraged to point out students' errors and emphasize error elimination.

The principal researcher for this study was Dr. Kathleen B. Whale, Department of Curriculum Studies, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan. Carol Lockhart and Sam Robinson, colleagues of Kay's, are publishing this report posthumously to honour Kay and her contribution to teacher education in Saskatchewan.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1989, Dr. Kathleen Whale died, leaving unfinished a research project that she had started for the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association (SSTA). Out of respect for Kay, Carol Lockhart and I have pieced together her notes to finish her report. Carol had worked with Kay as a student assistant and I was a colleague and friend.

This research is a composite of several objectives: a study of the writing of elementary school students; the beginning of research on literacy based in Saskatchewan, one of Kay's intentions; an example of qualitative research, an approach to research that Kay established in the College of Education. For these reasons, Kay's work, although reported posthumously, has value for educators in Saskatchewan and elsewhere.

Kay's research began with her sabbatical leave at Stanford University in 1986.¹ It was there that Kay started to think about a study of language arts based upon Saskatchewan data. She had in mind a major study of students' work in language arts in which she would examine the impact of the students' total environment on the way they learned to write -- home, peer groups and play, social settings, daycare, and, of course, schools. She planned to collect her data in both urban and rural schools. In pencil notes left in her draft proposal, Kay outlined her broad and narrow research questions:

Broad Question: In what ways do the various social, cognitive, and linguistic environments in which children and young adults participate foster the development of writing abilities?

Narrow Questions: How do children and young adults acquire the ability to write?

How is writing ability developed over an extended period of time: ages 3 - 16?

¹ This acknowledgement appeared at the bottom of Kay's SSTA research proposal: "The researcher acknowledges the expert guidance and support of Dr. Judith Langer and Dr. George Spindler, members of the faculty of Stanford University, Palo Alto, California, who read successive drafts of the research proposal. Their suggestions were of invaluable help in conceptualizing the design of this study."

In notes about her meeting with Judith Langer² (January 8, 1986), Kay wrote, with her characteristic understated humour: "Discussed study. Broad description I gave would take at least \$500,000 to do."

This report does not provide an account of the grand study that Kay had in mind. It is, rather, the first stage of such a study, which will be introduced more completely in the next chapter. For the moment it is sufficient to know that this report presents Kay's proposal for major research on the teaching of writing and the data from her three-month study of writing in a grade-four classroom.

Before turning to Kay's study, I would like to return to the grand design of Kay's work. In her notes, Kay had sketched a chart to consider the breadth of her thinking. She was planning a qualitative study in which she would collect data through observations, interviews, spontaneous talk, and audio-taping of instruction. The chart on the following page, found in Kay's briefcase as hand-written notes very much in draft form, suggests the scope of Kay's thinking about this project. It seems, then, that Kay's goal was to initiate in Saskatchewan a study, like Shirley Brice Heath's (1983) *Ways with Words*, but concentrating on writing in school and those factors outside school that have an influence upon student achievement: home, community, clubs, friendships, media, and so forth.

To put together this report, I have used the pile of unsorted material left in Kay's briefcase. What appears here is a collage drawn from several sources: a paper completed to summarize her thinking during sabbatical leave, her proposals to the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association (SSTA) and the Saskatoon Public School Board, notes from readings and personal thoughts, notes from on-site observations, collected samples of student work, and an outline for this SSTA report that Kay sketched just before her death.

² Dr. Judith Langer was Dr. Whale's host at Stanford University. Dr. Langer has since moved to the State University of New York (Albany) as co-director of the Center for the Learning and Teaching of Literature. It was in her work with Dr. Langer that Dr. Whale developed her interest in the influence of out-of-school factors on students' writing and learning.

Scope of Dr. Whale's Research Plan

Social	Cognitive	Linguistic
playground games books in home reading & writing in home television/media in home (VCR, radio, tapes) relatives, friends: talk talk in home	concepts of story/ narrative concept of descriptions concept of argument concept of report concept of poetry and forms thereof knowledge problem solving perception	writings syntactic structures functions person (point of view) punctuation verb density verb forms linguistic attitudes

Kay had engaged Carol Lockhart, who is now a resource room teacher with the Outlook School Division, to work on this project as a student assistant by interviewing students, assisting in classroom observations, and transcribing and summarizing the notes that Kay made during school visits; those of you who remember Kay's small, tight, pencil handwriting will recognize Carol's work as a major contribution.

This report is not a finished document. We have presented an extensive overview of Kay's research design and what amounts to a progress report of the first stage of her research: an account of a three-month, on-site study. This account, unfortunately, suffers from incompleteness, for it does not contain the thick description (Geertz, 1973) that Kay would have laced through it. And, to a large extent, the presentation of findings is more a report than an analysis; Carol and I were not able to reconstruct the observations and student notes to do justice to this qualitative study. We did not observe students nor conduct most of the interviews: this was Kay's work, and it has been lost.

Much of the writing of the theoretical explanation in chapter one is Kay's own work and in her own words. I have selected the order of this information and, where necessary, the transitions to make the ideas flow. Similarly chapters two and three, classroom observations

and interviews, have been reconstructed from Kay's and Carol's notes. It was left to me to complete the analysis and discussion of the students' writings as reported in chapter four.

Dr. Whale's research is of value to educators in Saskatchewan for a number of reasons. Kay's review of literature, a statement of what was known in 1987 about elementary language arts and students' writing, is remarkably current. Her writing about qualitative research similarly provides a sound statement about this research method, giving an historical record of the development of this research method in the College of Education. Kay's conceptualization of her study shows the careful integration of theory with the research question and method. Her thinking provides an example for graduate students and others who face the task of completing qualitative research. Many of the questions raised in the rationale statement for this study have not yet been considered in research in English language arts; indeed, this report provides a source of questions for future research. Above all, this report provides a tribute to Kay Whale: her interest in writing, her contribution to research methods in the College of Education, her concern for students and education in Saskatchewan.

I owe a special thanks to Ms. Goold, the teacher in this study, and her students who are central to this study. For ethical reasons, their identities have not been disclosed; we have used pseudonyms to name the students and the teacher. Ms. Goold also read a final draft of this report and provided many details that enhance the story of her classroom experience. I acknowledge, too, the contributions of my colleagues, Alan Ryan and Trevor Gambell, who read early drafts of this report. By helping with this manuscript, they, too, acknowledge and honour Kay Whale. I extend thanks to Carol Fedrau-Ens who has provided a dedication for this report. Carol's comments express the appreciation of all those graduate students who worked with Kay in learning to understand qualitative research and, more difficult, to develop their own writing abilities.

Sam Robinson,

September, 1993

Chapter One

BACKGROUND AND THEORY

Two issues about schooling in Canada and the United States recur with disturbing regularity: students' low scores on standardized tests of reading, language, and mathematics, and their lack of ability to function at a high level of literacy. In the past two decades, declining test scores in these subjects have been described in editorials and lead stories in various forms of the media, and in articles in professional journals. When test scores in language decline, people involved in government, business and industry, educators in universities and secondary and elementary schools, parents and other taxpayers infer that the literacy level of students attending our schools and of young adults seeking entrance to employment or university studies is inadequate. Specifically, critics interpret the test scores to mean that students cannot write grammatically accurate and coherent English and, because students cannot write well, they have difficulty demonstrating their ability to think critically and to solve problems.

The tests themselves are part of the problem. A close examination of the standardized tests of written language used in schools reveals that they do not include items that require students to think critically or to solve problems. They are asked to identify correct grammatical and lexical forms of the language; they are not asked to compose a paragraph or larger unit of discourse to use the forms correctly and coherently. For example, the possessive forms of nouns are used incorrectly, in both speaking and writing, more than any other structure. Students tend not to have difficulty on standardized tests demonstrating their mastery of possessive forms, for they are only required to fill a blank with the correct form of the possessive or to select the correct form from a number of choices. In doing so, students are demonstrating knowledge of language structure in isolation from its use. Often they have memorized the form but do not use it correctly in writing letters, minutes of meetings, papers, reports, or persuasive prose. The issue of literacy ability is complex. To understand it more

completely, researchers need to go beyond simple inferences derived from scores on standardized tests.

We have learned a great deal from research of writing that has focussed on the amount and kinds of writing students do in schools and on the analysis of students' writings and their cognitive processes at work while they write. This information helps us to understand why test scores reveal only the *tip of the iceberg* of an individual's total knowledge of language structures, and why the current definition of literacy based on knowledge of structures alone needs to be expanded.

Recently, researchers have responded to these gaps in our knowledge with systematic inquiry into written language instruction by means of direct observation in classrooms. They have discovered much about how teachers teach the content and form of English. The students' responses in writing have shown some of the cognitive processes at work while they write. However, there is more to be learned about writing instruction and students' writings not only in classrooms but in other settings as well. To be able to relate writing to critical thinking and to problem solving, we need to know in what ways students use writing and for what purposes in such subjects as language arts, social studies, and science -- those content areas that make frequent demands on students to write. In addition, we need to know the kinds of influences that any writing students do at home and in the community may have on their ability to use writing to express thought. The review of literature that follows reveals the progress that has been made in research into these areas and what still needs to be explored, and serves as a conceptual background for this study of writing in an elementary classroom.

Review of Literature

From classroom research of written language, we have learned the kinds of syntactic structures, vocabulary, and spelling that appear in children's writings across various age levels. We know the kinds of topics and motivational strategies that seem to appeal to them, and that

before children come to school they already have a limited concept of story form. Several researchers have identified category systems of functions that writing serves; others have focussed on the nature of assigned writing tasks.

Philosophers and theorists have described the need to search for underlying cognitive processes at work as children try to symbolize their thinking in written language. Anthropologists and linguists who apply their fields of study to education consider it important to understand the cultural forces at work in school, at home, and in the community that affect a child's ability and desire to master the complexities of writing.

A review of the literature related to these different orientations to research of written language reveals the issues that this research addresses. The thinking of philosophers and theorists is discussed first. The contributions of research on written language to further our understanding of teaching writing in classrooms follow. Finally, the role of anthropology and linguistics in educational research, specifically in the area of language, is explored. Related to this aspect of the review of literature is a discussion of an appropriate research method for a long-term study of the uses of written language in the classroom, the home, and the community.

Susanne Langer (1957; 1967) describes a philosophy of mind in which she argues that, because humans are symbol-making creatures, the "processes and products of art (such as painting, drawing, dancing, writing) are the starting points for the understanding of mind" (1967, p. 99). Completed forms of art have potential to reveal intuition which, for her, is a basic intellectual function. Intuition, which we usually consider to be implicit, is made explicit in reasoning. According to Langer, reasoning is the use of logic to make "implicitly given conditions explicit" (1967, p. 146); she argues, too, that logic is a process of getting from one intuition to another, systematically. Therefore, writing, as a way in which humans symbolize their thoughts, provides the key to understand how the mind works. By studying the ways students use writing to accomplish assigned writing tasks, teachers have potential to increase their awareness of how students think.

Kelly (1963) proposed a theory of "personal constructs" as a way in which we test our hypotheses about the world as we have experienced it. As our knowledge and experiences grow, we add to and refine our ways of constructing the world. Further, he argues that "personal constructs" are formed in a social context with adults in a process of "reciprocity" that strives for mutual understanding. All the events in our lives have personal meaning which we have constructed based on previous knowledge and experience. If we think about the process of writing from this perspective, we see that the writer interprets a personal world of knowledge and experience and creates a symbolic object (a text) for public or private communication of meaning. Whether we write for contemplation or reverie, for fun, for sharing details of an important event, for persuading others, or for self-expression, we are attempting to make sense of life experiences.

Moffett (1968) presented a theory of "spectrum of discourse" which includes categories of oral and written language that describe the uses of language at increasing levels of abstraction. In developing his theory, Moffett argues for the importance of providing students with opportunities to learn to use writing to express ideas at ever-increasing levels of abstraction. He has translated his "spectrum of discourse" into a practical curriculum for use in elementary and secondary schools (Moffett and Wagner, 1976; 1992). The actual use of the curriculum in schools has been limited due, at least in part, to the detail and complexity of its theoretical base and of the activities designed to achieve its objectives.

Britton (1970) developed a theory of oral and written language instruction based on Langer's (1967) philosophy of mind, on Kelly's (1963) theory of personal constructs, and his own research of the writing abilities of students, ages eleven to eighteen (Britton et al., 1975). The theory includes a system for categorizing language according to the writer's use of it: for informing, structuring, persuading, explaining, planning, story-telling, gossiping, or personal reflection. Writing experiences in school, Britton claims, should provide opportunities for students to use written language in these ways. Yet, his research findings show that much of

the writing students do in school is used to plan, explain, record, and report, rather than to write narrative, fiction, poetry, or personal reflection. According to these findings, teachers of writing do not provide students with an array of writing modes, and students' experiences with writing are limited in scope and purpose. To find out the nature of the limitations of these practices, actual observation of classroom instruction over time is necessary. The present study represents the beginning of such research.

Several researchers have studied students' writing and teachers' instruction in classrooms. In the studies cited here, researchers have collected and subsequently analyzed students' writings to discover the kinds of tasks teachers set and how students actually use writing to complete the assigned tasks. Only two of the studies cited below (Graves, 1983; Whale, 1980) involve actual long-term participant observation in classrooms. However, all the studies have added important information to our understanding of writing instruction in classrooms. In the primary grades, students' use of territory in writing changes as they mature (Graves, 1973), and in subsequent grades depends more specifically on the nature of the assigned writing task (Bartel, 1982); preschool children have already developed a concept of story that includes a formal opening phase, a formal closing, and use of the past tense (Applebee, 1978). For beginning writers, the nature of the writing assignment influences the way in which they use writing to express their ideas (Temple, Nathan, and Burris, 1982); in the early grades of school *table talk* among students while they are writing develops their understanding of various uses of language and builds an understanding of a sense of audience for writing (Piazza and Tomlinson, 1985). Most writing of elementary and secondary school students serves to inform, to record, or report information rather than to write stories, poetry, or personal reflection (Applebee, 1982; Bartel, 1982; Britton et al., 1975; Whale and Robinson, 1978; Whale, 1980); students, ages eight, ten, and fourteen, have a well developed sense of story and reports (Langer, 1985); and there is a strong and consistent relationship between topic-specific background knowledge and the quality of students' writings (Langer and Applebee, 1984).

Although the findings of these studies have provided separate clues to some ways in which students use writing for classroom assignments, they also have raised additional questions that merit the attention of researchers. Each study has focussed on written language as a subject and not on written language as it is used in other subject areas and in contexts outside school. Researchers such as Langer (1986) claim that thus far the focus of studies of written language has been narrow and short term. She calls for studies that involve direct contact in classrooms with students as they are actually engaged in writing:

If our studies are going to yield results that are informative to instruction, we need to search for developmental models of performance that are truly derived from successful strategies that children use when they read or write. But we need to design our studies to examine such development directly, rather than relying on extrapolations from studies of experts and novices.³

It is Langer's opinion that too many studies are designed to compare "novice" and "expert" readers and writers. Such studies lead to the identification of differences between novices and experts which are considered deficiencies in skills or strategies, rather than developmental aspects of learning to read and write.

More recently, some researchers of written language have broadened the focus of their studies and increased the length of time spent in the research setting. For example, Applebee's (1984) study of two high schools included analysis of writing activities in textbooks in a variety of subject areas, a sixteen-month study of the writings of fifteen high-school students, and a system for analysis of their writings for audience and function. The fifteen case studies revealed that, for all major subject areas, writing activities concentrated on having students provide short bits of information in single paragraphs, not with expressing thought in several connected and related paragraphs or extended text. Topics for writing tested previous learning of information;

³ I have not been able to find the source for this quotation. (S.D.R.)

students were not asked to build an argument to inform, convince, or persuade using this information. Personal and literary uses of writing were not part of these students' school writing experiences.

There has been little research to date on ways in which any writing students do at home or in the community relates to their writing in school classrooms. One important investigation of such relationships has been completed by Heath (1983). She has described her work in two small American communities as an investigation into "how children are socialized to be talkers, readers, and writers" (p.6). To do so, she "lived, worked, and played with the children and their families and friends" (p. 5) for nine years. Hers is an intimate, personal account of the whole context -- homes, schools, and communities -- in which children learn to use oral and written language for a variety of purposes. In her study, Heath recorded "the natural flow of community and classroom life" and described in detail "what actually happens to children as they learn to use language and form their values about its structures and functions..." (p. 8).

Bernier (1981) supported a focus on teaching-learning as an interactive process that occurs in many different settings. Although schools are institutions vested with responsibility for public education, other organized groups in our society such as hospitals, recreation centres, concerts, mass media, and churches provide teaching-learning activities too. Each organized group or institution is "part of the educational configuration"; each has what Bernier calls "the ignored curriculum" (pp. 299-302) which needs to be understood in relation to schooling. As Bernier writes: "Public school is a contact point of a variety of cultural and ideological patterns. Effective schooling occurs when it serves as a multi-cultural and multi-ideological contact point" (p. 302). Bernier emphasized the importance of research that attempts to answer this question: How do teachers and students know, understand, interpret, and use the folk culture, the cosmetic culture of the mass media, the various ethnic and religious patterns of the neighbourhood, and the community of which the school is a part?

According to linguist Shirley Brice Heath (1983), anthropologist George Spindler (1982), and social psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1978), the cultures of the home, of the school, and of the community are interactive, not mutually exclusive. If this is so, it is important for teachers and students to discover how use of language in school is related to language used in home and community. Knowledge of such relationships will reveal for teachers and students the ways language is used in different settings. With information about students' total language context, teachers will be able to use language with greater sensitivity; they will know how to plan lessons to include the many uses of writing and ensure students' personal success in the communication of ideas. These views are supported by Erickson (1986), a prominent researcher of classroom interaction. In the third *Handbook of Research on Teaching*, he has provided a comprehensive detailed discussion of research on teaching that shows a need "to look outside the classroom to the student's own family and local community for influences said to exist between these learning environments" (p. 139).

In summary, this review of literature shows that we have yet to learn the various ways children at the same grade level use written language to communicate ideas; why they choose to use writing in these ways; and their personal knowledge and perceptions of what writing is for and what it can do for them. We have not compared children's uses of writing in the language arts with their uses of writing in other subject areas. Further, we still have much to learn about how children use writing at home and in the community and whether what they write in these contexts has an impact on writing in school.

Much of the written language students do in school is in language arts, social studies, and science. These subjects represent the core of oral and written language processes practised in the classroom. A more complete understanding of how students use writing in school requires research that compares their written language across school subjects, in particular those that engage students in writing frequently, and examines whether life outside the classroom has any impact on students' uses of writing and, if so, in what ways this impact is manifested and why.

It is important to know whether students, teachers, caregivers, and community members share the same objectives in learning to write.⁴

This present study has been delimited to consider only the classroom writing experiences in an elementary classroom. It looks at how the students experienced writing and how their teacher felt about the experience. It also describes and interprets students' written language in the classroom context to suggest a perspective on their development as writers.

Research Method

The key feature of this study is its focus on specific, immediate meanings of actions from the participants' points of view in their local setting. The interpretive participant-observational research approach is most appropriate for this focus because collection of data is carried out by observing participants as they carry out their accustomed tasks in a specific setting -- here, a classroom in an elementary school. Interpretive participant-observational research involves intensive and long-term participation by the researcher in a setting, careful recording of what happens in the research setting, and analytical reflection on what has been recorded. The researcher needs to be thorough and systematic in noticing and describing daily events and in identifying the significance of participants' actions in events from their own points of view. In this study, it is the actions of one teacher and her students in a particular setting that were observed and carefully documented.

Although a researcher pursues deliberate lines of inquiry in a setting, he or she also follows lines of inquiry that emerge in response to personal changes of perception and understanding that occur during the time spent in the setting. Thus, the research approach is not static: the researcher does not develop an experimental design in which one group of participants receives

⁴ Dr. Whale has outlined here a long-term study. The data presented in this study respond only to the first of these purposes: a consideration of how children experience writing in the classroom. Dr. Whale became ill before she was able to collect data to consider the cross-curricular nature of the writing experience and the impact of home and community experiences on writing.

a treatment which is compared to a similar group without the treatment. Instead, the research approach is one in which understanding of people and events evolves gradually through daily observation over an extended period in a natural setting. In this study, the approach was responsive to and resonant with the participants in an attempt to develop a broader, deeper, and richer basis on which to identify, understand, and interpret factors involved in writing and to see how writing experiences foster critical thinking skills.

There are several other understandings that this research approach has potential to develop. In carrying out everyday tasks, the patterns of our actions often become invisible to us through our familiarity with them. In addition, we tend to resist dealing with contradictions that arise. The reflective aspect of interpretive participant-observational research helps the researcher, the teacher, and the students to "make the familiar strange" (Erickson, 1986) and to think about and examine closely any contradictions that occur. The documentation of concrete details of classroom practice provides specific understandings of the participants and thus ensures that local meanings of what happens in the setting are considered. In short, interpretive participant-observational research has as its central concern the human mind, subjective meanings, and the nature of social interactions. This kind of perspective is useful in understanding exactly how students experience the classroom context and in planning for change in attitudes to writing.

According to Erickson (1986), other approaches to research ignore the specifics of actions and the perspectives of the actors because the people who are the subject of study are "relatively powerless members of society" (p. 125). Another factor to consider is that the personal meanings that actions have for people frequently are held below the level of conscious awareness which makes them difficult to bring to the surface for describing and discussing. It takes time to reflect upon our deepest thoughts. Then, too, such perspectives are subjective. Usual approaches to research claim that these kinds of data are irrelevant, that they should be eliminated because only objective data are relevant. Nevertheless, to ignore the ways in which

students and teachers think and act when they are engaged in learning and teaching is to leave unexplored crucial aspects of human cognition and feeling.

Description of the Study

This study provides a description of the nature of the writing experience in an elementary classroom, both for the teacher and the students. In this study, we report three different components. Through observation and participation in a classroom, Dr. Whale has provided a description of students' experiences in their writing programme. The presentation of interviews with students and the teacher provides the reader with an awareness of the personal meaning that they ascribed to their experience in the writing classroom. Finally, we have provided an analysis of selected writings of six students, using the work of Rosen (n.d.), Kroll (1981) and Perera (1984), and Dixon and Stratta (1986). (See also Sloat [n.d.]). This analysis gives an outline of students' development as beginning writers. In effect, the study provides teachers and others with the personal meaning that students and teacher have attributed to their experiences with writing and a perspective with which to examine writing developmentally by looking at writing achievements, and not students' errors.

The following section introduces the participants and the setting and outlines procedures used to conduct this interpretive, participant-observer study. In addition, we have provided a detailed account of the steps that Dr. Whale followed to gain entry to the school and the classroom to conduct this qualitative study.

Setting and Participants

Dr. Whale conducted this study in an urban school in Saskatchewan which served a low income population of several different ethnic backgrounds: Chilean, Vietnamese, Chinese, First Nations, British Canadian. The families were highly mobile; care givers changed jobs often. Few students belonged to organized groups such as Scouts, Guides, church or athletic clubs. Most students reported that they watched television after supper until ten o'clock or later. Since

involvement in community programmes and organized groups was minimal, there was little opportunity for these activities to influence the ways in which the students used language and little opportunity to explore this relationship.

Dr. Whale chose students in grade four because students at this level are about to enter the middle years of schooling, with different cultural, cognitive, and affective responsibilities and demands. They are at the end of primary level and are beginning their middle years schooling. At this age they can write at greater length, using more extensive vocabulary and more complex sentence structures than in earlier years. Therefore, their explicit and implicit uses of writing, their intentions in writing, and their thought processes revealed in their writings are potentially more accessible for analysis.

Procedures

Dr. Whale took great care to explain the nature of the research to all participants, as well as other staff members. Their cooperation was sought on the basis of the benefits that accrue from a deeper understanding of the ways in which students use writing for communicating thought, and their own perspectives on that process, and the development of a more holistic view of what writing is and what it can do for people. Teachers will discover that increased knowledge of the various contexts in which students share experiences with others will enlarge their perceptions of what students need to become more proficient writers. Teachers can then devise writing experiences for those purposes. Dr. Whale's notes to further explain the value of total school involvement are included in Appendix A.

Instruction of written language was observed daily in a grade-four classroom of twenty-two students throughout a three-month period from April to June, 1987. Observations were made by Kay Whale or by student assistant, Carol Lockhart, who was very familiar with the intent of the study. Various ways of collecting data were used: observation of writing instruction and writing in the classroom to discover the kinds of writing tasks required and how students write in response to them; personal interviews with participants to elicit their attitudes to and beliefs

about the purposes and importance of writing. Additional data were provided by the classroom teacher and other teachers in the school. In conducting personal interviews with participants, Dr. Whale used the Expressive Autobiographic Interview technique (L. Spindler, 1978. See Appendix B) which was adapted for this study. This interview technique provides a way to elicit each participant's special cultural knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes concerning the people and the community in which he or she lives. The interview schedule is listed in Appendix C.

These formal and informal kinds of data make up the information that is required for constructing a holistic understanding of how and why students use writing in the ways they do. In addition, the data allowed the researchers to build a context for students' writings: instructional materials and their role in uses of writing; personal impressions and interpretations of their role in uses of writing; personal impressions and interpretations of participants that are both implicit and explicit in audio recordings of personal interviews; the objective and subjective interpretations of the observer.

In conducting interpretive participant-observation research, all these ways of collecting data are essential for understanding: how students define themselves in different formal and informal situations; how institutions such as schools socialize students to view subject matter of schooling; and how knowledge, actions, and attitudes that students learn in their homes and communities relate to other social and cultural influences.

Entry Procedures

The following comments show how the researcher initiated this research. It is important for ethnographic researchers to lay the groundwork carefully for entry into a research setting. In this study, this preparation included discussion with the school principal, the teacher involved, and the entire teaching staff.

The staff of the school was invited to attend a session at which the purposes of the study were presented. This discussion described the nature of the involvement of participants, and the important contribution students, teachers, parents, and members of the community can make

to deepen our understanding of writing and classroom practices. Dr. Whale noted the following advantages for the school and used this list as personal notes to prompt discussion during the initial meeting:

1. There is little research in English language arts based on Saskatchewan students. Generally, little research has been done to compare the ways in which students use writing in several subject areas. Nor has there been research to discover relationships between writing in schools and writing at home and in the community. A study of how and why students choose to use written language in particular ways and the impact of home and community on their choices has potential to provide a rich and relatively untapped source of data on which to base writing tasks and experiences in the classroom.
2. Saskatchewan Education's Curriculum Review, *Directions*, (Saskatchewan Education, 1984) states as a major objective that parents and members of the community be involved in school programmes and instruction. It calls, too, for changes in instruction in language arts, social studies, and science to develop critical thinking skills. Moreover, Saskatchewan Education's *Program Policy Proposals* (Saskatchewan Education, 1986) has outlined a plan to include common essential learnings in the curriculum. The present study will help teachers find directions for changes in instruction that will develop, specifically, communication skills, critical and creative thinking skills, as well the skills of literacy. In addition, the study through its emphasis on the participants' view of writing and writing instruction can influence independent learning and personal social skills and values in communicating ideas through writing.
3. Involvement in this research provides the potential for improving instruction. Increased understanding of how and why writing in core subject areas is important for developing awareness of one's own writing processes. Knowledge of forms and structures of one's language will help students, teachers, and other educators in learning and teaching. When we know more clearly what students already know about writing, we can use that

knowledge to plan specific and appropriate writing experiences to expand their understanding of and skills in writing.

4. Because of this study, home and community participants will be more knowledgeable about what happens in written language instruction in school. Their involvement has potential to improve home-community-school communication and to increase their personal understanding of the uses of writing.

Analysis of Data

Two approaches were used for analyzing the data: analysis that was concurrent with data collection; formal analysis after all the data were collected. The following discussion provides details to note how the data for this interpretive, participant observation study were considered.

Concurrent Analysis

This level of analysis was carried out in the school setting immediately following the observation and recording of events and actions. Concurrent analysis allowed participants to respond to the researcher's observations daily. For example, field notes taken by the observer during classroom instruction or interaction were reviewed with Ms. Goold⁵ and the students, as appropriate. Any questions that the researcher had about events or actions in the classroom or on the playground were asked as well. The teacher's and the students' responses prompted additions to or changes in the research process. Checking these data with the teacher and the students helped the researcher to understand classroom interactions from the teacher's and students' points of view, to identify with the teacher new sources of information, and to construct hypotheses arising from the stream of events and actions in the classroom. In this way Dr. Whale determined that the research process was continually consonant with the setting and the participants.

⁵ Ms. Goold also reviewed the final draft of this report and added comments to further clarify the classroom experience and her own reactions and beliefs.

The information presented in chapters two and three, *The Classroom Experience and Personal Meanings*, was derived as part of the concurrent analysis of data. That is, this information resulted from classroom observations which were triangulated, or corroborated, by interviews with students and teacher and consideration of students' work. In this way, then, the researchers gathered data to build the formal report that is presented in chapters two and three.

Formal Analysis

The information presented in chapter four, *Students' Writings*, is more clearly the result of formal analysis, occurring after students had completed their writing programme. In this chapter, we have provided a description of the writings of six selected students to note their achievements and suggest their growth or development as writers. It was Dr. Whale's intent to allow the categorization system to emerge from the writings, the interviews, and the classroom observations, in true ethnographic fashion. However, too much of the qualitative, observation data was lost to allow us to proceed with this kind of analysis. What we have done instead is to apply the schemes for writing analysis of Rosen (n.d.), Kroll, (1981), Perera (1984), and Dixon and Stratta (1986). We have used their work, then, to provide a yardstick against which we have assessed the work of the students in this study.

Summary

In this chapter, we have provided the academic context for this study, in this way providing a justification for the study. A qualitative study of writing is important for several reasons. For example, standardized tests, which are often used to determine students' literacy abilities, do not provide an accurate measure of student writing. Such measures are based on components of the writing process, not the writing process itself. This study has looked at writing in the classroom, as students were making use of their writing skills.

The review of research in this chapter considers the nature of writing across the curriculum and in non-school settings. This discussion makes the point that writing is fundamental to the development of students' thinking abilities; the two processes are interrelated. It also goes on to make a case for a constructive perspective on learning, drawing upon the work of Vygotsky, Kelly, Moffett, Britton, and others. The information reported in this study, however, is delimited to students' classroom experience, leaving the wider consideration of writing contexts for other researchers.

The discussion in this chapter also provides an overview of qualitative research methods. By observing in a classroom for three months, the researcher, Dr. Whale, was able to focus on the writing experiences of the teacher and students to determine how they made meaning of their classroom experience -- how they experienced and understood the three-month writing unit. A true ethnographic inquiry would allow the means of categorizing and analysis to emerge from the experience, and this approach to reporting the data has been followed in chapter two, *The Classroom Experience*, and chapter three, *Personal Meanings*. For chapter four, *Students' Writings*, we have used the categorization schemes of Rosen, Kroll and Perera, and Dixon and Stratta, because complete data were not available.

Chapter Two

THE CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE

As part of her study of writing in an elementary school, Dr. Whale observed instruction in a grade-four classroom during April, May, and June, 1987. The teacher, Ms. Goold⁶ who had taught for six years, was in the second year of implementing a "whole language classroom," although it was her third year in this school. Her previous teaching experience had been as an English as a second language teacher; she had always worked with culturally varied classes. Dr. Whale's initial notes describe her as "short, blonde, glasses, blue eyes. She looked tired today. Moves quickly, and purposefully. Gets animated when she describes her programme." Data were collected each morning from nine o'clock until noon. Additional data were provided by Ms. Goold, by other teachers in staffroom conversations, and by students during individual conferences in the school library. At the end of June, Dr. Whale had three individual conferences with Ms. Goold to discuss her observations and analytical procedures. What follows is an example of action research: the students' experiences with writing and an account of the meaning that teaching had for Ms. Goold.

Before Dr. Whale began her research, she conducted several entry interviews with Ms. Goold. Ms. Goold clearly defined her approach to teaching language arts as "whole language." This definition of her work prompted Dr. Whale to respond and consider the issue of whole language. The first section in this section outlines Dr. Whale's notes about whole language. The other topics discussed in this chapter include a detailed description of the writing programme and an overview of special events designed to interest students in writing.

⁶ We have used pseudonyms for the names of all participants in this study.

Whole Language Instruction

Working with Ms. Goold, Dr. Whale was forced to deal with the issue of whole language, a topic that was not part of her original research plan. In short, she had to reconsider her research, and adapt her design, in light of the teacher's understanding of whole language teaching. Information about whole language is also necessary to understand Dr. Whale's comments about Ms. Goold's classroom.

A whole language approach to writing instruction is based on Vygotsky's (1978) theory of language development. Vygotsky suggests that a child learns language first as an *interpersonal* form of communication. Then language develops *intrapersonal* forms. Both forms of language are learned in a *social context*. That is, the acquisition of all these aspects of language undergirds the whole language approach to language learning. Continuing interaction and talk are necessary to extend knowledge of and skill in using language. Vygotsky (1978) described the process for language development as scaffolding; his own words explain it best:

From the very first days of the child's development his [her] activities acquire a meaning of their own in a system of social behaviour and, being directed towards a definite purpose, are refracted through the prism of the child's environment. The path from object to child and from child to object passes through another person. This complex human structure is the product of a developmental process deeply rooted in the links between individual and social history. (p. 30)

Whole language is an attitude of mind that provides a shape for the classroom (Rich, 1985). It is an attitude of mind of teachers who hold the belief that integration of the language arts is central to all aspects of classroom instruction, that it honours children's personal experiences as an important source of language learning and development, and that language learning and development are considered children's attempts to make meaning of classroom events, behaviours, and cognition. In such classrooms children read and write daily. Children interact;

talk is important. A wide, appropriate selection of books is available, and opportunities to listen and speak are important (Smith, 1988).

Recently, the media have focussed attention on the shocking number of illiterates in Canada (Lever, 1993). Literacy -- listening, speaking, reading, and writing -- has always been a goal of school systems in Canada. Renowned educator Janet Emig (1983) has described the importance of literacy for students. Indeed, she describes literacy "as a necessary condition, if not ... the exclusive condition, for freedom" (page 172), a fundamental human right. She claims that literacy is not worth teaching "if it doesn't provide success; if it doesn't sponsor learning; if it doesn't unleash literal power; if it doesn't activate the greatest power of all -- the imagination" (p. 178). The purpose for literacy remains constant; it is the means or method of instruction that is in question. This conflict leads to the tension between whole language instruction and more traditional approaches. To help the reader understand whole language, we have provided the following comparison between whole language instruction and more traditional approaches.

Whole language stands in contrast to the skill instruction of more traditional approaches in language arts. It is the difference between a behaviourist and a constructivist view of learning. With the behaviourist approach, students are expected to acquire information -- skills, facts, content, then knowledge. They learn the parts which collectively add up to the whole, parts such as phonics, vocabulary, spelling, grammar, mechanics, and so forth. Students are set the task of learning the parts, often through drill-and-practice and worksheet exercises that are designed to teach a specific skill, for example phonics drills or spelling lists. Educators from this tradition have searched for many years to find the best hierarchy of skills to build the best sequence for learning. Often different sequential approaches vie for dominance as in the conflict over learning phonics or learning sight words in beginning reading. The basic assumption of the traditional approaches to language arts teaching is that the learner acquires skills or facts or content which are found in texts, and are external to the him or her. Mastery of the appropriate skills or facts allows the learner to apply this ability in reading or writing.

The whole language approach, or holistic learning, is built on the assumption that the content of what the learner is doing matters to him or her and that the learner is, in effect, a composite of all previous experiences. The learner's present context and his or her prior experience cannot be ignored; learners are what they are. They learn as their context and experiences (what Kelly [1963] calls personal constructs) interact with their current experiencing. Learners acquire and learn skills and facts in a context that is important to them. The role of the teacher is to provide learners with skills or facts when they are needed and to give them the right scaffolding to support learning. Such support occurs in the form of the right question asked, the right information provided, the right book introduced, or, indeed, the right skill taught.

The theoretical background for whole language was introduced as part of chapter one of this report. The review of literature in this chapter introduced the learning theories of Vygotsky, Britton, and Moffett, in addition to the views of Kelly. Vygotsky and Britton noted specifically the centrality of language -- speaking, listening, reading writing -- for learning. Popularizing the theory of these researchers, Cochrane and Scalena (1986) have provided a list of basic principles of whole language teaching and learning which is an application of constructivist learning theory. The following list paraphrases Cochrane and Scalena's answer to the question "What is whole language?":

1. School learning needs to be viewed as a continuation of pre-school learning. Teachers accept the language and experiences the child brings to school.
2. Classrooms have a workshop atmosphere in which language learning is a transactional event. Children work either individually or by interacting and sharing in small groups; they are encouraged to take risks because they can learn from being "wrong."
3. Since meaning is emphasized, the focus of language development is on process rather than on products. Meaning precedes form.

4. Children should be intrinsically motivated to learn more about language and its use. The teacher's role is to make sure that language learning is a joyful experience.
5. The language arts as a communication cycle complement and support one another (Cochrane and Scalena, 1986, pp. 1 - 3).

The Language Programme

In keeping with a whole language environment for language learning, writing was the centre of Ms. Goold's programme for her twenty-two students. She taught reading, spelling, and language structure as they became important in the context of the curriculum; that is, the skill areas were considered as components of the content. In this way, student were engaged with their learning. The overall framework of the year's programme was language as narrative -- personal experiences, adventure, fantasy, and mystery. Since Ms. Goold was knowledgeable about Graves (1983) and other theorists, her activities mirrored their whole language approach.

There was considerable social interaction while the students were writing. They read one another's stories and poetry, asked questions, and gave suggestions for added content. "In this way," Ms. Goold explained, "they have real commitments and emotional involvement in writing. They think of themselves as real authors."

Individual and Group Writing Process

Each student had a folder for writing-in-progress; Ms. Goold put her written responses to each one's work, which was at various stages of completion, in the folders. Tape recorders and tapes, which were part of the reading programme, were arranged for individual or group use on a rug at the back of the class. Ms. Goold stapled Flub Stubs, short structured tasks based on specific writing problems, to the students' stories. The student's task was to find and fix her or his errors. For example often one or more of the following were noted in their writing by Ms. Goold as needing attention: story frames, characterization, spelling problems, possessives and contractions, singular and plural forms. The students' published stories were displayed

attractively on a wooden library cart and changed frequently. In free reading time after recess each day, students chose one another's books to read, books that they had written and published; they preferred them to the commercial children's books which were also available on the wooden cart. These preparations for the students' organized time focussed on language structures in which problems had been noted in the students' writings.

To encourage further interest in writing, Ms. Goold published a monthly newsletter, *Our Classy Newsletter*, for parents, the principal, the other teachers. Other handouts included *How to Become an Author*, *Weekly Handwriting Booklet*, *Story Starts* -- for students who needed an idea for a story; writing starters usually centred on a book all students were reading orally in class, thus integrating reading and writing. (See Appendix D for examples of these writing prompts.) The *How to Become an Author* checklists, one for publishing one-page pieces to go into a duo-tang and one for publishing hard cover books, were especially important, since they outlined the steps for the students to follow to publish their writing. All students published, usually once a month. And, Ms. Goold maintained a Record Sheet for each genre of narrative - - mystery, fantasy, personal experience, adventure and a sheet for each of Question, Editing, Proofreading.

Posters designed by Ms. Goold to highlight specific aspects of writing were mounted on the side blackboard and on the walls: Classroom Rights, Punctuation, Rules for Writing, Rules for Reading, Hand Writing, Contractions, Spelling Demons, Homonyms. For example, two comical little stick figures danced on a poster with the exclamation *Don't let the slumps get you in the dumps!* And, just above, another exclamation, *Make your letters on the line!* Four more stick figures assumed the posture of paddling a canoe on a straight line. The posters were changed frequently.

At the beginning of a typical writing period, each student opened his or her writing folder and started to work on the story "in progress" which varied in topic according to the student's interests. During this stage of the writing process the students worked quietly. Since the speed

of composing varied widely, students were ready for editing, the next stage, at different times. Ms. Goold encouraged them to have a friend edit the first draft or to read it orally to the whole class. Then each student had an editing conference with Ms. Goold. Her classroom routine was typical of those many teachers who have implemented a process approach to writing.

Prewriting

When students started to compose a new piece of writing, they brainstormed ideas for topics, used ideas of their own or from the bulletin board with suggested story starters, or from discussion with classmates. According to Ms. Goold, "This first step is often the hardest part.... It is important to always have ideas ready so that they can make the best use of our writing periods." If anyone needed help during this prewriting stage, Ms. Goold considered it her role to talk with him or her about what is of interest at this point. She described her view of this approach in *Our Classy Newsletter*, February 23, 1987: "One of the wonderful aspects of a writing programme where the students are given ownership of their own choice of writing topics is that they learn to value the stories and knowledge inside them. In other words, each child's self-confidence grows."

First Draft

Ms. Goold emphasized the importance of "letting ideas flow" in first drafts. To encourage students to do so, she wrote only positive comments on each new section of their drafts. Each child had a folder for all his or her writing, which was handed in each day for the teacher's response. Positive comments on students' drafts included: "I'm looking forward to finding out what happens"; "What an original idea for a story!"; "Very exciting." Ms. Goold did not concern herself with correcting errors at this stage in the writing process. Her role was to help students write -- to help them get ideas down on paper. At this point, she was teaching composing through modelling and scaffolding. To do this she postponed her concern for errors and a correct draft. This is the task of the editing phase.

Editing

After completing a first draft, the student decided whether it had the potential to be published; Ms. Goold encouraged the children to publish every third or fourth writing. When a student decided to publish, the process of editing began. Students found this task difficult because it demanded knowledge and application of language structures to their writings: choice of vocabulary, use of connectives, kinds of clauses, punctuation, syntax and sentence structure, genres, structure of genres. The possibility that one of their writings could be published gave purpose to their efforts.

Sharing writing with classmates for feedback always followed the struggle to create a story in one of the genres. Drafts were read aloud either to the whole class or to a chosen partner. Feedback always followed a pattern Ms. Goold had taught. First, the students gave specific compliments such as, "I liked how you wrote bumpity, bumpity, bump. It has a neat sound"; "I liked the beginning because it caught my attention right away"; or "I liked your description of the old man. I could really see him." Students learned the importance of word choice (sound), of a beginning that captures the reader's attention right away, and of description that emphasizes "seeing."

Next, students commented on the content of the story; for example, "Your story reminds me of the time my cat got lost," or "I think my sister would like your poem. She likes funny poems." Finally, classmates asked questions and gave suggestions. They tended to focus on gaps in the story, elaborations, and the need for clarity in communication of ideas:

I'd like to know more about what you did when you went to Prince Albert.

Why did your hair stand up when you were on the rides in Edmonton Mall?

Who is "she" in the story?

After feedback from peers, Ms. Goold held an Editing Conference with each student and used the same process of giving compliments, commenting on the content of the story, and asking questions and offering suggestions. According to Ms. Goold, if students had difficulty

expressing ideas, she asked them to tell the story without looking at the written version and to read confused sentences aloud to help them develop an awareness of what they had learned so far about writing a story. For example, she said the following questions helped most students in this respect:

What do you think is the best part of what you have written so far?

Can you tell me what is giving you the most trouble?

How do you try to solve your problems?

These students were learning to compose by looking at their achievements -- by noting and understanding what in their writing had worked well. They were learning to develop skills, not eliminate errors. We return to look more closely at a developmental perspective on learning to write in chapter four.

Proofreading

On completion of editing, proofreading began. The students recorded problems on a form designed for that purpose (See Appendix E.); they did not erase to make changes, just crossed out and added using a different colour. Spelling errors were recorded on the bottom of the form, giving Ms. Gould an opportunity to see the original spelling so she could monitor their ability to catch errors. Ms. Good notes:

The children were to use the bottom of each rough sheet to work out the spelling of the words they weren't sure of. They wrote the word once and if they weren't sure tried it again; if they still weren't sure they tried it again. Then they circled the one that looked the best. When I looked at their work in the evening, I checked the correct version or wrote it correctly if none of them was right.

Capitals, punctuation, and sentence problems were added where missing. Using this sheet was an alternative to having an editing conference with a friend or sharing with the whole class. The mechanics of writing were not ignored; rather, they were introduced when the student had a reason to learn them in a context that was important.

Publishing and Illustrating

If the writing were going to be a book, the publishing stage helped to make all the hard work worthwhile, according to the children. Publishing was an exciting event for them. They had three choices about publishing: hard-bound books, single sheet to be put into a class anthology, or small, fold-out laminated books. Then, the children had to decide whether to illustrate their own books or to ask a friend to do it for them. The illustrator made a dummy, a rough copy of what the book would be like for one of the mothers who typed the books. The dummy showed her where on each page to put the print. After they decided to publish, the children filled out a standard form which included the dummy and personal information. (See Appendix F for a typescript of students' completed stories.)

Next, the child wrote a dedication and sent it and the dummy to a mother who typed it. If the book were to be hard bound, it was sent to another mother who did all the binding. Then the children did the illustrations and made book jackets. Ms. Goold was the editor: she organized what was to go on the jacket, wrote biographical information about the author and the illustrator and a brief description of the book. The principal or the teacher-librarian wrote a brief statement about the quality of the book, like the advertising blurb on the back cover of a commercial book. All this information and pictures of the author and the illustrator were put on the book jacket, which was laminated. The book was finished.

Ms. Goold comments on the value of publishing:

The books were impressive to the children and a source of great pride. Later on in the year I displayed them elsewhere in the school. They were also displayed in a local library. At the end of the year, I invited the children to donate their books to the school library, but not one would give up a single book!

Special Events

Ms. Goold arranged three events during the year to encourage the class members to write and to have them begin to feel like authors. Early in the fall, a Cree story teller, who wrote songs, which he sang, and accompanied himself on the guitar, visited the class. The children listened to him tell his stories and sang some of his songs along with him. According to the students he made them feel that they, too, could be writers. After the New Year, a professional writer was invited to talk about writing with the class members. This writer, a qualified teacher, reinforced their desire to continue writing and publishing their books.

At the end of the school year, Ms. Goold organized an Author Party to which the students invited their parents and the guests who had previously visited their classroom: the Cree story teller, a local author, and a children's librarian in the city who wanted to use their books, selected by the students, in a display. Each student was offered the opportunity to read her or his favourite book to the group. Ms. Goold placed a set of steps at the front of her classroom. Each student had a turn to group all his or her books on the lower steps while Ms. Goold described his or her writing accomplishments. Then the student sat on the top step and read a favourite piece. Cookies, cake, and juice made the party special. On an evaluation questionnaire fourteen of the twenty-three students claimed the Author Party was their favourite event of the year.

The students' written comments about these special events illustrate the value of continuing efforts to stimulate and encourage the development of writing abilities and the pleasure they experienced in writing through using a variety of activities. Here are some student comments:

"Mr. [the Cree storyteller] told interesting stories, sang songs to the music of his guitar.

[The Cree storyteller] is an interesting man. It was my first reading in front of the class; we showed off our books."

"I like to read my books to people and I like to hear people read their books. We got to tell about our books. You had to read a best part of your story.

Sylvia and Billy⁷ explained why they especially enjoyed Mr. [Cree storyteller's] visit to the classroom. They both commented that the songs and story telling were their favourite activities because "Mr. [Cree storyteller] played lots of music and told some stories to us." "Mr. [Cree storyteller] played his guitar good and sang good" wrote Paul, while Ronald, too, liked "how he sings." Elizabeth expressed her pleasure in having "to read a best part of your story to the parents and to the class." Closely related to this thought was Chan's statement, "I like to read my books to people and like to hear people read their books." For Joanne, the Author Party was the favourite "because we showed off our books," while Mary noted that "after all the work we did on our books we deserve a party."

This chapter has provided a picture of Ms. Goold's writing classroom. She was just beginning to try out a whole language approach in her culturally varied classroom. This description documents the practices and routines that made this classroom work and illustrates how Ms. Goold brought into practice a whole language rationale. The following chapter provides an account of students' reactions to their writing experiences and a statement from Ms. Goold to tell what this experience meant to her. It includes the stories that show the personal meaning this classroom experience had for the participants.

⁷ We have used pseudonyms for names of students and teacher so that their identity would remain anonymous.

Chapter Three

PERSONAL MEANINGS

The previous chapter has provided a description of Ms. Goold's classroom and her language programme. In this chapter, we turn to the personal meaning of this classroom experience for both students and teacher. Through interviewing, Kay Whale and Carol Lockhart were able to find out what the students and Ms. Goold felt and thought about their experiences. This chapter presents their stories.

Student Interviews

In June, at the end of the term in June, Carol Lockhart interviewed five students: Chan, Paul, Wilfred, Mary, Sylvia (pseudonyms), three boys and two girls. Ms. Goold, their teacher, sent students to the interview session when they had completed their work in the classroom. All interviews were held on a regular school day, between ten and twelve in the morning, in a tiny space in the school library, set away from the classroom. The interview consisted of a set of twenty questions, designed by Dr. Whale, which the students were asked to answer (see Appendix C). Carol Lockhart usually wrote the answers down after the students left the interview room. She occasionally jotted down notes during the interview when students mentioned something of particular importance. The following discussion presents the responses of the students to the interview questions, thus giving a picture of what the writing programme meant to them – how they felt about their participation and the extent to which they were involved.

An important issue for writing programmes is student engagement: Are students interested in what they are doing? To get at this issue, Carol Lockhart asked students whether they had unfinished work in their writing folders and to talk about it. Although it was the end of term,

all five students said that they had unfinished stories. Three of them could recall the titles of their selections: Chan -- Enter the Night Bird; Mary -- The Case of the Missing Ballet Dress and The Tooth Fairy; Paul -- The Super Ninja and two additional titles which he could not recall. Student interest was maintained in this programme. The end of the term was not a time for these students to turn off; their eagerness to write prompted them to start new pieces even though they knew they would probably not have them published.

By contrasting their grade-four experience with that of the previous year, these students indicated their acceptance of their whole language writing programme. When asked if they wrote last year in grade three, all answered "No." Mary qualified the "no" statement by adding that she did "writing for work but no stories." Chan added, "It was different this year. We chose what we wanted to write about." Choosing their own stories was important to the students. As Ms. Goold said, "The most successful pieces were always the ones that were motivated by their own lives. For example, one of the students wrote all his stories about trips he had taken." Another question asked whether the student would write during the next school year, when they moved on to grade five. Three of the five replied with a definite "yes." Chan replied, "I don't know. I'll try to," and Mary said, "Probably; yes."

Students' responses also suggested that they experienced writing and reading outside school time. When asked if they wrote at home, all but Paul said "yes." Students were also asked if any of their family members wrote. Wilfred and Chan answered "no," while Sylvia, Mary, and Paul answered that their mothers wrote -- two wrote letters and Mary's mother "wrote about her daughter." A question was asked about the reading the students did at home, and the reading done by other family members. All five mentioned that they read at home, mostly comics and mystery stories, and that their family members read, mostly newspapers and books. Students were asked to name the kinds of materials that they enjoyed reading. They noted that they read a variety of genres, the most common ones being comics, non-fiction, fiction, and mysteries. There is evidence here to justify Dr. Whale's interest in the total context

of students' literacy learning, not just the school. Future research may be able to take this study beyond the confines of the school and classroom.

Carol Lockhart asked the students to name their favourite stories from among those that they had written during the year and why they chose their stories. Wilfred chose a piece of personal writing, "My Trip to Edmonton" because, as he said, "That's the best trip I had." Chan selected his work of poetry, "Poems for Children." He said that "poems sound better -- words fit in well." Sylvia chose one of her true stories, "My Bird," and her reason was that "It's a true story. I like it because my bird is so crazy." Mary said that she liked mystery stories, and gave no particular title or reason. Paul liked his mystery story, "The Super Ninja"; his reason for this choice was a simple statement about liking mysteries. The students were also asked to tell what kind of story they best liked to write. Wilfred said that he liked adventure stories; Chan, poems and going to the circus. Sylvia said trips, and Mary said, "I like to write adventures and mysteries." Paul commented that "I like to write about my life, trips I took." Responses to these last two questions suggest that these students chose and enjoyed writing about experiences from their daily lives. The value and nature of narrative or storying for grade-four students is discussed further in the next chapter.

Students progressed through several steps as they moved from the initial brainstorming for ideas to the final step of publishing their stories. Responses to questions about editing provide an indication as to how the students accepted the writing process. One step was a conference held individually with Ms. Goold. During the conference, Ms. Goold used a number of sheets offering writing suggestions, writing steps, and so on (see Appendix E). Mary and Paul said that the sheets were not very useful; they seemed to prefer peer conferences to the writing sheets. Chan replied that the sheets guided what he did. Sylvia found that the abbreviations used in proofreading were helpful. Mary and Paul said that the conferences were good in that Ms. Goold offered suggestions for writing and new ideas.

Likes and dislikes about writing were solicited. Wilfred and Chan replied that they liked everything. The other three students were more specific in their replies. Sylvia and Mary liked illustrating their stories best. For Paul, the actual writing of the story was best; however, he disliked the dummy sheets and doing the good copy of the story. He also disliked reading his stories aloud. And, Mary disliked proofreading and going over the story. Sylvia also mentioned that the correcting took too long.

Each student was asked to tell what he or she found easy and difficult about writing. Some things found easy by one child were found difficult by the next. Wilfred found that it was easy "waiting for the book to come back," but hard "making the cover and illustrating the story." Mary, on the other hand, found it easy "making the cover," and added, "I can write whatever I want." She found the proofreading to be the most difficult. Paul found it easy to "organize the story" but had problems with punctuation. Chan thought that writing poems was the easiest because, as he put it, the thoughts just "go into my head." Sylvia replied in a similar manner by saying, "When you have the idea in your head and you start writing it down." Both she and Chan found nothing to be difficult.

The students were also asked whether they might like to be an author someday, and if yes, what might they write about. All but Sylvia said "yes." Sylvia replied, "Maybe. I'll write about jokes and riddles." Chan and Paul said that they would write about their lives; Paul added "and things I've done." Mary replied, "I'd like to write mysteries." Wilfred was not specific about a writing topic.

The following interview excerpt provides a further example of the kind of reaction students had to their writing programme. Elizabeth is talking with Dr. Whale about a story that she is writing. She talks first about sharing the story with her family, even putting her brother into the story as one of the characters. The discussion then leads into a comparison between the grade-four, whole language writing programme and the kind of programme that Elizabeth expects to have in grade five. Her comments reinforce the value of a writing programme that allows

students to write freely from their own experiences. (Elizabeth is referring to a story that we have included in Appendix F and to a story that she did not finish.)

Elizabeth: Sometimes I get stuck like in my Grandma Annie story. She was sure fun, used to give us necklaces and earrings to play with. Then she started getting sick all the time... died of cancer... My brother asked me, "Why did you put that in your story [getting sick]?" I thought it should go in because it was happening. My Dad thought it was all right for it to be in.

Kay Whale: So your Dad reads your stories?

Elizabeth: All my family does. In this story [The Case of the Noise at Night] my little brother wants to be this character. My sister will be this one. I'm in it. All my family will be in it."

Kay Whale: Will you be able to keep on writing like this in Grade 5?

Elizabeth: No. The teacher in Grade 5 doesn't do writing like this. She gives the kids the start of a story. They have to finish it. Everybody writes on the same topic. I like it this year because we get to decide our own topics. I wish we could write like we do this year. I'm learning how to write good stories.

Student responses tend to verify their appreciation of Ms. Goold's whole language approach. They liked what they did, and in a limited way, they were developing a vocabulary to describe their writing process. They were also quite able to contrast their grade-four experience with their previous experience with writing, which they described as "no writing at all." The students' comments tend to suggest that Ms. Goold's industry in providing a whole language programme did, indeed, have positive results, especially in her students' attitude toward writing and language arts. Ms. Goold's story is the focus of the following section.

Ms. Goold's Story

As part of her study of writing in a grade-four classroom, Dr. Whale worked closely with the classroom teacher, Ms. Goold. Dr. Whale conducted at least three Expressive Autobiographical Interviews (see Appendix B) with Ms. Goold. The following discussion has been constructed from Dr. Whale's interview notes and additional ideas jotted down at various places in Dr. Whale's field notes.

In her first entry interview, Ms. Goold described her language arts programme. "My programme is not unique but it is unique to this school. Some of the staff disagree with my using a whole language approach rather than basal readers. One teacher is openly hostile to the programme." In a later conversation, Ms. Goold described at length how she felt about her experience as a whole language teacher. "I just shut my door and carry on with what I want to do with these children. Nobody interrupts me and I don't bother anyone else. One of the teachers told me I wasn't a very good salesperson for whole language because I work all the time. Every night I take their [students'] writing folders home and put my comments on their work -- in the margins only -- not on the text itself. That teacher said she wouldn't spend that much time on preparation for teaching no matter what she was paid. In the face of such lack of enthusiasm you become unsure as to whether you are doing the right thing. Of course, I think the whole language approach is better than basal reader approach. But the other teachers think basals are best. Suppose I'm wrong! (laughs)."

On taking a grade-four assignment the previous year, Ms. Goold was told which basals she was expected to use. She soon decided that basal readers wouldn't work in her classroom and she described the lives of her students to support her belief. "Anyway, basals were in the school (*Expressways, Mr. Mugs*) when I arrived here. The grade-four workbooks had arrived and I used them until Christmas. I persuaded the principal to send the other workbooks back [to the publisher].

In commenting on her present grade-four class, Ms. Goold stated that this class is not like a normal class. The children are low achievers. Most are not achieving at the grade four level according to CTBS [Canadian Test of Basic Skills]. There is a lot of moving in and out of the community. After Christmas, four ... [new] children registered in the school, in this class. One of them has left already [March 4]. The children are absent often... It is hard to build a programme when you have children away at different times of the week."

Despite the difficult nature of her student population, Ms. Goold attests to the success of her approach. "But the children in this class love to write. They consider themselves to be authors, you know. I think that may be because early in the fall I asked a Native story teller to come in. He was wonderful with the children... had them tell stories, create a song for which he played an accompaniment on the guitar. He gave them one line to start with. One thing that he did was wonderful: He showed the boys that they could write, that it was OK for boys to write... it was not a sissy thing to do... and of course he showed the children that Native children can write,... that they can even be male and Native and write. That seemed to make writing an important and real activity that was appropriate to do in school. They love to read one another's published books (the mothers type them up) and they love to read their own."

Ms. Goold did express some concern about whole language and what was happening in her classroom. "What worries me sometimes is whether their reading suffers when they choose only the child-made books in the classroom. Because their stories are sometimes only 2 to 3 lines long. What does this do to develop their reading skills? My programme is not a step-by-step sequence. This group of children needs to have reinforcement often. I give them stickers and I've made up certificates to show that they have achieved a specific task. I don't really believe in these kinds of rewards -- learning should be its own reward -- but I also know that for these children the tokens for achievement are important. I would even say necessary. They still need someone to show them that they can do, make, finish something and then move on to the next step."

Ms. Goold expressed her appreciation for Dr. Whale's presence in the classroom. In one of the interviews, Ms. Goold stated her feelings about setting up a whole language process in a school that appeared to her to be indifferent if not hostile to what she is doing. What follows is an excellent example of the kind of information that flows out of the Expressive Autobiographical Interview (See Appendix B.). "Sorry. I've talked your ear off. But I have no one at the school to share with. It's so good to talk with someone who knows what I'm trying to do, who listens and who approves of whole language teaching. This is just my second year teaching in this way and of course you are never sure you are on the right track. That's why the whole language group [in her school system] that meets once a month is so good for me. I hear what others are doing and we all make suggestions for related activities. Or ask questions about what we are trying to do." In later notes, Dr. Whale indicated that Ms. Goold was taking leave of absence during the subsequent year. Her father was very ill and this, combined with the stress of teaching, have convinced her that she needed a year of restoration to recover from physical and mental "burn out."

The response of the students to their writing experiences is encouraging for teachers, who, like Ms. Goold, wonder at times whether their work is worth the effort. In her interview, Ms. Goold indicated that she was feeling somewhat despondent at the end of the year. She had found this particular grade-four class a heavy assignment. She didn't feel that she had received support from her colleagues, and she was moved to wonder whether she was doing the right thing for her students. Ms. Goold, and teachers like her, can take heart from the responses of the students which reveal that they had had a positive experience with writing. Without doubt, they grew in their writing abilities, and equally important, developed a positive attitude to writing and language arts.

This chapter has looked at the personal meaning that grade-four students and teacher constructed from their whole language, writing unit. The next chapter provides an analysis of

their writings to determine some of the ways that students were developing in their writing abilities.

Chapter Four

STUDENTS' WRITINGS

Analysis of writing can be helpful as teachers and others learn to observe student writing developmentally. The discussion in this chapter examines the writings of six students whose work was selected for detailed analysis: Elizabeth, Joanne, Sylvia, Chan, Billy, Wilfred. (Pseudonyms have been used for students' names.) The first section examines the personal writing that these students completed to show how such writing supports growth in writing ability, a genre in which students are free to express ideas and to explore different structures and organization. The second analysis considers the speaking-writing relationship to show how these grade-four students were in the beginning stages of developing a writing style that is different from their speaking style. A complete typescript of students' stories has been included in Appendix I.

Personal Writing

One of the first theorists to stress the value of narrative in the school curriculum was Harold Rosen (n.d.). For him narrative, or story, forms the basis for writing; narrative is the "primary act of the mind," "a cognitive source -- a meaning-making strategy" (Rosen, n.d., p. 13). Following on from Rosen, other educators such as Graves (1983), Calkins (1983, 1986), and Atwell, (1987) have suggested that teachers should encourage beginning writers to focus on personal experiences, as opposed to creative or imaginative writing. They argue that the creative writing task is often a one-time event, for which students frequently use television as a model, and they rarely return to such writing to think about it, to revise, to make it their own work. When students are engaged in writing about personal experiences, they more freely explore ideas, try out new structures, or experiment with form. They handle this writing form easily, perhaps as a result of their reading experiences. It is a form which they are comfortable

with. In narrative, personal writing, they are more willing to take risks, and, as a result, to gain control of the processes of writing. Kirby, Latta, and Chantz (1988) provide a succinct statement about the value of personal writing: "The quintessential writing activity in any class is the translation of personal feelings, experiences, and knowledge into texts" (p. 720).

Ms. Goold, the teacher involved in this study, encouraged her students to write about personal experience in the narrative mode. This type of writing was the focus of the unit she taught between April and June. The writings of six students in this class, who were the more successful writers, were selected for detailed analysis. All these writers drew upon personal experiences as a source for writing. Much of their work was a simple, chronological account of an event from their lives. The students handled this type of writing easily; they felt comfortable with the subject matter, and the organization was, for the most part, a time-sequence of events.

Sylvia, for example, wrote about a trip to Green Water Lake and her bird, Beeker. Joanne told about the disappearance of her dog Sandy, the pregnancy of her cat, her trip to a friend's cabin at a lake "even past Candle Lake," seeing a bear with Auntie Annette, getting a new puppy Silver Snow Prince, and taking swimming lessons with her brother. Chan's writing described a trip with his father to Regina, going to the circus, and his goldfish. Wilfred's personal stories involved his trip to Edmonton with his family and the death of a neighbourhood dog. Billy's stories recount the day his family got his cat Fluffy, a trip to Jasper and Edmonton with his family, and a special trip with his father to Prince Albert. Elizabeth wrote about a family trip to Edmonton and a poignant account of her feelings about Grandma Annie.

There are examples within these stories that show the students stretching their writing ability, where they go beyond a simple retelling of events to take risks with writing form or the expression of ideas. The following discussion reveals students expanding their repertoire of writing skills in several ways: complexity of sentence structure, use of time and tense, exploration of form, relating ideas.

Sentence Structure.

Among the writers selected for detailed analysis, Joanne exhibited the greatest level of sentence complexity. She is adept at handling the complex sentence, as the following example illustrates:

They have a hide-out. Nobody knows where it is, except for one person. He never told anyone because he would know what would happen to him. (Story 1, The Panthers, October, 1986)

The form of personal narrative provides a safe context for her, and in her story about her cat, she constructs a sentence of even greater syntactic complexity:

It was fun there but when we came home nobody was there, not even my cat. (Story 3, My Cat, October, 1986)

Here Joanne has written a compound sentence, with an embedded adverb clause and a concluding free modifier in the form of an absolute phrase.

Time and Tense

Students in this sample have generally mastered the various forms of past tense. Sylvia, for example, writes: "One day, my Mom and Sister, and my Brother and I were having supper, when my Dad came home" (Story 3, My Bird, January, 1987). However, they occasionally run into tense problems, particularly when they try to deal with future time in the past. The following examples illustrate students using the narrative form to experiment with time sequence. Although they do run into trouble with the tense sequence, such problems, when viewed developmentally, provide examples of students' experimentation and growth with writing skills, and not errors in handling tense.

Chan's writing provides an example of his experimentation with time, something that a number of the students in the sample grappled with. Chan writes:

We were going out. My dad told us to wait here. And my dad will go get the car. So we were in the car. We drove Kevin home. (Story 2, Going to the Circus, no date)

Although he does not get his tense sequence right, Chan is mentally dealing with the problem of recounting a story in the past, but telling about something that will happen in the future.¹

He shows the same struggle with time in another story:

One day a little boy named Tony wanted a bike for his birthday. He is turning seven.

(Story 3, Tony's Bike, November, 1986)

Elizabeth, also writing about a trip experience, writes a sentence similar to Chan's in which she too is dealing with time past and time in the future:

We went to their house to go to Edmonton. We didn't leave from their house until 5:30 in the morning. On the way we thought we will stop and get some candy and gum and then we left. (Story 1, Our Trip, September, 1986)

Here Elizabeth falls back on oral storying as the model for her story; she writes the same way that she would speak.

The next example, also by Elizabeth, provides a good illustration of a student dealing with time in the past and time in the future-past. In the following excerpt, she has to deal with her narrative account of her experiences with Gramma Annie, a woman she likes very much, and the story of her cancer. Within this incident, Elizabeth embeds the story of Grandma Annie's cat:

Annie lives with her son and his wife. My Gramma has cancer and we go visit her. We know her son. He's our friend. They have a cat. When we went there we were playing with the cat. The cat likes Gramma Annie. My gramma Annie gets sore pains because of her cancer. (Story 2, My Grandma Annie, December 8, 1986)

For Elizabeth, the memory of the story includes the illness of the woman whom she calls gramma, not being able to see her when they visit, and playing with the cat while all the sadness

¹ The following example illustrates how a mature writer handles the future-past tense: "Rooms were booked, luggage was unloaded, and Beckie headed off to phone the school. The performance was scheduled to begin in half an hour's time" (Bogerson, 1993).

is occurring around her. Although we might accuse her of switching tense, Elizabeth does provide an accurate account of what she remembers and feels.

Billy's description of his family trip to Jasper and Edmonton provides another example of a student learning within his writing about personal experience to handle time sequence. He begins his story this way:

One day my family and I went to Jasper. It took us eight hours to get there. Five hours later we went through a little town and we could see the mountains. Then when we got to Hinton we could see the mountains better. (Story 2, My trip to Jasper and Edmonton, January, 1987)

Unlike Chan and Elizabeth who are dealing with verb tense, Billy is experimenting with the organizational structure of his story. He tells the reader first that it took eight hours to make the trip. Then he has to go back and retell the trip to describe when he first saw the mountains, something that obviously impressed him.

Story Structure

These students go beyond experimentation with word and sentence structure to take risks with story structure. Sylvia, for example, moves beyond the account of personal experience to use the personal account to talk about Jack and his Dad finding a Mother (Story 1, A Story about Jack and Dad, undated). On several occasions, Joanne uses the form of the personal account to move into story form. Her story about The Panthers (Story 1, October 28, 1986) begins by describing a gang, the Panthers, whom she names as members of her class. She moves the story along to tell how this bad gang became good. In her account, MaryJo and Joanne Make a Snowman (Story 6, November, 1986), provides an intriguing example of her experimentation with form. This story is really a personal account of an experience with a friend. Instead of using the first-person point of view to tell this story, Joanne tries out the third-person point of view and in this personal account, she describes herself as a character in the story. Joanne begins this way:

One day MaryJo went over to Joanne's house.

They were bored, but Joanne said, "Why don't we make a snowman?"

MaryJo said, "o.k." But first I have to go home and get bundled up because it is cold outside. Joanne replied, "o.k.!"

So MaryJo went home and got bundled up. Joanne got bundled up herself. (Story 6, MaryJo and Joanne Make a Snowman, November, 1986)

In her story about the Luggar Girls, Joanne again uses the third-person point of view to tell this account. This time, however, she creates an imaginary story, and not the adaptation of a personal account as she did in the MaryJo and Joanne story. Even the traditional beginning of this story indicates Joanne's efforts to develop a story, rather than an account:

Once upon a time, there were three girls who had a gang. Their gang was called The Luggar Girls.

They were snoopy, actually very snoopy and sneaky. Their hide-out was called Lugs. (Story 9, The Luggar Girls, March, 1987)

Joanne's final story, Pignochio, is a sophisticated, imaginative story modelled on the story of Pinocchio:

One day, a wood cutter was sitting on a log crying.

A little boy came up to him and said, "Why are you crying?"

The woodcutter said, "I am very lonely and I don't have anyone to live with. You've got your mom, dad, brothers, plus sisters. I have no one!" (Story 10, Pignochio, June, 1987)

In this story, Joanne uses her knowledge of fairy tales, including the visit of a fairy godmother, to tell her story. Behind this story lies the work and practice that went into the accounts of her personal experience. This story, then, may be seen as a logical development from narrative to a more controlled story form, an indication of Joanne's growing control over the processes of composing.

Similarly, Chan branches out from his personal account to experiment with story form. His first story about Tony's Bike is essentially a personal account, but he experiments with the third-person point of view:

One day a little boy named Tony wanted a bike for his birthday. He is turning seven.

He asked his dad but his dad said, "Maybe". (Story 3, Tony's Bike, November, 1986)

Later, Chan creates an imaginative account, How Pigs Got Their Curly Tails (Story 4, February 24, 1987). In Enter the Night Bird (Story 6, no date), Chan uses the form of the personal account, but involves himself only as a bystander in the adventures of Night Bird. This story appears derivative of the Ninja adventures on film and television.

Ideas

Elizabeth's story My Grandma Annie (Story 2, December, 1986) is perhaps the strongest example of a student taking risks with her writing. This story is a personal account, but where most other personal accounts in this writing sample provide detail about a specific event, Elizabeth uses this story to explore both what happened and how she felt. She begins the narrative by her description of Grandma Annie and the great times she has had with her:

My Grandma Annie is a very nice grandma! She gives us gifts, like she gives my sister and me earrings, necklaces, bracelets, and broches. (Story 2, My Grandma Annie, December, 1986)

After remembering the good times with this caring person, Elizabeth reveals that Grandma Annie has cancer, that Elizabeth can't visit her, and that Grandma Annie is dying. Elizabeth ends poignantly:

My Gramma is in the hospital and she doesn't want any visitors only her family, but my mom and dad can go and say hi and then leave. Gramma Annie is throwing up

black things. I hope my Gramma doesn't suffer with cancer but I really love my

Gramma Annie. (Story 2, My Grandma Annie, December, 1986)

In this narrative, Elizabeth has had to come to grips with an extended account of her relationship with Grandma Annie, she has had to call upon her knowledge of the technical aspects of organizing and writing this account, and she has had to trust her readers in revealing her feelings about a sad event.

Summary

Young writers develop through their writing about personal accounts in the narrative mode. Because this mode of writing is comfortable for them, young writers take risks with their writing, and by doing so, extend and develop their writing skills. The discussion in this section suggests how teachers and others can observe student writing to understand how students develop as writers. Problems with writing, then, need not be considered as errors to be eliminated through drill and practice and worksheet exercises, but as a natural struggle with syntax, sentence structure, and content. The examples in this section also note how students tend to progress in their work by moving from the retelling of personal account to explorations with story structure.

Speaking-Writing Relationship

When children learn to compose, they must master the structural and organizational patterns of written language. At first, these patterns resemble those of spoken language, but as students develop in their writing ability, these patterns diverge. This is what writing personal narrative allows young writers to do. The analysis of writing presented in the following section shows that students in the study wrote in the same way that they talked, but that they were beginning to acquire the dialect of writing.

In the early years of elementary school, students have not completely developed their speech patterns. As these young learners grow in their writing ability, they use this new

knowledge to feed back into their speaking patterns. The relationship between speaking and writing among young learners is multidimensional, with writing beginning in speech patterns, but with writing patterns and organization, in turn, impacting upon students' speaking ability. Katharine Perera (1984) sums up:

When children begin to learn to write, they have not fully mastered the spoken language. Indeed, just as their writing grows out of the oral language patterns they bring to school, so, in turn, what they learn through writing and reading feeds into the development of their speech. (p. 207)

Perera has used the work of Barry Kroll (1981) as a model to examine the relationship between students' writing and speaking abilities. Kroll (1981, p. 39, 40) suggests a model to describe the four phases as writing develops concurrently with speaking: separate, consolidated, differentiated, integrated. During the first phase, students are preparing for writing by learning the technical skills, handwriting and spelling, to represent spoken words in writing.² During the consolidating phase, students' speech and writing are virtually the same, with their writing being talk written down. At the third phase, differentiation, students discover differences between speech and writing, that speaking tends to be casual, informal, and dependent upon context or situation, while writing tends to be formal and a specific text situation.³ At the level of integration, students have discovered the characteristics of speaking and writing and are able to use the properties of each form in their writings. Kroll clarifies: "When oral and written

² Kroll does not imply that the phase of preparation precedes the act of composing. Students learn about composing, often in the form of drawing, as they are learning the technical skills of writing. Often, young students dictate their ideas to an experienced writer to engage in the act of composing before they acquire the technical skills of writing. Nevertheless, these technical skills of handwriting and spelling, including invented spelling, do prepare students so that they may engage in writing independently.

³ Kroll (1981) outlines the abilities that students develop as they progress in writing ability: "[they] must learn to generate text freely without a respondent, to engage in whole-text planning, to function as the reader of their own writing, and to revise their own texts" (pp. 47, 48). Students discover that writing ability is an autonomous skill, not an interaction between writing and speaking. During this phase, teachers need to stress differences between speaking and writing such as the composing of stories. Students later, at the secondary level, move beyond narrative and personal experience to the rhetorical demands of academic writing. Kroll describes this development: "The emphasis in the teaching of writing must shift from consolidation to differentiation, from kinds of writing which draw heavily on oral language competencies to kinds of writing which involve increasingly explicit and autonomous discourse" (p. 52).

resources are systematically integrated, rather than simply consolidated, a person can make *choices* within a flexible, organized system of voices, registers, and styles -- choices which are appropriate for the purpose, audience, and context of communication" (p. 53).

Kroll reminds us that his model provides a broad description of students' development in writing. The developmental process for individual students tends to be recursive, often depending upon the situation the student is engaged with, and not clearly defined, with elements, for example, of differentiation and integration often appearing in the same piece of writing. Kantor and Rubin (1981) suggest that

Many writers ..., perhaps the majority of high school graduates, remain at a middle level of development, suspended awkwardly between speech and writing. They have acquired, with more or less acumen, the mechanics of speaking and writing. But they have not learned to exploit the interactions of coding, social awareness, and reconstruction of experience in either speech or writing. (pp. 62-63)

Perera (1984) has used Kroll's model to analyze student writings. Cautioning the reader about the difficulty of matching chronological age to developmental phase, she suggests that the consolidation phase, where students learn to write as they speak, begins about ages six or seven. The differentiation phase, the beginnings of a separate writing and speaking dialect, begins about ages nine or ten (Perera, 1984, p. 208) -- or about the fourth grade, where grammatical structures not often used in speech begin to appear in students' writings.

The following analysis of six students' writing shows the students in this study dealing with the demands of writing. Much of their writing is at the consolidation phase. That is, they write in much the same way that they speak, and they use their oral language competence to compose their stories. The following examples illustrate how these students, who are mostly at the consolidation phase, use oral language as the basis for writing. These utterances are the short statements of speech, often using *and* as a conjunction:

I jumped off my horse and I hurt my knees. And then my horse went back. I went on my brother's horse with him. The horse was slow. And then we went back. (Sylvia, Story 2, October, 1986)

One summer holidays we were going to the lake. Before we went we had to go pick up our friend's daughter because she was coming with us. It was very far. It was even past Candle Lake. We stopped in P.A. to get something to eat. (Joanne, Story 4, October, 1986)

And the funnest part of all was the water park. (Wilfred, Story 1, October, 1986)

Me and my dad had to get skiing lessons.... Me and my brother went on the chair lift. (Billy, Story 2, January 25, 1987)

Joanne provides an interesting example of the interrelatedness between students consolidation of speaking competencies (phase two) in writing and the extension of her ability as she learns to differentiate between writing and speaking (phase three). In her story (Story 6, November, 1986), Joanne employs a story genre, with the omniscient author, to recount her experience with a friend in building a snowman. She starts the story in traditional story form: *One day MaryJo went over to Joanne's house. / They were bored, but Joanne said, "Why don't we make a snowman?"* The story continues, with Joanne easily handling the omniscient point of view. At one point in her narrative, she presents one paragraph, in the middle of a sequence of ideas, as if she were speaking her thoughts, that is, an example of writing at the consolidation phase. She then continues her story with control over the written form, writing at the differentiation phase:

MaryJo said, "Lets go outside now!" MaryJo, you make the big one and I'll make the middle sized one. "o.k." Joanne said.

Who ever finishes rolling their's first, can roll the head.

MaryJo and Joanne finished, then they went inside to get a hat and all that stuff.

Then they came back and put all that stuff on him. (Story 6, November, 1986)

As expected, the six students in this study rarely used word modifiers in writing: adverbs and adjectives. Almost all adverbs used noted time in a chronological sequence: *then, one day*, (Sylvia); *once, one day, then, there, finally, that night, the next day, once upon a time, sometimes, one night, more and more* (Joanne); *then, one day, once, now, luckily*⁴ (Chan); *one day, then, nearest, there* (Wilfred); *one day, around, one day, five hours later, then, that night, Monday March 18, right now, pretty soon, the second day* (Billy); *then, a few hours later, every time, always, now* (Elizabeth).

These students rarely used adjectives in their writings and those that were used tended to be included as noun phrases, rather than as an noun with an adjective modifier. For example, Joanne describes a bear as a "huge mangy bear" (Story 5, November, 1986). Her repetition of these adjectives every time she refers to the bear suggests that, to her, this structure is a noun phrase, and she thinks of the animal not as a "bear" but as a "huge mangy bear," just as Chan uses "hockey stick" as a noun phrase. Chan also uses the adjective "black" to describe the Night Bird, a figure like a Ninja. Like Joanne he seems to use the adjective as part of a noun phrase: *Black shoes, black pants, shirt and a black mask* (story 6, no date).

In one of his stories, Wilfred writes about the "funnest part of all," a form which for him is probably a noun phrase. Wilfred also makes use of the adjective "next" to mark chronological sequence: *The next thing we did was go back to the mall* (Story 1, October, 1986). He also uses the adjective modifier in "sad day" (Story 2, February, 1987). Billy used an adjective to help define time sequence, "the next morning," but he later used this adjective as part of a noun phrase: "used to live next door." He used a number of colour adjectives as part of a noun phrase: "green runs, blue [runs], black diamond" (Story 1, January 25, 1987). Elizabeth writes about Gramma Annie's "sore pains," her "lung and heart area," and her "whole body" (Story 2, December, 1986).

⁴ Note this is one of the few examples of the use of an adverbial that did not denote time sequence.

The students in this study, then, were mainly at the consolidation phase in their writing development (Kroll, 1981; Perera, 1984): they wrote in the same way that they spoke. There were a few examples, however, to show some students moving on to the differentiation phase in which they were learning to write in a different manner from speaking.

Dixon and Stratta (1986, pp. 27-30) have looked closely at the work of students in Kroll's differentiation phase. They suggest that story organization can be described in terms of its derivation. For the most part, the students in this sample are at the consolidation phase; their stories provide a straight-forward account. That is, their stories were derived from the oral tradition. Some of the stories, however, are beginning to show another influence: the literary tradition. Joanne's (Story 9, *The Luggar Girls*, March, 1987; Story 10, *Pignochio*, June, 1987) and Chan's (Story 3, *Tony's Bike*, November, 1986; Story 4, *How Pigs Got Their Curly Tails*, February 24, 1986) stories in particular are beginning to reveal characteristics of the literary story. That is, they have created an imaginative event with a developed character and plot (Dixon and Stratta, 1986, p. 27 - 30). In other words, the literary tradition, the result of their reading of fiction, has begun to inform their writings.

In this chapter, we have provided a detailed analysis of students' writings. The first analysis examined students writings as personal narratives and made the point that students were comfortable with this genre and used it to explore and extend their writing abilities. The second analysis, based on the work of Kroll and Perera, described how the students in this study were drawing upon their oral abilities to write their stories; sentence structure and organization were very much in the oral mode. However, some students were beginning to move from this oral mode to a written mode, hence differentiating between a spoken and written style. Dixon and Stratta suggest that this differentiation occurs, in part, as a result of the literary tradition that students experience in their reading.

The value in such an analyses, as Healy and Barr (1991) remind us, lies in helping teachers "recognize the markers of literacy's developing stages so they can set up classroom situations

in which pupils can grow" (p. 823). By knowing the students writing abilities, teachers can better help students develop as writers by using this knowledge to plan writing experiences and respond to students' work. They can take on the role of support for students, providing the appropriate scaffolding for growth (Vygotsky, 1978), and offering students more help than mere error correction.

Chapter Five

CONCLUSION

This report has provided a description of an interpretive, participant-observation study of the writing experiences of grade-four students and their teacher. The presentation of the findings began with a description of the classroom itself, in effect showing how one teacher managed a whole language classroom. The next segment presented the personal meanings that this classroom experience held for the students and their teacher. Interviews with the students suggested that they valued the whole language approach that they had experienced. They saw their grade-four work as real writing; they didn't perceive what they had done in previous grades as writing. Students' comments also suggested that they were beginning to find language that would describe the writing process. Ms. Gould, the teacher, revealed the manner in which she taught but also the difficulties that she faced, both from staff indifference and actual hostility, personal doubt, and sheer effort and burnout.

The examination of students' writings provides a description of student work at the fourth grade level. For the most part, students employed the narrative mode, with the personal experience used most frequently. The examination of the writings also showed students gaining control of story structure and syntax. As expected of students of this age, they were working with connectives between ideas, moving from almost exclusive use of coordinating connectives to explore other ways to link sentences -- indeed other ways to control thought.

This study was initiated by Dr. Kay Whale, and results of the study are being published posthumously. The presentation of the data and its interpretation have been reconstructed from Dr. Whale's notes by Carol Lockhart, who had been hired as a student assistant for the original data gathering, and Sam Robinson, a colleague of Dr. Whale's, who wrote the final report.

When Dr. Whale prepared her original proposal for a major study while on sabbatical leave, she outlined in this proposal her thoughts about the significance of an interpretive, participant-

observation study of student writers. The following statement about the implications of this study, adapted from her writing, provides a powerful closing to this study. We hope that other researchers, graduate students perhaps, will wrestle with the ideas that Dr. Whale has surfaced and move this research forward.

Implications

This study provides –

Knowledge and understanding of the ways students use writing in language arts.

The design of this study required intensive weekly observations. The interpretation of data that resulted from intensive and systematic observation and documentation of students' uses of writing provides a means for teachers to increase their understanding of how students write in response to assigned writing tasks. Teachers can perceive, in some depth, how students control language to express ideas, and how they have used writing in the same way over an extended period.

Understanding the writing process is important for teachers in planning learning activities for students and for setting long-range goals for having students write. Teachers with this orientation to teaching and learning also demonstrate a commitment to the importance of having students develop higher levels of literacy. Increasing the literacy level of students will make it possible to develop students' critical and creative thinking skills.

Educators who plan curricula for elementary schools will benefit from an increased knowledge and understanding of grade-four students' uses of writing, and of what and how they write. Planning can be guided by what students can do, and curricula can be designed that include built-in challenges that have potential to extend students' existing communication skills, and their critical and creative thinking skills.

Students' perceptions of their uses of writing and their reasons for choosing those uses.

The design of the study encourages students themselves to bring to conscious awareness their writing processes, preferences, and how writing helps them to make meaning out of theirs and others' experiences. This knowledge can help them to extend their existing writing repertoires and build on their latent store of critical thinking and problem solving. If they can discover their personal understanding of and attitudes to writing, they are likely to take ownership for writing experiences in school. This factor is important for learning. When students invest a great deal of themselves in a writing task and are committed to its completion in the best way they know how, they are more likely to develop their potential as writers. They are much more likely to understand the role of writing in their lives, and its power as a form of communication with others, and the personal satisfaction that comes from mastering difficult and complex writing tasks. This kind of learning and understanding, if it is developed in the early school years, has potential to increase the literacy level of students, and to stimulate their consideration of personal values they hold about writing.

A brief consideration of various contexts in which writing is used: school, home, and community

The nature of teaching is one, but only one aspect of the classroom environment. Equally important are the nature and context of how the teacher and students create meaning for themselves during learning activities when they come from various cultural backgrounds. Information about the cultural aspects of learning to read and write, of how school, home, and community activities interact in these processes can help teachers to capitalize on the skills, values, and knowledge that children bring to school. If the mandate of the school is to have all children acquire literacy skills, subject area knowledge, and school values (honesty, promptness, politeness, respect for others), then the teacher's understanding of the culture of the school, of the home, and of the community is crucial to the success of children as they progress through school.

The Uses of Writing in the Classroom

It is easy enough to see and understand students' growth in the use of the various structures and forms of their writings. What is not so easy to understand are the cognitive processes that lie beneath the surface of the words. Writing plays a central role in revealing to students themselves and to their readers the nature of their thinking. In bringing thought, which is private and often below the level of conscious awareness, to the surface and making it public, students have the potential to develop their own cognitive capacities. When others respond to their writing, they learn the kind of impact their thinking has on others' thoughts. Depending upon the responses to their writing, they may add to, rub out, rearrange words to represent their thinking at that particular time. They become *critics* of their own work. They reformulate thought which is a central part of critical thinking.

There is evidence from extensive observation in school classrooms that most writing tasks merely ask for copying, filling in blanks, summarizing or paraphrasing what is in a text book or reference book. In these kinds of writing there is little, if any, demand for thinking by the student. Writing tasks that ask students to think beyond the information given, or to express personal opinions, or to build an argument, move them into a quest for the vocabulary and syntactic structures to organize and write their own thoughts. For students with limited experience with written language, what they put down on paper may be incomplete. It may not represent fully the nature of their cognitive abilities; they may need to work through the necessary cognitive processes with help from a teacher or from more experienced peers. The Russian psychologist Vygotsky (1978) labelled this cognitive gap the zone of proximal development, "the distance between the actual developmental level [of an individual] as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). In learning a new task, there is often a time when students need support to master it. Humans have potential beyond what they demonstrate overtly if the scaffolding is in place, and

especially so if support is available to help them at crucial moments when they are faced with new demands on their thinking.

If writing does help students to know what they want to say, if they have experience in writing tasks that make cognitive demands that are in their "zone of proximal development," and if they have support while they are moving beyond what they know how to do on their own, then writing plays a major part in cognitive development.

This study has provided a glimpse into the writing experiences of students and their teacher in a grade-four classroom. The teacher has created for these students a holistic context in which they learn to write. This report has provided a description of the actual experience, and a glimpse into the personal meaning of the experience for students and teacher. It has also provided an analysis to show exactly how they are growing in their writing abilities. The background to this description is the knowledge of what writing means in the school: a significant way to deal with student thinking.

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Appendix A

Involvement of School Faculty

The following notes provide Dr. Whale's explanation of how and why she needed to involve the entire school in her ethnographic study in one classroom:

1. The teacher and the researcher have the opportunity to learn, in depth, the repertoire of students' uses of writing, any changes in the development of their repertoires, the kinds of critical thinking skills they demonstrate throughout the writing process, and the factors in home and community that influence students and teachers.
2. The teacher, as partner in the research process, has an opportunity to expand her interest in and understanding of writing and writing instruction. Thus, instruction is likely to improve.
3. The principal and staff of the school are likely to develop interest in the research process. Workshops that involve them in actual collection and analysis of data will nurture their interest. This practice can inform them about the *why* of teaching and learning as well as the *what*. That is, research can be part of the actual practice of teaching and learning in the classroom. Other principals and staffs may be interested in participating in similar workshops provided by the teachers themselves or members of the research team. Teaching as a profession will benefit by having teachers perceive that they have the ability to become researchers in their own classrooms, that they can influence fellow professionals, and that their instructional practices will improve because they will become even more clear, intentional, and goal-specific.

Appendix B

The Expressive Autobiographic Interview (E.A.I)¹ L. Spindler

Definition:

A cross between a structured expressive interview and a chronological autobiography -- in abbreviated form. The interviewer interrupts with questions at critical points, critical to his or her interests (i.e., pre-puberty, early school, first contact with the opposite sex, marriage, death or relatives, etc.), while the interviewee is relating his or her life events.

The interviewer can control the length of the document without excluding those important leads and cues that come unsolicited. The interview can last from one to x number hours.

The interviewer can start at any point in the life cycle. When the technique was used to solicit materials from teachers in U. S. schools by G. Spindler, he usually began directing questions related to the college period. When it was used by L. Spindler to pinpoint culture conflict among Menomini Indian women, the informant was asked to begin by relating the very first thing she could remember.

The emotional atmosphere established in the confidential framework of the life story seems appropriate for questions of almost any type. The respondent introduces you to his or her family, reveals incidents cloaked with sentiment, touches upon the main areas of friction and conflict in his or her life, expresses attitudes towards parents, siblings, friends, and authority figures and talk about areas inaccessible to direct questioning (i.e., sex or witchcraft (Menomini Indians)).

Purpose:

One purpose in using the technique is to elicit materials concerning a person's special cultural knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes concerning the people and the world around him or her. The informant is often unaware of the kinds of values and attitudes communicated in the E.A.I. Anthropologists believe that these kinds of data cannot be secured by direct questioning. Answers too often refer to the "ideal," what one should do or what it is thought the interviewer would like, rather than to the actual expected behaviour of the informant. And the E.A.I. is a record of behavioural events plus the informant's attitudes towards them.

Another purpose in using the technique is to elicit materials to help clarify a person's identity (or lack of any). Whether it is male, female, neuter, middle-class American (upper or lower), Native American Traditional, traditional Chicano, etc., the materials from the E.A.I. help place a person in U.S. culture.

By way of illustration:

(Question): What were your parents like?

My parents believed in self-support, work from sunrise to sunset. They didn't believe in vacationing. If you don't work you can't eat, they said. I'm like that too. I feel these people around here weren't brought up right. My parents always believed in six days of work and one day to rest.

One transitional Menomini woman replied, in answer to the question: How did you meet your husband?, after relating how her mother introduced her to her "native-oriented" Menomini husband:

It always seemed kinda funny that my mother liked all those thing -- Indian dances and medicines, when my grandmother was a good Catholic (referring to her mother's involvement with a native doctor and learning special native medicines). I don't know where to belong. I don't go to church, and I use Indian cures for different things. I can't go to church now. If I should die I suppose I would be buried out in that potter's field (an unkept area in the cemetery for the "pagans").

* * * * *

There is always the problem of ethics in using personal materials of this type. The interviewer should establish good rapport with the informant before asking intimate questions and then get

¹ This description of the E.A.I. was discovered in Dr. Whale's notes. She explains in her rationale that she used Spindler's ideas in formulating the questions and technique used in interviewing students in her study.

permission to use the data, which can be done by disguising the identity of the interviewee.

When G. Spindler took the E.A.I.s from teachers, he discussed his interpretations with the teachers. (To be discussed later.)

* * * * *

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(To pages on the E.A.I. in the larger context of field methods in the Menomini fieldwork.)
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(Described briefly in the larger context of methods used by G. and L. Spindler in studying the psychology of culture change.)

Appendix C

Interview Schedule

1. Favourite story. Why?
2. Folder -- unfinished stories
3. Conferences with your teacher -- what happens etc.
4. Stories in library display
5. Do you like writing. Why or why not?
6. What do you like best about writing; least about writing?
7. Did you write last year?
8. If yes, What did you write?
9. What are differences between writing last year and this year?
10. In grade five, will you write like you did this year?
11. Why or why not?
12. What do you find easy about writing?
13. What do you find to be difficult about writing?
14. What kind of story do you like to write best of all?
15. Do you write at home?
16. Does anyone in your family write? If yes, what type of things?
17. Do you read at home? If yes, what do you read?
18. Does anyone in your family read?
19. What do they read?
20. Would you like to be an author someday?

Appendix D

Writing Prompts

Ms. Goold, the classroom teacher, displayed these writing starters in the classroom. They were used by the students as a prompt to write.

Treasure Island

1. In the book, Jim changed his point of view about Long John, because Long John saved Jim's life. Write a story about how you changed your mind about a person.
2. Long John made Jim his prisoner! He told the captain that he would hold Jim until he got the treasure map! Write Long John's speech. Make it exciting.

Bad Times Under the Big Top

3. Bernie Byrd caused a lot of trouble for the circus because he was jealous of his sister. In a story, tell about a time when you felt jealous. Tell about what you did and what happened next.

Krypto Makes a Movie

4. Krypto met a real bully. The Superdog knew he could knock her out with one paw. But then he'd be the bully! Instead, he want to teacher her a good lesson. Plan and write a story about what a bully did. Tell how you helped the bully learn a lesson.
5. Suppose that you too are a superperson with super powers. You are hiding the superperson you actually are. Write an adventure about you as a superperson. Be sure to tell how you change from one to the other.

Comics

6. Suppose you met one of the comic characters. Write an adventure about what might happen if you asked the character to do a favour for you.

The Tiny Trappers

7. Teri and Ted Trapper were detectives. Write a story about their next case

A Puli Named Sandor

8. Write Bill Tuff's diary about how he learned that Abby and Mike were missing. Try to show his point of view about the trouble the family was in. (You may want to reread pages 73, 74, and 75 to remind yourself.)
9. Abby and Mike were very scared when they realized that they were really lost. Abby wrote, "I was so scared I felt dizzy!" Write about a time that you were very frightened. Be sure to show how you were feeling.
10. Abby's dad didn't really want to get a dog. Write his diary for the day he agreed to keep Sandor. Show his point of view: why he didn't want a dog, how he felt about his wife bringing home a dog and why he finally changed his mind.
11. At the beginning of the book, Abby's mother and father disagreed about having a pet. Sometimes when people have a problem, they write Ann Landers for advice. Pretend to be either the mon or dad, write to Ann explaining the problem and asking for advice.

12.

Write Mr. Antonelli's diary of the day that he helped Abby find Sandor. Tell the story from his point of view; show how he felt about what happened. Start when Abby wanted to leave the school.

Appendix E
Students' Advice Sheets

Editing Sheet

name of author: _____ name of editor: _____

title of story: _____

date: _____

GIVE A COMPLIMENT:

- I liked the part when ... because ...
- I liked the sentence/paragraph because ...
- I liked this word ... because ...
- I liked the way you wrote this piece because ...
- I liked the ending/beginning because ...
- The best written part was ...

MAKE A COMMENT:

- I would recommend this piece to ... because ...
- This story reminds me of ... because ...
- If I had been this character ... I would/wouldn't ...
- Something like this happened to me once ...

GIVE A SUGGESTION:

- Maybe you could explain more how ... happened.
- Perhaps you could tell how ... felt when ...
- You could try explaining more why ... happened.
- This part ... could be made easier to read.
- Maybe you could tell more about how this character ... looks.
- Perhaps you could write more about how this character ... acts.
- It might help to explain more at the beginning.
- Maybe the ending would be better if you wrote more about what happened in the end.
- You might make it more exciting to read by changing some of the words to make them more interesting.

Appendix F

TYPESCRIPTS OF STUDENTS' WRITINGS

Sylvia

Story 1: A story about Jack and Dad (undated)

[Note: Sylvia illustrated with drawings each of these sentence statements.]

Jack and Dad went down the hill to find a Mother and bring her home.

And so they did.

They next day, Dad asked her on a date.

Jack said, "I hope I have a Mother."

Then Dad asked her to marry him.

She replied, "Yes!"

Jack said, "I love my Mom and Dad."

Story 2: My Trip (October, 1986)

[An illustrated series of pictures]

One day I went close by Green water... went horseback riding. My mom's horse laid down on her foot. The leader helped my mom up.

I jumped off my horse and I hurt my knees.

And then my horse went back. I went on my brother's horse with him.

The horse was slow.

And then we went back.

Story 3: My Bird (January 5, 1987)

[An illustrated book]

One day, my Mom and Sister, and my Brother and I were having supper, when my Dad came home.

He had a box and a bag.

I asked, "What is that?"

He replied, "It's a budgie."

My Brother, Sister and I were really happy.

The next day at lunch, he was really loud!

At supper, he was flying around a lot.

We named the bird Beeker.

We really like our bird.

He's the best bird I ever had.

[There's an interesting illustration with this sentence, a picture of Dad, presumably, with these words in a speech bubble, "I wish that bird would shut up."]

I love my bird.

Joanne

Story 1 The Panthers (October 28, 1986)

[an illustrated book]

There once was a gang called the Panthers! They were very, very mean.

Their names were Josie , Kelly Stewart, MaryJo Freed, Joanne Brown, Billy Fenton,

Agnes Gable, Arnold Sawatsky and Chan Ho. ¹

They did not like to be bugged. Who ever bugged them, they would wish they never did.

They have a hide-out. Nobody knows where it is, except for one person. He never told anyone because he would know what would happen to him.

He was a wizard and once he cast a spell on them to be good.

One day Josie said, "I feel real strange!" Kelly Stewart said, "I feel strange too!" Everybody felt strange.

The wizard told everyone in the town where their fort was.

They came to the fort and instead of beating them up like they used to do, they shared everything and from then on, nobody, but nobody would be mean to someone...

The End

Story 2 My Favorite Dog (October, 1986)

[An illustrated story]

Once I was going to pick up my friend. So I could play with her.

Then we were going to play with my dog Sandy. When we got back to my house she was gone.

My friend and I were only four so we could not go off the block. So we went to pick up our other friend to see if she could help us find my dog.

She said she had to do homework. So that night our family went to look for her. We couldn't find her.

So we went to the dogpound. We found her there but we couldn't take her home because they put her to sleep.

I cried for awhile then I stopped because my dad said, "We will get a cat from your uncle's cat."

The End

Story 3 My Cat (October, 1986)

One day me and my brother went to my grandma's for the night and we went to George Ward Pool.

It was fun there but when we came home nobody was there, not even my cat.

My grandma said, "They took her to the male cat."

She was right because my mom and dad said, "She got in heat so we took her."

When she came back she was not pregnant.

We went back and got the male and brought him to our house and locked both of them in the garage.

After a week we took the male back to its owner and we found out that she was pregnant.

Monday, September 9th 1986. She is going to get babies in October and she looks like a football.

Story 4 The Trip (October, 1986)

[an illustrated book]

[Note: Joanne set up her title page as follows:

The Trip

by Joanne Jaime Verna Brown

illustrated by Joanne Jaime Verna Brown

The Writing/Reading Tree Company

¹ Carla used names of classmates here. We have used pseudonyms to maintain anonymity of the students.

Saskatoon

One summer holidays we were going to the lake.

Before we went we had to go pick up our friend's daughter because she was coming with us.

It was very far. It was even past Candle Lake. We stopped in P.A. to get something to eat.

Then we finally got there, it started to rain so we couldn't play outside. It finally stopped raining and then we couldn't go outside because we were going to eat.

We had to stay in for the rest of the night. So we watched alot of movies before we went to bed.

In the morning, we went for a long walk. We were walking in the woods. It was nice. In the afternoon, my mom and dad went back to Saskatoon and we stayed there.

We did alot of things after they left. We were going for bike rides and we went to the park alot.

On Thursday, we went to Shannon Lake. It was fun there. When we got there, we found a big hill. We started rolling down it.

Nuttin, their dog, started rolling down the hill with me. Sometimes I grabbed on to her. Then we went home

We went past a huge forest fire on the way back to the cabin. The fire started in 1977 and it was burning for three weeks. Annette and Glen went up to the cabin to see if it was all right. It was but coals were hitting their cabin from the forest fire.

We finally got back to the cabin. All of us sat on the balcony for awhile and then went to bed.

The next morning, it wasn't a nice day. So we dressed warm and then we went to eat.

After we ate, us kids went to the tire dock. There was white caps on the lake. The tire dock was going up and down because water was splashing on it. So we went on it and it was fun.

I was standing at the end of the tire dock and I was getting soaking wet. Then we went back and got our rubber boots on.

When we got there, we went back on it. I started to get so wet I went back.

When I got back, I changed my clothes and hung up my wet clothes to dry.

Finally they came back. It was supertime.

Then we all stayed in. We went to bed.

In the morning, my mom and dad came.

Michelle and I went for a walk and we found a fort in the bushes. We put branches on top so we could go in there if it rained. There was a place for our bikes too.

Then we had to pack and go home.

We saw two jack rabbits on the way home.

The End

Story 5 Seeing a Bear (November, 1986)

When I was at Whelan Bay Lake, I was at the dump with my auntie picking berries and I looked up and saw a huge mangy bear and I said, "Look Auntie Annette!" She looked up and said, "RUN!!"

The huge mangy bear started to run after us. I tumbled over a board. My auntie helped me up. We started running again.

We made it to the truck just in time because the bear just about caught us.

We went back and told my uncle. He said, "That must of been a funny adventure!"

I told him that I was scared! He said, "Don't worry about it!"

After that I was scared and I was shakey for about 5 minutes. That was the first time I ever saw a bear too and I told him that in a way it was fun.

The End.

[Note: on the last page, Joanne has written:

First Edition
November, 1986
Made in Canada]

Story 6 MaryJo and Joanne Make a Snowman (November, 1986)

[an illustrated book]

One day MaryJo went over to Joanne's house.

They were bored, but Joanne said, "Why don't we make a snowman?"

MaryJo said, "o.k." But first I have to go home and get bundled up because it is cold outside. Joanne replied, "o.k!"

So MaryJo went home and got bundled up. Joanne got bundled up herself.

MaryJo came back. She said, "Are you ready?" Joanne replied, "yes!"

Joanne asked MaryJo what she was wearing.

MaryJo said, "Two sweaters, my boots, mitts, toque, my scarf and of course my jacket and ski pants!"

Joanne said, "Same with me!"

MaryJo said, "Lets go outside now!" MaryJo, you make the big one and I'll make the middle sized one. "o.k.!" Joanne said.

Who ever finishes rolling their's first, can roll the head.

MaryJo and Joanne finished, then they went inside to get hat and all that stuff. Then they came back and put all that stuff on him.

He looked pretty.

They started playing with him.

Then they had another idea. They were going to make a lady snowman.

Then they both looked at them. They looked gorgeous together.

MaryJo put some clothes on the lady snowman. They started to get cold, so they went inside and had hot chocolate and cookies.

Then they played for a while. Silence it was Friday, Joanne asked her Mom if MaryJo could sleep over.

Her Mom said "Yes!"

So MaryJo phoned her Mom. Her brother Doug answered it. MaryJo asked him if he could put her Mom on the phone, but Doug said, "she's busy."

MaryJo said, "Doing what?" Doug said, "She's busy painting your room!"

MaryJo said, "Can you ask her if I can sleep over at Joanne's house?"

Doug said, "o.k."

Then he went back on the phone and said, "yes you can." MaryJo said, "Yippee!" The she said bye Doug, and slammed down the phone, and said, "I can!"

That night, they had a party. Just her and Joanne. They stayed up until 4:00 O'Clock in the morning.

When they got up, they looked out the window. Our snowman and snowlady were gone. So they said, "I guess we have to make two more!"

First they watched cartoons, ate breakfast, and got bundled up and went outside.

They made them exactly the same and then went back inside and played.

MaryJo's Dad came to pick her up because she was going somewhere. Joanne asked if she could play with her when she got back.

Her Mom and Dad said, "Yes!" Joanne said, "See you after."

Story 7 The New Puppy (February 10, 1987)

[Illustrations were not completed for this story]

Friday, Feb. 6th, 1987, my Dad was reading the paper and he found an ad in the paper. It said, "Puppies for sale."

My Dad told my Mom because she always wanted one.

That night, my Dad phoned the lady and asked where she lived. Then my Mom and Dad went to there house.

When they came back, they said that we were getting a puppy Monday.

I couldn't wait.

Finally Monday came. When we got out of school, I ran all the way home. I had to go to organ lessons. Then we went home.

My Auntie and Cousins were waiting there. We went inside.

After a while, my Auntie left, but my cousins stayed.

Then my Dad came home. My Dad changed, and then we went to my brother's hockey game.

After my brother's hockey game, we went to get our dog. After we got our dog, we went home to eat.

After we ate, my Dad took my brother and my cousins back to their house because my brother had to babysit them.

The next day, my dog was sleeping on me before I went to school. We called him Silver Snow Prince.

I love him too!

The End.

Story 8 Swimming Lessons (February, 1987)

One day my brother and I asked if we could take swimming lessons.

My mom said, "Yes!" The next day my mom phoned Riversdale Pool to register my brother and I.

Three weeks later a form came. My mom signed it out and mailed it the next day.

After 5 weeks someone phoned. It was from Riversdale Pool. They phoned to tell my mom who our teachers were.

Then I started swimming lessons Monday, August 25th.

I started in yellow and my brother started in orange. My brother was too good for orange so he got jumped all the way to maroon.

At the end of the year, I got my orange and yellow badge. My brother got his red badge but he didn't get his maroon badge because he failed maroon.

I want to take swimming lessons again next year but my brother doesn't know if he is going to take swimming lessons next year. Taking swimming lessons is fun too,

THE END

Story 9 The Luggar Girls (March, 1987)

Once upon a time, there were three girls who had a gang. Their gang was called The Luggar Girls.

They were snoop, actually very snoop and sneaky. Their hide-out was called Lugs. That meant Luggars. Their hideout was underground. Nobody knows where it is.

At night time when everybody was asleep, they would sneak in houses and look at everything.

They snooped in closets. They snooped in kitchens. They snooped at every thing everywhere.

When the sun came up they would disappear and the people would scream and shout because someone stole their stuff.

They never knew those people existed if they were people. They always cried.

Sometimes expensive jewelry was stolen and fancy dishes were stolen.

One night they did not go out into houses and sneak in closets and kitchens.
Something happened to them because what they did, they didn't do it anymore.
The people screamed and shouted for joy because they found all of their stuff BUT it's still a mystery for them and they're still wondering who was stealing their stuff.

THE
END

Story 10 Pignochio (June, 1987)

[story that was not illustrated]

[Joanne set the title page as follows:

PIGNOCHIO
written by Joanne Brown
illustrated by Josieberly Margaret

The Writing/Reading Tree
Company
Saskatoon

the second page as follows:

FIRST EDITION
June, 1987
Made in Saskatoon

followed on the next page by a dedication:

TO MaryJo
MY BEST FRIEND
AND Josie

One day, a wood cutter was sitting on a log crying.

A little boy came up to him and said, "Why are you crying?"

The woodcutter said, "I am very lonely and I don't have anyone to live with. You've got you mom, dad, brothers, plus sisters. I have no one!"

The boy said, "Why don't you make a puppet that might keep you from being lonely?"

The wood cutter agreed with him. He stopped crying, ran home and started to make a girl puppet.

When he was finished, he was so tired that he went to sleep.

While he was sleeping a fairy god mother came and turned her into a real girl.

Then the fairy disappeared. In the morning the wood cutter woke up and saw his little puppet a real live girl.

The wood cutter called her Pignochio

One day Pignochio went for a walk. She walked around with her nose in the air.

A sly cat came and gave her a circus ticket. Pignochio had very nice manners but she did not use them. The sly cat was sometimes bad but this time he was nice, but he got very mad and said, "Don't you have any manners!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

Pignochio said, "No. I don't even know what manners are!"

The sly fox was so mad, he grabbed the ticket out of her hand and walked away.

More and more people asked her the same thing and she always replied the same thing until one person said, "Your feet are so big they're the size of Montreal!"

That person was right. Pignochio looked down at her feet and she started to cry.

She went home. When the wood cutter saw her he asked what happened.

She told him all about what happened. When she was finished, he said, "You go out and find everybody you lied to and apologize!"

It was hard for her but that's just what she did! When she got home she was so tired she went to bed and never lied again.

Elizabeth

Story 1 Our Trip (September 16, 1986)

[illustrated book]

On the summer holiday, we woke up at 3:30 in the morning because we wanted to go to Edmonton with our friends.

We went to their house to go to Edmonton. We didn't leave from their house until 5:30 in the morning.

On the way we thought we will stop and get some candy and gum and then we left.

And a few hours later we stopped at Smitty's restaurant. We had breakfast there. Then we left.

When we were almost at Edmonton, it started to rain and when we were in Edmonton it stopped raining.

We were looking for the mall. When we found it, we were looking for a place to stay. Then we found Relax Inn. We stayed at Edmonton for three days and two nights.

Everytime we were in the mall we got lost. We went to the fair. I went on two rides. The others went on more rides.

My sister and my friend got to stay on a ride three times in a row. The man who controls it said so.

My dad's legs got sore. So did mine, so we went to the car and rested. My mom was looking for us and she couldn't find us but then she found us.

We all got tired so we went to Relax Inn.

We went swimming when we got there.

When we got up to the room we stayed in. They said, "Want a Pizza?" We replied, "OK." [Note: illustration makes it clear that Elizabeth is back at the hotel.]

When we were done we watch t.v. and went swimming again. Then we went to bed.

When we woke up we went to the Mall and saw the Dolphins play their tricks.

We looked at stores until 6:30. Then we went to the water slides. My mom and dad almost didn't let us go down the water slides but after they did.

My mom and dad went to Relax Inn. They were tired.

I went down two water slides and I went in the wave pool. We stayed until 1:30. Our friend's dad gave us ice cream.

We got to the Relax Inn hotel at 12:30 at night and we went to bed.

In the morning we got ready to go.

When we got out of Edmonton we saw some animals. Dad took a picture of the animals and us children.

Then we left. After, we saw a store. We all had ice cream. Then we left. A few hours later, we stopped at another store. We shopped there and got a drink.

Then we left. We got home at 9:00 at night and we had tacos. Then we went to bed because we were exhausted.

Story 2 My Grandma Annie (December 8, 1986)

[Elizabeth's handwritten story]

My Grandma Annie is a very nice grandma! She gives us gifts, like she gives my sister and me earrings, necklaces, bracelets, and borches. My Grandma Annie takes us to smorgas board and she treats us. She even gives us money. She tells us to come to her house for coffee, and when we come to her house she gives us lots of cookies and juice, and when it is cold she give us hot chocolate, and my dad and mom coffee! My grandma even takes us to coffee shops. When we go to her house she gives us treats. She tells funny jokes. She goes out in service with us and places magazines and books and booklets. She calls us funny names. When we

went into a restaurant she always placed magazines. When we went into restaurant, she always had toast and jam and coffee or tea. She always offered to give us a piece of her toast. Annie lives with her son and his wife. My Gramma has cancer and we go visit her. We know her son. He's our friend. They have a cat. When we went there we were playing with the cat. The cat likes Gramma Annie. My gramma Annie gets sore pains because of her cancer. My Gramma Annie is getting sicker, because the cancer is in her whole body. It is going into her lung and heart area and it's going into her other parts of her body, and that is why she gets her sore pains. The doctor said she is going to die because the doctors can't do anything because the cancer is in her whole body. I'm very sad and so is everybody else who know her because she is going to die. And we knew her for a very long time. She really isn't our gramma. We just called her gramma because we were just really close to her so we called her gramma. She came to our house and we had Tiny our dog, and Annie used to pet Tiny and play with her, but Annie has to stay home now because of her pains but when she is in the hospital my brother, sister, me and my mom and dad can't go see her.

My Gramma is in the hospital and she doesn't want any visitors only her family, but my mom and dad can go and say hi and then leave. Gramma Annie is throwing up black things. I hope my Gramma doesn't suffer with cancer but I really love my Gramma Annie.

Chan

Story 1 Trip to Regina (October, 1986)

The title page was set up as follows:

The Trip to Regina
Chan Ho
illustrated by Chan Ho
The Writing/Reading Tree Company
Saskatoon

It was Friday when my dad told me that we are going to Regina because it's John's grandma's birthday. My dad said, "We will have to wake up early because we are going at 8:00."

It was 8:00 in the morning. We picked up my dad's friend and John's family. It was a long trip to Regina. So we were there at Regina.

We past Ma Donalds and Burger King. And so we were at John's uncles. We ate cake and drank orange juice and my dad and John's dad went to a motel and found a room.

I and my dad and my dad's friend slept in the room. In the morning, we went to Ma Donalds to eat breakfast. I asked my dad, "Can we go to the museum?"

So we went to the museum and took some pictures and I bought an adoption paper for the dinosaur. Then we were on our way home.

John asked his dad "Can we go to the museum?"

His dad said "Yes."

John asked "Do we want to go to the museum?"

We said, "We went already."

John said, "Do you want to go again?"

I said, "Sure," so we went again and took pictures again. Then we went shopping. We went to Sears and Eatons.

After shopping, we went to eat at a restaurant. It was full. It was Sunday, that's when we went home. I drank a coke and I saw a sign that said Welcome to Saskatoon.

The End

Story 2 Going to the Circus

Writing in an Elementary Classroom

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The title page was set up as follows:

Going to the Circus
by Chan Ho
Illustrated by Chan Ho
The Writing/Reading Tree Company
Saskatoon

I went to the circus with Kevin and my sister and brother and my Dad. So we went there and found a spot to sit.

Kevin and I were walking and we saw Jamie Gaw. Then Kevin bought an ax and cotton candy and a snow cone and a drink.

So the circus began. There was a man with a black suit and there was elephants, monkeys, dogs and a horse. We saw trapeze artists and we saw somersaults. We saw D'Arcy McDonald and his brother and mom.

My favorite act is the trapeze. So it was over and we were going out and the floor was slippery and I almost slipped on it and I almost fell.

We ere going out. My dad told us to wait here. And my dad will go get the car. So we were in the car. We drove Kevin home.

And we went home. Then my dad parked in our drive-way and we went in the house.
The End

Story 3 Tony's Bike (November, 1986)

The title page was set up as follows:

Tony's Bike
by Chan Ho
illustrated by Chan Ho
The Writing/Reading Tree Company
Saskatoon

One day a little boy named Tony wanted a bike for his birthday. He is turning seven. He asked his dad but his dad said, "Maybe".

So it was one more day before his birthday. His dad went to a bike shop and bought a bike for him and brought it home.

So it cost \$200.00. He brought it home. It was Tony's birthday party. His dad took the bike out.

Tony said, "Thanks very much dad".

He started bringing it outside and rode it and tried to do freestyle tricks. But he fell! He tried it again but he fell.

Two years later he could do almost everything on it. He could ride it and try to do freestyle tricks.

But there was only one sad thing. It's a car hit him and he went to the hospital with a broken arm.

He couldn't ride his bike for a long time.

THE END

Story 4 How Pigs Got Their Curly Tails (February 24, 1987)

The title page was set up as follows:

How Pigs Got Their Curly Tails
Author: Chan Ho
Illustrator: Chan Ho
The Writing/Reading Tree Company
Saskatoon

There once was a pig named Fredrick.

He wanted a perm because he saw some people that had a perm.

And he thought it looked nice on them.
But he had no hair.
Fredrick went to the barber shop anyway.
The main said, "Have a seat."

So Fredrick did.

Fredrick said that he wanted a perm.

The man said, "Sure, but where?"

"On my hair." said Fredrick.

"You don't have any hair!" said the man.

"I know." said the pig. That's why I came to you. I know where, on your tail, said the man. "I want a perm on my tail," said Fredrick.

So he did, and that's how pigs got their curly tails.

Story 5 My Goldfish (no date)

[an illustrated mini-book]

Dedicated To:

My Friend Agnes Gable

One day, my Dad bought home a gold fish. I was happy.

We put him in our aquarium with the other fish

One day I opened the lid of the aquarium. At night my gold fish jumped out of the aquarium and he died.

When I woke up, my Mom said, that my gold fish died. I asked, "How?"

My Mom said he jumped out of the aquarium.

Now I have no more fish because my Dad gave them to my cousin.

Story 6 Enter the Night Bird (no date)

[an illustrated book]

The title pages was set up as follows:

Enter The Night Bird

Author: Chan Ho

Illustrator: Chan Ho

The Writing/Reading Tree

Company Saskatoon

I was walking down the street and I saw a bank robbery. It was the Night Bird!

His is six feet tall, and wears all black.

Black shoes, black pants, shirt and a black mask.

His is like a Ninja. So am I. He carries swords, Ninja stars, and smoke bombs, and he drives a black limousine.

"I'd better follow him," I said to myself."

"Taxi." So I got to the taxi. I said to the taxi driver, "Follow that limousine!" So he did.

I paid the taxi driver and he left.

I climbed a pinetree and jumped on the roof of the red and white garage.

"Shhhhhhh!, I hear something," whispered the Night Bird. "NO, it's just the wind," said

Bob.

Bob is the Night Bird's friend, of course.

"No let's split up our money, said the Night Bird."

There's that sound again.

Bob went outside to check. So he climbed a tree and looked on the roof.

There was no one there, so he climbed down the tree and went onto the red and white garage.

Luckily I was hanging on the garage before that monkey saw me. He is like a monkey all right! He climbs a tree so fast.

Thump.....
"My sore arm," I said.
There was no time to go home now. So I jumped through the window and I arrested them.
I brought them to the court and the judge said that they were guilty.

Lesson: Don't lie. Just tell the truth.

Story 7 Poems for Children (November, 1986)

The title page was set up as follows:

Poems for Children
Author: Chan Ho
The Writing/Reading Tree Company
Saskatoon

Monsters

Monsters, monsters, I'm very
scared of monsters.
What should I do, Brother Lou?
I was just going to ask you,
Because I'm scared of him too!

My Hair

My hair is brown
My hair isn't black
Is your hair brown or black?
So tell me that.

The Man

I know a man that wears a hat
And he's fatter than a potatoe
sack.
And carries a baseball bat, and
has a cat.
That always eats big macs
And chases after rats
So how about that?

There was a boy named Mick

There was a boy named Mick
And he carries a hockey stick
And he got sick
And broke his hockey stick
He fell in a pit
That's how he got sick.

My Huge Dog

I have a huge dog,
That plays with my ground-hog,

And jumps like a frog,
And rolls like a log.

The Ocean

The ocean is blue
The ocean is white
And the ocean is bright
And what a beautiful sight!

Glasses

Glasses, glasses, I broke my
glasses.
What should I do brother Lou?
Ask your sister Sue
What should I do, sister Sue?
I broke my glasses too!

Wilfred

Story 1 The Trip to Edmonton (October, 1986)

[an illustrated book]

Title page was set up as follows:

The Trip to Edmonton
by Wilfred Star Blanket
illustrated by Wilfred Star Blanket
The Writing/Reading Tree Company
Saskatoon

and on the next page

dedicate this story to my
best friend Josie Green.
And My Mom [in handwriting]

One day I went to Edmonton. I travelled through lots of towns. And when I was going, I stopped in Lloydminster.

It was strange. The street lights were sideways. Then I went into Alberta. And then I was in Edmonton.

I went straight to West Edmonton mall. The first I saw was the ball instrument. I looked at it for a while and then I went to the Santa Maria.

It was a big boar. It had sails.

I went to see the Dolphins. The Dolphin did lots of trickes. I enjoyed it. They flopped over the other dolphins.

The nearest to the Dolphins was the sub. They had four subs.

And the funnest part of all was the water park.

Then I went to Fantasy Land. It was fun. I like it there. I went on the train. It was fun.

And then I went for dinner. The next thing we did was we went to the campground.

The next thing we did was go back to the mall. Then we went to the showroom. It was very nice.

There must be 10,000 stores.

On the way back, we stopped in Lloydminster. I hope to go there next year.

First Edition
October, 1986
Made in Canada

Story 2 *The Dog* (February 24, 1987)

[story written in Wilfred's handwriting]

One day I was walking home and I saw a dog. It was making noises. I went to talk to the owner and the owner said, it was sick. I asked if he saw a Vet and she said, "Yes." I went home. In the morning as I walked to school. I asked if the dog was O.K. The owner said, "The dog was dead." So I kept on walking to school. It was a sad day. I made it. I was really sad.

Billy

Story 1 *Our Cat Fluffy* (November, 1986)

[illustrated book]

The first page was set up as follows

Out Car Fluffy
by Billy Fenton
illustrated by Billy Fenton
The Writing/Reading Tree Company
Saskatoon

One day I, my mom and my brother went around to look for a cat. Before we went, we looked in the newspaper. We looked for pets.

Cars	Pets
ford	cats
Thunder bird	Dogs
CADILAC	Birds
cobra	turtles
pony	Snakes
pontiac	Iguanes
porsche	horse
Buick	
Camro	
Honda	
Plymoth	
Toyota	
Chevette	

So when we were driving along, we found the spot.

When we went in, Greg found the cat he wanted. So we bought it and we named her fluffy.

When we got home we showed her around but we had to make sure Fluffy and blackie would be friends. So they were.

Fluffy and Blackie were only babies then. Now they are big cats and they can be on their own.

Story 2 My trip to Jasper and Edmonton (January 25, 1987)

[story written in Billy's handwriting]

One day my family and I went to Jasper. It took us eight hours to get there. Five hours later we went through a little town and we could see the mountains. Then when we got to Hinton we could see the mountains better. When we got to Jasper we got the hotel we were staying in. That night we went to get our skis and poles. We saw some deer the next morning. When we got to the top of the mountain I looked at the other mountains. I couldn't really see them because there was fog in the way. Me and my dad had to get skiing lessons. After two hours I could ski very good. Me and my brother went on the chair lift. First we took green runs all the way down the second time we took blue and then I went down black diamond. The second and third day we were there we saw Brook Shields. She was skiing. A few days later we had to go to Edmonton. When we went to Edmonton we stayed in a hotel for 1 night. The next morning my friends who used to live next door to us came and picked us up and we... And we stayed my house for a night. That day we went to Fantasy land. Some of the rides were Drop of Doom, Swing of the Century, Train, Dragan swing, and the Roller Coaster twice. We played a couple games. And when went on the Drop of Doom we couldn't even sit on the box cart cause were going so fast and our hair was all sticking up. And then we went home. We went to loyd minister. We stopped and bought some donuts and then we drove home.

Story 3 My Trip To Prince Albert (March 18, 1987)

The first page was set up as follows:

My Trip To Prince Albert

Author: Robert Micheal Fenton

Illustrator: Robert Micheal Fenton

The Writing/Reading Tree Company

Saskatoon

Monday March 18, my Dad and I went to Prince Albert because my Dad had to deliver supplies to restaurants.

When we got to Prince Albert, my Dad and I went to Will Inns.

When we went inn the restaurant I found a pack of matches.

All together I have 13 packs, and right now I have 205 packs of matches at home.

My Dad and I stayed in the Marlboro Inn.

Pretty soon it was night time. My Dad phoned our house and we talked on the phone.

My brother said, "I have a survival knife for you."

The second day, my Dad was driving the car and we could hear noises.

So we went to the garage and asked the man how long it would be to fix the engine.

The man said, "5 hours." So we waited at the hotel and I went swimming 3 times.

We were the only one's there.

Then, we went back to the hotel room. We got the car and it was ready to go.

And then we went about 15 miles away from Prince Albert and my Dad showed me the way to Nipawan, and then we went home.

SASKATCHEWAN SCHOOL TRUSTEES ASSOCIATION
RESEARCH CENTRE

400 - 2222 13th Avenue
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4P3M7

phone (306) 569-0750 fax # (306) 352-9633

