DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 423 525 CS 216 482

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TITLE Improving Student Writing Skills Using Wordless Picture Books.
PUB DATE 1998-05-00
NOTE 75p.; M.A. Action Research Project, Saint Xavier University and IRI/Skylight.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses (040) -- Reports - Research (143) -- Tests/Questionnaires (160)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Action Research; Elementary Education; *Picture Books; Writing Achievement; *Writing Improvement; *Writing Instruction; Writing Research; *Writing Skills
IDENTIFIERS Illinois (Chicago Suburbs); Process Approach (Writing)

ABSTRACT

An action research project developed a program for improving writing skills. The targeted population consisted of second through fifth grade students in two districts in growing middle to upper class communities, located in suburbs southwest of Chicago. The need for improving writing skills was evidenced by classroom teacher observations, anecdotal records, authentic writing portfolios, and surveys. Research literature supports the assertion that students are unable to effectively communicate for a variety of purposes and audiences through written language. Four probable causes were examined in depth: developmental progression of writing skills; development of oral language skills; required time to teach and evaluate the writing process; and lack of teacher training. A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the selection of one major intervention, Wordless Picture Books. Intervention lessons using Wordless Picture Books focused upon the writing skills of sequencing, dialogue, describing words, elaboration, and vocabulary development. Results indicated that the intervention improved the overall growth of writing skills, specific to the areas of sequencing, elaboration, and dialogue. Results also suggest students in the lowest 25% on the pretest made the most gains. (Contains 31 references and 8 figures of data; 10 appendixes include survey instruments, pre- and posttests, lesson plans, a sequencing rubric, a wordless picture book rubric, and visual aids.) (Author/RS)

Improving Student Writing Skills
Using Wordless Picture Books

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

Saint Xavier University & IRI/Skylight
Field-Based Master's Program

Action Research Project
Site: Orland Park III
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Abstract

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This project addressed a program for improving writing skills. The targeted population consists of second through fifth grade students of two districts in growing middle to upper class communities, located in suburbs southwest of Chicago. The need for improving writing skills is evidenced by classroom teacher observations, anecdotal records, authentic writing portfolios, and surveys.

Research literature supports the assertion that students are unable to effectively communicate for a variety of purposes and audiences through written language. Four probable causes were examined in depth for the purposes of this study. They were:

1. developmental progression of writing skills,
2. development of oral language skills,
3. required time to teach and evaluate the writing process,
4. lack of teacher training.

A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the selection of one major intervention, Wordless Picture Books. Intervention lessons using Wordless Picture Books focus upon the writing skills of sequencing, dialogue, describing words, elaboration, and vocabulary development.

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PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of Problem

Students' ability to communicate through writing appears as a consistent educational problem. The second through fifth grade students in the targeted elementary school districts exhibit a need for improved writing skills as evidenced by classroom teacher observations, anecdotal records, authentic writing portfolios and surveys.

Immediate Problem Context

This action research project was conducted in two school districts in two different communities. Each setting will be described separately as District A and District B.

School Setting

Student Population

We found many similarities between the student population of District A and District B. The percentage of minorities in both districts is negligible. Total enrollment was approximately two thousand in both districts. Few differences were found between the districts. Student mobility and the English as a Second Language population in District B were greater than District A (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

District/School Demographics

	DISTRICT A	DISTRICT B
Total Enrollment	2,172	2,091
-Caucasian	95.5%	94.5%
-Black	.1%	.3%
-Hispanic	1.9%	4.0%
-Asian/Pacific Islander	1.5%	1.2%
-Native American	.6%	0%
Base School Population	689	494
-Caucasian	98.7%	96.4%
-Black	.1%	0%
-Hispanic	.9%	2.0%
-Asian/Pacific Islander	.3%	1.6%
-Native American	0%	0%
District Low Income	2.3%	5.3%
School Low Income	1.5%	3%
District Attendance	96%	95.6%
District Mobility	6.7%	10.7%
District Truancy	.1%	.2%
School Attendance	96.9%	95.6%
School Mobility	3.5%	9.5%
School Truancy	0%	0%

Faculty and Staff

Both District A and District B have identical percentages of ethnicity and gender. Both have a full range of support staff, special education experts, and fine arts professionals. The major differences seen between the two districts are level of education and salary. Fifty-eight percent of the staff in District A have obtained a master's degree or above as compared with District B, where thirty-two percent have obtained a master's or above. Another interesting difference is the average teacher salary. District A's average salary is $47,661 while District B's average salary is $37,425. The average administrator's salary was also higher in District A where administrators' average salary is $79,219, compared to District B where it is $67, 178 (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Faculty/Staff Demographics

	DISTRICT A	DISTRICT B
Faculty and Staff	117	108
-Caucasian	99.1%	99.1%
-Black	.1%	.3%
-Male	19%	19%
-Female	81%	81%
Years of Experience	14.5	16.1
-Bachelor's	41.6%	68%
-Master's	58.4%	32%
Average Teacher Salary	$47,661	$37,425
Average Admin. Salary	$79,219	$67, 178
Average Class Size (Gr. 3)	20.5	21.3
Per Pupil Spending	$5,763	$6,077

Facility

The range of grade levels in each building is similar. District A is a kindergarten through fifth grade setting while District B is a kindergarten through sixth grade setting. Class sizes for both districts are similar in that they are kept at smaller numbers. The third grade classes in District A average twenty students per room and District B averages at twenty-one students per room (see Figure 2).

Programs

The reading programs implemented at the targeted schools are both literature-based whole language programs with supplementary use of novels. The targeted schools allot approximately the same number of minutes per week for the core curriculum subjects (see Table 3). Illinois Goal Assessment Program scores for both districts to reflect achievement in the core curriculum subjects are shown in Figure 4.

Table 3

Minutes Spent Per Week on Subject Areas

	Dist. A	Dist. B
Math	60	50
Science	24	26
English	120	140
Soc. Science	24	30
Music/Art (wk)	40	25
P.E. (wk)	80	80

Figure 4

IGAP State Performance Standards

	District A			District B		
	% Do not meet goals	% meet goals	% Exceed goals	% Do not meet goals	% meet goals	% Exceed goals
District Scores (Grade 3)						
- Reading	6	49	45	17	61	21
- Mathematics	0	33	67	3	52	45
- Writing	1	52	46	2	70	29
School Scores (Grade 3)						
- Reading	6	50	44	4	70	26
- Mathematics	0	31	69	0	46	54
- Writing	0	51	49	0	59	41

In reviewing goals, it was noted that District B had included a goal to stress the quality of students' writing while District A had not included goals related to writing.

District A and District B have a high level of parent involvement. The parents/guardians of 100% of the students made at least one contact with the students' teachers during the 1995-96 school year. This is higher than the 95.4% for the state (School Report Card, 1996). Parental involvement ranges from individual participation to the collective efforts of groups such as the Parent Faculty Association.

The Community Setting

After examining the population and demographics of District A and District B, differences and similarities were noted. The population of District B is substantially greater than District A, as documented in the number of households and families. There is also a measurable difference in the median household and family income between District A and District B. The prices per dwelling appear to reflect the median income. The similarities noted between District A and District B were median age and racial/ethnic background of the population (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

Population and Demographics

	District A	District B
Population	4,199	56,830
-Caucasian	1,343	55,200
-Black	0	66
-Indian	0	39
-Asian	41	614
Households	1,389	21,680
Total Number of Families	511	15,820
Median Household Income	$68,005	$43,640
Median Family Income	$75,044	$49,700
Median Age	39.9	39.5

District A has two elementary schools (Kindergarten through Fifth Grade) and one middle school (Sixth through Eighth Grade). District B has four elementary schools (Preschool through Sixth Grade) and one middle school (Seventh and Eighth Grade).

District A has adopted a concept-based thematic instruction approach across all grade levels which is expected to restructure the philosophy and practice of the district. Although District B utilizes thematic units of instruction, the basic approach of instruction is traditional.

Regional and National Context of Problem

Historically, improving writing skills has been a focus for educators as well as the general population. According to Edward M. White, "Public and professional concern over student writing skills and complaints about student writing performance recur regularly in both American educational literature and the press" (White, 1985, xi). "Of the 2.4 million who graduate, as many as 25% cannot read or write at the eighth-grade or functionally literate level, according to some estimates. Most 17 year-olds in school cannot summarize a newspaper article, write a good letter requesting a job, solve real-life math problems, or follow a bus schedule" (Long, 1991, p. 9). Certainly in recent times there has been media attention given to the need for students to prepare to meet the challenges of today's work-force. Two examples of the need for better writing skills are in the fields of nursing and business. For example, Spears suggests that when nurses have good writing skills, health care delivery is improved and nurses feel empowered (Spears, 1995). Casper proposes that "professors should teach technical writing using assignments that simulate the reality of a work environment" (Casper,1995, p. 275).

"Literacy expectations have risen over time and are likely to continue to accelerate in the coming decade" (Standards for the English Language Arts, on-line). Recognizing the need for increased skills in written language, both state and national organizations have proposed standards. The Illinois State Board of Education has proposed academic standards to ensure that all students will achieve a level of proficiency in English Language Arts to compete in today's society (Illinois Federation of Teachers, 1996). The Illinois Goals Assessment Program was established to assess students' learning. In the area of writing, Illinois has seen average writing achievements in grades 6, 8, and 10 increase steadily from 1993-1995, but decrease in 1996. Grade 3 scores increased in 1994, but decreased in 1995 and 1996 (IL State Board of Education, 1996). In a broader spectrum, parallel concerns exist at the national level. As reflected by the National Assessment of Educational Progress, "The writing ability of American students is little short of appalling. American schools produce few students who can write well. Only 3% of American fourth, eighth, and twelfth graders can write above a minimal or adequate level according to the 1992 Writing Report Card" (Sykes,1995, p. 201).

Based on national and state assessments, there is an ongoing concern regarding students' written language ability. Since there is a recognized decline in students' written language abilities, standards have been proposed at both the state and national level. "Standards can help us ensure that all students become informed citizens and participate fully in society" (The Standards for English Language Arts, on-line).

Chapter 2

PROBLEM DEFINITION

Evidence of Problem

Students' inability to communicate through written language appears to be problematic in American schools today. This is evidenced through existing test scores, observations, and opinions of writing experts.

According to Harvey S. Wiener, Ph.D., " It is no news to anybody...that today's school children as a whole are poor writers. College teachers over the country, pointing to low scores on entrance exams and poor writing samples submitted by freshmen, are stunned at the writers' inability both to express ideas clearly and to use the conventions of correctness in conveying those ideas" (Wiener,1990, p.5).

Other experts in the field cite early school experiences that adversely affect young students' attitudes and ability toward writing. "Children want to write. They want to write the first day they attend school...[Most schools] ignore the child's urge to show what he knows. We underestimate the urge because of a lack of understanding of the writing process and what children do in order to control it. Instead, we take the control away from children and place unnecessary road blocks in the way of their intentions" (Graves,1983, p. 3).

Although some students are not motivated to write, it is apparent that teachers need to change instructional methodologies to increase their students' written language skills. To bring about needed change in current practice, probable causes need to be identified.

Probable Causes

Research literature supports the assertion that students are unable to effectively communicate for a variety of purposes and audiences through written language. Developmental progression of writing skills, development of oral language skills, required time to teach and evaluate the writing process, and lack of teacher training will be examined in depth for the purposes of this study. These national trends are reflected in the targeted populations of District A and District B .

In examining causes for the problems involved in student writing, the natural developmental progression of skills play a significant role. Donald Graves, writing expert, identifies five developmental stages of student writing:

1. Spelling
2. Motor Aesthetic
3. Convention
4. Topic Information
5. Revision (Graves, 1983).

Teachers must know at which stage a student is writing to progress to the next stage of development. According to Graves, students have the most difficulty growing beyond the first stage (Graves, 1983).

Perhaps the latter stages of writing development are more difficult for students because of the many thought processes and decisions involved. "...Writing is both a learning and a thinking process. Children's ability to express themselves in writing is dependent upon their ability to develop and relate ideas." (Anderson and Lapp,1988, p. 343) Without mastering previous stages of writing development, students are unable to grow in their writing skills and therefore lack the basic skills needed to communicate effectively.

The researchers observed that the general population of students in their classrooms did not independently exercise skills beyond the conventional third level of writing. The researchers found that their students have developed skills in spelling, motor aesthetics, and conventions. However, these skills exist at a very literal level. Most students have a relative weakness in the inferential or higher-order skills involved in topic information and revising. This is compounded by many teachers' inability to focus on student content during conferencing rather than the mechanics involved in the first three stages of writing.

Another probable cause of students' inability to communicate through written language involves oral language skills. "Without a strong oral language foundation, no student will write well" (Tiedt, 1983, p. 10). Teachers need to provide students with opportunities to use the mode of communication that they are most familiar with, and that is oral language (Tiedt, 1983) "As early as 1900, Fred Newton Scott and Joseph V. Denny declared that student indifference to written composition is often due to the isolation of written from spoken discourse" (Haley-James, 1981, p. 10). Teachers need to provide opportunities for children to dialogue before and during the writing process in order to develop their ideas (Haley-James, 1981).

After examining personal practice and the results of a teacher survey (Appendix A), the researchers found that they do not conference with their students before, during, and after writing on a consistent basis. In addition, the researchers concluded that most conferences are post-writing and primarily focus on writing mechanics as opposed to content and organization of ideas. It was also noted that oral communication skills are not directly taught in the curriculum. Experts state that, "Clearly, if writing in its simplest form is speech written down, the opportunities to improve oral communication become even more important" (Anderson and Lapp, 1988, p. 107). Time for teaching oral communication skills and conferencing before, during, and after writing becomes an issue.

A third probable cause of students' lack of proficiency of the written language is that teachers do not have enough time to teach or evaluate student writing.

> Teachers are hard pressed to find time for anything. Curricula are inflated, classroom interruptions rampant, the children overstimulated. Time for teaching is meted out into tiny eight to ten minute slots just to cover the required curriculum. Writing has never taken hold in American education because it has been given so little time. Writing taught once or twice a week is just frequently enough to remind children that they can't write and teachers that they can't teach. (Graves, 1983, p. 90)

Teachers need to find time to teach writing by integrating it into other subject areas. "From a practical standpoint, writing in Social Studies, Math, Science, History, and other disciplines provides students with more authentic purposes, audiences, and context- elements crucial to the successful implementation of process writing in elementary and secondary education," says Kapinus of the Maryland Department of Education (Lucas, 1993, p. 4). Student writing will probably improve if enough time is spent in writing instruction. "At least four 45 to 50 minute periods are necessary to provide a strong writing experience" (Graves, 1983, p. 90).

In the opinion of the researchers, demands in other curricular areas force teachers to selectively abandon teaching process writing. Perhaps because state mandated testing does not hold teachers accountable for the writing process at all grade levels, other subject areas are given priority when time becomes an issue. When time is taken to teach writing, particularly at the third grade level (where the Illinois Goals and Assessment Program includes a writing sub test), teaching is focused on the IGAP format. Even though the scores of District A and District B exceed the state goals, they do not reflect the students' inability to write for a variety of audiences and purposes.

Compounding the teacher's problem of finding time to teach writing is finding time to edit and evaluate students' writing. "In a daily writing program, thirty children might generate sixty to ninety pieces of writing a week. Even if teachers spend only one and a half minutes per paper (most would probably spend two to three minutes) they would have to find approximately two more hours per week to grade written work" (Anderson and Lapp, 1988, p. 330). Teaching writing thus becomes a burden and less time is allocated for its instruction. When time is allowed for writing, the teacher's negative attitude toward the task may be transferred to the students. "How can he build in your child a positive attitude toward written work if he himself, being overburdened, views it as a tedious, unrewarding chore?" (Wiener, 1990, p. 2).

When teachers *do* include writing instruction in their day, it is difficult to find the needed time to thoroughly evaluate the final product. A survey conducted by the researchers concluded that only 3.5% of the teachers polled always use rubrics to assess their students' work. More training in alternative forms of assessment, such as rubrics, may make the task more manageable.

The fourth probable cause of students' inability to write effectively is the lack of teacher training. "The astounding reality is that few teachers in grade school, junior high, senior high, or college have had any training in how to teach composition. How to teach reading; how to teach mathematics; how to teach science; how to evaluate tests-- in all of these, yes, but no course in how to teach writing" (Wiener, 1990, p. 8). The lack of instruction for educators in teaching the writing process has made them feel incompetent. Therefore, teachers are deficient in their ability to teach writing skills to their students. Beverly Bimes-Michalak, an expert in teaching writing instruction, points out that teachers must become authorities on writing and link research and practice for student writing to improve (Lucas, 1993). To bring about this change, universities need to alter writing instruction for students, and school districts need to provide opportunities for staff development for current teachers.

When teachers are adequately trained, they are able to model for their students. "Children learn by imitation" (Wiener, 1990, p.11). According to Wiener, today's children have poorer writing skills, in part, from the advantages of the modern world. Television, movies, videos, telephones, and stereos are making the written word in some sense obsolete. Even letter writing is often replaced by taped cassettes and long distance phone calls (Wiener, p.9). Children just don't see writing modeled.

The authors surveyed teachers enrolled in their master's program regarding their participation in undergraduate writing courses. Only 6% of teachers polled were formally instructed on the methods of teaching writing during their undergraduate studies.

In conclusion, the four probable causes identified by the researchers are: developmental progression of writing skills, development of oral language skills, required time to teach and evaluate the writing process, and lack of teacher training. After identifying the causes, solution strategies will be examined and implemented.

Chapter 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Writing Models

Research shows that there are a number of effective methods that can be incorporated in the classroom to improve student writing. The authors have identified five such methods. The Holistic Model, Process Writing, Uninterrupted Silent Sustained Writing, Power Writing, and the use of Wordless Picture Books are strategies supported by various experts.

Holistic Model. "The holistic model presents writing as a language art, beginning with a strong oral language foundation. Intended as a year-long curriculum framework for any level, this model begins with the student's oral language...and finally focuses on more specific studies of grammar, style, usage, conventions, and the precise choice of language" (Tiedt, 1983, p. 7).

Process Writing. According to Jim Gray, director of the National Writing Project, the process approach aims to help students develop as writers by having them "do what real writers do" (Lucas, 1993, p. 2). "Real writers develop their own topics, take time to think and talk about their work, and consistently revise their writing to clarify the way they've expressed their ideas and to reflect new things they've learned about their subject" (Lucas, 1993, p. 2).

Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Writing (USSW). USSW is daily journal writing at a designated time. "During this five to fifteen minute period...the teacher directs students to write continuously for the set period of time on anything they wish...The goal is to encourage a free flow of uninterrupted ideas" (Anderson and Lapp, 1988, p. 328).

Power Writing. Power Writing specifically addresses paragraph development by presenting a main idea and supporting details. "By using three numbers, Power Writing assigns the value of: 1st Power to main ideas, topic sentences, and topic paragraphs; 2nd Power to major details that explain main ideas; 3rd Power to minor details that elaborate upon or clarify major details" (Sparks, 1988, p. 2).

Wordless Picture Books. "Wordless books can be used to encourage the development of writing skills, not only with young children who are beginning writers, but also with older students who already possess some skill in writing" (D'Angelo, 1979, p. 813)

After reviewing the Holistic Model, Process Writing, USSW, Power Writing, and Wordless Picture Books, the authors selected the solution strategy of using Wordless Picture Books to improve students' writing. This particular solution strategy:

1. addresses the needs of the targeted population,
2. meets the time line of the project,
3. develops oral and written expression,
4. "stimulates unbridled thought and fun" (Caroff and Moje, 1993, p.287).[1]

Literature supports the use of Wordless Picture Books as an effective solution strategy to improve students' writing skills.

[1]In an interview with the authors of the article, *A Conversation with David Wiesner: 1992 Caldecott Medal Winner,* Wiesner discussed his thoughts regarding the creative use of his Wordless Picture Book, Tuesday.

Literature Review of Wordless Picture Books

Although Wordless Picture Books have been a familiar part of primary classrooms, their value has not been realized in developing students' written language. Researchers Preston and Ellis state, "...[it has been] only recently that these books have been discussed as vehicles for enhancing the reading and writing process with elementary students" (Preston and Ellis, 1983, p. 3). Research supports the use of Wordless Picture Books to foster writing development, visual literacy, oral to written expression, creative writing, higher-order thinking, and enjoyment of the writing process.

Development: Wordless Picture Books can increase the development of writing skills with children of all ages as they come to master the progression of writing stages, skills, and styles. Picture Books were previously limited to exclusive use in developing readiness skills in young readers. "Wordless books can be used to encourage the development of writing skills, not only with young children who are beginning writers, but also with older students who already possess some skills in writing" (D'Angelo, 1979, p 813).

Based on the stage of writing development a student may demonstrate, Wordless Books can aid in the continuation of writing skill development. "Wordless books can be used to promote a variety of writing skills. These writing skills can be viewed as developing in stages from an ability to produce single words and phrase, to the production of one complete statement, followed by writing two or more complete statements in logical order about the same topic" (D'Angelo, 1979, p. 813).

These books can also foster the development of essential cognitive and linguistic skills such as understanding story concept, recognizing details, sequencing, and development of character (Fusco and Noren, 1988).

Such skills can be transferred, but are not limited to, written language. "The approach (Wordless Books) capitalizes on students' natural language competencies. It not only improves their reading skills, but also develops their imagination and sensitivity to writing styles and expressive modes" (McGee & Tompkins,1983, p. 123).

Thus, research supports the use of Wordless Picture Books to improve students' writing of all ages through various writing stages, writing skills, and writing styles.

Visual Literacy: Our society is visually oriented. Many nonverbal signs are found on our streets and television plays an integral part in our homes. Turbayne states that, "The visual world is a script we all have to learn" (Turbayne, 1980, p. 19). Wordless picture books offer an excellent opportunity to develop visual literacy skills. "This competency is especially important since 80% of our information comes to us visually. Yet, visual literacy skills are probably the least often developed in any systematic fashion in elementary schools. This may in part, be due to a great dependence on basal reading instruction" (Read and Smith, 1982, p.30).

Wordless picture books can be used as an asset to, not a replacement of, books with text. Wordless books are read through illustrations and the story is dependent on what the reader visualizes. The absence of words helps the reader create his own story by the pictures he sees rather than the words he reads. "Busy pictures and wordless books are helpful visual props and idea prompts for encouraging use of language. But best of all is encouraging children to invent their own original stories. Typical characteristics of these stories are a conventional beginning, the marking of time and location, one or more characters, a sequence of events, and a conventional ending" (Hugh, Nurss, and Wood, 1987, p. 12). Working with children as they create a story from wordless picture books offers the teacher an opportunity to develop specific writing skills. The concrete stimuli of pictures allows children to easily sequence the events in a story. Teachers may also encourage children to use the pictures to expand

their vocabulary by expressing their ideas more precisely. Building on this skill, students may also be guided to expand sentences. "A teacher's question about who, what, why, and where can trigger this [expansion]. The expanded sentence becomes progressively more precise and information-packed, and children are usually delighted by seeing the long and complex sentences they have created" (Degler, 1979, p. 402). Wordless picture books are a valuable tool for integrating visual literacy skills into writing instruction.

Oral to Written Language: Wordless Picture Books can provide children with opportunities to develop their oral and written expression (Fagerlie, 1979, p. 92). "Wordless Books are books that tell a story through pictures. These books are especially effective in stimulating oral language since they encourage the student to react" (Tiedt, 1983, p. 244). Children may respond to a wordless picture book orally by telling what is happening in the story. Teachers can use questioning techniques to help children build their vocabularies, and express themselves clearly (Degler, 1979). Also, children may write their ideas down in order to share with others. "Writing is best taught as one of the language arts with strong emphasis on oral language as both a foundation and a continuing support to writing activities" (Tiedt, 1983, p. 9). "Working with children as they tell a story from a wordless picture book also offers the teacher an opportunity to help children develop their language competence" (Degler, 1979, p. 400).

Creative Writing: "Wordless books can also be used to promote...creative writing" (D'Angelo, 1979, p. 814). Authors of wordless picture books acknowledge the use of their books to foster creative writing. For example, Author David Weisner states, "Students use my books as a stimulus for creative thought" (Caroff and Moje, 1993, p. 287). Students may also enjoy the freedom wordless picture books offer. "With wordless books, there are no 'right' words to read: a perfect foundation for purely

creative thinking" (Lindauer, 1988, p. 138). By providing pictures which clearly portray actions and sequences, wordless books serve as a framework for students to become creative and successful writers (D'Angelo, 1979, p. 814). "Wordless books are safe and secure: they provide an environment in which a child is free to explore and create, uninhibited by the fear of 'being wrong'" (Whalen, 1974, p. 16).

Higher-Order Thinking Skills: Teaching students to improve their writing skills while utilizing wordless picture books also encourages students to write creatively using higher level thinking skills. Lois Degler suggests that the use of wordless picture books causes children to evaluate a character's actions, empathize with some aspect of the unfolding drama, and develop various types of thinking strategies (Degler, 1979, p. 399). Wordless books can allow for more than just the sequential development of writing skills which involve communication of literal messages. "Wordless books can also be used to promote inferential thinking and creative writing" (D'Angelo, 1979, p. 814). Hopkins states, "Using wordless picture books in your classroom can provide many opportunities for listening, discussing, writing, and dramatizing activities that stretch young minds and stimulate thinking" (Hopkins, 1979, p. 28). Experts in children's literature support the use of wordless books to teach students to think at a higher, critical level and develop thinking strategies they can apply and transfer to creative writing activities.

Enjoyment of the Writing Process: Using wordless picture books to develop student writing skills can be both fun and motivating to emergent authors. Swan states that "When students are paired together in a buddy system, wordless picture books become an enjoyable means to develop writing, reading, speaking, listening, and social skills. [He also relates that]... the children develop literacy competencies in a social context that is supportive and fun," (Swan, 1992, p. 655). If teachers want their students to become better writers, they need to find methods that will build their self-

confidence. As Lois Degler presents, "these books foster positive attitudes in the children about competence with books..." (Degler, 1979, p. 400). Once students' attitudes become more positive, only then are they ready to write.

After using wordless picture books in her elementary classroom, Lin Whalen felt these books would be good for older students too. These students would be capable of writing well-developed stories that they could share with others. When she asked if they thought making up a story would be fun, they unanimously answered "yes!" (Whalen, 1974, p. 15). With such an enthusiastic endorsement, it is understandable why students enjoy the writing process.

"As one studies picture books without words, one realizes how pleasurable, varied, plentiful and instructive they are for use in teaching reading and writing skills" (Preston and Ellis, 1983, p. 5). If students perceive writing to be fun, then they will be courageous enough to share their thoughts and feelings on paper. Using wordless picture books can help children to feel that they are the masters of their language.

Project Outcomes and Solution Components

After the investigation into the probable causes, as well as the review of the literature on this subject, the following project objective is proposed:

> As a result of utilizing wordless picture books to improve student writing during the period of September 1997 to December 1997, the second, third, fourth, and fifth grade students from the targeted classes will increase their writing skills, as measured by pre- and post- writing samples (Appendix B), checklists, rubrics, portfolios, teacher observations, and conferences.

In order to accomplish the terminal objective, the strategy of using wordless picture books to improve student writing in the areas of sequencing, dialogue, vocabulary, and elaboration will be developed and implemented.

Action Plan for the Intervention

Wordless picture books will be used to teach four main skills including sequencing, vocabulary, dialogue, and elaboration.

Topic: Wordless Picture Books

I. Sequencing Lesson Plan Grid (Appendix C)

A. **Explicit Lesson:** Students will work in pairs to write a sequence of directions to make Peanut Butter and Jelly sandwiches. Students will then follow each other's directions to make the sandwiches to show the importance of following steps in a sequence.

B. **Implicit Lesson:** (Appendix C) Students will order a set of pictures to show story sequence.

C. **Secondary Books:**

1. *Deep in the Forest*

a. Book Walk

b. Web Vocabulary

c. Classify Vocabulary

d. Pair Retelling; Student Tally of Skill Usage (Appendix C)

e. Cross-Age Sharing; Teacher Observation Checklist (Appendix C)

2. *Drip, Drop*

a. Book Walk

b. Web Vocabulary

c. Classify Vocabulary

d. Pair Retelling; Student Tally of Skill Usage

e. Cross-Age Sharing; Teacher Observation Checklist

D. **Primary Book:**

1. *Pancakes for Breakfast* By: Tomie dePaola

a. Book Walk

b. Web Vocabulary

c. Classify Vocabulary

d. Pair Retelling; Student Tally of Skill Usage

e. Written

II. Elaboration Lesson Plan Grid (Appendix D)

A. **Explicit Lesson:** (Appendix D) In small groups, students will use a picture to elaborate the statement of the previous student.

B. **Implicit Lesson:** Picture Prompt

C. **Secondary Books:**

1. *Catch that Cat!* By: Fernando Krahn

a. Book Walk

b. Web Vocabulary

c. Classify Vocabulary

d. Pair Retelling; Student Tally of Skill Usage

e. Cross-Age Sharing; Teacher Observation Checklist

2. *A Boy, a Dog, and a Frog* By: Mercer Mayer

a. Book Walk

b. Web Vocabulary

c. Classify Vocabulary

d. Pair Retelling; Student Tally of Skill Usage (Appendix D)

e. Cross-Age Sharing; Teacher Observation Checklist

D. **Primary Book:**

1. *Frog, Where Are You?* By: Mercer Mayer

a. Book Walk

b. Web Vocabulary

c. Classify Vocabulary

d. Pair Retelling; Student Tally of Skill Usage

e. Written

III. Dialogue Lesson Plan Grid (Appendix E)

A. **Explicit Lesson:**

1. Given certain situations (ex. your mother punished you from going to Great America with your friend), students will converse using play telephones. After recording the conversation, the teacher will write the dialogue between the students to model written dialogue.

B. **Implicit Lesson:** (Appendix E)

1. After reading a dialogue excerpt from a grade level novel, the students will infer character traits.

2. Using comic book strips, students will write dialogue in speech bubbles and transfer the speech to dialogue form.

C. **Secondary Books:**

1. *The Mystery of the Giant Footsteps* By: Fernando Krahn (Orally)
   a. Book Walk
   b. Web Vocabulary
   c. Classify Vocabulary
   d. Pair Retelling; Student Tally of Skill Usage (Appendix E)
   e. Cross-Age Sharing; Teacher Observation Checklist
2. *Bobo's Dream* By: Martha Alexander (Dialogue only on Post-It Notes)
   a. Book Walk
   b. Web Vocabulary
   c. Classify Vocabulary
   d. Pair Retelling; Student Tally of Skill Usage
   e. Cross-Age Sharing; Teacher Observation Checklist

D. **Primary Book:**

1. *Frog Goes to Dinner* By: Mercer Mayer (Written)
   a. Book Walk
   b. Web Vocabulary
   c. Classify Vocabulary
   d. Pair Retelling; Student Tally of Skill Usage
   e. Written

Methods of Assessment

Copies of the assessment tools used in the program are included in the appendix.

*A pre-writing sample was administered on the first day of the program. This sample provided baseline data on students' writing skills.

*Rubrics were developed to evaluate student growth in targeted skills while using Wordless Picture Books. They were employed to measure progress after each skill was taught. Additional comments and observations will be noted on the rubrics. (Appendixes G and H)

*Two checklists were employed to monitor students' progress throughout the writing process. One checklist was for peer monitoring during group sharing. An additional checklist was for teacher use as conferences were conducted both during and after the writing process.

*Artifacts were collected in a portfolio to enable students, teachers, and parents to reflect on the progress of students' writing skills.

*Two surveys were distributed to gather information from the broad population of the teachers in the targeted district. The first survey was distributed to the broad population of the teachers in the targeted district to establish a need for an intervention to improve writing skills. The second survey was given to teachers of the same grade level where the action project was implemented. (Appendix I)

*A post-writing sample was administered on the last day of the program. Because the post-writing sample was the same sample used in pretesting, student progress could be compared from the beginning to the end of the project.

Chapter 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The objective of this project was to improve student writing skills. The implementation of wordless picture books was selected to affect the desired changes in targeted skill areas.

Wordless picture books were used to develop the skills of sequencing, elaboration, and dialogue. A pretest was administered to determine baseline data. The original plans called for three instructional interventions to address the skill areas. However, two of the interventions were combined as researchers assessed the needs of the population. A rubric was designed to assess skill development through the pretest, Intervention A, Intervention B, and the post test.

Intervention A focused upon the targeted skill area of sequencing. Intervention B focused upon the targeted skill areas of elaboration and dialogue. Both interventions A and B included explicit and implicit lessons, vocabulary development, oral and written storytelling in pairs, teacher conferencing, and cross-grade sharing. An overview of lesson plans devoted to each of these areas is included in Appendices C, D, and E.

The interventions were concluded after ten weeks. A post test was administered to evaluate overall growth, skill area development, and comparative gains within the population.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

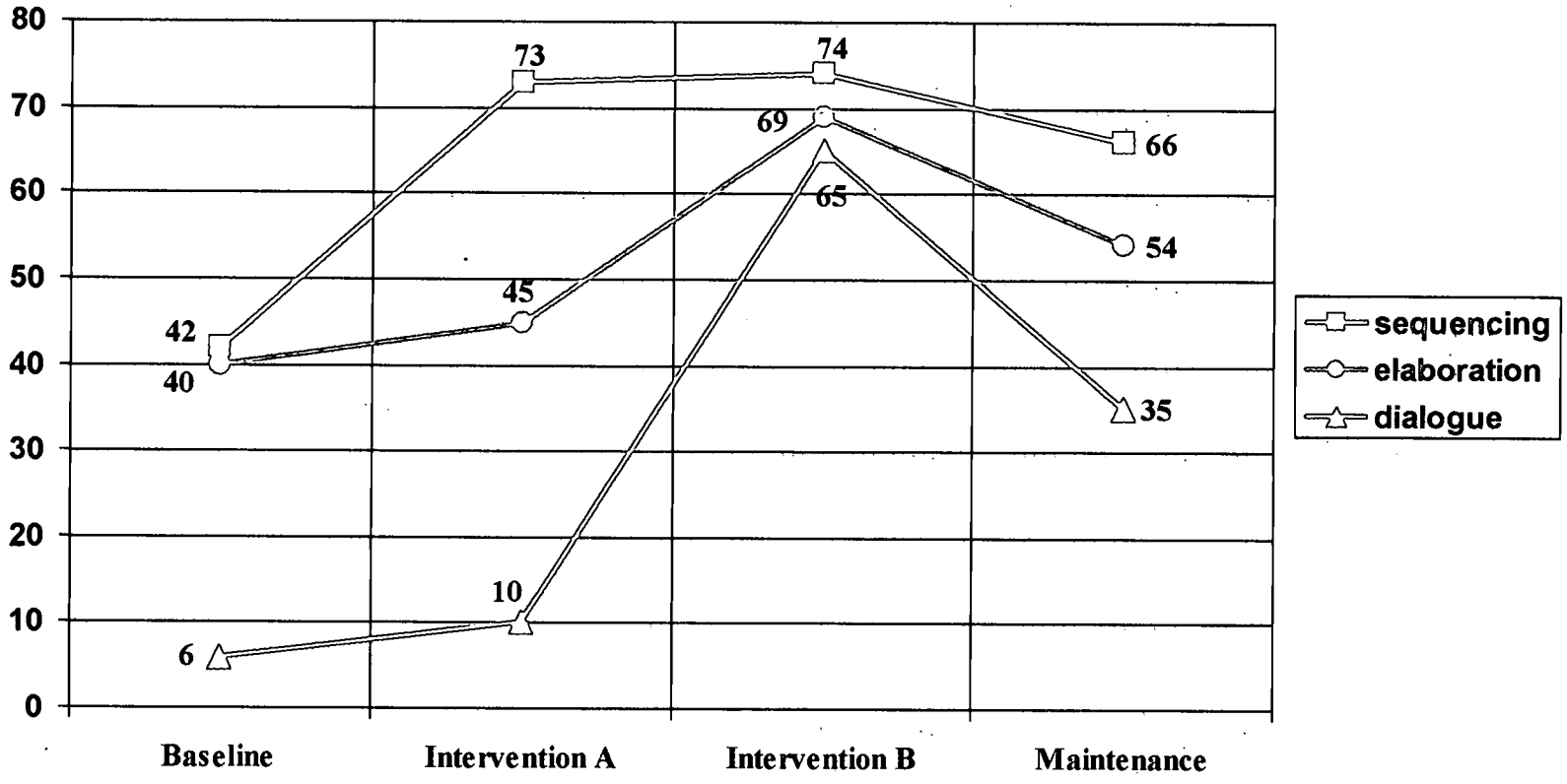
A rubric was designed to assess the effects of wordless picture books on the targeted population's writing abilities. The data were collected after the pretest, Intervention A, Intervention B, and the post test. This information is presented in Figure 6.

The interventions appear to have had a positive effect upon the overall growth of the targeted population. Sequencing, elaboration, and dialogue skills increased as indicated by post test results. The average pretest score was 40%, measuring sequencing, elaboration, and dialogue skills. The average post test score was 59%. An average increase in all skill areas (based on the rubric) was 19%. The range of overall growth in all skill areas (based on the rubric) of -0.2% to 41%. The intervention appears to have had a positive effect on overall skill areas. Results are presented in Figure 7.

To analyze growth in the three skill areas, the researchers isolated results after each intervention stage, using a rubric (Appendix G). Intervention A focused upon the targeted skill area of sequencing. Intervention B focused upon the skill areas of elaboration and dialogue. This information is presented in Figure 6.

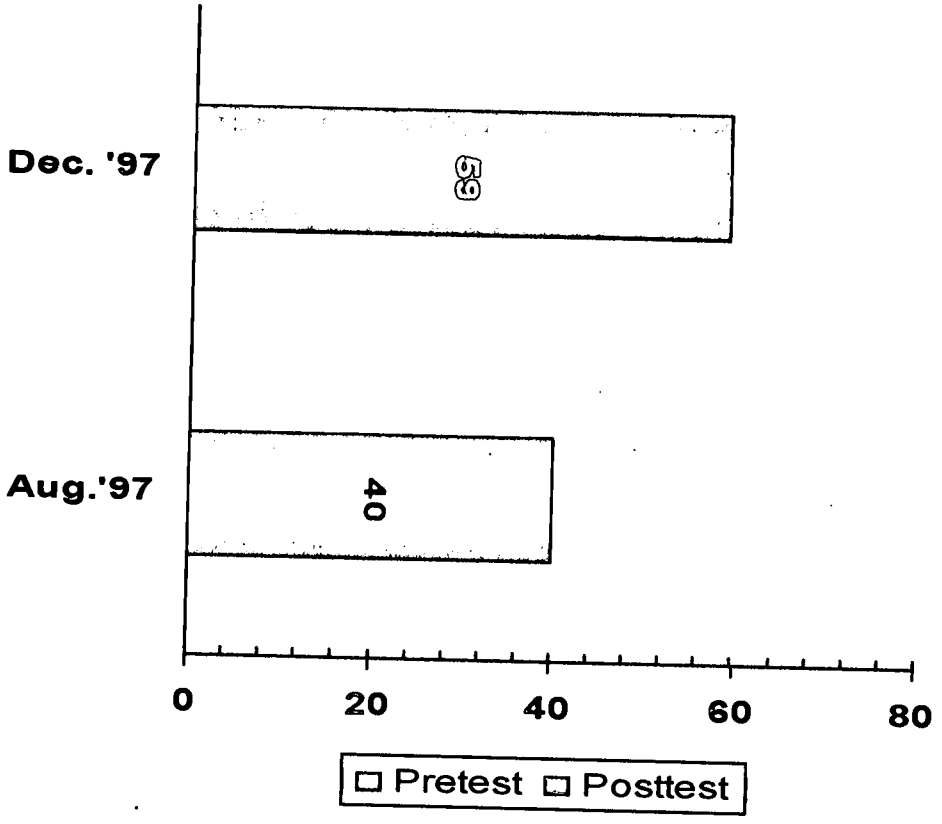
Before implementing Intervention A, baseline data were collected on the skill of sequencing. Specifically, use of chronological order and time-order words were assessed according to the rubric created by the researchers. The average score, according to the rubric developed, was 42%. After implementing Intervention A, the average score was 73%. When the post test was administered, the average score was 66%. Intervention A appears to have had a positive effect on the skill area of sequencing as indicated by the 24% growth from the pretest to the post test.

Figure 6
Percentage of Growth in Skill Areas
Using Wordless Picture Books



Baseline data were recorded using a pretest. To determine growth in the three skill areas, results were analyzed after each intervention stage. Maintenance data was recorded using a posttest.

Figure 7
Overall Growth in Targeted Skills

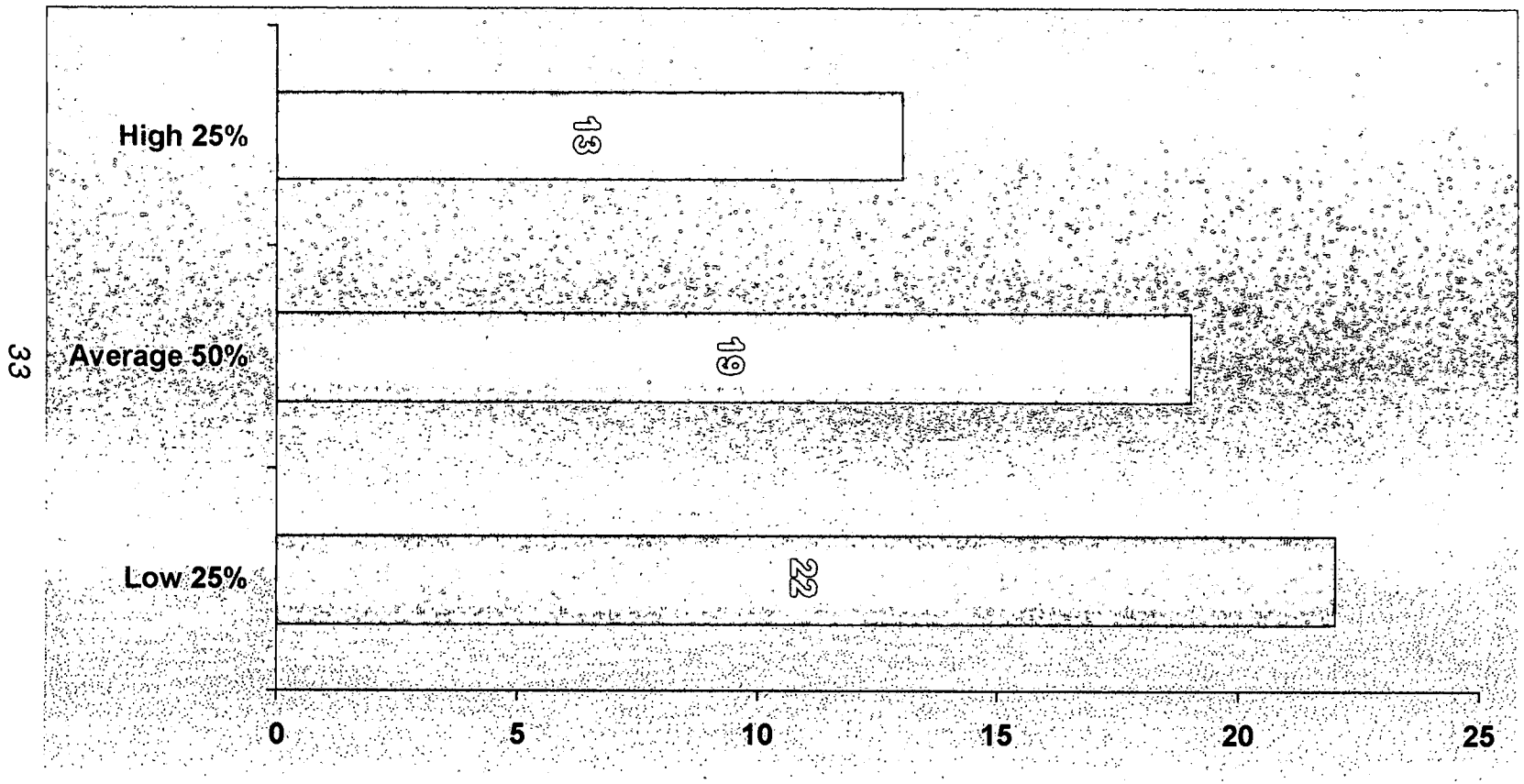


Pretest and Posttest Results of Targeted Population in Percentages from August of 1997 to December of 1997.

Baseline data collected prior to Intervention A indicated an average score of 40% in the skill area of elaboration and 6% in the skill area of dialogue. Following the implementation of Intervention A, the average score for the skill of elaboration was 45% while the average score for the skill of dialogue was 10%. Intervention B focused on the elaboration of events, characters and settings as well as the imaginative and consistent use of dialogue by characters. After implementing Intervention B, the average score for the skill of elaboration was 69% and the average score for the skill of dialogue was 65%. Intervention B appears to have had a positive effect on the skill areas as evidenced by the 14% growth in the skill of elaboration and 29% growth in the skill area of dialogue.

To identify the targeted population which showed the largest increase in the skill areas as a result of the interventions, comparative gains within the population were analyzed. The population was divided into three groups: low-average, average, and high-average. These groups were determined by performance on the pretest which served as baseline data. The low-average group made a 22% increase from the pretest to the post test. The average group made a 19% increase from the pretest to the post test. The high-average group made a 13% increase from the pretest to the post test. The interventions appear to have had a positive effect on all three groups. It is significant to note that the low-average group appears to have had a larger increase in their scores from the pretest to the post test than the average and high-average groups. This information is provided in Figure 8.

Figure 8
Percentage of Growth from Pretest to Posttest in Three Populations of Sample Group



Low, average, and high groups were determined by performances on the pretest. Posttest results were compared to establish increases within each group after the interventions were implemented.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the presentation and analysis of the data on the intervention of Wordless Picture Books, the students showed a marked improvement in their writing skills. The researchers conclude that the intervention improved the overall growth of writing skills, specific to the areas of sequencing, elaboration, and dialogue. It is also concluded that a particular segment of the targeted population made the most gains as a result of the intervention.

There was a marked improvement in the overall writing skills of the targeted population using Wordless Picture Books. The students improved their sequencing skills by retelling the story in chronological order with details and consistent use of time-order words. The use of elaboration was also improved as students developed events, characters and settings using feelings, emotions, and attitudes. Improvement was seen in the skill of dialogue as students conveyed feelings, emotions, and attitudes imaginatively and consistently. Students increased their vocabulary usage by utilizing words that explained and evaluated the pictures.

After analyzing the data regarding comparative gains within the population, the researchers concluded that the students who scored in the lowest 25% on the pretest made the most significant gains. This intervention appears to be most effective with the low-average segment of the targeted population. However, all segments of the population showed marked improvements in their writing skills.

It was also noted by the researchers that the intervention has other positive benefits. The benefits include development of visual literacy and oral to written expression, promoting creative writing and higher-order thinking skills, and enhancing the enjoyment of the writing process. Based on the data collection and observation, the researchers highly endorse the use of Wordless Picture Books to improve student writing.

Based on the data, the researchers recommend the use of this intervention across all grade levels. Although students in all grade levels of the targeted population benefit from the program, it was most effective with students in grades four and five.

When implementing the program, the researchers recommend the following components as essential to the effectiveness of the intervention: inclusion of the explicit lessons is vital for students to make real-world connections, utilization of lessons on vocabulary supports word development, incorporating visual aids throughout instruction increases the awareness of specific skills (see Appendix J), conferencing between teacher and student provides important feedback during the writing process, and organizing students in cooperative pairs and sharing across grade levels greatly fosters student enjoyment.

The researchers would recommend the following modifications when implementing the intervention. The pretest and post test should more specifically align with the targeted skills. The length of the book selections should be considered. If shorter books are chosen, students will be exposed to a greater number of book selections. If time permits, each skill should be introduced and developed using its own book. Consider combining a low-level skill with a high-level skill if time does not permit. For example, sequencing could be combined with dialogue. The rubric should be designed to include more specific details that would aid in determining the level of skill development.

Researchers encourage educators working with students in grades two through five to utilize wordless picture books to develop students' writing skills. By doing so, students and educators alike will be challenged to move toward new and exciting levels of accomplishment.

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Appendices

Teacher's Survey of Writing Ability

Please circle the most appropriate response.

1. Students' thoughts are logically sequenced in their writing.

strongly agree agree no opinion disagree strongly disagree

2. Students use elaboration in their writing.

strongly agree agree no opinion disagree strongly disagree

3. Students utilize a prewriting process.

strongly agree agree no opinion disagree strongly disagree

4. Students maintain a clear focus throughout their writing.

strongly agree agree no opinion disagree strongly disagree

5. How often do you evaluate your students' writing?

always frequent sometimes never

6. Do you use a rubric to assess your students' writing?

always frequent sometimes never

7.How many hours per week do you devote to writing instruction?

4 or more 2-4 1-2 0-1

8. How would you rate your own writing skills?

excellent good fair poor

9. How would you rate your students overall writing ability?

excellent good fair poor

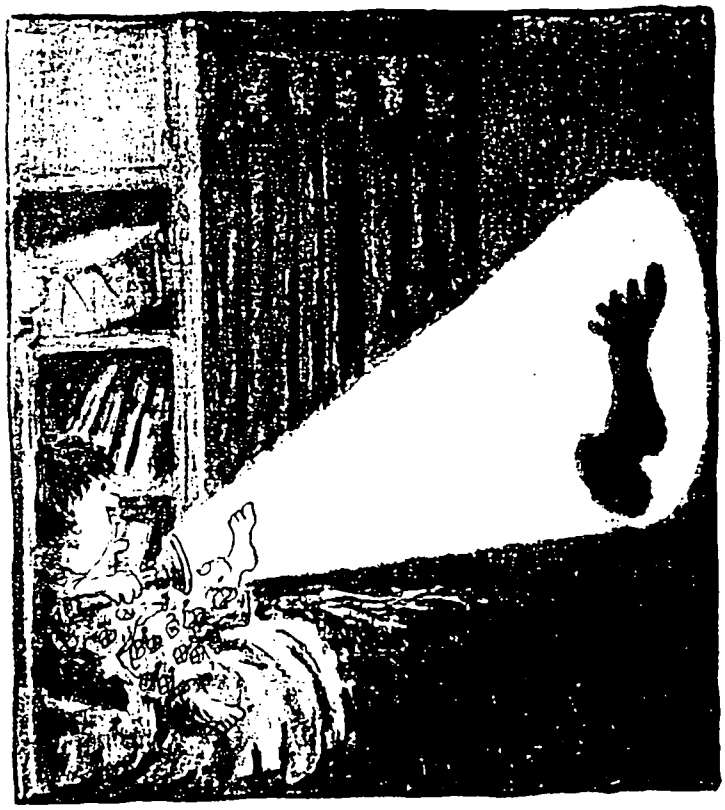
10. What grade level do you teach?

first second third fourth fifth sixth special education

Alex Pumpernickel — Larger than Life

A.M.

23



24

Lesson Design for Sequencing Skill

Wordless Books Used:
Deep in the Forest
Drip, Drop
Pancakes for Breakfast

1	2	3	4	5
Explicit Lesson Students will work in pairs to write a sequence of directions to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and then make a PB & J to show importance of following steps in a sequence	Implicit Lesson: Students will order a set of pictures to show story sequence. (see lesson plan)	Deep in the Forest Whole-Group Instruction Book Walk Web Vocabulary	Deep in the Forest Lesson on classification. Students will work in pairs to classify vocabulary generated from book and share with class.	Deep in the Forest Pair-Share developing oral story using vocabulary and time-order words.
6	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Deep in the Forest 2-4 Share Pairs will share with other pairs their versions of the story. Students will keep record of other's skill usage using checklist and PMI.	Drip, Drop Whole-Group Instruction Book Walk Web Vocabulary	Drip, Drop Students will work in pairs to classify vocabulary generated from book and share with class.	Drip, Drop Pair-Share developing oral story using vocabulary and time-order words.	Drip, Drop Teacher Conference Pairs will share 4-6 pages of their story in a teacher conference while other pairs are practicing their retelling.
11	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**
Pancakes for Breakfast Whole-Group Instruction Book Walk Web Vocabulary	Pancakes for Breakfast Students will work in pairs to classify vocabulary generated from book and share with class.	Pancakes for Breakfast Teacher will model 5 written pages from book. Students will pair-share to develop written story using vocabulary and time-order words.	Pancakes for Breakfast Students will write their story in pairs.	Pancakes for Breakfast Upon completion of written story, students will participate in a cross-age share of final product.

Implicit Lesson: Sequencing

Objective: Students will be able to order a set of pictures to show story sequence.

Students will use a variety of time order words to express time of day.

Students will use a variety of time order words to demonstrate passage of time.

Anticipatory Set: The teacher will ask the class four questions relating to time of day. Their responses will be recorded in one column on a piece of chart paper. The teacher will then ask six questions relating to passage of time and record those responses in a column on another piece of chart paper.

Lesson

1. Teacher will put the heading *Time of Day* above the first column of responses and *Passage of Time* above the second set of responses.

2. Teacher will explain that using words relating to time of day or passage of time is a way that a writer sequences his writing.

3. Model other ways to answer each question and record it on the chart next to the original responses.

4. Brainstorm with the class for other time order words to add to the chart.

5. Give the students a set of pictures to unscramble to show sequence. Tell them to cut and paste in proper story sequence.

6. Go back to the charts and ask which time order words could be used to explain the sequence of the pictures.

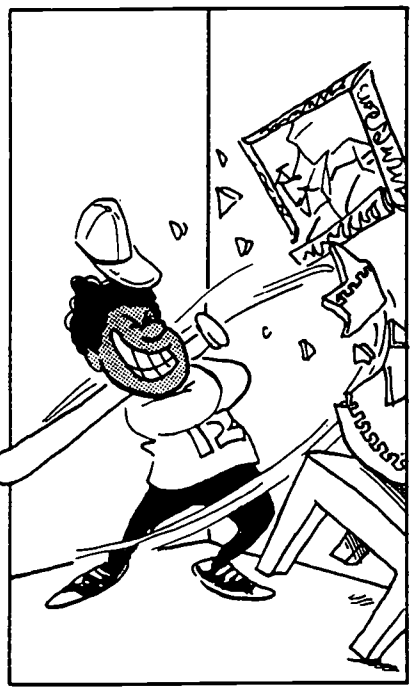
GAMES

Out of Order 1

The panels of this comic strip are all mixed up. Can you unscramble the pictures so that they tell a story?

Answer, page 170

A

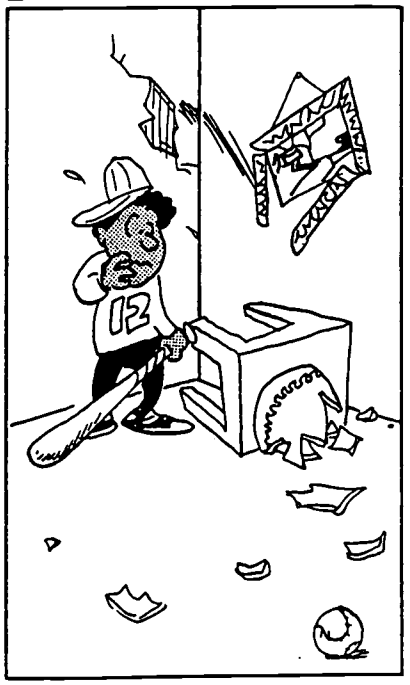


B

C

D

E



F

PUZZLE AND ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROBERT LEIGHTON

Student Checklist for Sequencing

Date _____

Name _____ Peer Editor _____

Make a tally mark each time a student uses time order words.

_____

P -

_____

M-

_____

I-

Teacher Checklist

Names	Social Skills		Sequence		Elaboration			Dialogue
	Taking turns	Encouraging words	Time order words	Matches picture to words	Identifies	Describes	Develops	Uses dialogue Yes or No

Lesson Design for Elaboration Skill

Wordless Books Used:
Catch that Cat!
A Boy, a Dog, and a Frog
Frog, Where Are You?

1	2	3	4	5
Explicit Lesson: Mystery Person- Students write 5 facts about selves from general to specific. Students all stand. Teacher reads off facts and studentssit if it does not apply to them. One student should be left for each turn. Example of elaborating for more information.	Implicit Lesson: Using a picture prompt in small groups of five, students will take turns elaborating on the picture from the previous students' response.	Catch that Cat! Whole-Group Instruction Book Walk Web Vocabulary	Catch that Cat! Students will work in pairs to classify vocabulary generated from book and share with class.	Catch that Cat! Pair-Share developing oral story using vocabulary and elaboration.
6	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Catch that Cat! 2-4 Share Pairs will share with other pairs their versions of the story. Students will keep record of other's skill usage using checklist and PMI.	A Boy, a Dog, and a Frog Whole-Group Instruction Book Walk Web Vocabulary	A Boy, a Dog, and a Frog Students will work in pairs to classify vocabulary generated from book and share with class.	A Boy, a Dog, and a Frog Pair-Share developing oral story using vocabulary and elaboration.	A Boy, a Dog, and a Frog Teacher Conference Pairs will share 4-6 pages of their story in a teacher conference while other pairs are practicing their retelling.
11	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**
Frog, Where Are You? Whole-Group Instruction Book Walk Web Vocabulary	Frog, Where Are You? Students will work in pairs to classify vocabulary generated from book and share with class.	Frog, Where Are You? Teacher will model 5 written pages from book. Students will pair-share to develop written story using vocabulary and elaboration	Frog, Where Are You? Students will write their story in pairs.	Frog, Where Are You? Upon completion of written story, students will participate in a cross-age share of final product.

Elaboration

A. Explicit Lesson: In groups (circles), use picture as prompt. Each student will add to the previous student's statement.

B. Implicit Lesson:

a. Whole-class Discovery Lesson--Three stages of elaborating:

1. IDENTIFIES-- Student names what he/she sees in the picture.
2. DESCRIBES--Student gives more details about the picture.
3. DEVELOPS--Student not only identifies and describes, but also relates the characters feelings, emotions, and attitudes.

b. Whole-class Practice Lesson--Elaboration:

Each pair of students is given a large sentence strip. They must decide in which of the three stages of elaboration their sentence belongs and then go stand under a sign that reads:

1. IDENTIFIES
2. DESCRIBES or
3. DEVELOPS.

In order to apply their learning, students then think of what they could add to their sentences to move them to the DEVELOPED stage.

Student Checklist for Elaboration

Date _____

Name _____ Peer Editor _____

Make a tally mark each time a student names things or tells more.

Names Things	Tells More

P -

M-

I-

Lesson Design for Dialogue Skill

Wordless Books Used:
The Mystery of the Giant Footsteps —
Bobo's Dream
Frog Goes to Dinner

1	2	3	4	5
Explicit Lesson: Given certain situations, students will converse on play phones. After recording the conversation, the teacher will write the dialogue between the students to model written dialogue.	Implicit Lesson: After reading an excerpt from a grade level novel, the students will infer character traits. Using comic strips, students will write dialogue in speech bubbles and transfer into dialogue form.	The Mystery of the Giant Footsteps Whole-Group Instruction Book Walk Web Vocabulary	The Mystery of the Giant Footsteps Students will work in pairs to classify vocabulary generated from book and share with class.	The Mystery of the Giant Footsteps Pair-Share developing oral story using vocabulary and dialogue.
6	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
The Mystery of the Giant Footsteps 2-4 Share Pairs will share with other pairs their versions of the story. Students will keep record of other's skill usage using checklist and PMI.	Bobo's Dream Whole-Group Instruction Book Walk Web Vocabulary	Bobo's Dream Students will work in pairs to classify vocabulary generated from book and share with class.	Bobo's Dream Pair-Share developing oral story using vocabulary and dialogue.	Bobo's Dream Teacher Conference Pairs will share 4-6 pages of their story in a teacher conference while other pairs are practicing their retelling.
11	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**
Frog Goes to Dinner Whole-Group Instruction Book Walk Web Vocabulary	Frog Goes to Dinner Students will work in pairs to classify vocabulary generated from book and share with class.	Frog Goes to Dinner Teacher will model 5 written pages from book. Students will pair-share to develop written story using vocabulary and dialogue	Frog Goes to Dinner Students will write their story in pairs.	Frog Goes to Dinner Upon completion of written story, students will participate in a cross-age share of final product.

Implicit Lesson: Dialogue

Objectives:

- Students will be able to use dialogue imaginatively and consistently to convey feelings, emotions, and attitudes.
- Students will use appropriate punctuation to express dialogue.
- Students will use synonyms for the word "said".

Anticipatory Set:

The teacher will read given passages from grade level novels to the students. Using the dialogue, the students will infer information about the character's thoughts, feelings, emotions, or attitudes.

Lesson:

1. On overhead, use comic strip with empty speech bubbles to introduce dialogue.
2. Brainstorm feelings, emotions or attitudes the character might have:
3. Model what the character might be saying by writing in the speech bubble.
4. Explain the transfer to dialogue as in the previous explicit lesson reviewing the use of commas, quotation marks, and end punctuation.
5. Transfer language in speech bubbles using the word said for each.
6. When complete, express your dissatisfaction with the word said for each box in the strip as it does not convey the feelings you previously brainstormed.
7. Go back to the web of feelings, emotions, and attitudes and next to each entry, ask for words to substitute "said" and write it in a different color.
8. Give the students a comic strip to try independently (first in speech bubbles, second in dialogue form). Point out the use of feelings, emotions, or attitudes to convey through their dialogue.

Student Checklist for Dialogue

Date _____

Name _____ Peer Editor _____

Make a tally mark each time a student uses dialogue.

_____

P -

_____

M-

_____

I-

Glossary of Terms

Book Walk: This is a whole group activity. The teacher reads the title, and shows all of the illustrations in the book. The children analyze the illustrations, and raise questions about the characters, setting and sequence of events.

Classify Vocabulary: Students will work in groups of two for this activity. The teacher will select a variety of words from the web. Students will classify the words into groups. Students need to label the groups. Students will use the vocabulary words when they write their stories.

Cross-Age Sharing: The teacher will set up a date and time when his/her students can read their completed stories to a different grade level.

Pair Retelling: A group of two students will join a second group of two students for this activity. One pair is retelling their story, while the second pair is listening for development of a particular skill. For example, if the students are working on sequencing, the students will listen for time order words and events in order.

Web Vocabulary: This is a whole group activity. One student reads the title and shows all of the illustrations in the book to the group. The students will generate vocabulary words for each page, and the teacher will record the vocabulary words on a web.

Wordless Picture Book Rubric

Student:_____ Partner:_____

CRITERIA	 0	1	2	 3			
Social Skills *Turn-Taking* 0 (not evident) 2 (evident) *Encouraging* 0 (not evident) 2 (evident)							
Writing Mechanics							
Capitalization	Not Yet	Infrequent Use		Frequent Use		Consistent Use	x1
Punctuation	Not Yet	Infrequent Use		Frequent Use		Consistent Use	x1
Quotations	Not Yet	Infrequent Use		Frequent Use		Consistent Use	x1
Complete Sentences	Not Yet	Infrequent Use		Frequent Use		Consistent Use	x1
Writing Concepts *Vocabulary Usage*	Not Yet	Words tell about the picture		Words explain the picture		Words evaluate the picture	x4
Sequencing: Order	Not Yet	Retold general ideas with no details		Retold story in chronic order with few details		Retold story in chronic. order with details	x4
Time-Order Words	Not Yet	Infrequent Use		Frequent Use		Consistent Use	x4

COMMENTS:

Total

Wordless Picture Book Rubric

Student:_____ Partner:_____

CRITERIA	 0	 1	 2	 3	
Social Skills *Turn-Taking* 0 (not evident) 2 (evident) *Encouraging* 0 (not evident) 2 (evident)					
Writing Mechanics					
Capitalization	Not Yet	Infrequent Use	Frequent Use	Consistent Use	x1
Punctuation	Not Yet	Infrequent Use	Frequent Use	Consistent Use	x1
Quotations	Not Yet	Infrequent Use	Frequent Use	Consistent Use	x1
Complete Sentences	Not Yet	Infrequent Use	Frequent Use	Consistent Use	x1
Writing Concepts *Vocabulary Usage*	Not Yet	Words tell about the picture	Words explain the picture	Words evaluate the picture	x4
Sequencing: Order	Not Yet	Retold general ideas with no details	Retold story in chronlc. order with few details	Retold story in chronlc. order with details	x4
Time-Order Words	Not Yet	Infrequent Use	Frequent Use	Consistent Use	x4
Elaboration: Events	Not Yet	Events Identified	Events Described w/Adj	*(feeling,emotion,attitude)* Events Developed	x4
Characters	Not Yet	Characters Identified	Char. Described w/Adj	Characters Developed	x4
Setting	Not Yet	Setting Identified	Setting Described w/ Adj	Setting Developed	x4
Dialogue	No Use of Dialogue by Characters	Infrequent Use of Dialogue by Characters	Frequent Use of Dialogue by Characters	Imaginative & Consistent Use to Convey: *feelings *emotions *attitudes	x4

COMMENTS:

Total /100

Teacher Survey of the Writing Process

Directions: Please check all that apply.

1. Which of the writing processes can most of your students do **independently** at the beginning of the year?

- ❑ Spelling and Conventions
- ❑ Choosing a Topic
- ❑ Elaborating
- ❑ Revising
- ❑ None of the Above

2. During which stage in your students' writing do you individually conference on a consistent basis?

- ❑ Before
- ❑ During
- ❑ After
- ❑ None of the Above

3. When you individually conference, what is your focus?

- ❑ Pre-Writing
- ❑ Proofreading for Mechanics
- ❑ Developing a Topic
- ❑ Elaborating Details
- ❑ Other: _____

4. I feel I have enough time for...

- ❑ direct writing instruction.
- ❑ individual conferencing.
- ❑ evaluating student writing.
- ❑ none of the above.

5. Factors that may negatively influence my time spent on developing students' writing skills are...

- ❑ demands of growing curriculum
- ❑ interruptions in the class day
- ❑ management of individualized instruction
- ❑ assessment of finished product
- ❑ standardized testing
- ❑ my comfort level with teaching the writing process
- ❑ Other: _____

6. I learned how to teach writing through...

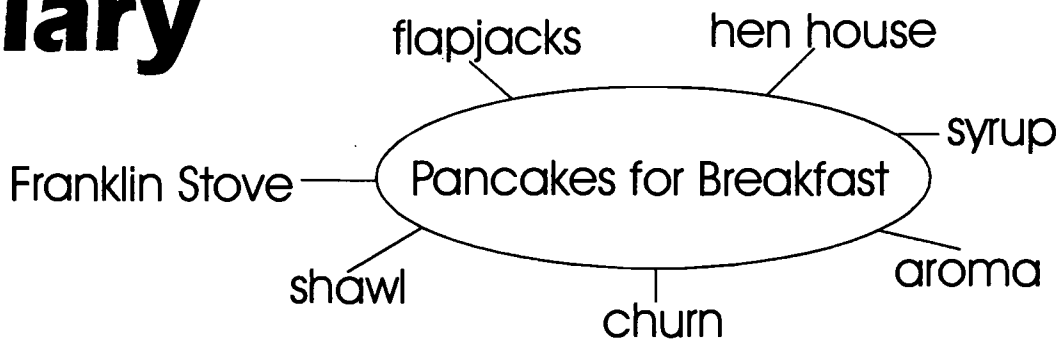
- ❑ undergraduate courses specific to teaching writing
- ❑ graduate courses specific to teaching writing
- ❑ staff development
- ❑ professional literature
- ❑ Other: _____ 74

Grade: ❑ 2 ❑ 3 ❑ 4 ❑ 5

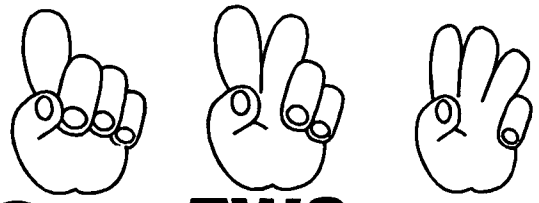
Wordless Picture Books

Remember to...Take Turns & Encourage!

Vocabulary



Sequencing

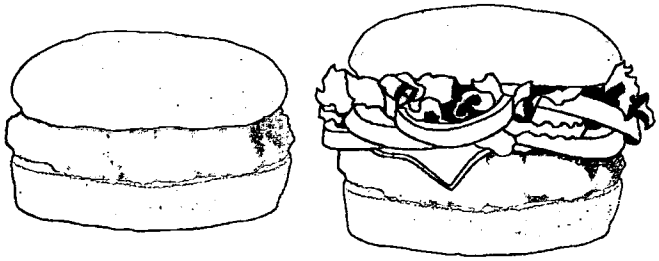


ONE TWO THREE

Time Order Words

first, second, third
in the morning...
a week later...
in a few minutes...
meanwhile...

Elaboration



Using words that:
* identify (name)
* describe (adj.)
* develop..... feelings, emotions, attitudes

Dialogue

The parrot squaked, "Polly wants a cracker!"

said howled
asked screamed
yelled
questioned
whispered
wimpered
remarked

CS216482

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(Rev. 6/96)