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ABSTRACT
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positive self-esteem which aides the child in becoming more confident in his
(or her) writing abilities. Teachers and parents who are willing to implement
various intervention strategies will be more successful with raising
confidence in writing, which in turn links to higher overall writing
achievement. We are only part of the tools that will help students succeed in
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positive self-esteem and confidence in writing is the child's own
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resulted in the three areas of intervention. One area consisted of teacher
intervention strategies, another is the parent intervention strategies done
at home, and finally what the children themselves could do to raise their own
self-esteem in writing. Results indicated an improvement in overall
confidence in writing and skills; and parent participation was a significant
asset to this writing program. Findings suggest that the writing strategies
learned in the classroom, along with parent assistance, made an impact on
students' writing achievement. Contains 34 references and 17 tables of data.
The 48 appendixes contain survey instruments, writing prompts, checklists,
planning sheets, tips and guides on writing, and parent letters. (Author/RS)

CS

IMPROVING STUDENTS' CONFIDENCE IN WRITING ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH THE USE OF PARENT, STUDENT, AND TEACHER INTERVENTIONS

Eleni Koulourianos
Vickie Marienau

An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the

School of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

St. Xavier University & SkyLight Professional Development

Field-Based Masters Program

Chicago, Illinois

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ABSTRACT

This study describes strategies used to increase student confidence in their overall writing achievement. The targeted population consists of third and fifth grade students from the same district located in a northwest suburban area. This community is located near a large metropolitan city in a midwestern state. Lack of confidence in student writing contributes to lower student achievement as well as lower enthusiasm in writing. Evidence for the existence of this problem includes teacher observation and evaluation; student, teacher, and parent surveys; student writing samples; and state achievement test scores.

Analyses of probable cause data revels that confidence in overall writing can be affected by the teacher, the parent, and the student. The teacher and the parent help foster positive self-esteem which aides the child in becoming more confident in his (or her) writing abilities. Teachers and parents who are willing to implement various intervention strategies will be more successful with raising confidence in writing, which in turn links to higher overall writing achievement. We are only part of the tools that will help students succeed in their writing accomplishments. Teachers and parents must remember that positive self-esteem and confidence in writing is the child's own responsibility.

A review of the solution strategies suggested by the professional literature, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the three areas of intervention. One area consisted of teacher intervention strategies, another is the parent intervention strategies done at home, and finally what the children themselves could do to raise their own self-esteem in writing.

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CHAPTER ONE

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

The students of the targeted third and fifth grade classes exhibit lack of confidence in their writing that interferes with their overall writing achievement. Evidence for the existence of this problem includes teacher observation and evaluation, student, teacher, and parent surveys, and student writing samples.

Immediate Problem Context School Site A

School A is located in a suburban area, near a large metropolitan city in a midwestern state. School A is a K-5 building in a unit school district. Enrollment at School A has continually grown throughout the years. Currently, School A has 597 students. The average class size at School A is as follows: Kindergarten, 19.0 students, grade one, 20.8 students, and grade three, 24.4 students. There are four sections each of kindergarten, third, and fourth grades, while first, second, and fifth grades have five sections.

The school is not ethnically diverse; 98.5% of the students are White. A very small percentage of diverse ethnicity is reported as Hispanic 7%, Asian/Pacific Islander 5%, and Black 3%. Only 1% of students come from low income families. There is no reported Limited-English Proficient rate found in School A. Limited-English Proficient students include students whose first language is not English and

who are eligible for transitional bilingual education. A high attendance rate of 96.3% is prevalent at this school, with a chronic truancy rate of 0% reported. The student mobility rate is 5.6% which is based on a combined number of students who enroll in or leave a school during the school year.

The staff at School A is comprised of 57 females and six males. The staff consists of one principal, two administrative assistants, one nurse, 25 classroom teachers, five district special services staff, 13 special area staff, four classroom assistants, one media center assistance, and nine special service assistants.

The students are heterogeneously assigned to classrooms. The following subject areas and the weekly time devoted to teaching them is: mathematics (50 minutes), science (25 minutes), language arts (160 minutes), and social science (25 minutes). In addition to these core subjects, students also receive 75 minutes of physical education, 50 minutes each of media center, art, and music per week. Time devoted to the teaching of core subjects is the average number of minutes during instruction. This area of instruction is for a five day school week which utilizes each subject area and then divides that number by five.

Immediate Problem Context School Site B

School B is located in the same district and area as School A. School B is also a K-5 building in a unit school district. At the current time, enrollment at School B is 459 students. The average class size is as follows: kindergarten, 18.0 students, grade one, 20.3 students, and grade three, 19.8 students. There are three sections each of kindergarten, second, third, fourth, and fifth grades, while first grade has four sections.

Similar to School A, this school has little diversity in its ethnicity; 92.8% of the students are White. The other ethnic groups and their percentages of the total population are: Hispanic 3.9%, Asian/Pacific Islander 2.6%, and Black 0.7%. There is a low rate of 1.1% of students who come from low income families comparable to

School A. In addition, the Limited-English Proficient rate is 0%. There was also a high attendance rate of 95.1% during 1999. Moreover, there is a chronic truancy rate of zero percent reported. The student mobility rate is 11.6%, which is based on the number of students who enroll or leave a school during the year.

The staff at School B is comprised of 45 females and four males. The staff consists of one principal, two administrative assistants, one nurse, eighteen classroom teachers, five district special services staff, eleven special area staff, three classroom assistants, one media center assistance, and seven special service assistants.

The students are heterogeneously assigned to classrooms. The core subject areas and the daily time devoted to them are as follows: mathematics (50 minutes), science (25 minutes), language arts (160 minutes), and social science (25 minutes). In addition to the core subjects, students also receive 75 minutes of physical education, 50 minutes each of media center, art, and music per week.

<center>District and Staff</center>

Schools A and B reside in the same unit school district. The school district is comprised of eight elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. The district serves a 72 square mile radius. The district serves over 7,900 students from pre-kindergarten through grade twelve. Blue Ribbon Awards have been given to three of the schools in this district from the United States Department of Education for the scope and progressiveness of each school's programs. Only a select few of all schools in the nation receive such an award. School A is a recipient of this honorable award. The per-pupil expenditure is estimated at $7,390, above the state average of $6,682. The central administrative office includes a superintendent, associate superintendent, business manager, director of human resources, and a director of special services. The Board of Education consists of seven members.

Schools A and B are comprised of a variety of staff members which include classroom teachers, as well as, teachers specializing in art, physical education, gifted, and computers. Currently, in 1999, the average teaching experience is 15.4 years. More than half of the teachers, 63.3%, have a master's degree or above, while 36.7% have earned a bachelor's degree. The average teacher salary is $56,920, while the average administrator salary reaches $97,028.

Similar to the students, the majority of the teachers are 98.0% White. The remaining ethnic groups include; 1% Hispanic, 0.6% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.3% Black. There are 69.4% female staff members and 30.6% male staff members. The pupil-teacher ratio throughout both elementary schools is 18.8 to 1.

The district is not only guided by its mission statement, "To help each student pursue excellence in learning through caring schools," but also by its Strategic Plan which was developed in cooperation with parents and community leaders. Ongoing strategies include: unity of students, staff, parents, community, and board; development of facility improvement plans; use of the school improvement planning process within buildings; assurance of fiscal responsibility; provision of adequate funding; and exploration of alternative delivery systems. Additionally, each school has its own goal articulation, implementation, and assessment process.

Improvement plans for School A and B include: increased use of technology to enhance the K-5 curriculum; emphasis on connections among subjects; continued use of performance assessments to evaluate student progress; collaborative efforts to infuse higher order thinking skills and problem solving as a critical part of teaching and learning; increased parental involvement in school; promotion of global perspectives; and improved communications among schools and homes.

The district has taken on an enormous task of curriculum mapping throughout all of the schools. Curriculum mapping is where teachers separate by grade level and

collaborate what they do for each subject area. This is done independently, prior to meeting as a whole district. They create a curriculum month-to-month map that will guide new teachers through that particular grade level. This helps each teacher know where their students have come from and where they need to be at the end of that grade level. It will also allow parents and administrators to become more knowledgeable about the expectations of each grade level.

Both Schools A and B offer a variety of academic programs to reach the needs of all students. Programs for the gifted and talented students are available. These programs are all put under the title of "resources". There is resource music and art for the children who are gifted in those areas. They are offered to students who are in first grade through fifth grade. They attend these classes once a week for approximately an hour. There are also resource math and language arts. Students are tested to enter all four programs when they are in second grade. Also, eligible learning disabled students receive support through special services in the areas of reading, writing, and math on a daily basis.

Schools A and B offer a wide range of activities to get the students actively involved before and after school. There is a before-school tutoring program for identified children in grades three, four, and five. The areas of focus are reading and writing. Also, before school there are a number of students involved in foreign language classes.

In addition, the district offers a variety of inter-scholastic activities. Intramural sports are available to students in grades four and five. Many district fifth grade students compete with one another in basketball and track. As part of the fifth grade curriculum the students go on an outdoor educational trip. The students learn about the importance of teamwork and life skills and transfer information from school subjects into real life situations in the four days and three nights that they are away

from their normal school environment.

Schools A and B have very active Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs) which are always willing to help the students, teachers, and community. They give funds to the classroom teachers and to the schools. Parent volunteers help with fund raisers and social events.

The Surrounding Community

The surrounding community is 90 square miles and is located in four counties, six townships, and includes eight villages and various unincorporated areas. The population of the community is 40,000. The median age for the total population according to the 1990 census is 36.9. A median household income is $99,167. There are only 5.8% households which have an income below $15,000. The unemployment rate is at a low 2.2%. The median home value is $306,938. The median rent is $741.00. There is little racial or ethnic diversity in this community. The racial distribution is as follows; 96.5% White, 2.2% Hispanic, 1.1% Asian, Pacific Island Natives, and Native Americans, and 0.2% Black. There is a high percentage rate of 92.8% high school graduates of which 51.7% of these students graduate from college.

The community has a variety of parks and recreation facilities. Four parks incorporating a total of 137 acres offers facilities such as soccer and baseball fields, tennis and basketball courts, playgrounds, a full-sized gymnasium, hiking and cross-country trails, picnic shelters, and a five-hole golf course. Numerous classes, organized recreation and leagues are also offered by the park district.

National Context of the Problem

Students exhibit lack of confidence in their writing that interferes with their overall writing achievement. As stated by Bottomley, Henk, and Melnick, "Because children's attitudes, values, beliefs, and motivation play a significant role in their literacy learning, the affective domain continues to be an area of interest for educators

and researchers" (Cramer & Castle, 1994; Turner & Paris, 1995, p. 286) . The problem relates to the lack of confidence in students' writing which interferes with their overall writing achievement. According to Bottomley, Henk, and Melnick (1997-1998), a children's self-perception of their own writing ability will affect their growth in the writing process. Students who have a positive self-perception about writing will put forth more effort into becoming better writers by engaging in activities which will reinforce their writing skills and process. The more a child practices the writing process, the more comfortable he or she will be with writing in its entirety. A lack of confidence in writing will display a negative effect towards writing or the child will not participate in the writing activity at all. Parents, peers, and teachers can help students become more confident in their writing skills and abilities.

The parents' roll in their children's confidence level is vital to the writer's self-perception. According to Carl Pickhardt (2000), parents can encourage their children to learn, foster creativity, develop competence, strengthen character, think positively, and manage emotions. Parents, with the help of educators, can influence a positive self-esteem in their children's writing ability. They can introduce and help foster these two rules of conduct to their children:

1. "Don't let how other people identify you limit how you define yourself."

2. "Don't let how other people evaluate you determine how you judge the worth of yourself" (Pickhardt, 2000, p.5).

Ultimately, the parents need to be great role models of self-esteem. "You cannot give to your children that which you do not possess yourself" (Pickhardt, 2000, p.5). For example, parents can model the writing process for their children. They can start by writing a rough draft, using a dictionary and/or thesaurus, sharing, editing, and finally ending with a final draft. This is a positive way to model self-confidence within the process of writing.

Self-esteem is primarily the children's own responsibility (Pickhardt, 2000). Early in their lives, they need to be taught the power of choice. The students define themselves with the roles they take on and the way they behave. Are the students continuing to try even when they are frustrated, or do they give up when difficult situations arise? These situations will either enhance or tear down the self-esteem of that student. Giving up will tend to weaken the self-esteem, while forging ahead will help to boost the self-esteem. In these difficult situations parents and teachers can persuade or even instruct the child through their situation. This will help the child persevere through their difficult problem and actually feel good about his or her final decision (Pickhardt, 2000).

Children have beliefs about themselves which they can evaluate (Pickhardt, 2000). These beliefs can be self-enhancing or even self-defeating. For example, a child may label oneself stupid because he or she made some errors in a final draft paper that was turned in and edited. The child's self-esteem may decrease after this difficult time, but it can be used as a teachable moment. The teacher or the parent can conference with the child to reiterate that making mistakes does not always have a negative connotation. "We believe that making mistakes are just a normal part of how people learn" (Pickhardt, 2000, p. 7). It is hoped that, the student will feel that something positive has been gained from the situation. To recap, the responsibility of self-esteem falls under all three parties: the parent, the teacher, and most of all the student.

- Managing his or her self-esteem is the child's personal responsibility.
- Teaching the child to manage his or her self-esteem is the parents' and teachers' instructional responsibility (Pickhardt, 2000).

The teacher is also an important component in helping to keep students' self confidence level positive in their writing. Writing is a process that can be taught to

children in a positive manner (Avery, 1993). Teachers at all levels find it difficult to stimulate students to write well without stifling their creativity and motivation. Writer's Workshop has been a helpful tool that has been recommended by several researchers to help organize and teach the writing process (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1986; Graves, 1994; Hansen, 1987). Teachers can implement this process into their approach of writing. The mini-lessons, state-of-the-class conferences, writing and conferring, and group sharing are the four approaches that will further be discussed later in this project. A child's personal life and school life can be linked together throughout this writing process (Cooper, 1993). This process can aid to boost self-confidence when the child is given the opportunity to write.

"Business professionals and educators recognize the importance of well-developed writing skills" (Harper, 1987, p. 24). "Furthermore, writing ability has a major influence on executive promotion, performance appraisals, and salary increases" (Addams, 1981, p. 37; Bennet & Olney, 1986, p. 13). Becoming a good writer is a vital life skill that can be used outside of education. Businesses find writing to be an important asset for their employees to have as part of their job performance skills. In fact, millions of dollars are spent each year to train employees on writing skills for their jobs (Davis, 1995). Students, teachers, and parents can work together to help build confidence in the students' writing abilities and furthermore become successful, lifelong writers.

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

In order to document the extent of lack of confidence in students' writing ability, documents and information were collected as evidence of the problem. This documentation consisted of: previous teacher surveys and interviews, parent surveys, student surveys, narrative writing prompts, previous writing samples, classroom observations, and standardized test scores. This evidence was collected over a six week period of time.

Of the 49 students from Site A and B, all were involved in this process over the six week period of time. A letter was given and survey was administered to each students' previous year teacher (Appendices A and B). One student from Site A was unable to be part of the survey due to his move into the area this year. In this survey, each teacher was given the opportunity to record student strengths and weaknesses. In addition, the previous teacher included whether the students exhibited confidence in their writing abilities and other necessary comments regarding their previous students' writing skills.

After reviewing the writing surveys, we found that weaknesses varied but could be grouped into seven categories. These categories included organization, focus/content, mechanics, confidence/desire, timeliness, elaboration, and poor

handwriting skills. This previous teacher survey also indicated which students displayed confidence in writing during the previous school year. The findings are found in Table 1.

Table 1

Teacher Response to Survey Question on Students' Confidence

Behavior Category	Site A	Site B
Confidence	48%	34%
No Confidence	52%	66%

Of the 21 students who were involved in the previous teacher survey at Site A, 52 percent displayed lack of confidence in their writing abilities. Of the 27 students at Site B, 66 percent were found to lack confidence in their writing abilities. This information proved as evidence that there is an existing problem with confidence in over half of the students involved in this study.

Each of the six previous teachers participated in an interview pertaining to their writing environment in their classrooms (Appendix C). The first question on the interview pertained to the amount of time spent on writing. "How many minutes per week do you spend on writing in your classroom?" These results are shown in Table 2.A..

Table 2. A.

Teacher Response to Teacher Interview Question 1

Sites	600-400 minutes	400-200 minutes	200-0 minutes
A	1	1	1
B	1	1	1

The results were consistent between the two sites. Each teacher spent a variety of time on writing in their classroom. This gave evidence to the researchers that the amount of time spent on writing was inconsistent across that grade level. This also meant that the amount of time each student was exposed to writing varied.

The second question illustrated in Table 2.B. on the teacher interview pertained to how each teacher incorporated writing into their other subject areas. "In order of importance, which subjects do you incorporate writing into daily?" Findings are found in Table 2.B..

Table 2.B.

Teacher Response to Teacher Interview Question 2 By Rank

Site	Language Arts	Social Studies	Math	Science
A				
Teacher 1	1	2	4	3
Teacher 2	1	2	3	4
Teacher 3	1	2	3	4
B				
Teacher 1	2	1	3	1
Teacher 2	1	2	3	4
Teacher 3	1	2	4	3

These results ranked the content of writing within each subject area. The researchers found that 83 percent of the teachers ranked Language Arts number one for incorporating writing into that subject area. Eighty-three percent ranked social studies as the second level of importance. Math was ranked third by 67 percent of the teachers and science was ranked fourth by 50 percent. Each used writing throughout

their curriculums but valued writing in subjects differently.

Question number three from the interview asked previous teachers about their training on the three types of writing. The three teachers responded with a yes, somewhat, or no to the question, "Do you feel trained to teach the three types of writing? (narrative, persuasive, expository)" These results are shown in Table 2.C..

Table 2.C.

Teacher Response to Teacher Interview Question 3

Sites	yes	somewhat	no
A	2	0	1
B	0	3	0

This table displayed that out of six teachers half of them felt somewhat trained to teach the three types of writings, two teachers felt well trained, and one teacher did not feel trained at all. The teachers' training in writing varied, and therefore the students were not taught the same skills during their previous year in school. The children began the study knowing different facts about the three types of writing.

The fourth interview question asked, "What types of writing do you teach in your classroom?" Five of the six teachers responded that they taught all three types of writing in their classroom. One teacher from Site A only taught the narrative format of writing in her or his classroom. This information helped the researchers decipher that not all the students would have the same exposure to all three types of writing.

Question number five pertains to the components of writing that teachers use in their classroom. Question five asked, "What components of the writing process do you focus on most often?" These results are presented in Table 2.D..

Table 2.D.

Teacher Response to Teacher Interview Question 5

Component	yes	no	yes	no
	Site A		Site B	
brainstorming	3	0	3	0
pre-writing	3	0	2	1
first draft	3	0	0	3
editing/revisions	3	0	2	1
publishing	2	1	1	2

The responses reflect that various teachers weigh certain portions of writing more important than others. All of the teachers focused on brainstorming with their students. Five out of six teachers focused on pre-writing as well. After the first two components the focus varied. The students began the study with having various levels of experiences with the above components.

The next question focused on the teachers' perceptions of writing in their classroom. Question number six asked, "What is the overall attitude on writing in your classroom?" Five out of the six teachers from Site A and B responded with an answer of positive. One teacher responded with the answer of neutral and no teachers responded to negative. There was a contradiction found with the positive opinions from the teachers in comparison to some of the negative attitudes of some of the students.

Motivation is the topic of the next question. Each teacher stated their opinion on whether motivation comes from within each student. The seventh question asked, "Do you feel that your students need more motivation to write?" The results are shown in Table 2.E..

Table 2.E.

Teacher Response to Teacher Interview Question 7

Sites	yes	somewhat	no
A	0	2	1
B	1	1	1

The results indicated that there was a difference of opinion when asked if they felt their students needed to be motivated to write. This information helped the researchers understand that motivation comes from within each child can vary from student to student. The differences were due to experiences and exposure to writing in their past education.

Each teacher uses an assortment of activities to teach writing in their classroom. Question number eight pertained to the various interventions that teachers use with their students. Question eight asked, "Which of the following writing interventions do you use in your classroom?" The findings are found in Table 2.F..

Table 2.F.

Teacher Response to Teacher Interview Question 8

Component	yes	no	yes	no
	Site A		Site B	
pen pals	3	0	2	1
teacher conferencing	3	0	2	1
writing portfolios	3	0	1	2
peer conferencing/editing	1	2	2	1
graphic organizers	3	0	3	0
writing prompts	3	0	2	1

The results from school A were consistent except for the peer conferencing/editing. This means that the students from Site A were exposed to the same interventions. On the other hand, Site B's teachers used different interventions in their classrooms. The students from school B were not exposed to similar interventions. Therefore, not all of the students would have similar writing experiences in school.

Parents were an important piece of this study. They were given an eight question survey, during the month of September to help understand what type of writing experiences each child had at home (Appendix D). The questions helped the researchers determine the level of understanding the parents had regarding writing and if the parents themselves needed additional information on the writing process.

Table 3.A.

Parent Writing Survey-September 2000

1. Does your child write at home beyond required homework?

	almost always	sometimes	almost never
Site A	5	14	3
Site B	6	16	5

2. Do you encourage your child to write at home?

	almost always	sometimes	almost never
Site A	6	15	1
Site B	9	15	3

3. Does your child enjoy writing letters, stories, poems, etc.?

	almost always	sometimes	almost never
Site A	6	11	5
Site B	5	17	5

4. Do you talk about your child's writing with him/her?

	almost always	sometimes	almost never
Site A	10	11	1
Site B	13	11	3

5. Do you enjoy writing letters, stories, poems, etc. at home?

	almost always	sometimes	almost never
Site A	3	12	7
Site B	9	13	5

6. Does your child see you writing at home?

	almost always	sometimes	almost never
Site A	5	14	3
Site B	10	13	4

7. Do you provide writing materials for your child?

	almost always	sometimes	almost never
Site A	22	0	0
Site B	19	4	4

8. Are you available to assist your child with rewriting if necessary?

	almost always	sometimes	almost never
Site A	22	0	0
Site B	20	5	2

The results from this parent survey are consistent between the two sites. In response to question one, 64 percent of the students from Site A sometimes write at home for pleasure. Similarly, 59 percent of the students from Site B also write at home sometimes. These results indicated that more than half of the students were using writing beyond school assignments.

When the parents were asked, in question two, if they encouraged their child to write at home, 68 percent of the parents from Site A replied to the answer of sometimes. While 56 percent of the parents from Site B responded the same. This information was utilized to discuss the importance of positive encouragement with the parents at Back to School Night.

Question three pertained to the enjoyment of letter writing, story writing, and poetry writing. Fifty percent of the parents of Site A replied with an answer of sometimes to this question. Comparably, 63 percent responded the same from Site B. This was valuable information because it exhibited the interest of writing besides homework.

The parents seemed to find discussing writing with their children a worthwhile experience. Ninety percent of the parents from Site A answered question four with an

always or sometimes. Meanwhile, 89 percent of the parents from Site B discussed their child's writing in the home. This information was vital to the writing process. It not only increased their knowledge of their own strengths and weaknesses in writing but helped motivate them as well. The researchers gave parents helpful hints to aid in this process of writing by distributing a parent handbook during conferences (Appendices I, 0, R-S, X-HH).

Questions five and six pertained to the parents' writing habits and modeling writing for enjoyment in the home. Site A's parents averaged a percentage of 59 percent in the sometimes category, while Site B's parents averaged at 48 percent. This information gave insight about the relationship between the parents' enjoyment in writing verses the students' enjoyment in writing.

The majority of the parents answered almost always in questions seven and eight. All of the parents from Site A encouraged writing at home by providing materials for writing and were willing to assist their child with the rewriting process. On the other hand, Site B had 70 percent of the parents providing materials at home and 74 percent of the parents were assisting their child in rewriting. Research shows that if the teacher, parent, and child work and communicate together they can benefit the child's motivation and writing capabilities.

Table 4.A.

Student Writing Survey-September 2000

1. I like to write.

	always	most of the time	hardly ever
Site A	5	13	4
Site B	5	14	8

2. I find it easy to write.

	always	most of the time	hardly ever
Site A	8	11	3
Site B	4	19	4

3. I like how writing makes me feel inside.

	always	most of the time	hardly ever
Site A	7	12	3
Site B	5	15	7

4. Writing helps me sort out my feelings.

	always	most of the time	hardly ever
Site A	3	8	11
Site B	4	11	12

5. I think that writing is important.

	always	most of the time	hardly ever
Site A	6	13	3
Site B	12	12	3

6. I like to write at school.

	always	most of the time	hardly ever
Site A	6	12	4
Site B	5	17	5

7. I like to write at home.

	always	most of the time	hardly ever
Site A	3	11	8
Site B	7	8	12

8. I am proud of what I write.

	always	most of the time	hardly ever
Site A	12	10	0
Site B	7	18	2

9. I am good at sorting out my ideas and writing them on paper.

	always	most of the time	hardly ever
Site A	6	13	3
Site B	9	13	5

10. I write different types of stories.

	always	most of the time	hardly ever
Site A	9	10	3
Site B	15	7	5

11. I like when my teacher assigns a writing topic.

	always	most of the time	hardly ever
Site A	5	8	9
Site B	6	10	11

12. I like when I choose my own writing topic.

	always	most of the time	hardly ever
Site A	11	9	2
Site B	19	7	1

13. I am able to edit and revise my writing.

	always	most of the time	hardly ever
Site A	9	10	3
Site B	7	14	6

14. I like when a classmate helps me edit and revise my writing.

	always	most of the time	hardly ever
Site A	3	7	12
Site B	11	11	5

15. My parents help me edit and revise my writing.

	always	most of the time	hardly ever
Site A	12	10	0
Site B	5	15	7

The researchers administered a student writing survey to determine how writing was viewed in each child's life (Appendix E). Question one pertained to the students' enjoyment in writing. Twenty-four percent of the students from Site A and B responded that they hardly ever liked to write. When the researchers asked the students about the process of writing being easy, 12 percent, from both sites marked the hardly ever category on the survey. This information was used to find strategies that would help these students feel more at ease about the process of writing.

Feelings are the topic of questions three and four for the student survey. Fourteen percent of the students at Site A responded that writing hardly ever helped them sort out their feelings. At Site B, 26 percent responded with a hardly ever as well. When students were asked about if writing helped sort out their feelings, 50 percent of Site A replied with a hardly ever. Site B had 44 percent that answered hardly ever. These percentages were high. This information was to help find strategies that would

influence positive effects in writing.

The results from question five are consistent between the two sites. Most of the students found writing to be important. Three students from each site replied with a hardly ever response to the importance of writing. This averaged to one percent at both sites. A small percentage of students did not find writing important, but made an effort to reinforce the importance of writing to that small percentage.

Questions six and seven pertained to where the students enjoy writing. More of the students enjoyed writing in school instead of their home. Two percent of the students, from Site A and B, responded that they hardly ever liked writing at school. That percentage doubled when it came to writing in the home, at both sites. After the interventions, the students chose to write more during their free time.

The eighth question refered to the pride the students feel toward their writing. Zero of the children from Site A hardly ever had pride in their writing pieces. Site B's percentage was also extremely low, at a .07 percent. During the study, this was found to be a positive outcome.

Sorting out ideas onto paper was the topic of question nine. One percent of the students from Site A and B hardly ever thought they were good at sorting their ideas onto paper. When the students feel comfortable using various graphic organizers, this tool will help sort out ideas appropriately. When it comes to pre-writing, the students will have many methods to choose from to help plan out their piece of writing.

Question 10 asks the students if they write various types of stories. The results in the hardly ever category were low. One percent of the students from Site A answered hardly ever, while two percent answered the same at Site B.

Questions 11 and 12 were comparing teachers choosing writing assignments with students choosing their own writing topics. At Sites A and B, 41 percent of the students hardly ever liked the teacher choosing writing projects. Less than one

percent of the students hardly ever liked choosing their own topics. Students need to choose their own topics some of the time, but teachers must intervene when it is necessary.

The last three questions on the student writing survey referred to editing. Number 13 asked students if they are able to revise their own writing. One percent of the students from Site A admitted to hardly ever being able to revise their own writing, while two percent of the students from Site B responded the same. Students may not be truthful or even truly understand what it means to self-edit. This means that the teacher will need to observe the students' self-editing skills and give them a worksheet that will help them check this process.

Classmates can help one another with revisions as well. Question number 14 refers to the classmates editing. Fifty-five percent of the students from Site A responded with a hardly ever when asked if they enjoy their peers editing their pieces of writing. Only two percent of the students from Site B responded with a hardly ever. The instructors will model and use a worksheet to help the students better understand partner editing.

Question number 15 asked the students if their parents help them edit and revise their papers. All of the parents from Site A helped their children edit their writing. Three percent of the students from Site B said their parents hardly ever helped revise their writing. The parents were better informed about how to help their children edit. The parents were given writing handbooks to help aid their children in the writing process.

To determine the students' writing ability levels, the researchers administered a pre-test narrative writing prompt (Appendix F). The children were asked to write to the following prompt: Write about one exciting time you experienced over this past summer. One of your experiences may include vacations, weddings,

family parties, sport camps, friends sleeping over, or even outdoor camping. Students

were given a 35 minute time period to complete this essay.

Pre-test Narrative Writing Prompt
Site A
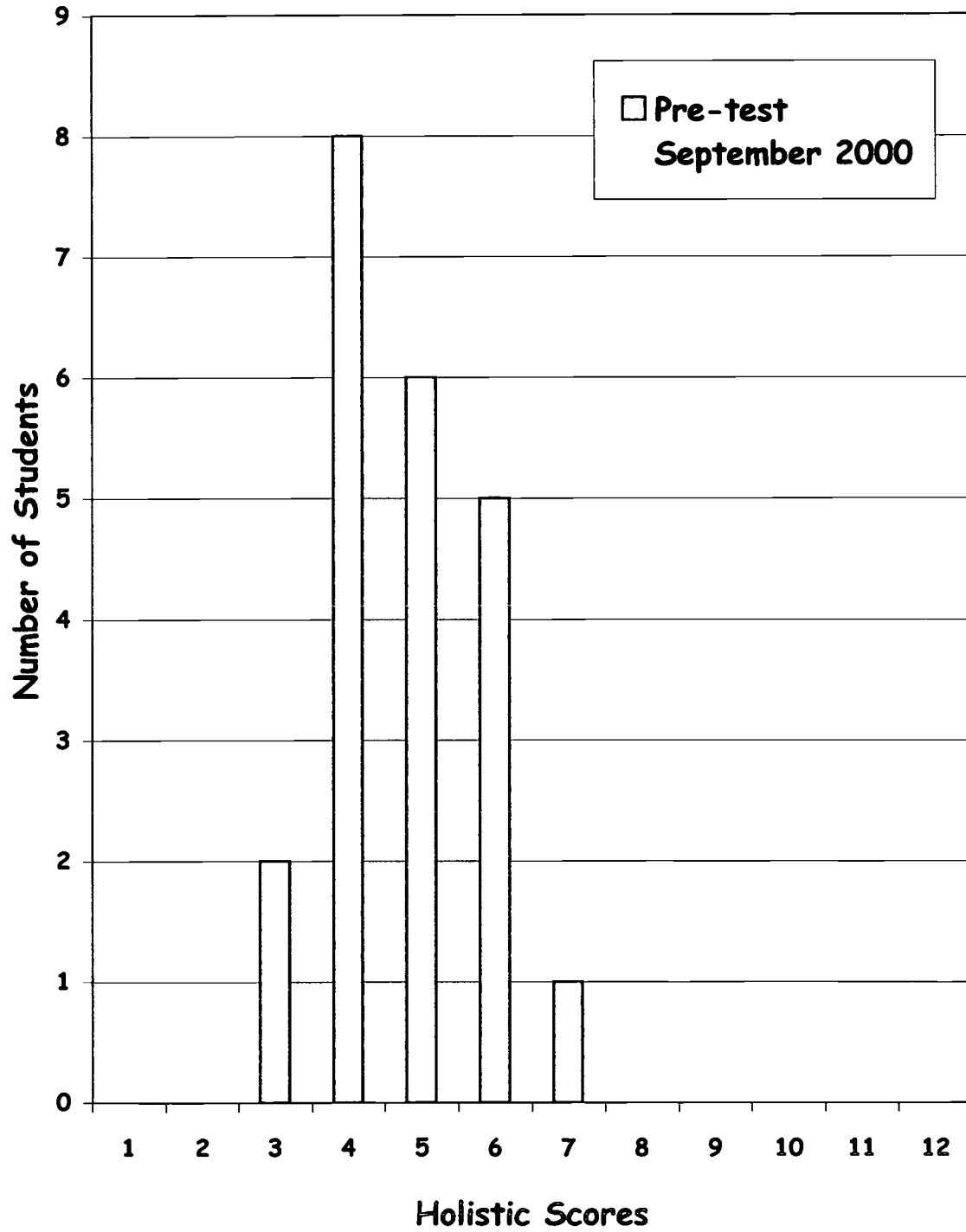
Pre-test Narrative Writing Prompt
Site B
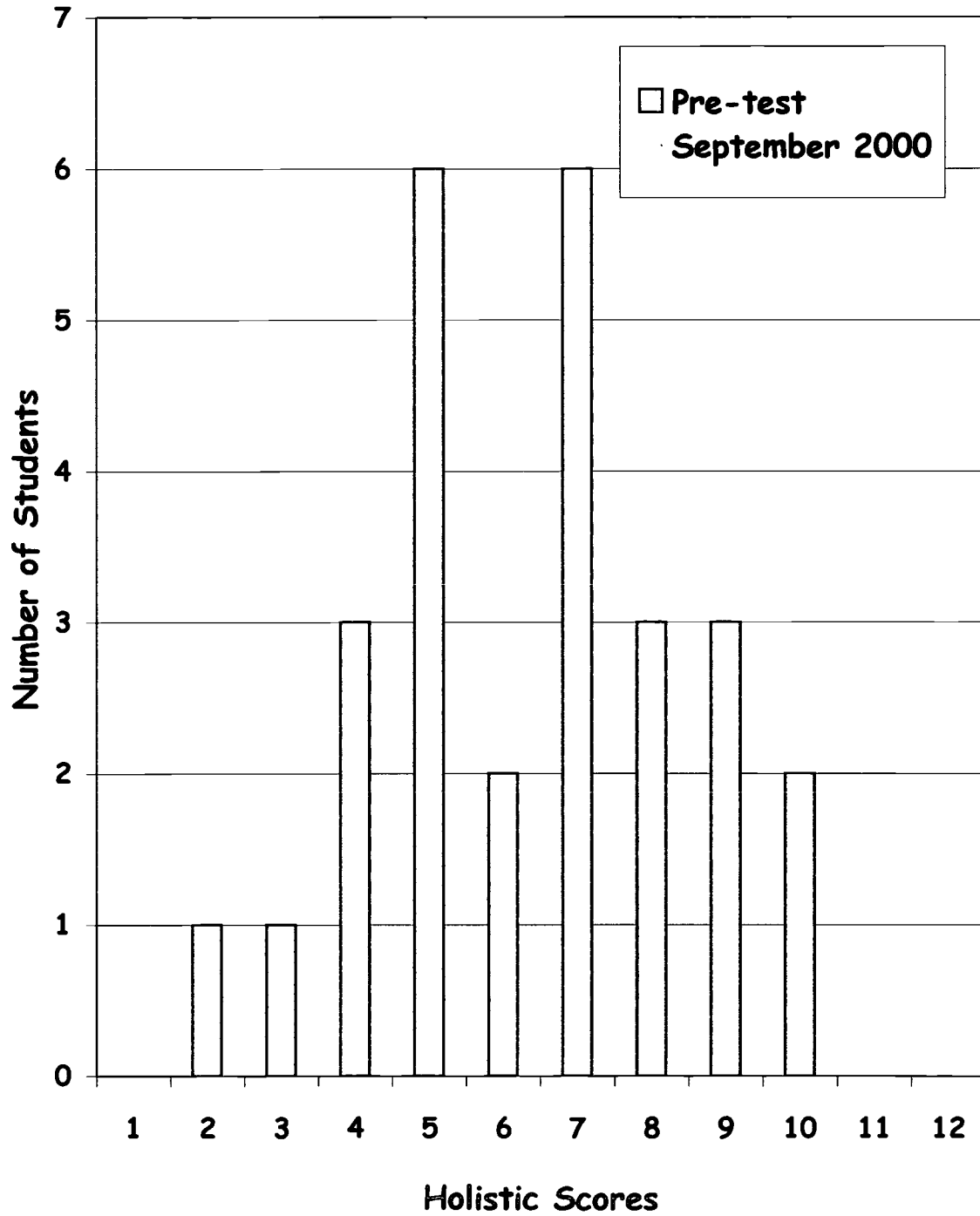
The researchers found that the average score at Site A was a 4.8 combined total score. None of the students met state expectations of a total of eight points. At Site B the average score, on the narrative writing pre-test was a 5.9 combined total score. Nineteen students out of 27 did not meet state standards.

Although the students did not do well on the narrative pre-test, the researchers gathered information that would later benefit each student. It provided the researchers with specific facts on what the students needed to improve on in their writing. Improvements would include: brainstorming, organization, focus, paragraphing, details, elaboration, conventions, timeliness, and self-editing skills.

Once the essays were completed, the researchers evaluated the essays by using the state's method of holistic scoring. There were two evaluators who scored each site's essays. Each evaluator gave the students a one, two, three, four, five, or six on their writing. One, two, and three did not meet state expectations, while four, five, and six did meet state expectations. These two scores were added together for a combined total score. The highest score possible was a 12, while, the lowest was a two.

Using the state standards, the evaluators kept these five writing components in mind while scoring the students' essays: Focus is the first component. The entire paper is focused on the subject of the writing prompt, and provides a clear main idea or point of view. The second is support/elaboration. Support is the degree to which the main point or position is supported and explained by specific details and reasons. Organization is the third component. This is the clarity of the logical flow of ideas and the explicitness of the text structure or plan. The fourth writing component entails the proper use of conventions. This includes proper grammatical conventions including spelling, punctuation, and capitalization appropriate for each grade level. Integration is the final writing component considered while holistically scoring. This is when the

student's paper exhibits unity in presentation of ideas.

As the students move from one grade level to another, each teacher keeps a few pieces of writing in that child's cumulative writing folder. The teachers who follow may review these writing folders to better understand what each child already knows about writing and what the child needs to improve on during the next year. This is what the researchers used these folders for during their study.

The teachers took specific notes on each child's writing. Each teacher looked for understanding of paragraphing, organization, and conventions. They also observed what types of writing were worked on throughout their school career. The teachers found that most of the pieces in their cumulative folders were problem/solution narratives. This meant that the teachers had to introduce and practice persuasive and expository writing with all students. Furthermore, time needed to be spent on conventions, paragraphing, transitions, better beginnings, details in writing, and wording in general. The teachers also realized that each student needed individual help on specific problems that they were having with writing.

A teacher writing observation checklist was created and completed by each teacher (Appendix G). The teacher walked around the room observing their students as they wrote their narrative writing pre-test. Observing one student at a time, the teacher looked for graphic organizer use, writing promptness, correct use of capitalization, punctuation, and paragraphing.

Table 6.A.

Teacher Writing Checklist September 2000

Questions:	Yes		No	
	Site A	Site B	Site A	Site B
1. Did the student begin the writing process by using a graphic organizer?	4	2	18	25
2. Did the student begin writing immediately after the writing prompt was presented?	17	26	5	1
3. Did the student use capitalization?	20	23	2	4
4. Did the student use punctuation?	19	24	3	3
5. Did the student understand paragraphing?	0	12	22	15

Some results were consistent between the two sites and some questions varied. Question number one pertained to the use of a graphic organizer. Eighty-two percent of the students from Site A did not use any form of a graphic organizer, while 93 percent of the students from Site B did not use one either. This information lead the focus on the many uses of graphic organizers. The more the students are aware of the various graphic organizers the more likely they are to use one prior to writing.

In question number two, the teachers were observing to see if the students began writing immediately after the prompt was given. Seventy-seven percent of the students from Site A began writing immediately, while 96 percent of Site B also began writing immediately. The researchers took each individual student's essay and looked to see how focused their writing was in correlation with their quick start and no graphic organizer use. The teacher would then conference and recommend new strategies to each individual student.

The next two questions, three and four, pertained to capitalization and punctuation. The majority of the students did well in these two categories. Ninety-one percent of the students from Site A used capitalization appropriately, and 85 percent of Site B used capitalization as well. In question four, 86 percent of Site A used punctuation properly, while 89 percent of Site B also used punctuation properly. With this information, the researchers decided to individually help students with capitalization and punctuation during during conference time. Whole class discussions and teaching could be focused on other writing topics.

Question number five focused on the understanding of paragraphing. The two Sites had contrasting results. One hundred percent of the students did not understand paragraphing from Site A. On the contrary 55 percent of the students from Site B did not understand paragraphing. This was a topic that the third grade teacher needed to spend time introducing and developing throughout the year. The fifth grade teacher would review this with her or his students and then follow up during individual conference time.

The last piece of evidence that the researchers used to help determine what interventions would need to be used were the standardized district scores from the state achievement tests. The students were given 35 minutes to write a narrative, persuasive, or expository essay. Each third and fifth grade student would need to determine which format would be the best to use after reading the prompt given by the state.

After looking at the district scores as a whole, the students did well in comparison to the state scores. There were four levels that students could fall under: Level One was academic warning, Level Two was below standards, Level Three was meets standards, and Level Four was exceeds standards. Two percent of the third graders in the district received a Level Two on their writing exam and two students

were in academic warning. Less than one percent of the fifth graders in the district received a Level Two on their writing exam and no students were in academic warning.

According to the state, the district did well on their writing exams. Sixty-four percent of the students met state expectations, and 26 percent exceeded state expectations. The school district and community would like to see more of their students exceeding state expectations. This testing information was used to better understand what components of writing the students needed to improve upon. Adjustments were made and new methods were added to their writing instruction to improve confidence in writing. Hence, higher levels of confidence yielded better test scores.

<div align="center">Probable Causes</div>

In analyzing the data, it was evident that the targeted third and fifth grade classes lack confidence in writing, which interfered with their overall writing achievement. Many students were challenged with one or various probable causes. These causes were gathered from parent, student, and teacher surveys, interviews, tests, and teacher observations.

After receiving and analyzing the parent surveys, it was found that information was inconsistent from home to home. The parents played a vital role in their child's education, especially when it comes to writing. The parents from Sites A and B were asked if they encouraged their child to write at home. More than half of the parents, from both sites, responded with a sometimes. According to Pickhardt (2000), it is the parents' responsibility to encourage their children to develop a positive self-esteem towards writing.

Another question on the survey asked the parents if they enjoyed writing letters, stories, and or poems. Close to fifty percent of the parents replied with a sometimes.

In order for children to be successful in their writing, the parents should play an active role in modeling writing (Graves & Stuart,1985).

Children's attitudes and enjoyment toward writing was another probable cause. "As children move from grade to grade, their attitude toward writing generally worsens" (Kear, Coffman, McKenna, Ambrosio, 2000, p. 15). The students from Sites A and B were asked, on the survey, if they liked to write. More than 50 percent of the students responded with a most of the time and more than 20 percent responded with a hardly ever. The students were also asked if writing was important to them. About 50 percent of the students responded with most of the time and 12 percent responded with a hardly ever. There was a link between motivation and literature learning and this was reason alone for probable cause (Turner & Paris, 1995).

The previous teachers gave the researchers many reasons for probable cause. Students need many opportunities during their day to write in various ways throughout their curriculum (Zaragoza & Vaughn, 1995). The teachers at Sites A and B were asked how many minutes they allocated towards writing daily. Each teacher spent a different amount of minutes per week on writing. This concluded that students at both sites received a wide range of writing instruction the previous year.

In another interview question, the previous teachers were asked if they felt trained to teach the three types of writing. Sixty-seven percent of the teachers felt they were somewhat or not at all trained to teach the three types of writing. This concluded that each child received a different type of experience with writing, depending on his or her teacher's knowledge and confidence. "Teachers face an uphill battle as they attempt to foster positive writing attitudes in their students" (Kear, Coffman, McKenna, Ambrosio, 2000, p.15).

Confidence played a significant role in writing. The previous teachers were given a survey that indicated which students displayed confidence and which students

did not. At Site A, 52 percent of the students did not display confidence, and at Site B 66 percent of the students did not display confidence. The researchers found this to be a significant probable cause in their study. A child's self perception of their own writing is vital to their development in the writing process (Bottomley, Henk, and Melnick, 1997-1998).

The next probable cause was the low scores on the pre-test narrative writing prompt. Each student was given the same writing prompt. They had 35 minutes to complete their essays. None of the students from Site A met state expectations, which would have been a combined score of eight. The average score at Site A was a 4.8 combined score. Performing slightly better, the students from Site B had a combined total score of 5.9. Furthermore, 19 students out 27 did not meet state expectations either. All in all, this was a probable cause for the researchers to perform this study.

According to Frank (1995), children need to organize their thoughts prior to writing. The organizational tool can be a simple map or web. It is not necessary to utilize some intricate pattern, because the purpose of this step in writing is to prepare the author to write (Frank, 1995). Organizing was not part of the plan for the majority of the students from Sites A and B. Eighty-two percent from Site A did not use a graphic organizer, while 93 percent of the students from Site B did use a tool.

The literature and probable causes from Sites A and B proved the reason for this study. Students lacked confidence in writing and this interfered with their overall writing achievement. These probable causes included: lack of positive reinforcement and interaction at the home, lack of student confidence and motivation, lack of time devoted to teaching writing, lack of professional teacher training, lack of exposure to the various types of writing and its process, and lack of consistency with writing instruction. All of these components were part of the reason that students lacked confidence which interfered with the students' writing success.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

Throughout this literature study, it has become evident that creating an environment where children feel safe and unthreatened at home and at school can help the children share their innermost thoughts and feelings through writing (Capacchione, 1982). Most importantly, creating an atmosphere of sharing will motivate children to read and write for each other (Graves & Stuart,1985). When children are able to speak from their creative selves freely, basic educational skills can be developed easily and naturally (Capacchione,1982). Parents, children, and teachers must work together to accomplish full writing potential in all students.

Evidence has proven that when parents play an active role in their child's education the child will make significant gains. Parents must be a good role model for their child. Parents who read and write, in the presence of their children, demonstrate enjoyment and the process that is taken when reading and writing. Reading and writing should be part of the parents' daily lives and should be a special and entertaining part of playtime with children (Graves & Stuart, 1985).

There are various daily activities, in which a family may take part, that are similar to the writing process. Such activities include painting, repairing cars, writing computer programs, playing an instrument, training horses, cooking from scratch, or

even shopping for clothes. Parents need to help their children see the parallel relationships that exist in the writing process and the above activities. Children may miss the comparisons unless parents draw attention to the writing process. Some similarities include the need for creating unexpected ideas, interesting alternatives, accepting failure, and being persistent (Graves & Stuart, 1985).

An essential beginning to the writing process at home begins with various media surrounding the child. Parents can supply pencils, pens, crayons, journals, diaries, construction paper, and notebook paper with the children's other toys. These writing tools should be accessible to the children at all times. "The more they trip over them, the more inclined they are to use them" (Graves & Stuart, 1985).

Writing opportunities should not be restricted to playtime only. Daily chores, errands, and activities can impact children in learning to read and write. Children can write at home by writing labels, signs, notes, letters, and lists. A natural progression will include writing recipes and cooking, reading and writing shopping lists, and writing letters to family members and friends. Parents will create a successful writing environment when promoting writing naturally, as opposed to formal workbook lessons.

As children begin the writing process, parents need to respond in a natural manner. Parents should not feel that they must behave like an old-fashioned grammar teacher. They should first show interest by responding to their child's writing. Then parents should ask the writer questions relating to their piece without discouraging the writer. Questions should remain in a positive tone. For example, say, "This sentence confused me," rather than, "This sentence is a mess" or "I can't make this out," instead of, "This handwriting is atrocious!" By focusing on one problem at a time, parents can be a positive tool in their child's writing success.

Teachers are a very important part to the writing process and need to be dedicated in order to make it successful. "As teachers, we are aware that our students do not have the same interests and abilities and do not learn in the same way. However, all students have the potential to learn skills and develop their unique abilities" (Sejnost & Thiese, 2001, p. 37). The teacher can be the guide into the positive process called writing. To make this writing process successful, the teacher is responsible for implementing the following into their classroom: model the writing process, introduce various methods of graphic organizers, use rubrics for the writing process, complete teacher observation writing checklists, communicate with parents on the writing process, and organize a celebration for the success of the writing process.

It is essential for the teacher to be a good role model in the process of writing. Children find success in writing when they observe models of writing instead of being told what and how to write. Children will feel more confident about starting the writing process if they examine the procedure first. The continuous modeling of writing that occurs in the classroom will increase student writing. Their overall attitude towards writing will contribute to the effectiveness of the writing program (Tully, 1996).

Teachers can introduce the first step to the writing process by using a graphic organizer. Graphic organizers help students group all their thoughts and ideas collectively in a way that will help them visually connect their impressions together in writing. At this time, the writer needs to decide what organizational method will fit best with their ideas. These tools may be a chart, a web, a story board, an outline, a series of boxes, a diagram, a list, or a series of note cards. Connection between the child's brain and a visual organizer is vital in the beginning stages of writing (Frank, 1995). According to Merkley and Jefferies (2001), "Students need to systematically activate background knowledge in order to make the necessary connections for learning to

occur" (p. 350).

A rubric can help guide the teacher in the instruction of writing and in the grading process. Using a rubric can serve as a model of what to work towards to improve student writing. The students will be clear on what the teacher is expecting from each piece of writing (Frank, 1995). Once the students have a clear understanding of the required components, they will generate better work (Fiderer, 1999). Teachers will find rubrics helpful when scoring pieces of writing. Rubrics can help examine specific writing skills with distinct criteria and numerical scores (Frank, 1995). The students will find rubrics valuable when they connect evaluation and learning (Fiderer, 1999).

One excellent way to involve students in the assessment process is through self-assessment checklists. The self-assessment checklists are designed to correlate with each rubric. Students will use these checklists to self- and peer-assess. This process will aid students in achieving their writing potential. Teachers can model the process of self-assessment by using a checklist to evaluate their own writing piece. This can be done by demonstrating this process as the teacher thinks aloud (Fiderer, 1999).

It is the responsibility of the teacher to communicate the progress of each student's writing to the parents. To help in this communication, the parents are also given a writing handbook to aid in the journey of their child's writing experience. As teachers, we lead the parents and the children through this process by giving specific information to make this adventure a success. According to DeFina (1992), "Involving parents not only increases understanding of the aims of the writing program and garners support for it; such involvement also gives parents a fuller understanding of classroom activity and, in turn, they become more sensitive to the many ways in which their children learn" (p. 62).

One method of communication between the parent, teacher, and student is the PQP plan for responding and revising (Appendices H and I). The purpose of the PQP method is to learn about effective writing and progress to make improvements. The first P stands for praise. Writers and parents share with one another the strengths, what is positive and effective, what caught your attention, what shocked or pleased you, ect.? Writers and parents then ask questions (Q) to help the author think about their piece of writing. A question is asked to help guide the writer make their piece more clear. Questions can also be asked to help add, remove, or change what the author has already written. These first two steps are a part of the response tactics, and polish (P) is the final revision strategy. Because there are many suggestions made, the author needs to decide what changes need to occur to make their piece polished (Frank, 1995). This plan strengthens the message that writing is communication and writing has a purpose (Tully, 1996).

Teachers can celebrate the writing process with their students in several ways. The work and writing of the students can be displayed in the classroom or other visible places throughout the school. Another form of celebration is an Authors' Tea of some kind where parents and relatives are invited into the classroom to listen to the children's pieces of writing. This celebration honors each student and makes them feel positive about their writing (Tully, 1996).

Another way to celebrate children's writing is by having a portfolio exhibit. Parents, teachers, other students and administrators can be invited to this event. The key to this celebration is to signify their accomplishments and their growth as writers. The recognition of the students as fine writers will aid in their personal confidence in the writing process (Tully, 1996).

After parents and teachers role model and set the stage for success in writing, the students take an active part in the writing process. A sense of purpose in the

writing process is gained when a child can positively motivate his or her own performance and not give up the desire to try (Pickhardt, 2000). There are various ways to help motivate students and build confidence in their writing. Some of these activities include: goal setting, writing portfolios, writing journals, writing pen pals, student/teacher writing conferences, self/peer editing, sharing, reflecting, and finally publishing.

Goal setting is a very important piece to the positive process of writing. When a child sets a goal that is realistic the outcome will reaffirm their goal (Pickhardt, 2000). Each child has a writing folder where they can keep their personal writing goals on the writing planner (Appendix J). These goals may be daily or even weekly goals that are realistic to each individual. The students should ask themselves what they want to do next to become a better writer and how they will plan to work on their next piece? During their next writing process, the teacher can help generate possible goals that each individual student should strive to attain (Hansen, 1996).

"Portfolios are the best thing to happen to writing since the discovery of process writing. Doing portfolios is a process... writing is a process... and the two processes just blend together as nicely as hot fudge mixing in with melting ice cream. The two form a natural partnership that does wonders for writing instruction, writing improvement, and writing assessment" (Frank, 1995).

A writing portfolio is an excellent way to gain an ongoing view of a child's work over a period of time that shows writing achievement, efforts, growth, and attitudes (Rubin,1995). The students take ownership of their writing portfolios by decorating binders and making their portfolios personal. Furthermore, a variety of writing pieces are selected, by the student, to add to their portfolio. By allowing the students to have choice, the portfolios become a positive reflection of themselves as a writer (Tully, 1996).

When a child chooses a piece(s) for their portfolio, it is important for the student to reflect on why the piece or pieces were selected (Tully, 1996). First, students reflect on their piece(s) and the process of writing by looking back at what goals were met. Next students set new goals for future pieces of writing. These reflection worksheets will be placed in their portfolio, prior to their selected piece of writing, with an explanation of why this piece was chosen (Tully, 1996).

Although portfolios are personal collections, the pieces of writing, reflections, and successes should be celebrated with others (Tully, 1996). "The key element in all of this is to give recognition to our students for the fine writing that they have done and to mark this milestone in their growth as writers" (Tully, 1996).

Another way to motivate students in writing is by journaling. A journal is like a diary of events or a way students can express themselves daily (Rubin, 1995). Personal journal writing makes learning tangible, intimate, and alive for the individual student. It is a way for children to express themselves free of critiques and grades, which often cause resistance to writing (Capacchione, 1989).

Students seem to be easily engaged into sharing their thoughts and ideas with their journals. Stimulation also occurs during this thought process of what they are doing, why they are writing on a topic, and how they are doing it (Rubin, 1995). By journaling, the students will learn about themselves. As Pat Wolf stated, "Information is more likely to be attended to and remembered if it has meaning to the student and contains an emotional hook" (Conference, 1999). They can try out their convictions, share feelings, ask questions, examine their fears, vent issues, and clear their heads to allow learning to occur (Frank, 1995). Thus, they encouraged this by metacognition (Rubin, 1995). Private writing allows the students to take risks that they would not take anywhere else (Frank, 1995).

Taking the time to share journals with others has many benefits. The students are able to choose which feelings they want to share and still keep some private. Shy students will find this beneficial, because they can express themselves through characters in their stories and receive feedback from their peers without judgment. Finally, sharing journals is an effective way to practice listening and speaking skills (Simpson, 1993).

Journal sharing is a good way for students to generate new ideas for their writing pieces. It gives them an opportunity to hear about what other students are writing and helps them endure confidence towards their own writing abilities. Students need the joyous feeling that a writer receives when sharing their writing makes others laugh, cry, or leaves them bewildered (Simpson, 1993).

Another way to share writing is by having a pen pal to write and partake in the writing process. Communication through pen pal writing is a form of sharing with other students that are not at the same school and not sharing the same experiences. This gives each student an unbiased opinion of their writing and their feelings. It helps build better self-esteem and fosters a positive image of themselves as a writer. This positive input produces more authentic writing (Frank, 1995).

Writing conferences are an important part of the writing process and in helping build confidence in each student. One-on-one conferencing will establish trust and create a safe environment between student and teacher (De Fina, 1992). It is time for a conference when a child needs assistance on their piece or is stuck on a portion of his or her writing. A conference is also appropriate when the student is excited or proud of a particular piece that has been written. This process can help in the attainment of goal achievement (Rubin, 1995).

Having this one-on-one communication with a teacher can improve the child's motivation to write. This is an opportunity for the student to receive constructive

criticism and positive feedback from their teacher in a non-threatening setting. Each student wants to feel like an author and their teacher can be the audience for that piece of writing. The student is looking for the teacher to enhance their writing, not change it. Each child wants to be in control of where that piece is going and how it will end. This conferencing time with the teacher allows the child to feel good about oneself as a writer (Tully, 1996).

Students can learn a tremendous amount from each other about writing. Through peer editing children can learn how to compliment, how to suggest changes that need to be made, and how to correct errors in the work of others (Maifair, 1999). These three steps can be used to aid the peer editor: praise, question, and polish (Frank, 1995). As these steps are used the writer will become more self confident, will strengthen one's writing abilities, and will increase writing skills. The more active the students become in the process of peer editing, the greater impact they will have on each other's writing (Maifair, 1999).

The final and most crucial step in the writing process is publishing. Publishing a piece of writing reveals the importance of the author and his or her piece. Children should have the opportunity to share each finished product of their choice (Frank, 1995). Having a real audience will give purpose to each writer and his or her piece. Going through the steps of the writing stages; pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing makes this process meaningful and purposeful (Kellaher, 1999).

When a student shares his published piece he is communicating through the process of sharing. The method of presenting, hearing, and publishing a piece of writing provides the writer with a clear image of one's work and influences future writing pieces. An author has a purpose and motivation when creating a piece to share with others (Frank, 1999).

Creating an atmosphere of sharing is an excellent way to learn about what works, what doesn't work, and which devices produce good writing. As children write and publish they become more conscious and concerned about grammatical mistakes and plunge forward to improve their skills. The fulfillment of a finished product aids in the writer's motivation. When acquiring positive feedback from an audience the writer builds self-esteem. The students gain self respect which enables them to feel proud of themselves as writers (Frank, 1999).

PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND PROCESSES

After reviewing the literature on the lack of student confidence which interferes with their overall writing achievement, the researchers formulated the following project objectives:

As a result of increased parent and teacher interventions on gaining student confidence in writing, during the period of September 2000 to February 2001, the third and fifth grade students from the targeted classes will improve their self-esteem in writing, as measured by teacher constructed pre- and post-writing prompts, pre- and post-student/parent surveys, and review of student writing portfolios.

In order to accomplish the terminal objective, the following processes are necessary:

1. Teachers and parents will become more knowledgeable about various ways to increase motivation and writing skills and implement specific strategies to help students gain confidence in writing.

2. Communication between teacher, parent, and student will be a helpful tool in building writing self-esteem.

Project Action Plan

I. August

    A. Previous teacher interview and survey

    B. Parent permission slip

    C. Distribute parent survey

    D. Parent letter requesting portfolio binder

    E. Administer student survey

II. September

    A. Complete teacher observation writing checklist

    B. pre-test writing prompt will be administered and holistically scored

    C. Work on introductory writing pieces and journal writing

    D. Create portfolio covers

    E. Begin publishing and collecting writing pieces for portfolio

    F. Write letters to pen pals

    G. Create writing folders containing goals, planner and proofreading marks

    H. Begin peer editing process with the class/PQP (Praise, Question, Polish)

    I. Begin Friday letters to parents regarding the writing process and goals

    J. Begin weekly teacher/student conferencing about writing

    K. Back-to-School Night with parents explaining writing program

    L. Meet with in-school writing buddies

III. October

    A. Introduce various types of graphic organizers

    B. Introduce narrative writing

    C. Collect various narrative writing pieces for their portfolio

D. Continue writing folders, conferencing, and peer editing

E. Write letter to pen pals about writing

F. Parent/teacher conferences

G. Distribute Parent Writing Handbook to parents

H. Meet with in-school writing buddies

IV. November

A. Introduce more types of graphic organizers

B. Introduce persuasive writing

C. Write another letter to pen pals about writing

D. Continue writing folders, conferencing, and peer editing

V. December

A. Introduce expository writing

B. Write another letter to pen pals about writing

C. Continue to peer edit, teacher/student conference, and communicate with parents

D. Continue writing folders, conferencing, and peer editing

VI. January/February

A. Post-parent and post-student surveys given

B. Celebration with pen pals to discuss and share writing portfolios

C. Post-test writing prompt will be administered and holistically scored

D. Review various types of graphic organizers and their appropriate uses

E. Review narrative, persuasive, and expository writing types

F. Complete teacher observation writing checklist

G. Share portfolios with parents

H. Student and parent reflection on portfolios

Methods of Assessment

In order to assess the effects of the intervention, several forms of assessment will be given and reviewed. The first intervention that will be administered will be the previous teacher survey. Each of the previous year's teachers will write the strengths and weaknesses of their students as well as any additional comments. The previous year's teachers will also participate in a one-on-one interview. A variety of questions will be asked regarding the use of the writing process in their classrooms.

The next intervention will include a parent survey. Parents will take part in responding to the writing that takes place in their home. The parents are asked to respond on how they play an active role in encouraging their child to write. When the study is completed the parents will reassess their thoughts and feelings regarding their child and the writing process at home.

Prior to the study, the students will complete a survey concerning their attitudes towards writing. At this time, the students will reflect upon how they feel about themselves as writers. In addition, the students will ponder on how they use writing at home and at school.

As part of the assessment process, a pre- and post-writing prompt will be given to each student during an allotted time frame. This piece should be written in a narrative format with five paragraphs. The first paragraph is the introduction, the middle paragraphs are the body, and the final paragraph is the conclusion.

Throughout the course of this study, the students will be compiling various writing pieces into a portfolio. The teacher and parents have two jobs to complete: observing and reflection. The students will use their portfolios to reflect and make improvements in their writing.

As part of the writing process, the teacher and students will conference on various pieces of writing and their journals. During each conference the students will discover and discuss their strengths and what needs to be improved upon in that piece of writing. General comments and observations will be reviewed while conferencing with the journal and other pieces of writing.

Furthermore, peers will play an active role in the assessment in each child's writing development. Students will use a checklist to guide each student with praise and questions. This format is called PQP (Praise, Question, Polish). Each student must have one other peer complete this checklist for each piece of writing.

Students will be given several opportunities to enhance their writing skills throughout the year. Various prompts, which include narrative, persuasive, and expository, will be given to the students to journey through the writing process. The teacher will observe and guide the students through this process.

In correlation with our state scoring system, we will develop writing/scoring rubrics (Appendices K and L). These rubrics will guide the students with their writing and aid the teacher with grading each piece. The paper is broken down into several categories that will help the teacher focus on each skill. The categories fall under organization, conventions, focus, elaboration, support, and integration.

To assess the effects of the pen pal program, the students responded to their initial feelings about receiving letters and cards from their pen pals. They will place their feelings in their personal journals. The teacher will then record the feelings during a writing conference.

All these components together will help the teachers assess the impact that this writing study has made on each child.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The objective of this project was to improve student confidence in writing in two regular education third and fifth grade classrooms. This writing program focused on the student, teacher, and parent all working closely together to promote a positive writing experience. Various strategies were implemented to increase student motivation and confidence towards writing. In addition, surveys were given to previous teachers, students, and parents, as well as, pre- and post-writing assessments. Frequent parent communication was essential to achieve the desired results.

August: Sites A and B

During the first week of implementation of the action research project, a letter was sent to the targeted students and previous teachers explaining their past roles with the components of the writing program (Appendix A). The teachers were asked to complete a survey on the students they had the previous year (Appendix B). The survey was used to determine if the students exhibited confidence in writing, any strengths or weaknesses in their writing ability, and any additional comments that would be helpful to the researchers. In addition, the researchers conducted an interview with each teacher (Appendix C). It consisted of eight questions related to

each teacher's feelings towards writing and how they incorporate writing into their classroom daily.

Parent contact in the form of a letter was sent home during the first week of the action plan (Appendix M). The purpose of the letter was to inform the parents of the intentions of the writing program for the project. The researchers also needed to obtain permission from the parents for their son/daughter to participate in the program. In addition, a parent survey was sent home as well. The parents were asked various questions regarding the writing atmosphere created at home. In addition, the students were each asked to bring in a binder. This portfolio was used to collect their individual writing pieces throughout the entire year. The researchers sent a second letter (Appendix N) to the parents requesting students to bring a three-ring binder to school to serve as their child's writing portfolio. The students created a cover for their portfolio which made it unique and their own. Included in each portfolio was a collection of writing pieces that each child had completed throughout the school year.

The researchers administered a writing survey to each student (Appendix E). This survey was used to determine the students' feelings about writing. It consisted fifteen questions and took approximately 15 minutes to administer. The fifteen statements were read to the students by the researchers. Each item presented a brief, simply-worded statement about writing followed by three answer choices: always, most of the time, hardly ever.

September: Sites A and B

A writing pre-test was administered to all students (Appendix F). This consisted of a written narrative writing prompt which was identical for all students. Each child was given a timed period of 35 minutes to complete their writing piece. The students were asked to write about one exciting time they experienced over the past summer.

They were given the opportunity to use the paper with the writing prompt for any pre-writing activities before they began to write on a separate piece of paper. The researchers holistically scored each paper, giving it a single number between one and six, one being the lowest score and six the highest. The two scores of the two researchers were added together giving the paper a final score between two and twelve. Then the scores were graphed so they could later be compared to the post test.

While the students were engaged in the pre-test, the researchers completed a writing checklist on each child. There were five questions that required a yes or no response from the researchers. Each question pertained to the writing process. The researchers wanted to know if each child began the process by creating a graphic organizer. They also wanted to know if the children began the process immediately after the prompt was given. Finally, the researchers observed each child to see if the use of capitalization, punctuation, and paragraphs were present.

Each child had his own writing folder that was used during Writer's Workshop. Included in each folder was a proofreading/editing marks sheet that each child could refer to when editing their own or a partners writing piece (Appendix O). The children also had their own weekly writing planner, which helped them set writing goals each day. The title of each piece was written on the planner for the week along with the daily goals for that specific writing piece. The teacher, student, and parent would then add any comments for that particular piece at the bottom of the planner. A writing checklist was the final article found in the writing folder (Appendix P). This worksheet was to aid in the progress of each piece of writing from start to completion. The student was responsible for this checklist. As they went through each step of the writing process they would check off that specific task. This approach helped each child with organization and the complete process of writing.

Every piece that the child had written had gone through the entire writing process and was placed in their respective writing portfolios. The writing process began by brainstorming ideas about the given topic (Appendix Q). The children may have used a graphic organizer to help organize their thoughts and ideas. A first draft is was written and the students edited their papers using the writing/editing checklist (Appendices R and S). Each child signed up for a conference with the teacher to review and revise their piece. The teacher kept a writing conference binder to write down any information pertaining to that child's writing techniques and skills. The teacher was able to keep a detailed log on each child's writing piece and writing ability (Appendix T). Following the conference, the students made any needed corrections and finally a published piece was written. This final piece of writing was placed in their year long cumulative portfolio.

After the children published their pieces, they got together with a partner and completed a PQP (Praise, Question, and Polish) (Appendices H and I). Each child read his partner's writing piece and reflected on it by praising, questioning, and polishing the work.

The students at Sites A and B were paired up with one another to create a year-long pen pal adventure. The researchers decided which students would be a match for each other based on gender, personality, and academic ability. Each month the students wrote a letter to their pen pals. After receiving the letters, the students were to reflect on how they felt after they read their letters. In their writing journals, the children simply drew a thumbs-up sign, a sideways-thumb, or a thumbs-down sign indicating how they felt about their experience. A thumbs-up experience meant that it was a positive experience. A sideways-thumb meant that pen pals was a neutral experience. A thumbs-down meant that the students had a negative experience.

Both sites began the school year with writing about similar topics. The goal of the researchers was to create a connection between the students so when they finally met, there would be a commonality. Each site began the year by creating a bio poem (Appendix U). This bio poem consisted of information that helped each student express their interests to the peers. The lines of this poem included: name, adjectives that described student, if they had siblings, what they loved, how they felt, what they feared, what they liked to see in life, and their residence. As the students created their bio poem they were able to get their thoughts and ideas about themselves on paper, as well as, using it as a tool to share with their classmates and pen pals.

In addition to the bio poem, each child created a window description piece. Each child chose either a summer or fall image that was prevalent in one's mind and drew it in the window pane. After drawing the scene, each child wrote a paragraph describing the picture using adjectives, details, and figurative language. Once everyone was finished, the teacher hung up all of the window panes. The teacher read each description and the students were to choose which picture fit the description. This piece was included in the student's writing portfolio.

Each site also began the year with narrative writing. The students were introduced to the style of narrative pieces and began to write personal stories about themselves. These stories included specific details and feelings about one particular event. The children were given the opportunity to use a graphic organizer to arrange their thoughts and ideas (Appendices V and W). Each piece went through the entire writing process before producing a final piece. These stories are included in their writing portfolios and are shared with their classmates and pen pals.

Each week the children were given an opportunity to show their creative side. The children had a notebook that was designated for their journal writing. The students were able to choose a topic of their choice and write about it. This allowed

the children to exhibit their own creativity while writing about something that interests them. Each child had a variety of pieces in his journal and was given the chance to share his work with classmates and pen pals.

Weekly parent communication about each child's writing progress was essential to achieve the goal of the researchers. The writing planner that was included in each child's writing folder was sent home weekly (Appendix J). The parents were able to see what their children were writing about along with any goals the students made for themselves. Teacher comments were also included on the planner. Parents were encouraged to write comments or any feedback regarding their child's work. The researchers felt it was important to have open communication with the parents.

In September, each site held their annual Back-to-School Night with the parents. The researchers' project on effective strategies to improve and motivate student writing, as well as, the fact that writing was going to be a strong concentration throughout the curriculum this school year was explained to the parents. The researchers explained that their goals were to increase parent involvement with their child's writing, improve students' internal confidence, and add various teacher interventions to the curriculum. These strategies combined would improve students' overall writing achievement. I t was stressed the importance of parent involvement and parent, child, and teacher communication.

Another way to improve students' motivation in writing was by having in-school writing buddies. Each site was paired up with a younger grade at their school. Together the children, at both grade levels, worked on various reading and writing activities. This gave the third and fifth grade students the opportunity to assist their buddies with their writing skills. The third and fifth grade students met with their writing buddies on a monthly basis.

October: Sites A and B

During the month of October, the following activities from September were continued: writing folders, collecting writing pieces for the writing portfolio, the writing process, writing/editing checklists, PQP (Praise, Question, and Polish) reflections, teacher/student writing conferences, pen pal letters and reflections, narrative writing, journal writing, weekly parent communication, and in-school writing buddies.

Each October both sites participated in a semi-annual parent/teacher conference. During each conference, the child's academic and social progress was discussed along with informing the parents about the writing program in greater detail. Each parent was given a writing handbook to aid in the success of their child's writing process (Appendix X). Included in the handbook for both third and fifth grade were tips to help children become better and more confident writers (Appendix Y) and an explanation of the three types of writing (Appendix Z). Also, included in the third grade handbook was a guide to personal narrative writing (Appendix AA), a student friendly rubric for the three types of writing (Appendices BB and CC), a writing checklist for third grade (Appendix R), editing marks (Appendix O), and a list of words that must be spelled correctly by third graders (Appendix DD). Each fifth grade handbook also included the following: A guide to narrative, persuasive, and expository writing, (Appendices EE, FF and GG), a praise, question, polish/suggestion revision sheet for comments (Appendix I), an upper elementary editing checklist (Appendix S), and a word bank of 1200 high-frequency writing words (Appendices HH). This handbook provided each parent with the appropriate tools to aid in the writing process at home.

November: Sites A and B

During the month of November, the following activities from September and October were continued: writing folders, collecting writing pieces for the writing

portfolio, the writing process, writing/editing checklists, PQP reflections, teacher/student writing conferences, pen pal letters and reflections, narrative writing, journal writing, weekly parent communication and in-school writing buddies.

Persuasive writing was the second type of writing that was introduced. The children were exposed to a graphic organizer (Appendices II, JJ, and KK) to help arrange their thoughts and ideas. Then the students were taken through the entire writing process and finished with a completed persuasive piece.

December: Sites A and B

During the month of December, the following activities from September, October and November were continued: writing folders, collecting writing pieces for the writing portfolio, the writing process, writing/editing checklists, PQP reflections, teacher/student writing conferences, pen pal letters and reflections, narrative writing, journal writing, weekly parent communication, in-school writing buddies, and persuasive writing.

The third and final style of writing that was introduced was expository writing. Once again, the children were given a graphic organizer (Appendices LL and MM) to assist in organizing their thoughts and ideas. Students were taken through the entire writing process and ended with a completed expository writing piece.

January/February Sites A and B

During the months of January and February, the following activities from September, October, November and December were continued: writing folders, collecting writing pieces for the writing portfolio, the writing process, writing/editing checklists, PQP reflections, teacher/student writing conferences, pen pal letters and reflections, narrative writing, journal writing, weekly parent communication, in-school

writing buddies, persuasive and expository writing.

Prior to the state testing in third and fifth grades, the three types of writing, narrative, persuasive and expository were revisited. The use of graphic organizers and the writing process were focused on and reviewed.

A post-test was administered to all of the students at Sites A and B. The students were given another narrative writing prompt (Appendix NN) and a 35 minute time period to complete their writing pieces. The students were asked to write about a time in their life when they felt scared. If the students chose to, they were allowed to use the paper with the writing prompt for any pre-writing activities before they began to write on a separate piece of paper. While the students were working on their writing piece, the researchers completed another writing checklist on each child. Each writing piece was holistically scored by the researchers and the results were graphed so they may be compared to the pre-test scores.

The students from Sites A and B chose one piece of writing to submit to the area arts council, project for young writers. These pieces fell under four different categories: fiction: any subject, non-fiction: any subject (expository, essays, or articles), poetry: any subject, any style, and plays or scripts: any subject. Some students chose a piece from their portfolio, while others started fresh and new. All of the students from both sites submitted a piece to this project. This gave them a purpose to write.

A letter was sent home to the parents (Appendix OO) and the researchers requested that they complete a post-writing survey (Appendix PP). The parents were asked the same eight questions as the survey given in September with two additional questions. The researchers felt it was important to find out if the parents noticed a positive change, no change, or a negative change in their child's motivation towards writing and if they felt their child's writing as improved, stayed the same, or decreased. The parents were also given the opportunity to comment on any of the writing

experiences their child has had this year.

The researchers administered a post-writing survey to all of the students. The survey asked the same questions and required the same responses about the students' feelings towards writing as the survey previously given (Appendix E).

Working together with the parents to help their child grow as a writer was an ultimate goal of the researchers. Sharing and reflecting was an important component of the writing process. In order for the students to share their writing success, each child brought home his portfolio to share with one's parents. A letter was sent home to the parents and students explaining the components of the writing portfolios (Appendices QQ and RR). Included in each child's portfolio was a thoughts and goals reflection sheet that the students completed on the artifacts that were in their writing portfolios (Appendix SS). After the children shared their portfolios with their parents, the parents were asked to complete a PQP reflection sheet on their child's writing portfolio (Appendix TT).

As a culminating activity, the students from Sites A and B were finally able to meet one another during a writing celebration. The students from Site A traveled to their pen pal's school. A letter was sent home to Site A's parents informing them that their children would be traveling to another school within the district (Appendix UU). During the celebration, the pen pals were able to share their writing portfolios and writing journals with each other. The students also had the opportunity to read books and create stories together. Venn Diagrams were created by the students stating similarities and differences between the two schools and between the two pen pals. The children participated in a "Find a Pen Pal" search (Appendix VV). The third graders were to find fifth grade pen pals to fit certain categories and fifth graders had to find third grade pen pals. The celebration concluded with eating lunch, sharing treats and enjoying recess together.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

In order to assess the effects of lack of confidence in writing, various pre- and post-assessment tools were utilized. These assessment tools included: the parent survey, student survey, post-test narrative writing prompt, observation checklist, and pen pal reflection.

At both Sites A and B, the parents were given a pre- and post-survey to complete about themselves and their children as writers. The teachers sent home the surveys with the students, and the parents sent them back to school when they were completed. Two questions were added to the post-survey. One pertained to the type of change they saw in their children's writing, up to the date of the survey. The second question asked if they felt their children's writing had improved throughout the study. In addition to the two questions, the parents were asked to write a brief narrative about their children's writing experiences. All of the other questions remained the same. The results of the per- and post-surveys are presented below.

Table 7.A.

Pre-Parent Writing Survey September 2000 and

Post-Parent Writing Survey February 2001

1. Does your child write at home beyond required homework?

	almost always		sometimes		almost never	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Site A	5	2	14	15	3	5
Site B	6	7	16	13	5	7

2. Do you encourage your child to write at home?

	almost always		sometimes		almost never	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Site A	6	5	15	17	1	0
Site B	9	6	15	17	3	4

3. Does your child enjoy writing letters, stories, poems, etc.?

	almost always		sometimes		almost never	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Site A	6	7	11	11	5	4
Site B	5	12	17	11	5	4

4. Do you talk about your child's writing with him/her?

	almost always		sometimes		almost never	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Site A	10	10	11	11	1	1
Site B	13	16	11	10	3	1

5. Do you enjoy writing letters, stories, poems, etc. at home?

	almost always		sometimes		almost never	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Site A	3	3	12	14	7	5
Site B	9	10	13	12	5	5

6. Does your child see you writing at home?

	almost always		sometimes		almost never	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Site A	5	3	14	17	3	2
Site B	10	10	13	15	4	2

7. Do you provide writing materials for your child?

	almost always		sometimes		almost never	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Site A	22	20	0	2	0	0
Site B	19	21	4	2	4	4

8. Are you available to assist your child with rewriting if necessary?

	almost always		sometimes		almost never	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Site A	22	21	0	1	0	1
Site B	20	23	5	4	2	0

9. What type of change have you seen in your child's motivation towards writing thus far?

	positive change		no change		negative change	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Site A		16		6		0
Site B		13		14		0

10. Do you feel your child's writing has:

	improved		stayed the same		decreased	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Site A		19		3		0
Site B		17		10		0

All eight questions that were asked on the pre-survey had a slight change, but no difference that was large enough to evaluate. There were two questions added to the post-survey that carried a lot of value for the researchers. Question number nine referred to the change the parents had seen in their children's writing during the

implementations from the study. Seventy-three percent of the parents from Site A saw a positive change in their children's writing, while 49 percent of the parents from Site B saw a change as well. The researchers found this information to be worthwhile to their study. Not only was this change evident in the classroom, but the parents viewed these results at home through the writing portfolio.

On the second question added to the survey, the parents also found a positive change. Question number ten referred to what degree the parents thought their children had improved in writing. There was an overwhelming growth of 86 percent of the parents, at Site A, who felt their children's writing had improved throughout the study. Sixty-three percent of the parents from Site B documented an improvement in writing during the course of this project.

On the survey there was a section for the parents to comment on any aspect of the writing program thus far. Some parents chose not to write comments at all, while other parents gave a brief narrative. The comments from both sites were positive. Due to the grade level difference, the comments from Sites A and B varied in topic.

The parents at Site A commented on a variety of different aspects regarding the writing program. Some parents were pleased that their children used more description in their writing, and explored different types of writing. Parents commented on the various tools that were taught to aid the children in developing a writing piece. The children's content was more structured and organized. Most parents observed that their children had a better understanding of the writing process. The emphasis on editing and revising was stressed upon as a positive part of the program. In addition, conventions, such as, capitalization, punctuation, and complete sentence usage had improved in the children's writing. A few parents replied that their children had been more motivated to write, while only one said his child still needed a lot of encouragement.

At Site B, the parents focused on the positive changes that they witnessed their children transcend through their fifth grade experience. Many of the parents referred to the writing portfolio, where they experienced first hand the changes that occurred throughout the year. Comments varied from "now keeping a journal or a diary" to "now eagerly sharing their writing on a constant basis." Other parents wrote that their children recently started to correspond with their family and friends by using the Internet. Many parents also commented on their children's enthusiasm about writing. The children had become aware of all the steps of the writing process and were able to let their imaginations flow. Overall, this program seemed to be beneficial to most of the students from Sites A and B.

The findings of the pre- and post-student writing survey (Appendix E) are presented in Table 8.A.. The pre-test was given in September and an identical post-test was administered in February. The questions on this survey focused on student's view of writing, his/her level of enjoyment, and the student's level of confidence. These results are presented in Table 8 below.

Table 8.A.

Pre-Student Writing Survey September 2000 and

Post-Student Writing Survey February 2001

1. I like to write.

	always		most of the time		hardly ever	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Site A	5	6	13	13	4	3
Site B	5	11	14	14	8	2

2. I find it easy to write.

	always		most of the time		hardly ever	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Site A	8	10	11	11	3.	1
Site B	4	7	19	18	4	2

3. I like how writing makes me feel inside.

	always		most of the time		hardly ever	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Site A	7	8	12	8	3	6
Site B	5	6	15	18	7	3

4. Writing helps me sort out my feelings.

	always		most of the time		hardly ever	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Site A	3	2	8	11	11	9
Site B	4	7	11	10	12	10

5. I think that writing is important.

	always		most of the time		hardly ever	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Site A	6	13	13	7	3	2
Site B	12	16	12	9	3	2

6. I like to write at school.

	always		most of the time		hardly ever	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Site A	6	10	12	10	4	2
Site B	5	7	17	17	5	3

7. I like to write at home.

	always		most of the time		hardly ever	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Site A	3	3	11	8	8	11
Site B	7	12	8	8	12	7

8. I am proud of what I write.

	always		most of the time		hardly ever	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Site A	12	14	10	6	0	2
Site B	7	11	18	13	2	3

9. I am good at sorting out my ideas and writing them on paper.

	always		most of the time		hardly ever	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Site A	6	6	13	14	3	2
Site B	9	12	13	11	5	4

10. I write different types of stories.

	always		most of the time		hardly ever	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Site A	9	13	10	7	3	2
Site B	15	17	7	7	5	2

11. I like when my teacher assigns a writing topic.

	always		most of the time		hardly ever	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Site A	5	7	8	8	9	7
Site B	6	6	10	14	11	7

12. I like when I choose my own writing topic.

	always		most of the time		hardly ever	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Site A	11	14	9	2	2	6
Site B	19	13	7	3	1	11

13. I am able to edit and revise my writing.

	always		most of the time		hardly ever	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Site A	9	9	10	13	3	0
Site B	7	8	14	14	6	5

14. I like when a classmate helps me edit and revise my writing.

	always		most of the time		hardly ever	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Site A	3	3	7	5	12	14
Site B	11	10	11	14	5	3

15. My parents help me edit and revise my writing.

	always		most of the time		hardly ever	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Site A	12	5	10	7	0	10
Site B	5	11	15	12	7	4

All 15 questions had a slight change from the pre- to post-survey. The first change was in question number one, which pertains to whether or not the children enjoyed writing. There was no change at Site A, but at Site B there was a 22 percent increase in the category of always liking to write. This was a positive change that the researchers found.

In question number two, there was a ten percent change at both Sites A and B. Question number two related to how easy the children believed writing could be. The ten percent increase was in the "always" section of the survey. This slight increase of children found it easier to write after they completed the writing program.

There was also a slight increase in numbers three and four, which referred to how writing made the students feel. Site A had a four percent increase in "how writing makes the child feel inside." Eleven percent of the students from Site B had a positive increase on their feelings of writing. Question number four referred to how writing helped the students sort out their feelings. Nineteen percent of the students from Site B had a significant change towards this question. On the other hand, the students from Site A had no change. The researchers found these questions to be important and meaningful to the study.

The interventions appeared to have a positive effect on the importance of writing for some of the students from Sites A and B. At Site A, there was a 32 percent increase, while at Site B there was a 15 percent change. Those students felt that writing was important.

Having pride in pieces of writing was important to this study. Question eight asked the students if they were proud of what they wrote. Nine percent of students from Site A had an increase in the pride of their writing. At Site B, 15 percent of the students had a positive change in the their pride. Pride was an important piece of a writer's self-esteem. That was why this was such a relevant question to the study.

Variety in writing was a specific focus in the writing program and school curriculum. In question number ten, the students were asked if they wrote different types of stories. There was an 18 percent increase at Site A, while there was a seven percent increase at Site B. The students found the variety of writing to be important. Due to the wide range of writing to which the students were exposed throughout the

day, it kept writing fresh and new.

Those were the significant changes that occurred from September's student writing pre-survey to February's student writing post-survey. Decreases were not prevalent in this survey. There was a small change or no change that took place during the interventions of this program.

To determine if there were any improvements over the course of this study in students' writing ability levels, a pre-test and post-test narrative writing prompt was administered to all the students from Site A and B. All of the children were given 35 minutes to write about the following prompt: Describe a time in your life when you felt scared. The results of the pre- and post-test narrative writing are displayed in Tables 9.A. and B..

Pre- and Post-test
Narrative Writing Prompt-Site A

Table 9.B.   70
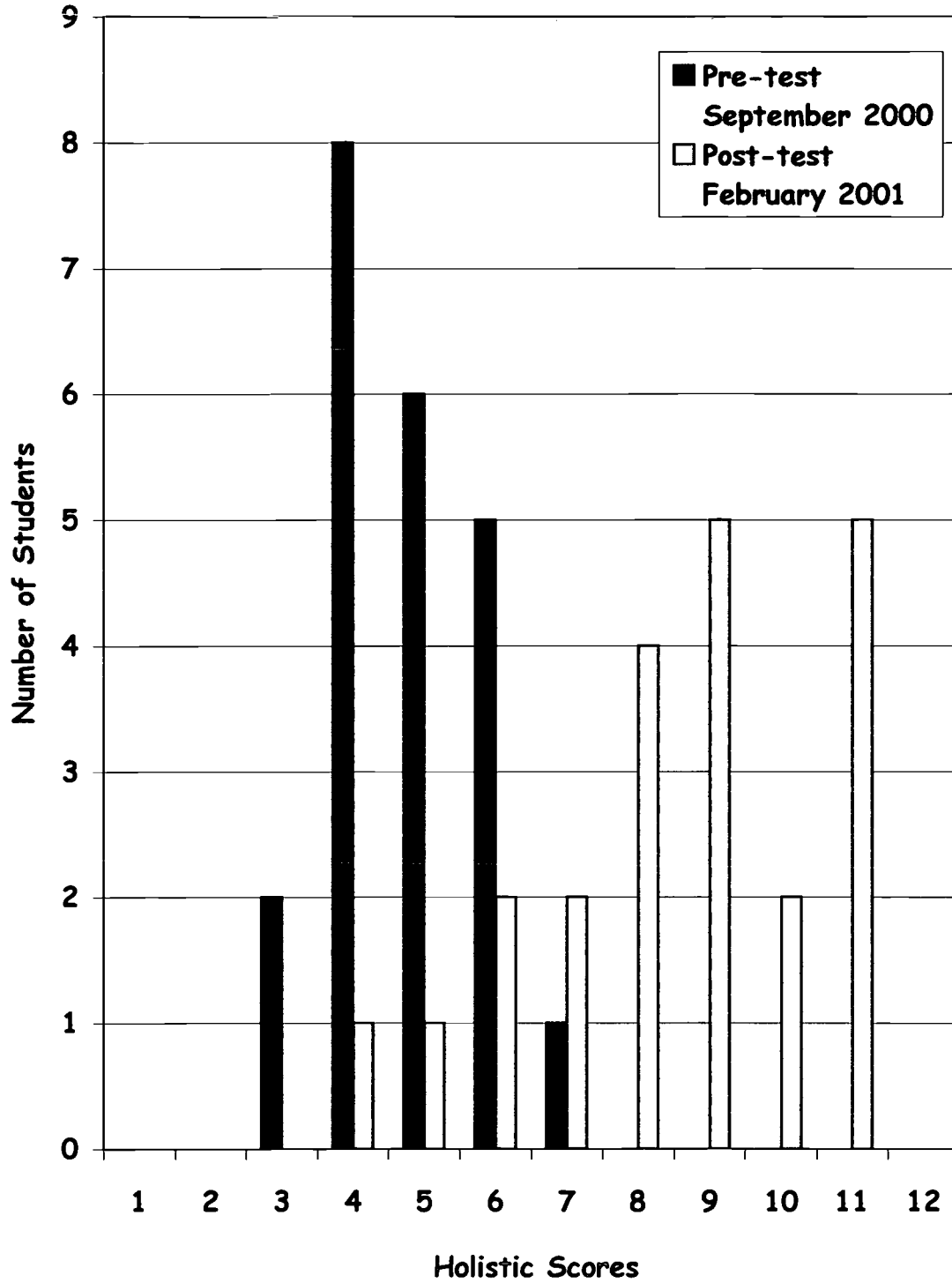
Pre- and Post-test
Narrative Writing Prompt-Site B
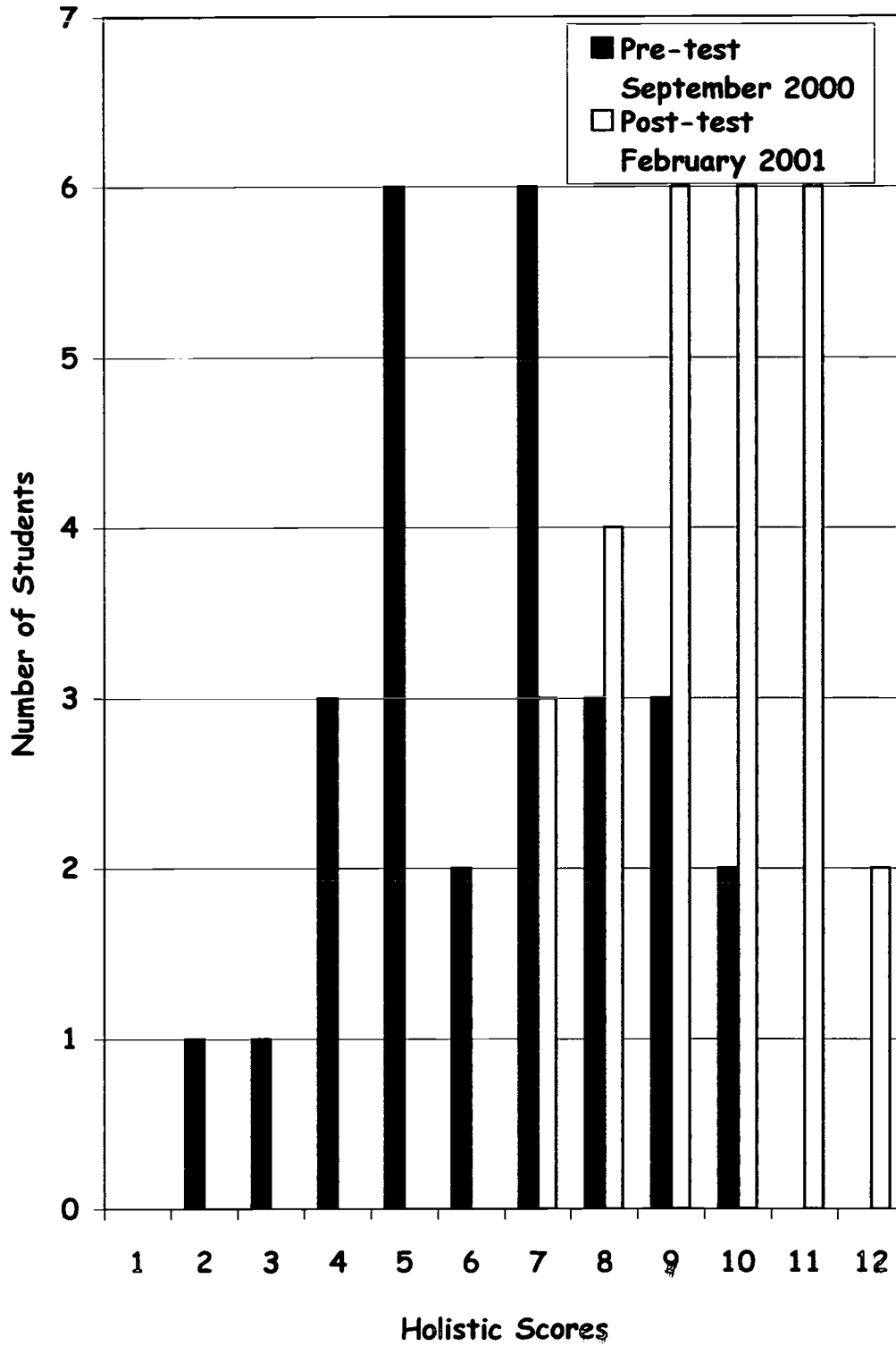
Once the post-tests were completed, the researchers evaluated the pieces of writing by using the state's method of holistic scoring. The same two evaluators who scored the pre-test at each site also scored the post-test. Each evaluator gave the students a one, two, three, four, five, or six on their writing. One, two, and three did not meet state expectations, while four, five, and six did meet state expectations. These two scores were added together for a combined total score. The highest score possible was a 12, while, the lowest was a two.

Using the state standards, the evaluators kept these five writing components in mind while scoring the students' essays: Focus was the first component. The entire paper was focused on the subject of the writing prompt, and provided a clear main idea or point of view. The second was support/elaboration. Support was the degree to which the main point or position was supported and explained by specific details and reasons. Organization was the third component. This was the clarity of the logical flow of ideas and the explicitness of the text structure or plan. The fourth writing component entailed the proper use of conventions. This included proper grammatical conventions including spelling, punctuation, and capitalization appropriate for each grade level. Integration was the final writing component considered while holistically scoring. This was when the student's paper exhibited unity in presentation of ideas.

The researchers found that the average score from September to February had a significant change. In September, the average score was a 4.8 combined total score, while in February it changed to an 8.5 combined total score. Sixteen of the 22 students met state expectations. This was a substantial change since none of the students met expectations on the September pre-test.

Similar to Site A, Site B had a considerable increase in total combined scores for the narrative writing post-test. In September, the average score on the narrative writing pre-test was 5.9, while in February the collaborative total score was 9.5. Only

eight students out of 27 did meet expectations on the pre-writing test. In contrast, twenty-four out of the 27 students met state expectations on the post-test. This was a massive increase that occurred during this writing program.

During the post-test writing prompt the researchers observed certain skills while each student was writing. Graphic organizers were the first item that the researchers were observing. The use of graphic organizers is an important tool in the beginning stages of the writing process. Eleven students out of 22 used a graphic organizer from Site A. All of the students from Site B used a graphic organizer prior to writing their piece. The second component of the observation checklist was if the students began writing immediately after the prompts was presented. At Site A, 20 out of the 22 students started their piece immediately, while 24 out of 27 of the students from Site B did the same. Capitalization and punctuation usage were the next items on the observation checklist. Nineteen out of the 22 students, from Site A, used these grammar techniques appropriately. Twenty-five out of 27 of the students from Site B did equally well. Understanding when to use paragraphs appropriately was the last observation of the checklist. Seventeen of the students from Site A understood paragraphing , and all the students from Site B used paragraphs in their writing pieces.

Throughout the school year, the students at Sites A and B were paired up with one another to create a pen pal network. The researchers tested the effectiveness of this program by evaluating the reflections given by the students. This was measured immediately after receiving a letter from their pal. In their writing journals, the children simply drew a thumbs-up sign, a sideways-thumb, or a thumbs-down sign indicating how they felt about their experience. These were measured in the months of October, December, February, and after the pen pal celebration. The results are listed on the table that follows.

Table 10.A.

Student Responses of Pen Pal Network During the Months of October, December,

February, and After the Celebration

October			
	Thumbs-up	Sideways	Thumbs-down
Site A	21	1	0
Site B	26	1	0
December			
	Thumbs-up	Sideways	Thumbs-down
Site A	18	4	0
Site B	25	2	0
February			
	Thumbs-up	Sideways	Thumbs-down
Site A	20	2	0
Site B	24	3	0
After Pen Pal Celebration			
	Thumbs-up	Sideways	Thumbs-down
Site A	20	2	0
Site B	27	0	0

Building a year-long pen pal relationship was a beneficial asset to this writing study. It seemed to have a positive effect on most of the students. The majority of the students from both sites had a thumbs-up attitude towards this networking system.

Only a few students from both sites had a sideways-thumb sign, indicating that their experiences were neither positive or negative. The reason that children felt this way was that their pen pal was sick and was unable to send a letter at that given time.

This concluded the analyses for the results of this study. The assessment tools included: the parent survey, student survey, post-test narrative writing prompt, observation checklist, and pen pal reflection. The results from the tools above had a positive effect on the students and this writing program.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the presentation and analysis of the data from the post-test narrative writing prompt, post-observation teacher checklist, pen pal program, post-parent survey, and post-student survey, the majority of the targeted students showed an improvement in their overall confidence in writing and skills. The writing strategies learned in the classroom, along with parent assistance, appeared to have made an impact on the students' writing achievement.

At Sites A and B there was substantial growth in the students' post-narrative writing test scores. In September, when the pre-test was given, none of the students, at Site A, met state expectations. After many interventions, a post-test was administered in February. The results of the post-test indicated 73 percent of the students met state expectations. Similar to Site A, Site B had significant gains on the post-test. Thirty percent of the students from Site B met state expectations in September. Eighty-nine percent of the students met state expectations on the post-test in February. These students made tremendous gains throughout the writing program.

The students from Sites A and B had various expectations, due to the different grade levels. The differences in gains were caused by length of exposure and development in the writing process. The third graders from Site A were not exposed to the various types of writing, or had the opportunity to develop the same skills as the fifth grade students from Site B. Therefore, Site B's percentages started higher and ended higher than Site A. The researchers would expect the students from Site A to have similar gains at Site B when they would be at that same grade level.

While the students were taking their post-test writing prompt, the researchers were observing the skills that each student gained while participating in the writing program. Beginning the writing process with a graphic organizer helped students collect their thoughts and ideas prior to writing. In September, 18 percent of the students from Site A began the writing process with a graphic organizer. During the month of February, 50 percent used a graphic organizer prior to starting their piece of writing. Site B had a large population of students that learned the appropriate use of graphic organizers. During the month of September, seven percent of the students used a graphic organizer. In February, all the students used a type of graphic organizer before writing their essays.

Another significant change was the understanding of paragraphing. At Site A, the students had significant gains with paragraphing skills. In September, none of the students used paragraphs in their writing. During the month of February's post-test writing prompt, 77 percent of those same students used paragraphs appropriately. The students from Site B made gains as well. In September, 44 percent of the students understood paragraphing and in February all of the students used paragraphs properly.

The pen pal writing program was quite an adventure for all the students from Sites A and B. This program entailed writing letters to pen pals monthly, which the students seemed to enjoy. The researchers evaluated this enjoyment by analyzing the student reflections regarding their feelings upon receiving letters from their pen pals. None of the students had a negative experience. In fact, 91 percent of the students from both sites had a positive thumbs-up experience. For a culminating activity, the students shared a celebration at Site B. The students enthusiastically shared their portfolios with one another and participating in various getting-to-know-you activities. Ninety-six percent of the students said their involvement was a positive thumbs-up

experience. From the perspective of the researchers, the pen pal program proved to be a worthwhile writing experience for all the children.

The post-parent survey gave insight to how the parents viewed their children's writing progress throughout the year. Parents were asked what type of change they had seen in their children's motivation to write. Seventy-three percent of the parents from Site A said they felt there was a positive change in their children's motivation towards writing. Forty-eight percent of the parents from Site B had similar feelings. The parents were also asked if they felt their children's writing had improved, stayed the same, or decreased after the writing interventions took place. Eighty-six percent of the parents from Site A responded that they felt their children's writing had improved. Sixty-three percent of the parents from Site B also witnessed improvement throughout the program. After reading the parent comments, the researchers felt there were significant positive gains to the writing program.

Similar to the parents, the students completed a writing survey that let the researchers know how they felt about writing before and after all the interventions. There was a four percent increase at Site A when the students were asked if they enjoyed writing. There was a 22 percent increase at Site B. At Sites A and B, there was a four percent increase in how the writing made the students feel inside. All of these changes were slight, but were a positive increase nonetheless.

Parent involvement was a significant asset to this writing program. During parent/teacher conferences, in October, the parents were given a writing handbook. This handbook helped them guide their children through the various types of writing and its processes. The other parent component was the writing portfolio reflection. After the students collected several pieces of writing, they shared their portfolios with their parents. Parents completed a PQP (Praise, Question, Polish) after reading through the various writing pieces. Overall, the parent comments were positive and

they gave constructive criticism to assist their children with the writing process. This was a positive experience for both parties. The students were excited to share their work, and the parents enjoyed their involvement.

After reviewing the course of action taken throughout the study, the researchers developed the following recommendations: pen pal e-mail, pre-party to meet pen pals, reflection sheet for portfolio, portfolio night or author's tea, more work published, and teacher consistency. The researchers felt that these recommendations would be beneficial if added to the study.

In addition to the handwritten pen pal letters, writing via Internet would give the students an immediate response instead of waiting a week to receive a letter. Setting up individual e-mail accounts could be done through the district. To make this adventure more complete, the students could have a pre-party meeting where they could share a few pieces of writing and get to know one another. Students could witness one another's growth in writing and would help in matching a face with the writing they would receive throughout the year.

A few components could be added to the portfolio to make it more complete. After each student chooses a writing piece for their portfolio, each student could write a reflection on what they learned and why they chose this piece. The last piece would be a portfolio night or author's tea. This would give each student the opportunity to share their work with their family and friends. The researchers feel that this will motivate the students to become better writers and be an overall positive experience.

Along those same lines, the students would gain self-confidence by getting more pieces of writing published. Various children's magazines and local newspapers offer opportunities throughout the school year to publish students' writing. The researchers feel that this could also benefit each child's self-confidence in writing. It also helps the students' understand the full process of writing.

Finally, a key component the researchers felt needed more time and emphasis was teacher consistency throughout the grade levels. A common vocabulary must be established in order for the students to spiral from one grade level to the next. Another key piece would be a curriculum mapping plan that each grade level would develop and then follow. Each grade level would be responsible for teaching a part of the writing process or a type of writing. Teachers can then collaborate ideas for student-friendly rubrics and graphic organizers that would be appropriate for each grade level. This would keep the writing curriculum consistent from year to year and would allow students to feel successful and motivated to become the best writer possible.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
Previous Teacher Letter

August 29, 2000

Dear Teachers,

We are currently participating in Saint Xavier University Field-Based Master's Degree Program in Teaching and Leadership. As part of the program, we are completing a research project on effective strategies to improve and motivate confidence in writing in the intermediate grades. This study hopes to increase parent involvement with their child's writing, students' internal confidence, and add various teacher interventions to our curriculum. These strategies combined will improve students' overall writing achievement.

As you can see, writing is going to be a strong concentration throughout our curriculum this year. This study will be conducted during the months of September through February. The students will engage in various writing activities that will promote positive learning throughout the year. This study promises to provide students with an exciting opportunity that they will benefit from greatly.

In order for our study to be successful, we need your help and support. We are asking for you to complete a writing survey on some of the students you had in your classroom last year that we have in our classroom this school year. Also, at your convenience, we would like to conduct a short interview with you regarding your overall feelings about writing. We greatly appreciate your time and efforts in making our project a huge success. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Eleni Koulourianos
Vickie Marienau

APPENDIX B
Previous Teacher Writing Survey

PREVIOUS TEACHER WRITING SURVEY

Student Name	Exhibits Confidence (Yes or No)	Strengths	Weaknesses	Comments

APPENDIX C
Previous Teacher Interview

Teacher's Name:_____   Date:_____

Previous Teacher Interview

1. How important is writing in your classroom?
   very important   somewhat important   not important

2. What subjects do you incorporate writing in daily?
   L.A.   Math   Science   Social Studies

3. Do you feel you are trained to teach the three types of writing?
   yes   somewhat   no

4. What types of writing do you teach in your classroom?
   narrative   persuasive   expository

5. What components of the writing process do you focus on most often?
   brainstorming   prewriting   1st draft
   editing/revisions   publishing

6. What is the overall attitude on writing in your classroom?
   enthusiastic   in between   negative

7. Do you feel that your students need more motivation to write?
   yes   somewhat   no

8. Which of the following writing interventions do you use in your classroom?
   pen pals   peer conferencing/editing
   teacher conferencing   graphic organizers

APPENDIX D
Parent Writing Survey

Parent's Name:_____   Date:_____
Student's Name:_____

Parent Writing Survey

For each item circle your response:

1. Does your child write at home?
    almost always   sometimes   almost never

2. Do you encourage your child to write at home?
    almost always   sometimes   almost never

3. Does your child enjoy writing letters, stories, poems, etc.?
    almost always   sometimes   almost never

4. Do you talk about your child's writing with him/her?
    almost always   sometimes   almost never

5. Do you write at home?
    almost always   sometimes   almost never

6. Does your child see you writing at home?
    almost always   sometimes   almost never

7. Do you provide writing materials for your child?
    almost always   sometimes   almost never

8. Are you available to assist your child with rewriting if necessary?
    almost always   sometimes   almost never

APPENDIX E
Student Writing Survey

Student's Name:_____   Date:_____

Student   Writing   Survey

1. I like to write.
   always   most of the time   hardly ever

2. I find it easy to write.
   always   most of the time   hardly ever

3. I like how writing makes me feel inside.
   always   most of the time   hardly ever

4. I think that writing is important.
   always   most of the time   hardly ever

5. I like to write at school.
   always   most of the time   hardly ever

6. I like to write at home.
   always   most of the time   hardly ever

7. I am proud of what I write.
   always   most of the time   hardly ever

8. I am good at putting ideas on paper.
   always   most of the time   hardly ever

9. I write different types of stories.
   always   most of the time   hardly ever

10. I like when my teacher assigns a writing topic.
    always   most of the time   hardly ever

11. I like when I choose my own writing topic.
    always   most of the time   hardly ever

12. I am able to revise and edit my writing.
    always   most of the time   hardly ever

13. I like when a classmate helps me revise and edit my writing.
    always   most of the time   hardly ever

APPENDIX F
Pre-test Narrative Prompt

W.O.W. DAY
Narrative Prompt
Pretest September 2000

Write about one exciting time you experienced this past summer. Your experience may include vacations, weddings, family parties, sport camps, friends sleeping over, or any other event you took part in. Describe what you did. Use adjectives and add details. Be sure to SHOW your feelings throughout your story.

You may use this paper for any pre-writing activities. Try your best!

APPENDIX G
Teacher Writing Observation Checklist

Teacher Writing Checklist ☒✓

Student Name:	Yes	No
1. Did the student begin the writing process by using a graphic organizer?		
2. Did the student begin writing immediately after the prompt was presented?		
3. Did the student use capitalization?		
4. Did the student use punctuation?		
5. Did the student understand paragraphing?		

Student Name:	Yes	No
1. Did the student begin the writing process by using a graphic organizer?		
2. Did the student begin writing immediately after the prompt was presented?		
3. Did the student use capitalization?		
4. Did the student use punctuation?		
5. Did the student understand paragraphing?		

Student Name:	Yes	No
1. Did the student begin the writing process by using a graphic organizer?		
2. Did the student begin writing immediately after the prompt was presented?		
3. Did the student use capitalization?		
4. Did the student use punctuation?		
5. Did the student understand paragraphing?		

APPENDIX H
Praise, Question, Polish Reflection Sheet

Partner's Name:_____ Date:_____

Title of Piece:_____ My Name:_____

PQP

Praise:_____

_____

_____

_____

Question:_____

_____

_____

_____

Polish:_____

_____

_____

ERIC

APPENDIX I
Praise, Question, Suggest Reflection Sheet

R E U I S I O N

AUTHOR _____

REUISER_____

(PRAISE)

Tell the writer what you like about his/her writing. Did you like his/her style of writing, description of characters, or certain part of the piece? (EH: I like the way you used similes in your descriptions.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

(QUESTION)

What don't you understand in the writing? Does the story follow a logical sequence? Where has the writer confused you or has not answered any question in your mind? (EH: I don't understand when ......)

_____

_____

_____

_____

(SUGGEST)

Giue the author some constructive, helpful suggestions.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____
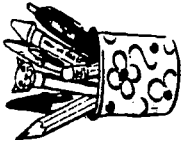
APPENDIX J
Writing Planner

My Writing Planner

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Date:					
Writing Piece:					
My Goals and Plans:					
Comments: Teacher, Student, or Parent					

Name: _____

100

Narrative Rubric

Focus-_____/6
*event/theme is clear and maintained
*has a strong ending
*use feeling by adding figurative language:similes,
        metaphors, and personification
    (I was so scared that my hair stood straight up.)

Elaboration-_____/6
*give specific details for each episode/reactions
*use "WOW" words

Organization-_____/6
*has a plan - beginning, middle, end
*these events are in time order
*use transition words
        -vertical transitions (between paragraphs)
        -horizontal transitions (glue within paragraphs)
* use sentence variety

Conventions-_____/6
*mastery of sentence construction
*few spelling errors (100 most frequent words)
*mastery of punctuation/capitalization
*mastery of verb/noun agreement

Integration-_____/6
*Is the paper clear?
*Was the prompt followed?
*Does it have balanced support?
*Does this paper truly resemble your writing abilities?

Total_____/30

Persuasive/Expository Rubric

Focus-_____/6
- restate prompt/thesis/main idea in introduction or opening
- give specific reasons
- stick to the prompt/thesis/main idea
- your paper has a clear purpose
- paper is in a logical order
- restate prompt and reasoning in a new and-effective conclusion

Support-_____/6
- give specific details for each reason
- use "WOW" words

Orga nization-_____/6
- Do you have a plan?
- use paragraphs-indent
- 3-5 sentences in each paragraph
- use transition words
    * vertical transitions-between paragraphs
    * horizontal transitions-glue within paragraphs
- use sentence variety

Conventions-_____/6
- mastery of sentence construction
- correct spelling
- mastery of punctuation/capitalization
- mastery of verb/noun agreement

Integration-_____/6
- Is your paper clear?
- Did you follow the assignment?
- Does it have balanced support?
- Does this paper truly resemble your writing abilities?

Total _____/30   102

APPENDIX M
Parent Permission Slip

August 29, 2000

Dear Parents,

As our school year begins, we are looking forward to an exciting year of learning, experiencing, and exploring. Among other focuses, writing is going to be a strong concentration throughout our curriculum this year.

We are currently participating in Saint Xavier University Field-Based Master's Degree Program in Teaching and Leadership. As part of the program, we are completing a research project on effective strategies to improve and motivate confidence in writing in the intermediate grades. This study hopes to increase parent involvement with their child's writing, students' internal confidence, and add various teacher interventions to our curriculum. These strategies combined will improve students' overall writing achievement.

In order for your child to be actively involved in this study, a signed permission form is necessary. This study will be conducted during the months of September through February. There will be both parent and student surveys completed to analyze confidence and attitudes towards written language. Your child will engage in various writing activities that will promote positive learning throughout the year. Each child will keep an individual writing portfolio which will show growth throughout the year. Miss Koulourianos' fifth grade class from Countryside and Mrs. Marienau's third class from Lines will be participating in an all year pen pal writing adventure.

This study promises to provide students with an exciting opportunity that they will benefit from greatly. Hopefully, they will be able to take these strategies and utilize them throughout their life. Throughout this study specific names will not be used in reporting survey and test data results.

Students, parents, and teachers can work together to make this experience a success. Please feel free to contact us with any questions, comments, or concerns about our writing program. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Miss Eleni Koulourianos
Mrs. Vickie Marienau

PLEASE RETURN TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER BY FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 1.

I give permission for my child, _____, to participate in this writing study.

_____   _____
Parent Signature   Date

APPENDIX N
Parent Letter Requesting Binder

August 29, 2000

Dear Parents,

As part of our writing program this year, your child will create a writing portfolio. He/she will select various writing pieces to put in their portfolio throughout the year.

You will need to purchase a 1-inch, 3-ring binder with a clear view cover. Your child may choose the color. Please send your binder in by Friday, September 1st.

Thank you for your help and support.
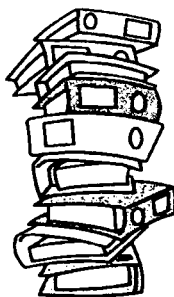
Sincerely,

Miss Koulourianos
Mrs. Marienau

APPENDIX 0
Proofreading/Editing Marks
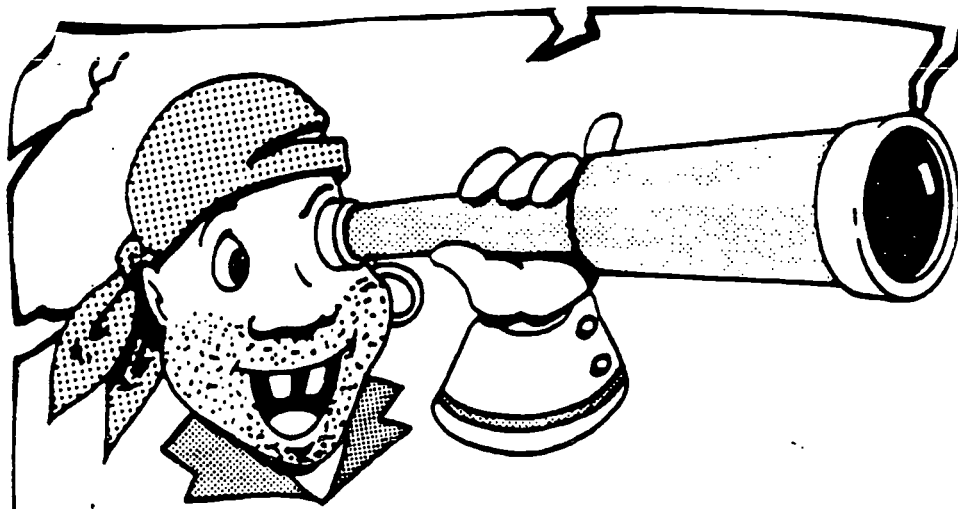
Look!

Editing Marks:

Add a word or words

Omit a word or words

Add a period

Add a comma

Start a new paragraph

Correct the spelling

Make a capital letter

Examples:

∧

�

⊙

⌃,

¶

sp. ⬭

≡

105

WRITING CHECKLIST

Title of Story	Brainstorming	1st Draft	Revise	Edit	Publish

APPENDIX Q
Writing Web/Graphic Organizer

Getting Started:

Use the figure or web below to organize your ideas. Place the subject of you essay in the center circle. List supporting ideas in the circles around it.
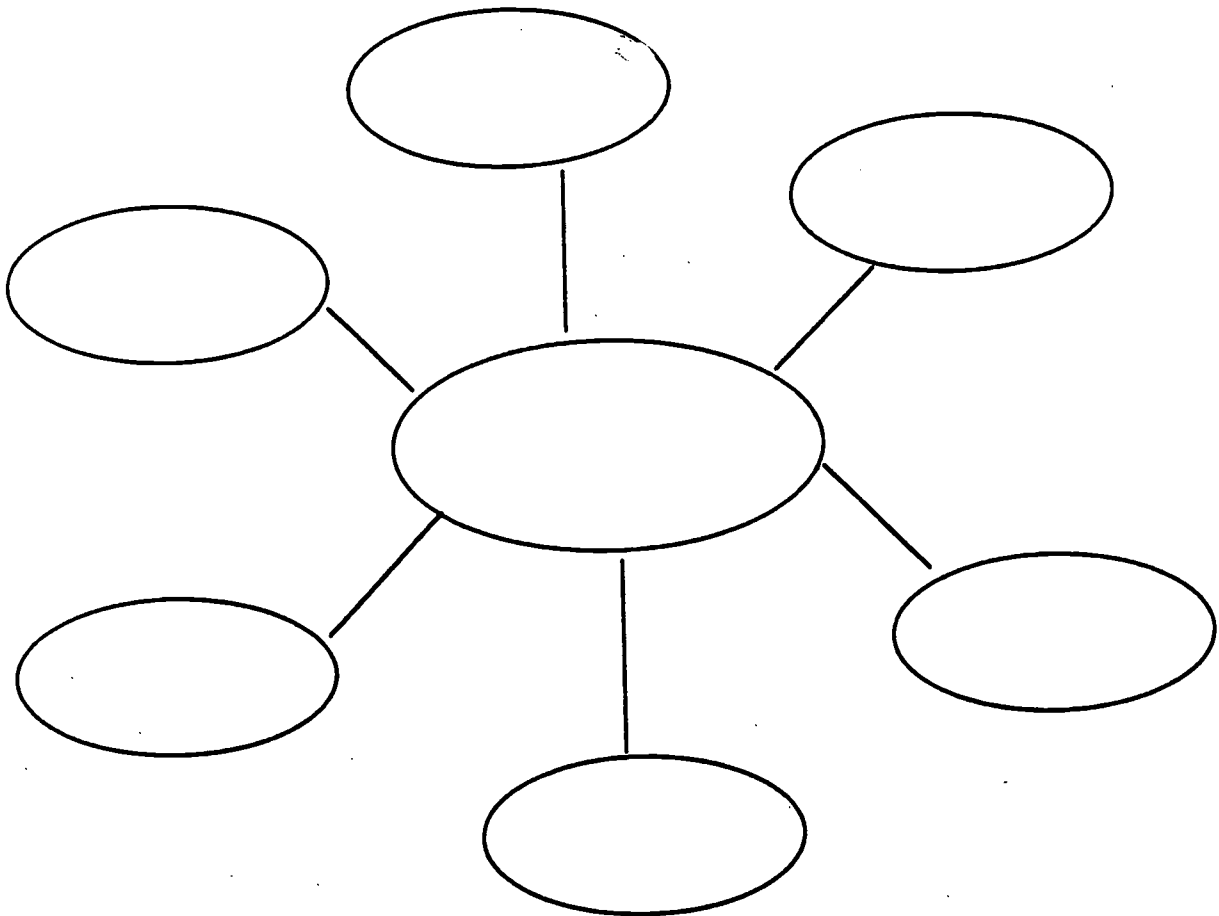
Writing Checklist

Name _____ Date _____

Title _____

A Writing Checklist

(Grade 3)

1. I read my writing to myself to see if it made sense. ☐

2. I used specific words to make my writing clearer. ☐

   Examples:

sprinted	whispered	Hershey bar	cheese sandwich
∧ ~~ran~~	∧ ~~said~~	∧ ~~candy~~	∧ ~~lunch~~

3. I read my story again to see where to stop for

   periods .   question marks ?   exclamation points ! ☐

4. I crossed out extra words (*and, then*) that I didn't need. ☐

5. I used capital letters: ☐

   at the beginning of each sentence ☐

   for the first letter of each name ☐

   for the word *I* ☐

6. I looked for words that might be misspelled and tried
   to correct them. ☐

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Self-Assessment Checklist

Name _____ Date _____

Editing Checklist

(Upper Elementary)

Read your writing to see if you should answer **Yes** or **No** to each question. If your answer to a question is No, make the appropriate correction.

	Yes	No
1. Did I use complete sentences (no fragments)?	☐	☐
2. Does each sentence begin with a capital letter and end with a period, question mark, or exclamation point?	☐	☐
3. Did I check to see that I have no run-on sentences?	☐	☐
4. Are my sentences logically organized into paragraphs?	☐	☐
5. Did I check my spelling and make corrections?	☐	☐
6. Did I capitalize the names of people, places, and titles?	☐	☐
7. Did I use quotation marks around spoken words?	☐	☐
8. Did I use commas correctly?	☐	☐
9. Did I use apostrophes for contractions?	☐	☐
10. Did I use apostrophes to show possession?	☐	☐

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APPENDIX T
Writing Conference Teacher Notes

Writing Conferences

NAME:_____

Date	Story	Conference Notes

APPENDIX U
Bio Poem

BIO POEM

1. 1st name only
2. 4 adjectives that describe you
3. Sibling of
4. Lover of (3 things)
5. Who feels (3 things)
6. Who fears (3 things)
7. Who'd like to see (3 things)
8. Resident of (city and state)
9. Last name

<u>EXAMPLE:</u>

Mrs.
Loving, Caring, Organized, and Responsible
Sibling of Tony
Lover of chocolate, Matt, friends and family
Who feels sad, anxious, and excited
Who fears bugs, bees, and failure
Who'd like to see Italy, world peace, and a successful year
Resident of Rolling Meadows, Illinois
Marienau

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Personal Narrative

OPENING ACT

<u>CHOOSE ONE</u>: Dialogue, Action, Question, Sound Effects, or
Thoughts/Feelings

<u>SETTING:</u>

FEELINGS

Show-Don't Tell!

MAIN EVENT

Choose only ONE EVENT!

ENDING

Memories, Feelings, Hopes/Wishes, Decisions

Narrative (Story) Writing Planning Sheet

Who, What, When, Where, Why, Emotion

Beginning

Events before
incident

Story

Events during
incident

Events after
incident

End

114
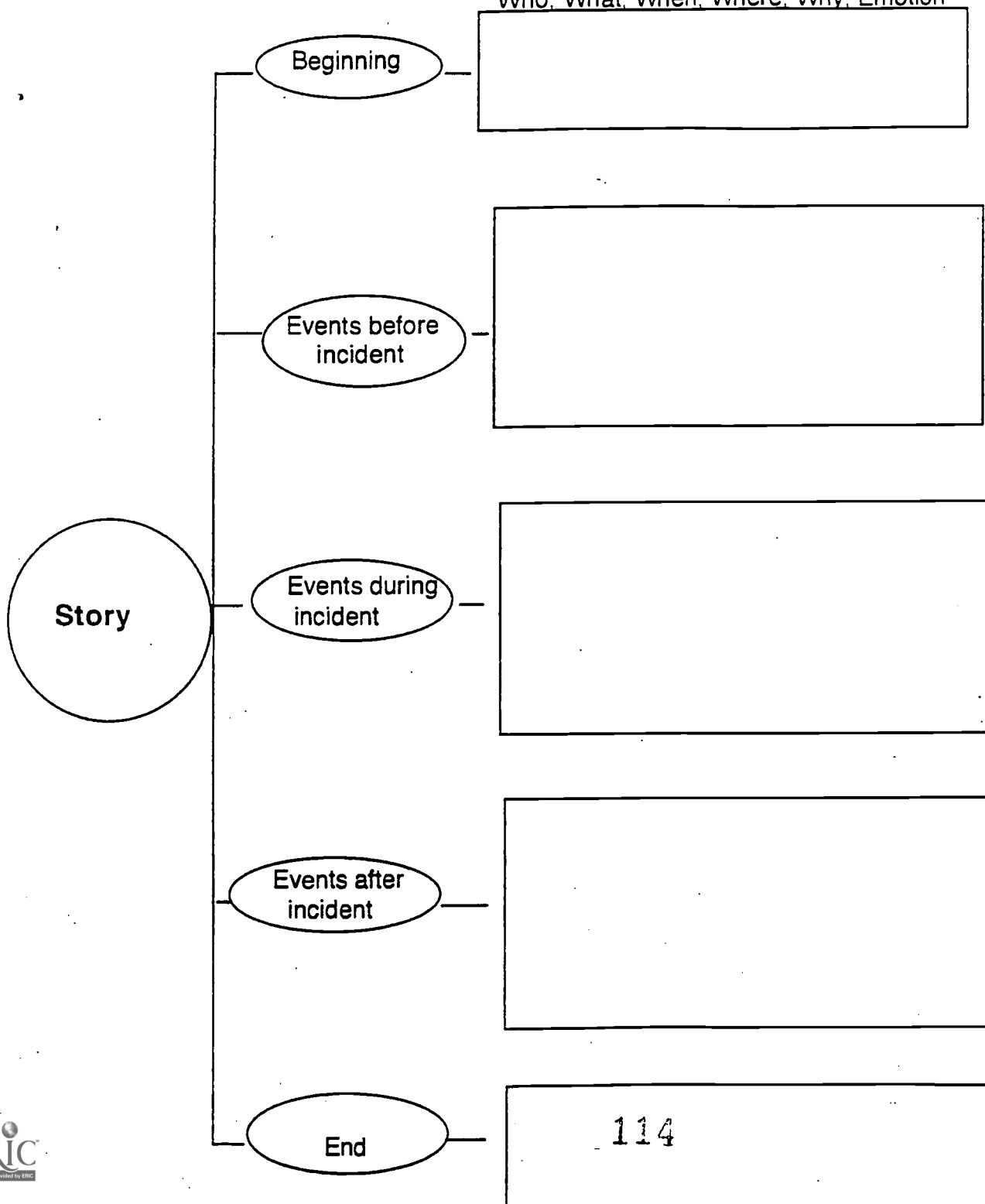
Parent Handbook
to Aid in
the Success of Your Child's
Writing Process!

" One responsibility of parents is to establish healthy goals, standards, and limits for their child, and this includes setting appropriate expectations for school achievement."

By: Carl Pickardt, Ph.D.
Author of:

Keys to Developing Your Child's Self-Esteem

Taking the time to support your child in their educational experiences will benefit their learning process. Your encouragement and help can ensure success in your child's future. Thank you for assisting your child in the adventures of writing.
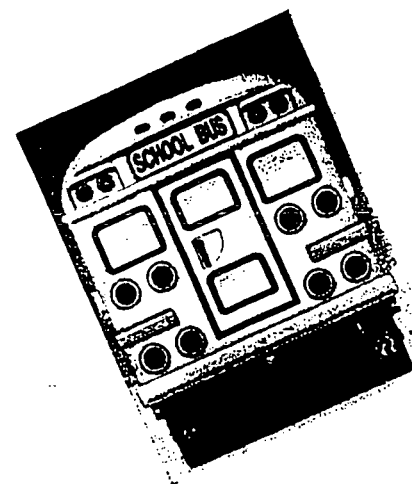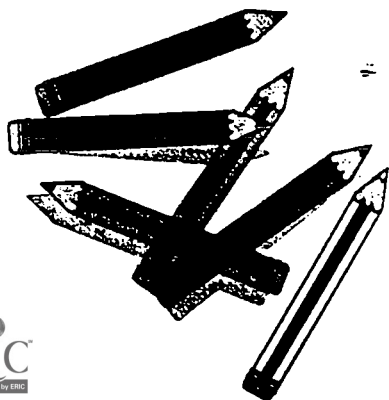
APPENDIX Y
Tips for a Confident Writer

Tips to Help Your Child Become a Better and More Confident Writer!

Evidence has proven that when parents play an active role in their child's education the child will make tremendous gains. Parents must be a good role model for their child. Parents who read and write around their children demonstrate enjoyment and the process that is taken when reading and writing. Reading and writing must be part of their daily lives and should be a special and entertaining part of playtime with children (Graves and Stuart 1985).

What to do when your child brings home writing pieces from school.
- show interest by responding to your child's writing positively

- keep questions positive (for example say: "This sentence confused me." instead of: "This sentence is a mess, I can't make this out.")

- pick one problem in your child's writing piece and focus on that (examples: content, organization/paragraphing, final touches can include grammar)

- main focus should not include grammar issues. Ideas and thoughts are more important in the writing process. Keep it for the very end of your time together.

List of everyday activities to help your child improve their writing.
- writing a letter (friend or family)

- help with cooking (writing or reading a recipe)

- writing grocery shopping (making a list or reading a list)

- keeping a daily planner/calendar (at home)

- writing journals/diaries

- writing thank you notes (for gifts)

- making lists (birthday/holiday gifts, things to do)
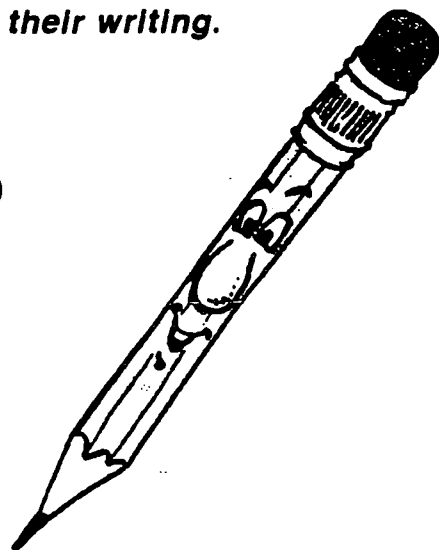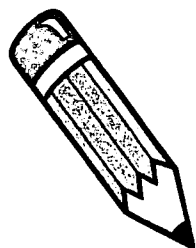
The 3 Types of Writing

PERSONAL NARRATIVE WRITING

The students will share and reflect upon a significant experience they have had and record their reactions. The students are expected to describe the action and express their feelings.

PERSUASIVE WRITING

This type of writing assignment requires students to take a position and develop one side of an argument. A persuasive paper tells the writers feelings, lists reasons, and asks the reader to agree with them.

EXPOSITORY WRITING

Expository writing requires students to interpret, or describe something based upon background experiences or information provided in the prompt.
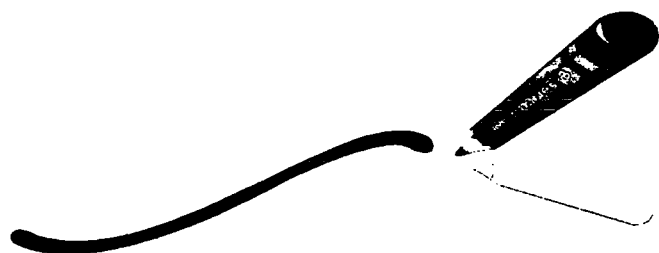
Personal Narrative Writing

OPENING ACT

- ❑ Grab the reader's attention and get them interested!
    - o Use dialogue, action, question, sound effects, or thoughts/feelings
- ❑ Tell the reader where you are and what the main character's goal is.
- ❑ Begin your story as close to the main event as possible.
- ❑ If the opening act is too long the audience gets restless.

MAIN EVENT

- ❑ Choose ONE event to focus on
- ❑ Action
- ❑ Dialogue
- ❑ Description
- ❑ The main character's thoughts/feelings
    - o Show-Don't Tell
- ❑ REMEMBER-No bed to bed stories!
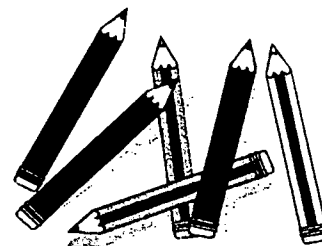
ENDING

- ❑ A memory of the main event
- ❑ The main character's feelings
- ❑ The main character's hopes/wishes
- ❑ A decision or defining action

KID FRIENDLY RUBRIC

<u>*Narrative*</u>

Focus –
- use reactions = show don't tell

    I was scared ➔ My hair stood on end.
- has one inch picture frame
- make subject clear – unifying event
- stick to the experience throughout – the WHAT of the story
- don't ramble

Elaboration –
- give specific details for each episode
- use exciting words

Organization –
- has a plan – beginning, middle, end
- use paragraphs – indent, more than one sentence
- use transitions
    * vertical transitions – between paragraphs
    * horizontal transitions – glue within paragraphs
- use sentence variety – more than simple sentences

KID FRIENDLY RUBRIC

Persuasive/Expository

Focus –
- restate prompt/thesis/main idea in introduction or opening
- give specific reasons
- stick to the prompt/thesis/main idea
- restate prompt and reasoning in a new way in conclusion

Elaboration –
- give specific details for each reason
- use exciting words

Organization –
- has a plan
- use paragraphs – indent, more than one sentence
- use transitions
    - * vertical transitions – between paragraphs
    - * horizontal transitions – glue within paragraphs *120*
- use sentence variety – more than simple sentences

APPENDIX DD
"Musties": Words that I Must Spell Correctly

a	had	most	there
about	has	my	these
after	have	no	they
all	he	not	this
an	her	now	time
and	him	of	to
are	his	on	two
as	how	one	up
at	I	only	use
be	if	or	very
been	in	other	was
but	into	out	water
by	is	over	way
called	it	people	we
can	its	said	were
could	just	see	what
do	know	she	when
did	like	so	where
down	little	some	which
each	long	than	who
find	made	that	will
first	make	the	with
for	many	their	words
from	may	them	would
	more	then	you
			your

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Write to Narrate .... Part 2

The goal of **narrative** writing is to tell stories. Narrative writing works best when it presents and develops a story in an organized manner. Narrative writing should carry readers along and make them want to know what will happen next.

Narrative writing techniques focus on the effective use of basic story elements—a setting in time and place, central characters, a plot, a conflict, and a resolution. Narrative writing needs a beginning, a middle, and an end, and many vivid details that bring the tale to life.

EVALUATION TIPS

There are many ways to evaluate students' narrative writing. Here are some broad points to consider as you judge some or all of the writing activities in this section of the book:

Does the narrative piece have—

- ❏ A clear beginning, middle, and end?

- ❏ A way to engage readers from the start?

- ❏ Specific characters, setting, and plot?

- ❏ Vivid details?

- ❏ Realistic dialogue (if applicable)?

- ❏ A consistent point of view?

- ❏ Transitions and indications of order?

- ❏ Is the piece complete?

- ❏ Does it allow readers to follow a story?

- ❏ Does it reach its intended audience?

- ❏ Does it show planning and follow-through?

- ❏ Is the word choice thoughtful, precise, and descriptive?

- ❏ How are the mechanics (grammar, usage, spelling, punctuation)?

Write to Persuade ·················· Part 4

The goal of **persuasive** writing is to offer an opinion supported by facts. Persuasive writing attempts to convince the reader to agree with the author's point of view. Persuasive writing works best when facts and examples back up the author's statements.

Techniques of persuasive writing include the use of comparison and value words, such as *better, more precise*, or *safest*. Persuasive writing must be logical and convincing, but to be most effective it should not hit the reader over the head!

EVALUATION TIPS

There are many ways to evaluate students' persuasive writing. Here are some broad points to consider as you judge some or all of the writing activities in this section of the book:

Does the persuasive piece have—

❑ A clear audience and purpose?

❑ A logical plan of organization?

❑ A focused argument?

❑ Support through examples, logic, data, or other details?

❑ A strong conclusion?

❑ A reasonable and/or respectful tone?

❑ Is the piece complete?

❑ Does it allow readers to evaluate the writer's point of view?

❑ Does it show planning and follow-through?

❑ Is the word choice thoughtful, precise, and persuasive?

❑ How are the mechanics (grammar, usage, spelling, punctuation)?

Write to Inform .... Part ⭐3⭐
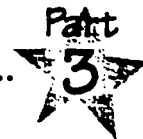
T he goal of **expository** writing is to give information. Expository writing may convey
ideas, provide step-by-step directions, or explain how to complete a task.
Expository writing must present facts and details in an orderly way; it should be
extremely clear and informative.

Techniques of expository writing include the use of transition words such as *first*, *then*,
or *finally*, and graphic organizers such as tables, charts, graphs, or diagrams.
Expository writing needs well-structured paragraphs with topic sentences supported by
details; it should be geared to meet the needs of a specific audience.

Evaluation Tips

There are many ways to evaluate students' expository writing. Here are some broad points
to consider as you judge some or all of the writing activities in this section of the book:

Does the expository piece have—

  ☐ A stated purpose or clear focus?

  ☐ A sensible plan of organization?

  ☐ A beginning, middle, and end?

  ☐ Paragraphs with main ideas and supporting details?

  ☐ Effective transitions?

  ☐ Thorough explanations?

  ☐ Precise language?

  ☐ Accurate definitions?

☐ Is the piece complete?

☐ Does it allow readers to get information clearly?

☐ Does it show planning and follow-through?

☐ Is the word choice thoughtful, precise, and informative?

☐ How are the mechanics (grammar, usage, spelling, punctuation)?

Reference 1

<div align="right">77</div>

Word Bank of 1200 High-Frequency Writing Words

Researchers over the years have carefully tabulated the highest-utility writing words. There are only minor differences in word placement among the most respected and massive studies, which serves to validate the totality of this research. The *Spelling Sourcebook* word bank of 1200 high-use writing words is a cross-referenced compilation of these word-frequency studies. At its base is the American Heritage Word Frequency Study (Carroll, Davies, Richman). However, several other valid studies significantly influenced the development of the word bank. These include the work of Gates, Horn, Rinsland, Greene and Loomer, Harris and Jacobson.

Between frequencies 1-999, all words have been included in the *Spelling Sourcebook* word bank, regardless of their phonetic complexity. For frequencies 1000-1200, words have been edited to make the word bank instructionally appropriate at the upper grade levels. Regularly spelled words with few letters have been omitted from the word bank within these frequencies. In their place are the next words that occur consecutively in the frequency studies. This maintains the integrity and consistency of the *Spelling Sourcebook* word bank, accurately indicating the relative frequency of use of the words listed. As a result, the word bank provides appropriate spelling words for the lower, as well as the upper grade levels.

This word bank is the source for the Core Words (see Article 2, page 9) and Priority Words (see Article 8, page 33, and Article 9, page 39). The words in the bank are listed in the order of their frequency of use in everyday writing. Words decrease in writing utility as the word numbers increase. Since *the* is the most frequently used word in our language, its number is one (1) in the word bank. Therefore, knowing how to spell *the* should provide a writer with more spelling power than knowing how to spell any other word, save the writer's own name.

frequency	word	frequency	word	frequency	word	frequency	word	frequency	word
1	the	49	how	97	just	145	number	193	want
2	of	50	up	98	where	146	great	194	school
3	and	51	out	99	most	147	tell	195	important
4	a	52	them	100	know	148	men	196	until
5	to	53	then	101	get	149	say	197	form
6	in	54	she	102	through	150	small	198	food
7	is	55	many	103	back	151	every	199	keep
8	you	56	some	104	much	152	found	200	children
9	that	57	so	105	go	153	still	201	feet
10	it	58	these	106	good	154	between	202	land
11	he	59	would	107	new	155	name	203	side
12	for	60	other	108	write	156	should	204	without
13	was	61	into	109	our	157	home	205	boy
14	on	62	has	110	me	158	big	206	once
15	are	63	more	111	man	159	give	207	animal
16	as	64	her	112	too	160	air	208	life
17	with	65	two	113	any	161	line	209	enough
18	his	66	like	114	day	162	set	210	took
19	they	67	him	115	same	163	own	211	four
20	at	68	see	116	right	164	under	212	head
21	be	69	time	117	look	165	read	213	above
22	this	70	could	118	think	166	last	214	kind
23	from	71	no	119	also	167	never	215	began
24	I	72	make	120	around	168	us	216	almost
25	have	73	than	121	another	169	left	217	live
26	or	74	first	122	came	170	end	218	page
27	by	75	been	123	come	171	along	219	got
28	one	76	its	124	work	172	while	220	earth
29	had	77	who	125	three	173	might	221	need
30	not	78	now	126	must	174	next	222	far
31	but	79	people	127	because	175	sound	223	hand
32	what	80	my	128	does	176	below	224	high
33	all	81	made	129	part	177	saw	225	year
34	were	82	over	130	even	178	something	226	mother
35	when	83	did	131	place	179	thought	227	light
36	we	84	down	132	well	180	both	228	country
37	there	85	only	133	such	181	few	229	father
38	can	86	way	134	here	182	those	230	let
39	an	87	find	135	take	183	always	231	night
40	your	88	use	136	why	184	show	232	picture
41	which	89	may	137	help	185	large	233	being
42	their	90	water	138	put	186	often	234	study
43	said	91	long	139	different	187	together	235	second
44	if	92	little	140	away	188	asked	236	soon
45	do	93	very	141	again	189	house	237	story
46	will	94	after	142	off	190	don't	238	since
47	each	95	words	143	went	191	world	239	white
48	about	96	called	144	old	192	going	240	ever

frequency	word		frequency	word		frequency	word		frequency	word		frequency	word
241	paper		289	turn		337	grow		385	horse		433	game
242	hard		290	move		338	draw		386	matter		434	system
243	near		291	face		339	yet		387	stand		435	bring
244	sentence		292	door		340	less		388	box		436	watch
245	better		293	cut		341	wind		389	start		437	shell
246	best		294	done		342	behind		390	that's		438	dry
247	across		295	group		343	cannot		391	class		439	within
248	during		296	true		344	letter		392	piece		440	floor
249	today		297	half		345	among		393	surface		441	ice
250	however		298	red		346	able		394	river		442	ship
251	sure		299	fish		347	dog		395	common		443	themselves
252	knew		300	plants		348	shown		396	stop		444	begin
253	it's		301	living		349	mean		397	am		445	fact
254	try		302	black		350	English		398	talk		446	third
255	told		303	eat		351	rest		399	whether		447	quite
256	young		304	short		352	perhaps		400	fine		448	carry
257	sun		305	United States		353	certain		401	round		449	distance
258	thing		306	run		354	six		402	dark		450	although
259	whole		307	book		355	feel		403	past		451	sat
260	hear		308	gave		356	fire		404	ball		452	possible
261	example		309	order		357	ready		405	girl		453	heart
262	heard		310	open		358	green		406	road		454	real
263	several		311	ground		359	yes		407	blue		455	simple
264	change		312	cold		360	built		408	instead		456	snow
265	answer		313	really		361	special		409	either		457	rain
266	room		314	table		362	ran		410	held		458	suddenly
267	sea		315	remember		363	full		411	already		459	easy
268	against		316	tree		364	town		412	warm		460	leaves
269	top		317	course		365	complete		413	gone		461	lay
270	turned		318	front		366	oh		414	finally		462	size
271	learn		319	American		367	person		415	summer		463	wild
272	point		320	space		368	hot		416	understand		464	weather
273	city		321	inside		369	anything		417	moon		465	miss
274	play		322	ago		370	hold		418	animals		466	pattern
275	toward		323	sad		371	state		419	mind		467	sky
276	five		324	early		372	list		420	outside		468	walked
277	himself		325	I'll		373	stood		421	power		469	main
278	usually		326	learned		374	hundred		422	problem		470	someone
279	money		327	brought		375	ten		423	longer		471	center
280	seen		328	close		376	fast		424	winter		472	field
281	didn't		329	nothing		377	felt		425	deep		473	stay
282	car		330	though		378	kept		426	heavy		474	itself
283	morning		331	idea		379	notice		427	carefully		475	boat
284	I'm		332	before		380	can't		428	follow		476	question
285	body		333	lived		381	strong		429	beautiful		477	wide
286	upon		334	became		382	voice		430	everyone		478	least
287	family		335	add		383	probably		431	leave		479	tiny
288	later		336	become		384	area		432	everything		480	hour

5th Grade

frequency	word	frequency	word	frequency	word	frequency	word	frequency	word
481	happened	529	bird	577	woman	625	yellow	673	wife
482	foot	530	wood	578	eye	626	party	674	island
483	care	531	color	579	milk	627	force	675	we'll
484	low	532	war	580	choose	628	test	676	opposite
485	else	533	fly	581	north	629	bad	677	born
486	gold	534	yourself	582	seven	630	temperature	678	sense
487	build	535	seem	583	famous	631	pair	679	cattle
488	glass	536	thus	584	late	632	ahead	680	million
489	rock	537	square	585	pay	633	wrong	681	anyone
490	tall	538	moment	586	sleep	634	practice	682	rule
491	alone	539	teacher	587	iron	635	sand	683	science
492	bottom	540	happy	588	trouble	636	tail	684	afraid
493	check	541	bright	589	store	637	wait	685	women
494	reading	542	sent	590	beside	638	difficult	686	produce
495	fall	543	present	591	oil	639	general	687	pull
496	poor	544	plan	592	modern	640	cover	688	son
497	map	545	rather	593	fun	641	material	689	meant
498	friend	546	length	594	catch	642	isn't	690	broken
499	language	547	speed	595	business	643	thousand	691	interest
500	job	548	machine	596	reach	644	sign	692	chance
501	music	549	information	597	lot	645	guess	693	thick
502	buy	550	except	598	won't	646	forward	694	sight
503	window	551	figure	599	case	647	huge	695	pretty
504	mark	552	you're	600	speak	648	ride	696	train
505	heat	553	free	601	shape	649	region	697	fresh
506	grew	554	fell	602	eight	650	nor	698	drive
507	listen	555	suppose	603	edge	651	period	699	lead
508	ask	556	natural	604	soft	652	blood	700	break
509	single	557	ocean	605	village	653	rich	701	sit
510	clear	558	government	606	object	654	team	702	bought
511	energy	559	baby	607	age	655	corner	703	radio
512	week	560	grass	608	minute	656	cat	704	method
513	explain	561	plane	609	wall	657	amount	705	king
514	lost	562	street	610	meet	658	garden	706	similar
515	spring	563	couldn't	611	record	659	led	707	return
516	travel	564	reason	612	copy	660	note	708	corn
517	wrote	565	difference	613	forest	661	various	709	decide
518	farm	566	maybe	614	especially	662	race	710	position
519	circle	567	history	615	necessary	663	bit	711	bear
520	whose	568	mouth	616	he's	664	result	712	hope
521	correct	569	middle	617	unit	665	brother	713	song
522	bed	570	step	618	flat	666	addition	714	engine
523	measure	571	child	619	direction	667	doesn't	715	board
524	straight	572	strange	620	south	668	dead	716	control
525	base	573	wish	621	subject	669	weight	717	spread
526	mountain	574	soil	622	skin	670	thin	718	evening
527	caught	575	human	623	wasn't	671	stone	719	brown
528	hair	576	trip	624	I've	672	hit	720	clean

frequency	word	frequency	word	frequency	word	frequency	word	frequency	word
721	wouldn't	769	wear	817	path	865	clothes	913	northern
722	section	770	act	818	careful	866	doctor	914	flower
723	spent	771	hat	819	narrow	867	indeed	915	star
724	ring	772	arm	820	mental	868	dance	916	feed
725	teeth	773	believe	821	nine	869	church	917	wooden
726	quiet	774	major	822	useful	870	original	918	sort
727	ancient	775	gray	823	public	871	enjoy	919	develop
728	stick	776	wonder	824	according	872	string	920	shoulder
729	afternoon	777	include	825	steel	873	sister	921	variety
730	silver	778	describe	826	salt	874	familiar	922	season
731	nose	779	electric	827	speech	875	onto	923	share
732	century	780	sold	828	forth	876	imagine	924	jump
733	therefore	781	visit	829	nation	877	blow	925	regular
734	level	782	sheep	830	knowledge	878	quick	926	represent
735	you'll	783	I'd	831	appear	879	law	927	market
736	death	784	office	832	ate	880	lie	928	we're
737	hole	785	row	833	dinner	881	final	929	flew
738	coast	786	contain	834	hurt	882	rise	930	finger
739	cross	787	fit	835	spend	883	loud	931	expect
740	sharp	788	equal	836	experiment	884	fair	932	army
741	fight	789	value	837	touch	885	herself	933	cabin
742	capital	790	yard	838	drop	886	slow	934	camp
743	fill	791	beat	839	chair	887	noise	935	danger
744	deal	792	inch	840	east	888	statement	936	purpose
745	busy	793	sugar	841	separate	889	hungry	937	breakfast
746	beyond	794	key	842	truck	890	join	938	proper
747	send	795	product	843	sing	891	tube	939	coat
748	love	796	desert	844	column	892	rode	940	push
749	cool	797	bank	845	twice	893	empty	941	express
750	cause	798	farther	846	particular	894	twenty	942	shot
751	please	799	won	847	shop	895	broke	943	angry
752	meat	800	total	848	unless	896	nice	944	southern
753	lady	801	sell	849	spot	897	effect	945	dress
754	west	802	wire	850	neither	898	paid	946	bag
755	glad	803	rose	851	met	899	motion	947	proud
756	action	804	cotton	852	wheel	900	myself	948	neck
757	pass	805	spoke	853	none	901	divide	949	breath
758	type	806	rope	854	hill	902	supply	950	strength
759	attention	807	fear	855	television	903	laid	951	member
760	gas	808	shore	856	bill	904	dear	952	twelve
761	kitchen	809	throughout	857	solve	905	surprise	953	mine
762	pick	810	compare	858	pressure	906	gun	954	company
763	scale	811	movement	859	report	907	entire	955	current
764	basic	812	exercise	860	farmer	908	fruit	956	pound
765	happen	813	bread	861	count	909	crowd	957	valley
766	safe	814	process	862	trade	910	band	958	double
767	grown	815	nature	863	chief	911	wet	959	till
768	cost	816	apart	864	month	912	solid	960	match

frequency	word	frequency	word	frequency	word	frequency	word	frequency	word
961	average	1009	industry	1057	dangerous	1105	vegetable	1153	disease
962	die	1010	they're	1058	event	1106	parents	1154	construction
963	liquid	1011	beneath	1059	leader	1107	style	1155	motor
964	alive	1012	laugh	1060	peace	1108	education	1156	affect
965	stream	1013	groceries	1061	spelling	1109	required	1157	conversation
966	provide	1014	popular	1062	chapter	1110	political	1158	evidence
967	drink	1015	thank	1063	swimming	1111	daughter	1159	citizen
968	experience	1016	quarter	1064	opportunity	1112	individual	1160	environment
969	future	1017	climbed	1065	immediately	1113	progress	1161	influence
970	tomorrow	1018	continue	1066	favorite	1114	altogether	1162	cancel
971	drove	1019	potatoes	1067	settled	1115	activities	1163	audience
972	population	1020	receive	1068	telephone	1116	article	1164	apartment
973	finish	1021	design	1069	repeat	1117	equipment	1165	worse
974	station	1022	president	1070	prepare	1118	discuss	1166	transportation
975	shook	1023	charge	1071	instance	1119	healthy	1167	frozen
976	stage	1024	mistake	1072	avenue	1120	perfect	1168	waste
977	oxygen	1025	hospital	1073	newspaper	1121	recognize	1169	couple
978	poem	1026	remain	1074	actually	1122	frequently	1170	function
979	solution	1027	service	1075	employee	1123	character	1171	connect
980	burn	1028	increase	1076	review	1124	personal	1172	project
981	cent	1029	students	1077	convince	1125	disappear	1173	pronounce
982	electricity	1030	insects	1078	allowed	1126	success	1174	offered
983	everybody	1031	address	1079	nobody	1127	traffic	1175	apply
984	rate	1032	sincerely	1080	details	1128	yesterday	1176	improve
985	dust	1033	dollars	1081	muscles	1129	situation	1177	stomach
986	worth	1034	belong	1082	model	1130	realize	1178	collect
987	community	1035	bottle	1083	climate	1131	message	1179	prevent
988	captain	1036	flight	1084	coffee	1132	recently	1180	courage
989	bus	1037	forget	1085	whenever	1133	account	1181	occur
990	protect	1038	bicycle	1086	serious	1134	physical	1182	foreign
991	cook	1039	secret	1087	angle	1135	neighbor	1183	quality
992	raise	1040	soldier	1088	feather	1136	excited	1184	terrible
993	further	1041	silent	1089	determined	1137	whisper	1185	instrument
994	steam	1042	structure	1090	dictionary	1138	available	1186	balance
995	guide	1043	height	1091	ordinary	1139	college	1187	ability
996	discover	1044	observe	1092	extra	1140	furniture	1188	arrange
997	plain	1045	indicate	1093	rough	1141	leather	1189	rhythm
998	usual	1046	railroad	1094	library	1142	husband	1190	avoid
999	seat	1047	knife	1095	condition	1143	principal	1191	daily
1000	accept	1048	married	1096	arrived	1144	medicine	1192	identity
1001	police	1049	suggested	1097	located	1145	excellent	1193	standard
1002	consider	1050	entered	1098	program	1146	operation	1194	combine
1003	dozen	1051	magazine	1099	pencil	1147	council	1195	attached
1004	baseball	1052	agree	1100	tongue	1148	author	1196	frighten
1005	rubber	1053	fifty	1101	title	1149	organize	1197	social
1006	symbol	1054	escape	1102	enemy	1150	concern	1198	factory
1007	support	1055	threw	1103	garage	1151	barbecue	1199	license
1008	exactly	1056	planet	1104	lose	1152	accident	1200	recommend

Following are two examples of the many different ways the words could be divided consecutively among grade levels to customize the program to meet various needs.

Example 1:

grade 1	word frequencies 1–30	(30 words)
grade 2	word frequencies 31–130	(100 words)
grade 3	word frequencies 131–265	(135 words)
grade 4	word frequencies 266–400	(135 words)
grade 5	word frequencies 401–600	(200 words)
grade 6	word frequencies 601–800	(200 words)
grade 7	word frequencies 801–1000	(200 words)
grade 8	word frequencies 1001–1200	(200 words)

A spelling program that encompasses only grades 1–6 does not need to accommodate all 1200 words within grades 1–6. It is always better to teach fewer words well than to teach many words poorly. Effective spelling instruction is not "covering" long lists of words.

Example 2 reflects Core Words drawn from a smaller word bank—just the first 800 of the 1200 total words in the word bank.

Example 2:

grade 1	word frequencies 1–25	(25 words)
grade 2	word frequencies 26–115	(90 words)
grade 3	word frequencies 116–250	(135 words)
grade 4	word frequencies 251–400	(150 words)
grade 5	word frequencies 401–600	(200 words)
grade 6	word frequencies 601–800	(200 words)

Once the number of Core Words has been determined and divided by grade level using the *Spelling Sourcebook* word bank as the resource, teachers can be presented with their new Core Word Curriculum. The Core Words are a customized set of words divided by grade level to accommodate a specific group of program users. The grade-level divisions for the customized set of Core Words should be recorded here as a resource for teachers using the program:

The Core Words by Grade Level

grades	word frequencies	number of words

APPENDIX II
Persuasive Writing Outline

PERSUASIVE WRITING OUTLINE

PARAGRAPH

Topic Sentence_____

#1   Reason #1_____

Reason #2_____

Reason #3_____

Reason #1_____

#2   Detail_____

Detail_____

Detail_____

Reason #2_____

#3   Detail_____

Detail_____

Detail_____

Reason #3_____

#4   Detail_____

Detail_____

Detail_____

Topic Sentence_____

#5   Reason #1_____

Reason #2_____

Reason #3_____

Conclusion Sentence_____

APPENDIX JJ
Persuasive Plan Sheet

Persuasive   Plan Sheet

introduction

reason 1   reason 2   reason 3

support   support   support

Conclusion

APPENDIX KK
Persuasive Planning Guide

PERSUASIVE PLANNING GUIDE

TITLE:_____

I. Many people believe_____

_____

I think_____

_____

     Argument A_____

     Argument B_____

     Argument C_____

II. Argument A_____
   1._____
   2._____
   3._____

III. Argument B_____
   1._____
   2._____
   3._____

IV. Argument C_____
   1._____
   2._____
   3._____

V. Restate 3 Argument_____

_____

_____

_____

EXPOSITORY WRITING OUTLINE

PARAGRAPH

Topic Sentence_____

#1 Fact/Step #1_____

Fact/Step #2_____

Fact/Step #3_____

Fact/Step #1_____

#2 Detail_____

Detail_____

Detail_____

Fact/Step #2_____

#3 Detail_____

Detail_____

Detail_____

Fact/Step #3_____

#4 Detail_____

Detail_____

Detail_____

Topic Sentence_____

#5 Fact/Step #1_____

Fact/Step #2_____

Fact/Step #3_____

Conclusion Sentence_____

EXPOSITORY PLANNING GUIDE

TITLE:_____

I. Who_____
   What_____
   When_____
   Where_____
   Why_____
   How_____

   Main Idea A_____

   Main Idea B_____

   Main Idea C_____

II. Main Idea A:_____
   1._____
   2._____
   3._____

III. Main Idea B:_____
   1._____
   2._____
   3._____

IV. Main Idea C:_____
   1._____
   2._____
   3._____

V. Restate 3 Main Ideas_____
_____
_____
_____

W.O.W. DAY
NARRATIVE PROMPT
Posttest February 2001

Describe a time in your life when you felt scared. What was your reaction? How did you feel? Describe what happened. Be sure to SHOW your feelings throughout your story.

You may use this paper for any pre-writing activities. Try your best!

APPENDIX OO
Post-Survey Parent Letter

February 16, 2001

Dear Parents,

The final days of our research project for our master's program through St. Xavier University are fast approaching. As part of the follow up portion of the data collection of the writing research, we would like to again have your opinion and feelings about your child's writing performance. Please complete the enclosed writing survey and return it to school by **Tuesday, February 20th**. All of your responses are, of course, strictly confidential.

We both thank you for your ever-constant support and cooperation. By working together, we feel that this experience has been a success.

Sincerely,

Miss Eleni Koulourianos
Countryside School

Mrs. Vickie Marienau
Lines School

APPENDIX PP
Post-Parent Writing Survey

Parent Name:_____   Date:_____

Student's Name:_____

Parent Writing Survey-February

For each item circle your response:

1.   Does your child write at home beyond required homework?
     almost always   sometimes   almost never

2.   Do you encourage your child to write at home?
     almost always   sometimes   almost never

3.   Does your child enjoy writing letters, stories, poems, etc.?
     almost always   sometimes   almost never

4.   Do you talk about your child's writing with him/her?
     almost always   sometimes   almost never

5.   Do you enjoy writing letters, stories, poems, etc. at home?
     almost always   sometimes   almost never

6.   Does your child see you writing at home?
     almost always   sometimes   almost never

7.   Do you provide writing materials for your child?
     almost always   sometimes   almost never

8. Are you available to assist your child with rewriting if necessary?

    almost always   sometimes   almost never

9. What type of change have you seen in your child's motivation towards writing thus far?

    positive change   no change   negative change

10. Do you feel your child's writing has:

    improved   stayed the same   decreased

Please comment on any of the writing experiences your child has had this year.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Dear Parents,

     As you know, your child is participating in an exciting new writing experience this year. The students have been working hard developing their writing skills through various activities. In addition, your child has been putting together a collection of his/her writing pieces in their writing portfolio.

     Periodically, throughout the rest of the school year, I will be sending home your child's writing portfolio. I would like you to review the contents of the portfolio and share comments and observations about your child's work with them.

     After your child has shared their writing portfolio with you, please complete the PQP reflection sheet. Your child will explain to you what a PQP is.

     The ultimate goal is for us to work together to help your child grow as a writer. Sharing and reflecting is an extremely important component of our writer's workshop process.

     Thank you in advance for your help and support. Your child will benefit greatly from this time you will spend with them.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Marienau

APPENDIX RR
Parent Portfolio Letter: 5th Grade

Dear Parents,

As you know, your child is participating in an exciting new writing experience this year. The students have been working hard developing their writing through various activities. In addition, your child has been putting together a collection of his/her writing pieces in their writing portfolio.

Periodically, throughout the rest of the school year, I will be sending home your child's writing portfolio. I would like you to review the contents of the portfolio and share comments and observations about your child's work with them.

After your child has shared their writing portfolio with you, please complete the Praise, Question, and Suggestion reflection sheet. Your child will explain the reflection format to you. If you still have questions please refer to the purple parent handbook that was given to you at parent/teacher conferences or call me here at Countryside.

The ultimate goal is for us to work together to help your child grow as a writer. Sharing and reflecting is an extremely important component of our writers workshop process.

Thank you in advance for your help and support. Your child will benefit greatly from this time you will spend with them.

Sincerely,
Miss Koulourianos

APPENDIX SS
Thoughts and Goals

Name:_____ Date:_____

Thoughts and Goals...

THOUGHTS:

The title of the writing piece I like the best is

_____

because_____

_____.

I worked my hardest on_____.

One thing I have learned about narrative writing

is_____
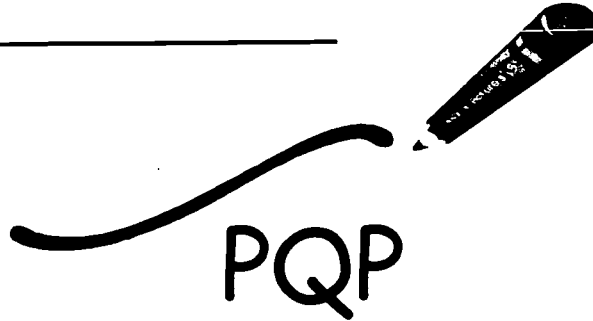
_____

_____.

GOALS:

Two things I want to work on are:

1._____

_____

2._____

_____

APPENDIX TT
Parent PQP

Child's Name:_____ Date:_____

Parent's Name:_____

PQP

Praise:_____

_____

_____

_____

Question:_____

_____

_____

_____

Polish:_____

_____

_____

_____

March 12, 2001

Dear Third Graders,

The time has finally arrived! You are going to meet your pen pals from Miss Koulourianos' 5th grade class at Countryside School! We will be going to Countryside School on **FRIDAY, MARCH 16th**. We will leave school at approximately 10:15am and return to school at 1:30pm.

Miss Koulourianos and I have planned many fun activities for you and your pen pals. We will be sharing our writing portfolios with each other and eat lunch together. Along with many other surprises...

On Friday, you will need to bring your lunch in a brown paper bag. If you normally buy your lunch at school, you will need to bring one from home.

I hope you are excited because your pen pals can't wait to meet all of you!

Mrs. Marienau

Find a Pen Pal

Find a Pen Pal who...   Pen Pal's Name

...is an only child.	
...can play a musical instrument.	
...is able to swim.	
...can make a basket from the free-throw line.	
...has a birthday the same month as you.	
...can roll their tongue.	
...has hit a homerun.	
...hates vegetables.	
...enjoys singing.	
...has read at least one of the Harry Potter books.	
...has a dog or cat.	
...has broken a bone.	
...has been to Disney Quest.	
...can speak a foreign language.	

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