DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 463 543 CS 510 888

AUTHOR Blackmore, Heather L.
TITLE Comprehension Promotes the Retention and Utilization of Literary Writing Techniques.
PUB DATE 2002-04-00
NOTE 64p.; Master of Arts Thesis, Kean University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Masters Theses (042) -- Tests/Questionnaires (160)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Grade 5; Instructional Effectiveness; Intermediate Grades; *Reading Comprehension; *Reading Instruction; Reading Research; *Reading Writing Relationship; *Short Stories; *Writing Instruction; Writing Research; *Writing Strategies

ABSTRACT

This study described how a fifth grade reading and writing class utilized short stories to comprehend how authors used eight different writing techniques in their own writing. The researcher found that when the fifth grade students comprehended how to use a writing technique they were able to apply it to their own personal, expressive writing. The researcher also analyzed the retention of the writing techniques over an eight-week study. It was found that if the writing technique was comprehended and utilized, a fifth grade student eventually mastered the technique. The integration of reading and writing are essential in the process of comprehension. The two strategies which developed comprehension included reading as a writing strategy and writing as a reading strategy. When teachers find a balanced approach of the two strategies the result is a total comprehension of the material being studied. (Contains 36 references. Appendixes contain a reading survey instrument and a writing survey instrument.) (Author/RS)

Comprehension Promotes the Retention and Utilization of Literary Writing Techniques

Heather L. Blackmore

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Master of Arts Degree in

Reading Specialization

Kean University

April, 2002

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to Dr. Diane Tracey, professor of Advanced Seminar, for her encouragement, support, and guidance. Her comments and suggestions improved the study greatly.

I gratefully thank the students, who wrote bravely and freely, as I said they should, thereby teaching me more about writing than I ever knew. They are remembered as the grade 5 class of 2002.

I also wish to thank my family and my husband John for their support and understanding during the many months of work. Their encouraging comments and listening ears made the journey more pleasurable.

ABSTRACT

This study described how a fifth grade reading and writing class utilized short stories to comprehend how authors used eight different writing techniques in their own writing. The researcher found that when the fifth grade students comprehended how to use a writing technique they were able to apply it to their own personal, expressive writing. The researcher also analyzed the retention of the writing techniques over an eight-week study. It was found that if the writing technique was comprehended and utilized, a fifth grade student eventually mastered the technique.

The integration of reading and writing are essential in the process of comprehension. The two strategies which developed comprehension included reading as a writing strategy and writing as a reading strategy. When teachers find a balanced approach of the two strategies the result is total comprehension of the material being studied.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The combination of reading and writing fosters the identification of significant information in a text and encourages reflection on that information as it is organized into a coherent written response. Research has been conducted which suggests that the teaching of reading and writing should be integrated, and not taught as separate skills. When reading and writing are integrated, comprehension of the material is enhanced.

In the attempt to provide a synthesis of traditional and contemporary insights, this research paper addresses the following: the importance of a balanced approach to reading and writing, the development of comprehension, whole language versus isolated phonics instruction, the role of reading and writing in the classroom, reading and writing workshops, reading as a writing strategy, writing as a reading strategy, and motivating independent reading and writing. The literature review closes with success rates of students who use personal, expressive writing to experience the reading and writing connection.

BALANCED APPROACH TO READING AND WRITING

There is no single, right balanced approach to teaching reading. Rather, balance is a *philosophical perspective* about what kinds of reading knowledge students should develop and how those kinds of knowledge can be attained.

There are at least three common characteristics among the variety of descriptions of balance between reading and writing. First, there must be an equal weighting of something, whether it be key aspects of curriculum, key components, or key kinds of instruction. Second, there is usually a focus on the method of doing the classroom program. This is a focus on the teacher's work, what the teacher does to plan, set up, and conduct the program. Third, you can usually infer the kinds of reading knowledge children attain from the methods that the authors of the program agree are most important (Fitzgerald, 1999).

In a balanced reading perspective, there are three broad categories of children's knowledge about reading that are equally important: local, global, and affective knowledge about reading (Fitzgerald, 1999). Local knowledge about reading includes areas such as phonological awareness; sight words; knowledge of sound-symbol relationships; knowledge of orthographic patterns; and a variety of word identification strategies. Global knowledge includes areas such as understanding, interpretation, and response to reading; strategies for enabling understanding and response; and an awareness of strategic use. Love of reading includes feelings, positive attitude, and the desire to read (Fitzgerald). Teachers who hold a balanced philosophical view of the reading process value multiple ways of learning and arrange their

reading program to incorporate local, global, and affective knowledge equally (Fitzgerald).

DEVELOPMENT OF COMPREHENSION

Reading and writing used to be considered separate skills. Today research recognizes the important relationship between the two (Konopak, 1987 & Squire, 1983). Both the reader and writer are involved in the comprehension process. Characteristics common to both processes include generating, organizing, drafting, and revising ideas (Konopak et al.). The construction of meaning entails an active interchange between writers, readers, and their emerging text world. A deeper level of understanding is developed when the learner anticipates, looks back, and forms momentary impressions.

Reading and writing can be integrated in the following ways to promote comprehension: (1) activate students' prior knowledge of the new topic using individual jot lists or a dialogue between two students, (2) brainstorm and discuss shared student experiences, (3) use appropriate prereading activities to introduce new vocabulary, (4) relate new text information to what they already know using a KWL, (5) have students write to integrate new information, (6) use individual writings during whole class discussions to model good questions and responses, (7) have students meet in small groups to read and discuss their writings, (8) students rewrite following group discussions to

fill in gaps of their previous writings, and (9) evaluate their learning by allowing the students to use writing (Konopak, 1987).

Content comprehension can be facilitated by students' prior knowledge, level of text understanding, and organization of the information. The degree to which incoming information is processed determines how well the text is comprehended (Konopak, 1987).

Development of comprehension depends on word-level skills, background knowledge, and comprehension strategies. Comprehension involves a number of lower and higher order processes specific to reading (Pressley, 2000).

Word-level processes affect the recognition of words. Word-level decoding is a critical bottleneck in the comprehension process, that if a reader cannot decode a word, she or he cannot comprehend it. Skilled readers do not sound out unfamiliar words letter by letter. Rather they recognize common letter chunks, such as recurring blends, prefixes, suffixes, Latin and Greek root words, and rhymes of the language. Starting at four years of age, a child can recognize recurring word chunks. Reading of words boils down to decoding and comprehension, with word-level comprehension depending greatly on the efficiency of decoding (Pressley, 2000).

A person's comprehension skills are also directly related to their knowledge of vocabulary (Pressley, 2000). Vocabulary and comprehension linkages are made stronger when the students are required to use the vocabulary words in multiple ways over a period of time. When a reader comes across a word that is unfamiliar, he or she relies on context clues to determine the meaning of the word. Context clues do not always provide the correct meaning of the vocabulary words. This provides evidence that comprehension depends greatly on word-level processing (Pressley, 2000 & Aulls, 1975).

Background knowledge is a higher order process that further affects comprehension. Readers that know a lot about the world can make valuable connections to their reading. Schematic processing is a top-down approach where activities of the higher order idea occurs first and affects thinking about the details of the situation (Pressley, 2000).

Students can learn comprehension strategies through specific instruction (Pressley, 2000). Teachers must teach decoding skills, sight words, vocabulary words, context clues, encourage extensive reading, and encourage students to ask themselves why the ideas related in the text make sense.

Reading comprehension is restricted when it is viewed as a cognitive process. "Although everyone accepts that comprehension is important in reading, reading starts to lose

its meaning if we limit our understanding to a narrow notion of comprehension" (Le, 1984, p. 352). Reading is a meaningful, active, and creative experience, which cannot be treated only in restricted cognitive terms. Teachers must share the reading experience with children and allow them to "get lost in reading." Students need to understand more than the meaning of the text. They need to be able to express their feelings, make connections, and see themselves in texts. "Reading is not just to comprehend. It is also a meditative process in which readers see themselves in texts" (Le, 1984, p.354).

Reading and writing activities provide models for identifying syntactic, semantic, and organizational structures that cue meanings and signal how ideas are related (Aulls, 1975). Reading is a process of getting meaning from written symbols, while writing is a process of expressing meaning with written symbols. Both processes require projecting meaning, rereading to maintain direction, and weighing what is said to what is intended. These two processes must be learned through the application of strategies (Aulls & Squire, 1983). As these strategies are learned, reading and writing are internalized, and thoughts about language begin. In the primary school years reading and writing foster sensory and imaginative powers. During the middle school years children learn the cognitive or reasoning powers of language (Aulls).

WHOLE LANGUAGE VERSUS ISOLATED PHONICS INSTRUCTION AND THE IMPACTS ON COMPREHENSION

It has been documented that whole language has a greater impact on comprehension than does isolated phonics instruction (Harp, 1988 & Manning & Kamii, 2000). Whole language instruction allows educators to plan meaningful reading and writing activities. Reading and writing are viewed as processes, rather than an accumulation of small skills. In a whole language classroom, children are first asked to respond to the largest units of meaning, whole sections, and only after truly meaningful experiences with whole sections are they asked to respond to smaller pieces such as paragraphs, sentences, words, and letter-sound relationships. In a whole language classroom, phonics is taught through shared reading, journal writing, and writing demonstrations, which involve the teacher. Literature response journals provide an effective means of linking writing with the active reading process (Hancock, 1992). The journals also encourage children to go beyond the printed page and reveal their emotional involvement with different characters. Teachers evaluate the comprehension process by reading and responding to the literature journals. Children sing songs, repeat favorite poems, role-play stories, and publish their own books using the computer, and share their

books with visitors (Manning & Kamii, 2000). Assessment is process oriented rather than product oriented.

Whole language instruction focuses on the improvement of the reading and writing process. A miscue analysis can be done to evaluate the reading process. It helps clarify whether a reader is attempting to construct meaning or decoding sound-symbol relationships. A writing evaluation process can consist of a profile of day-by-day observations, writing folders, and subjective comments from teachers (Harp, 1988). It was found that whole language instruction produces more progress in both reading and writing, and with more developmental coherence, as evidenced by the absence of regression and confusion.

A study was conducted to explore the impact varying language environments might have upon developing reading and writing strategies. For seven months, three first graders were taught phonics, skills, and whole language models of reading (DeFord, 1981). The phonics instruction involved associating symbols and sounds. Letter combinations were drilled and consonant/vowel relationships taught. The only strategy used to read unfamiliar words was decoding. In contrast, the whole language classroom used language experience activities, with individuals and groups, in conjunction with a children's literature program. Writing and reading were integrated. Classroom language experiences were prevalent at centers around

the room. Some of the centers included a water table and a wardrobe full of clothes. This was the only classroom that used writing to help teach reading.

The results of the study indicated that the whole language reading program generated much better retelling scores than the phonics and skills programs. Comprehension was improved with the use of predictable stories. Controlled vocabulary texts offered little for students to comprehend. The reading materials used within the classrooms influenced the writing samples of the first grade students. Students in the phonics and skills room wrote about personal or family related topics. The whole language room writers produced a variety of literary forms, such as stories, informational prose, songs, poetry, and newspaper reports (DeFord, 1981).

From this data, new literary meaning is created. First, language interaction is necessary to becoming literate. "The variety and quality of these experiences is of the utmost importance to expand competence" (DeFord, 1981, p. 656). Secondly, the relationship between reading and writing is supportive and interactive. "Children learn about how to become writers from reading as well as how to become readers" (DeFord, 1981, p. 657).

When skills are taught in isolation children have a greater tendency to regress and become confused in their learning

(Manning & Kamii, 2000). Phonics taught in isolation consists of daily phonics worksheets, oral-sound training, and many chalkboard activities that include sounding out words and sound blending. Children who are taught small skills in isolation either regress or stay at the same reading and writing level when beginning and end of the school year material is compared (Manning et al., 2000).

THE ROLE OF READING AND WRITING IN THE CLASSROOM

Reading and writing are both acts of composing (Tierney & Pearson, 1983). "As a reader reads (just as when a writer writes) goals may emerge, be discovered, or change" (Tierney & Pearson, 1983, p. 569). The writing process begins with planning how the ideas are going to be organized on paper. In order for the writing process to continue, the topic must remain focused.

The next step, drafting, is the refinement of meaning. This is the area where the reader tries to make sense of what is happening. The writer fills in the gaps to make the text flow with accuracy.

Revision, the third step, is as integral to reading as it is to writing. A writer revises by rereading, reexamining, deleting, shaping, and correcting what has already been written. A reader revises in the same way. If a section of text is

unclear, the reader must reread for meaning and ask questions. Interpretations of text can change at the stage of revision.

Readers and writers monitor their work to see if they have planned, drafted, and revised properly. The author's first reader is the inner reader who reacts to what has been written or read. The monitor decides how well the reader and writer or writer as reader is achieving their goals (Tierney & Pearson, 1983).

Specific types of reading and writing activities influence students' reasoning, as well as the understanding that occurs from writing done in combination with reading (McGinley, 1992). These activities include note taking, answering study-guide questions, and essay writing (McGinley). Studies have been conducted to determine which writing activities foster the greatest comprehension of the reading text. These studies concluded that composing a coherent rather than fragmentary text from sources involved more extensive thought and consideration of passage content than either note taking or study-guide questions (McGinley). Extended reading-to-write activities induce students to engage in significantly more examination, interpretation, and deliberation of stories (McGinley). The relationships among reading, several different writing activities (summary writing, note taking, analytic writing, and answering study-guide questions), and learning were investigated

(McGinley). Results from these studies indicated that summary writing or note taking, in conjunction with reading, encouraged students to direct their attention to the entire source text in comprehensive yet superficial ways. In contrast, analytic writing seemed to lead students to think more deeply about fewer select ideas in the text. Finally, answering study-guide questions engaged students in thinking only about information needed to answer each specific question. It can be reported that there is a direct relationship between students' reasoning operations and the specific type of writing in which they are involved. The way students think about a topic under study can be influenced by the kind of writing tasks they are assigned to do in response to reading (Hayes, 1987).

Writing in combination with reading, significantly influences students' understanding of a particular topic of study. Students who write in the context of reading become more engaged in the task (pursuing ideas, answering questions, and judging their own ideas and authors) (McGinley, 1992). Writing in response to reading positively affects students' thinking, learning, and promotes critical thinking (Hayes, 1987 & McGinley). When students talk and write about what they read, they develop a richer and more comprehensive understanding of what they read (White & Lawrence, 1992).

Preparation of the classroom environment is critical to learning. The integration of reading and writing needs to be present throughout the school day. Teachers need to model the importance of writing in response to reading. Bulletin boards should represent the covers of the books being read. Reading centers with theme-related books accessible to children create a literature rich classroom. Prereading activities are an excellent way to integrate reading, writing, and different subject areas. Some prereading activities include previews, anticipation guides, semantic mapping, writing before reading, and creative drama (Burns, Roe, & Ross, 1999). Students should be grouped heterogeneously during reading and writing activities.

> Students unable to read independently can be paired with a high-ability reader, allowed to listen to a taped version of the story, or helped by a parent or older sibling. Students who finish reading early should be encouraged to read other theme-related books in the reading center (White & Lawrence, 1992, p. 741).

Comprehension activities are designed to improve critical thinking and appreciation following the reading of the text. Small groups of students are chosen to problem-solve, share, and draw inferences. After 10-15 minutes, the whole class reconvenes to share their results. Later, students respond

reflectively in their journals (White & Lawrence, 1992). Teachers must always remember that the joy and success of reading occurs at a reader's own pace.

READING AND WRITING WORKSHOPS

The language arts classroom has changed enormously in the past decade. Many reader response theories note that the reader plays an important part in the construction of meaning (McGee, 1992). There is no one correct way to interpret a text.

> The relationship between readers and texts is a dynamic, ever-changing transaction, wherein readers shape texts as they use their past experiences to select images, feelings, and referents, while at the same time texts shape readers by creating new experiences and orientations (McGee, 1992, p.530).

A literate environment is a place where people read, write, and talk about reading and writing (Atwell, 1984). Reading and writing workshops provide instructional practices that encourage children to construct personal meanings from literature. The promising instructional practices include: grand conversations, literature logs, literary experience and literary analysis presentations, aesthetic and efferent teaching, and cooperative learning groups.

In 1989 Eeds and Wells explored grand conversations. They looked at how fifth and sixth graders responded to literature.

"In grand conversations, teachers and students work together to construct deeper, more enriched meaning" (McGee, 1992, p. 531). Teachers encouraged conversations and seized literary teachable moments. Interpretive questions were asked to help students focus on the significant elements of the text. The work of Eeds and Wells was built upon Rosenblatt's seminal writings regarding readers' stances. Rosenblatt distinguished two stances that a reader can take while reading (McGee, 1992). An efferent stance focuses the reader on the information to be carried away from the reading. In contrast, the aesthetic stance focuses readers' attention on the lived through experience when readers concentrate on their feelings and thoughts derived from the text.

Literature logs, reading logs, or dialogue journals were another instructional practice to help construct personal meaning to the literature. Students respond to literature in their literature or reading logs. Dialogue journals provide a place where students and teachers write to one another to share responses to literature. Folders can be used as a place for students and teachers to talk with one another.

> In your letters to me, talk with me about what you've read. Tell me what you thought and felt and why. Tell me what you liked and didn't like and why. Tell me what these books meant to you and said to you. Ask me questions or

for help. And write back to me about my ideas, feelings, and questions (Atwell, 1984, p. 242).

The literary experience presentation allows students to take an aesthetic stance on literature. Teachers ask students to think about how they would feel if they were in a character's shoes while listening to a story being read aloud. In contrast, the literary analysis presentation is designed to encourage students to take an efferent stance. To prompt this stance, students were asked to identify and solve the problem of the story. Research conducted by Wiseman, Many, and Altieri (in press) found that a literary experience approach followed by a literary analysis approach produced higher quality responses than student-directed discussions (McGee, 1992). When teachers led discussions prompted by the lived-through experience of reading, the students produced higher quality responses.

Cooperative learning groups are designed to facilitate the reading of literature. In 1991, Fisher, Blachowicz, and Smith conducted research on the effects on vocabulary learning of cooperative learning groups. Four groups of fourth grade heterogeneous readers were studied for a 3-week unit. One book was read and discussed intensively in cooperative groups. The children were assigned roles in the cooperative groups. The roles for the children change on a daily basis. Each child is responsible to complete one role, which adds to the discussion

of the literature. The roles included: discussion director, vocabulary researchers, and literary luminaries. Discussion directors composed good comprehension questions to guide daily discussions about the literature. Vocabulary researchers selected words in the text that were unfamiliar to the reader. They present the words to the cooperative groups and they have to look up the word in the text and try to derive the meaning of the word based on the context clues. Literary luminaries select meaningful text that is discussed within the group.

The integration of reading and writing can be achieved with the use of novel text as opposed to standard literature text. The use of novels allows teachers to integrate grammar, literature, and writing. In one study, children read four to five novels a year at their own pace (Hassid, 1977). After each chapter, they complete comprehension activities, which analyze plot, theme, and climax (Hassid, 1977). As the children are reading the novels, they are also involved in the writing process. Plot ideas are submitted in writing and discussed with the teacher. Teachers keep notes on each child's chapter that is submitted for editing. Throughout the reading and writing connection, children become authors and publishers.

Reading and writing workshops are structured communities where learners are teaching one another. Mini-lessons are used to teach new strategies for writers to try in their writing.

These lessons nudge children forward and show them how to improve their writing. Daily read aloud, mini-lessons, free writing time, and shared publications make up reading and writing workshops (Boutwell, 1983). Elements of the reading and writing workshop are very much alike. Both provide the learner with ownership over the material they choose to involve themselves, with an awareness of the strategies they will use, and conferences to discuss their progress and help them move forward and try new strategies.

READING AS A WRITING STRATEGY

Studies show that we learn how to read by reading (Collins, 1985). Additional reading, when compared to grammar studies, improves writing. Studies conducted by Strom (1960), Clark (1935), Bagley (1937), and Elley, Barham, Lamb, and Wyllie (1976) all found that students who did additional reading made more improvements in grammar and usage than did the students who studied only formal grammar (Stotsky, 1983).

> Several studies show that additional reading may be as good as, or better than, additional writing practice in improving writing. Heys (1962), in a year-long study in Grades 9 through 12, found that the classes that did additional reading and wrote only one paper every three weeks tended to make greater gains in writing than did classes that wrote one paper a week but read less. He

concluded that reading was a positive influence on the writing ability of many students (Stotsky, 1983, p. 634).

A case study done by Marilyn A. Boutwell found that reading was an important part of the writing process. While studying eight year olds, she found that the children went back and forth from writing to reading and rewriting to rereading. Rereading, a writer's strategy, led to places in the paper that needed more meaning. Through the use of reading, the writer is able to rethink and revisualize what they really want to say (Boutwell & Smith, 1983). More writing is generated to clarify parts of the text to the reader. Stepping back from writing and reading it as a reader generates questions that the reader can answer and the writer records. Teachers provide literary models to improve writing through reading. It is the teacher's job to make sure the children have access to reading materials that are relevant to the kinds of writers they are interested in becoming at a particular moment (Smith, 1983). Children will read stories, poems, letters, and other genres differently when they see these texts as things they themselves could produce.

Rosenblatt believes that perception begins in emotion when composition and literature are combined (Brookes, 1988). When students read literary material that causes strong responses, it allows them to express their strong feelings. Strong response feelings are discussed during group meetings. All the members

of the group have the text in common. Reading and writing are combined and feelings are discussed. Feelings may change after group discussions and change perceptions of the literary material. "They can use what they know of the world to interpret literature and of literature to interpret the world" (Brookes, 1988). Literature, writing, and discussion offer the opportunity for reflection on models of the world. The integration of reading and writing permit growth with understanding.

WRITING AS A READING STRATEGY

Writing is the process of putting meaning on written pages. It is a constructive or generative skill (Wittrock, 1983). Studies show that we best learn how to write by writing (Collins, 1985). Writing involves building relations among the words and sentences, the sentences in paragraphs, and the paragraphs in texts. Active learning is generated through writing. Writing experience in every content area is very important. When a child writes in a particular content area, such as science, social studies, or industrial arts, they acquire the basic vocabulary to the subject (Squire, 1983). They learn how to use the technical terms in context. Writing across curriculum contributes significantly to both the disciplines of reading and thinking. Learners must engage the

material on the basis of their previous experience and make it their own (Mayher, J.S. & Lester, N.B., 1983).

A number of studies suggest the usefulness of writing activities for improving comprehension of reading material. In 1930, Newlun studied summary writing in Grade 5 history classes for 12 weeks. He found that improvement of summary writing correlated with increased achievement in mastering information in history (Stotsky, 1983). "Dynes (1932) found that taking notes, outlining, and summarizing was superior to reading and rereading for immediate learning and for retention of information in high school history classes" (Stotsky, 1983, p. 632). Collins (1979) found that the combination of expressive writing practice with reading led to a significant improvement in the reading comprehension of college freshmen.

The writing of children is also influenced by basal texts. More complex basal texts with longer sentences, longer t-units, and more subordinate clauses influence their writing (Eckhoff, 1983).

MOTIVATING INDEPENDENT READING AND WRITING

A poll was conducted by the National Reading Research Center to determine priorities for reading research. Research on how to enhance students' motivation for independent reading and writing was the top priority (Koskinen, 1993).

> Reading instruction needs to develop readers who are (1) motivated to read voluntarily for pleasure and information, (2) able to use multiple skills strategically to read and understand independently, (3) able to use background information to gain knowledge from new material, then transfer and apply it to new contexts, and (4) able to approach literacy learning socially by engaging the help of others to gain competency (Koskinen, 1993, p.162).

A literature-based reading program was designed to increase the motivation for independent reading and writing (Koskinen, 1993). The program consisted of three major components: (1) physical design, (2) teacher-guided literature activities, and (3) independent reading and writing period.

The physical classroom design designated quiet, literacy centers with open-faced bookshelves. The books were representative of varied genre, which could be checked out to take home from the classroom library. To make the literacy center more comfortable and inviting, pillows, stuffed animals, rugs, and rocking chairs were added.

Teacher-guided literature activities provided models for independent activities. Teachers helped to create interest in literature by reading aloud to the students, chalk talks, and music stories. Children were encouraged to share stories they

had read, create original oral and written stories, and retell and rewrite stories.

Independent reading and writing periods took place three to five times a week for 30-40 minutes. This provided students with periods of choice, social cooperation, and time to practice literacy skills (Koskinen, 1993). Children had to choose independently from a variety of literacy activities: read a book, read to a friend, listen to a taped story, tell a story with the felt board, write a story, etc. Responsibility grows in the children when they are faced with these choices (Atwell, 1984).

The results of the study indicated that the students who participated in the experimental study gained significantly in tests of comprehension, language development, and writing when compared with the control group (Koskinen, 1993). The children involved in the study reported that what they chose to do during the independent reading and writing periods and with whom was a major motivating factor.

> Children referred to reading and writing as fun in this social setting and reported they were learning new words (vocabulary) and the meaning of stories (comprehension) because they could get help from their friends (Koskinen, 1993, p. 164).

Social interactions and collaboration among students in small groups increases productivity and achievement.

In writing workshops children analyze what they wrote for strengths and weaknesses. They are encouraged to write freely using new writing techniques (Atwell, 1984).

EXPRESSIVE WRITING AND READING COMPREHENSION

Today, elementary schools are putting more emphasis on writing skills. They have found that children learn to write by writing and more writing, and not by following rules of grammar (Calkins, 1978 & Smith, 1981). Children are being asked to write more about personal and imaginative interests (Kantor & Perron, 1977). Both research and experience tell us that personal interest and identification of audience enable writers to communicate ideas more effectively (Kantor & Perron). Personal writing allows children to experiment in problem solving, decision-making, and thinking. With the use of these skills children will expand their linguistic and cognitive skills, which are basic to their thinking and writing skills (Kantor & Perron).

In personal or creative writing students are placed in a situation to freely express themselves. As writers create meaning, their selves are revealed. Writing is as much self-exposure as self-expression and self-creation (Aulls, 1975). Students are taught to write with feeling, free of fear, and

with accurate observation. Subtle sounds become more obvious and personal pictures more vivid in the writers' mind and on paper. A trusting student exposes ideas before an understanding teacher (Biberstine, 1977).

> The expression of these ideas is the major goal of imaginative, creative, or personal writing. If we stop this flow of ideas we have defeated our purpose of the activity (Biberstine, 1977, p. 791).

When teachers evaluate expressive writing, spelling, sentence structure, capitalization, and punctuation should not be stressed. Through suggestion and praise teachers will help students improve their writing. Teachers must understand the importance of the response to children's writing and set aside the time to respond to journals on a regular basis (Goodman, 1983). Children's writing can be broken up into two categories: practical and personal writing. Practical writing includes such things as letters, memos, lists, and reports. The first thing children should strive for in practical writing is a natural spontaneity. "The secret is to get children to write in an easy, natural way - without self-consciousness - like one friendly person talking to another" (Perez, 1977, p. 796). The objective in practical writing is honest, clear communication. The idea is to write without awareness of writing (Perez, 1977).

Mechanical skills are stressed in this kind of writing (Biberstine, 1977).

Personal writing includes free expression of ideas in unique ways. Personal journals are used as a useful tool to allow children to better understand themselves through writing (Craig, 1983 & Goodman, 1983).

> In a journal, one writes the contents of one's life both in a forward and a backward way (in what Progoff calls a telescope way); we work within the present and look at the past in order to better understand the future (Craig, 1983, p. 374).

Writers express themselves in a holistic way when they express themselves in a journal. It is the place where writers find their own voice and speak the reality of past, personal events (Craig). The discovery of a students' own writing voice begins the process of discovery, brings order, sense, and meaning to their lives, and learning begins (Collins, 1985).

A study was conducted to show the impact writing has on the cognitive activity of reading (Collins, 1985). Seventy probationary, college, freshmen were split in half. Half the group was taught reading in a traditional way and the other half was given daily writing practice. The writing group wrote for ten minutes every day on any topic of their choice. The writing pieces were not graded or corrected for spelling and

punctuation. The results of the study concluded that the half of the class that wrote for ten minutes a day improved their reading comprehension scores, enhanced their attitudes toward instruction, and made them feel better about themselves as readers, writers, and learners (Collins).

Models provide opportunity to improve language skills. The writing process begins by writing. Then students reread, restructure, and revise what they have written (Calkins, 1978). Students need extension and refinement of their existing skills and corrective feedback in an improving environment. Writers need to stay focused on their topic. Their first draft is the beginning and not the end. In teacher-student conferences, teachers listen and ask questions to the writer to help improve their piece of writing. Children are taught to show the reader what happened rather than tell. "Children reach for words with texture, for words which tingle and ooze on the page. They reach, above all, for words which are honest" (Calkins, 1978, p. 808).

Teachers who use journals in the classroom need to keep a personal one themselves. It is very important for the teacher to share their own feelings on past events to illustrate to the students how important it is to open up and express oneself freely. Teachers need to create a safe environment of honest sharing to allow the students' writing to foster. "The

assertion is that children will learn to write and to enjoy writing only in the presence of teachers (or other adults) who themselves write and enjoy writing" (Smith, 1981).

When students write expressively on paper they begin to see connections, relationships, and ideas that were once elusive (Collins, 1985). A stronger sense of self is developed with increased confidence. As a writer reorganizes their thinking on paper, they are in a position to better understand and interpret another writer's organization of ideas.

> This is what reading comprehension is all about and this is what makes expressive writing a powerful teaching tool for reading comprehension. When writing and reading are used together in this way, students become conscious of themselves as writers working through a process, then as readers working through the product of another writer's process. They learn to think as the writer generating text; they learn to think as the reader making meaning from text; and this is what makes expressive writing a metacognitive activity (Collins, 1985, p. 52).

Publishing student writing and displaying it in the classroom provides the incentive to write. The reading-writing connection becomes a reality when the writing process is used to communicate meaning to a real audience. The opportunity to

publish one's work for others to see, touch, read, and reread turns children on to the connection (Bromley & Mannix, 1993).

SUMMARY

Comprehension skills can be increased in beginning learners with the proper instruction. Throughout the elementary years, the teaching of decoding skills is the beginning of comprehension building (Pressley, 2000). Instruction increases the likelihood that students will become skilled decoders, which allows for the development of the comprehension competence. Once children can decode, they are empowered to read with greater fluency. When a reader reads fluently, and can decode all of the words on a page, he or she spends more time focusing on new vocabulary. Beyond incidental learning of vocabulary through reading, students also can be taught vocabulary, which positively affects comprehension (Pressley, 2000).

> The development of comprehension skills is a long-term developmental process, which depends on rich world, language, and text experiences from early in life; learning how to decode; becoming fluent in decoding, in part, through the development of commonly encountered texts; and learning how to abstract meaning from text using the comprehension processes used by skilled readers (Pressley, 2000, p. 556).

Students need to be skilled in how to comprehend text. There is no evidence which supports that immersion in reading alone, as compared to a combined reading-writing approach, will lead to maximal comprehension.

The research being studied on the integration of reading and writing to promote comprehension skills is very recent. Approximately twenty years ago, teachers were teaching isolated skills to students using workbooks. Ten years later, they decided to get rid of the workbooks and try whole language. Whole language worked for certain students, but not all. Today we are looking closely at the necessity of both forms of teaching. Writing is used to enhance reading and learning. It is the true tool to comprehension. The integration of reading and writing in a classroom environment encourages students to negotiate their own meanings by exploring possibilities and considering understandings from multiple perspectives (Langer, 1994). There is more than one way to interpret any piece of literature. Critical thinking arises when students are taught to question, probe, ponder, and discuss all the possible interpretations of literature. Students begin with their own initial impressions of the literature and use writing, discussion, and further reading to ponder and refine their developing interpretations. In the collaborating classrooms students are working through their ideas in a variety of

contexts: in whole class discussion, alone, and in groups - in reading, writing, and speaking (Langer, 1994).

The integration of reading and writing promotes reading comprehension. When students read a novel they comprehend the events of a story. They are able to sequence the events of the story and answer discussion questions. Students can improve their comprehension of a text, when looking at it as a writer. Students analyze the text to see how the author gets a particular point across to the reader to aid in the comprehension process. Reading and writing go hand in hand. To understand both, means complete comprehension of the material. Readers may change their ideas of texts when they look at them through the eyes of a writer.

METHOD

The purpose of the present study was to examine how short stories motivate students to use literary elements in their own writing.

Participants

One class of twenty-one fifth grade students participated in the study. There were fourteen females and seven males. All twenty-one fifth grade students came from a high socioeconomic background and were nondisabled. The students ranged from moderate to high achievement readers, based on their ESPA scores from fourth grade.

Materials

Short personal narrative stories were used to teach writing techniques to the students. Every two weeks the students learned two new writing techniques. Since the study lasted eight weeks, the students learned a total of eight new writing techniques at the end of the study. A checklist was designed to evaluate the students' use of these techniques in their own personal writing. The writing techniques that were taught included dialogue, flashback, point of view, character development, setting, foreshadowing, revising for word choice, and using sensory details. Ratios were designed to illustrate how many students applied the taught writing techniques to their personal writing. To assess students' personal input on the integration of reading and writing, a questionnaire was designed (See Appendix A). Students evaluated the study and explained how they felt about using short stories to learn literary techniques.

Procedure

During the first two weeks all twenty-one students were taught two different writing techniques. Each student was given a copy of a short story. One writing technique was emphasized in each example. Students analyzed each short story as a writer. They tried to predict the specific writing technique utilized by the author. As the students read the stories, they

identified the purpose, audience, main idea, body, and conclusion. As the reader analyzed the writing, reading comprehension should improve. Questions were asked to assess whether all students comprehended the short stories.

At the end of week two, each student produced a personal piece of writing. The teacher based on their usage of two writing techniques evaluated the writing pieces. The teacher read all twenty-one papers and counted the writing technique frequency. This process continued over an eight-week period. At the end of the study, each student learned eight new writing techniques and produced four pieces of personal writing. The goal of the study was to observe the continuous application of the various writing techniques compiled over the eight-week study.

Time Line

The data collection of writing techniques began on January 02, 2002. During the first two weeks of the study the students learned two writing techniques, which included dialogue and flashback. Each student wrote a memoir using both writing techniques. The students read, "How We Won The Bean Field War," by Bob Sizoo, which focused on dialogue and "Second Chance," by John Triska, which taught flashback. On January 10, 2002 students celebrated their stories by reading them aloud to their classmates. The teacher used a rubric to evaluate each memoir.

On January 14, 2002 students learned how to write a persuasive essay using two new writing techniques. The two new writing techniques included point of view and character development. The personal narrative texts the students used to help them master these techniques included, "Crossing The Line," by Susan Bennett, which focused on point of view and, "Somebody's Fool," also by Susan Bennett, which taught them character development. On January 24, 2002 each student shared their persuasive piece of writing using the two new writing techniques. All students were encouraged to try and incorporate dialogue and flashback into their persuasive essays to demonstrate mastery of all four techniques.

On January 28, 2002 the students learned setting and foreshadowing. These two techniques were written in a genre of the students' choice. As a class we read and analyzed, "Bobby and the Stingray," by John Scanlon, which taught the students setting and "Sweet," by John Triska, which focused on foreshadowing. On February 7, 2002 each student shared their varied genre to the class using the two new writing techniques. All students were encouraged to use the other techniques they had learned to enhance their writing.

On February 11, 2002 the class learned how to write a descriptive story revising for word choice and sensory details. The texts we used included, "Hands Of Love," by Stacey Navarre,

which taught the students how to revise for word choice using a thesaurus and, "The Gift," by Mark Farrington, which taught them how to use sensory details to make their stories more vivid and real. On February 21, 2002 the students shared their stories and the teacher evaluated each story for the two new writing techniques. All students were encouraged to use as many new techniques as they possibly could. A student's ultimate goal was to use all eight writing techniques in their final descriptive story.

On February 22 each student completed a questionnaire, which asked him or her to evaluate how their writing had improved with the use of short stories to mentor the new writing techniques.

At the end of February all data was collected and evaluated using a ratio format for further interpretation.

Data Analysis

At the end of every two weeks, the teacher analyzed each piece of writing and documented the frequency of each writing technique, with the use of a checklist. This data was compiled into a database for further analysis. The data was placed into a ratio format to show the increase in writing techniques applied to students' personal writing.

Students assessed their writing performance after the study using a questionnaire. The questionnaire asked them to assess how their personal writing improved.

RESULTS

The writing technique results of the first genre, memoir, were 18/21; (86%) of the students successfully included dialogue into their stories and 15/21; (71%) used flashback.

The results of the second writing piece, persuasive essay, were 21/21; (100%) of the students successfully included point of view, 9/21; (43%) included character development, 6/21; (29%) used dialogue, and 7/21; (33%) used flashback.

The third writing piece was a varied genre. The students either wrote a personal narrative or a memoir. The teacher found that 19/21; (90%) of the students successfully used setting in their stories, 17/21; (81%) used foreshadowing, 17/21; (81%) used dialogue, 7/21; (33%) used flashback, 10/21; (48%) used point of view, and 13/21; (62%) used character development.

The fourth piece of writing was descriptive. The students wrote either a personal narrative or a memoir. After the stories were read the teacher found that 18/21; (86%) of the students revised for word choice using a thesaurus, 16/21; (76%) used sensory details, 20/21; (95%) used dialogue, 7/21; (33%) used flashback, 20/21; (95%) used point of view, 16/21; (76%)

used character development, 18/21; (86%) used setting, and 6/21; (29%) used foreshadowing.

In the reading survey completed on February 22, 2002, on average the students own 70 books. When they were asked how many books are in their house, the average was 400. In the last twelve months the students on average read 15 novels. Most of the students believed that the reason people read is for fun, enjoyment, and to learn new information. Fifteen out of twenty-one students read at home for pleasure, which is more than half of the class. The students involved in the study either loved reading or have a generally good feeling about it.

In the writing survey completed on February 22, 2002, 19/21 students reported that they thought of themselves as writers. When asked why people write, the students said to express their feelings and for others enjoyment. All of the students involved in the study felt good and confident about what they write. Out of the eight writing techniques that were taught during the study, the students felt they mastered between 5-8. Many of the students, 18/21, thought that the mentor texts used to teach the writing techniques were helpful. When asked if the students could read a text like a reader, 20/21 reported, "Yes." When asked if the students could read a mentor text like a writer, 18/21 reported, "Yes." At the end of the study, 19/21 students reported feeling that they had grown as writers.

DISCUSSION

Can short stories motivate students to use literary techniques in their own writing? This was the question that started the study. After analyzing the results, it was clear to see that students could successfully apply an author's writing techniques to their own stories. First, the short stories needed to be read like a reader, which gave the students an understanding of the short stories. Then they looked back in the text to try and identify the different writing techniques the author used to get their point across to the reader. As a class we analyzed the short stories to see how the author used the various techniques. For example, to incorporate flashback into a piece of writing, you first start off the story in the present tense. When the writer begins to flashback in time the verbs are all written in the past tense. Once the writer comes to, the verb tense returns back to the present.

The results of the first memoir study were successful. The two writing techniques the students used in their writing included dialogue and flashback. More than half of the students applied both writing techniques to their stories. The students learned that dialogue was used to show conversations that were taking place at the time their stories were unfolding. Dialogue made the reader more aware of characters' feelings, and gave the reader an overall better understanding of the story. It helped

to get their points across to the reader more vividly. Some dialogue caused the readers to feel sad, mad, happy, shocked, or scarred. The presence of dialogue in a story helped to show what was going on in the story as opposed to telling. It is better to show than tell a story, and dialogue was one writing technique the students learned to make this difficult task happen.

Flashback was a writing technique used to make the reader go back in time. For instance, a student may be sitting in class with puffy cheeks from getting their wisdom teeth pulled. All the student can concentrate on is the pain. The student begins to daydream about the visit to the dentist where this terrible day began. The writer illustrates this technique by writing in the past tense. When the teacher suddenly calls upon the student to answer the question on the Civil War, the student snaps out of the daydream, or the past, and back into reality, the present. The rest of the story remains in the present tense.

The students could see how the authors got their point across and tried it themselves. As long as a student understands how a technique is used they can apply it to their own writing. If the reader does not comprehend how a writer accomplished a particular technique they will not be able to successfully apply the technique to their own writing. One must

be able to read a text like a writer in order to write in the same fashion.

The second writing piece the students completed was a persuasive essay. It was the first time any of the students had written in this particular genre. The students had to persuade their audience to agree with their point of view. The more supporting details they used to express their point of view, the more persuasive a writer they would be. The essays could have been written in first or third person. Some of the topics the fifth grade students came up with included: no more homework, school uniforms, no school uniforms, a class set of lap tops to help increase the use of technology in the school, and more gym equipment to be used during recess. Each student had to have at least three reasons to help persuade their idea.

The two writing techniques that were incorporated into the persuasive essay included point of view and character development. All of the students successfully wrote their essays in either the first or third person. To write an essay in first person they had to use the word, "I." When an author writes on behave of someone else's' point of view that is considered third person. Each student mastered how to write his or her point of view by using the model of, "Crossing the Line."

After reading, "Somebody's Fool," the students had trouble comprehending character development. This was very noticeable

in the results, because only 43% used the technique correctly. Character development is illustrated in a story when the character mentally or physically changes over time. The students had difficulty incorporating this particular technique into a persuasive essay. Had they been writing a memoir or personal narrative, I think there would have been more of a success rate for this technique. Some genres lone themselves better to certain techniques rather than others.

As I analyzed the results I was also looking for a trend to see if the students were able to carry the first writing techniques over to the second paper. The results showed that not many students incorporated dialogue and flashback into their persuasive essay. The students that incorporated interview questions or past experiences were the only ones who were able to carry the writing techniques over. If someone was to replicate this study, it could be improved by keeping the genre of the stories constant and only changing the writing techniques.

In the third piece of writing the students had a choice of writing either a personal narrative or a memoir. The two new writing techniques that were taught included setting and foreshadowing. The setting is the place where the story opens up and takes place. As a class we discussed how John Scanlon took the reader to the place where his story opened up in,

"Bobby and the Stingray." John used vivid, descriptive words that made the reader feel and see what was surrounding the characters. John Scanlon showed the reader the scenery. He painted a picture through his choice of words. No details were ever assumed or left out. I often reminded my students that they could never take it for granted that a reader had been to the place they were describing. It is the job of the author to paint a vivid picture of everything in the story. The students were able to see Bobby and his stingray bicycle because John Scanlon took them there. When it came time for the students to write a vivid setting 90% of the students were successful at this technique. Studying setting helped the students to realize that everything is important to a story no matter how small or minute it is. They learned to not simply say they went for a boat ride. They first started with a visual picture of the boat, asking questions to themselves. "What color is the boat? How big is the boat? Where is the boat located? What season does your story take place in?" As the students began to ask themselves these pertinent questions their stories came alive. With every descriptive word they each added life to their stories.

Foreshadowing was the second technique the students learned that needed to be included in the third story. The students learned that foreshadowing was a hint of what's to come. After

reading, "Sweet," by John Triska, the students understood how the simple misspelling of the word "sweet" as "sweat" in a note ruined a sixth-grade boys chance of going steady with the girl of his dreams. They learned how to intentionally misguide the reader into making a false conclusion so that their ending was a surprise or gave a hint of what might be ahead. I also reminded the students to not give away too much too soon. After analyzing the results 81% of the students used foreshadowing correctly in their stories. This technique was new for them and they seemed to enjoy it. It allowed them a chance to surprise the reader by including something that did not seem to have much importance in the beginning of the story to determining how the story ended.

When I looked to see if the students were able to carry over dialogue, flashback, point of view, and character development, I found that the only technique most students felt comfortable using was dialogue. The other percentages for flashback, point of view, and character development were low because the students were concentrating on perfecting the setting and foreshadowing techniques. Incorporating all six writing techniques at this time was too much for them as a whole.

The final piece of writing was a descriptive personal narrative or a memoir. The two new writing techniques included

revising for word choice and the use of sensory details. Most of the students, 86%, successfully revised their stories for word choice. After analyzing, "Hands of Love," by Stacey Navarre, the students learned how to spice up their writing by using a thesaurus during the revision phase of the writing process. A thesaurus can help a writer say exactly what they want to say. The students had to be careful and use words that were familiar to them to make sure a revised word didn't change the meaning of their story. The use of a thesaurus makes the meaning of writing more precise. This writing technique was a great way to expand the students' vocabulary. They learned more precise ways to express feelings, moods, settings, characters, etc. Instead of saying that the character was sad, the students chose words like blue or depressed. They tried to use more visual words to help paint a clearer picture for the reader.

When I looked at the results for sensory details I saw that 76% of the students successfully met this requirement throughout their story. "The Gift," by Mark Farrington illustrated how to show and not tell a story. A writer best shows a story by using dialogue, descriptive writing, or both. I taught the students to use the five senses in their writing. The five senses include: see, hear, smell, taste, and touch. During the revision stage of the writing process the students went back and read through their drafts and looked for empty holes. They

tried to find areas where they could add the five senses. Including all five senses in a story make the story come alive. The senses paint a visual picture for the reader. Nothing is left out. Mark Farrington showed the students how to show everything that is going on in the story through the use of descriptive language of the five senses. A writer does not simply say they ate an ice cream cone after dinner. Instead they describe what kind of ice cream it was, how it tasted, how the taste reminded them of ice skating on a beautiful winters day, how your hands became sticky as the ice cream melted slowly down the side of the cone, and finally the sweetness it brought to your tongue. A small seed of ice cream can be stretched out for a paragraph or two. The students learned how to dive into their stories and make all aspects of them more vivid and real.

At the end of the fourth piece of writing I looked to see how many students carried over the eight total writing techniques. The percentage of students who used dialogue went up from 81% to 95%. Throughout the course of the study more and more students became comfortable with using the dialogue writing technique.

From the third to the fourth paper the percentage of students who used flashback stayed the same at 33%. Flashback is a technique that needs more attention and analysis. I don't feel enough of the students mastered this writing technique from

one short story. To help the students comprehend how to use flashback correctly the teacher would need to analyze more stories that use this technique. The students need to see a variety of places where authors have incorporated this technique into their writing.

The percentage of students who used point of view in their writing went up tremendously from 48% to 95%. As the students continued to write, the point of view writing technique became clear. Some students even began to write in the third person to illustrate another person's perspective on a subject. The students really challenged themselves during the writing process.

When I analyzed the results of character development I saw that the percentage went up slightly. The percentage rose from 62% to 76%. Character development was another technique the students had trouble with over the course of the study. They had trouble illustrating how a character changed over time from the experiences they encountered in a story. This is also a writing technique that would need more analysis and attention to help students grasp how other authors successfully change a character through the course of a story.

The percentage of students who used setting fell slightly from 90% to 86%. Even though this writing technique fell slightly, I strongly believe that the students have a great

understanding of setting and how to incorporate the technique into their writing.

The percentage of students who used foreshadowing dropped extensively from 81% to 29%. When the students had to use the technique in their third piece of writing they were pretty successful. By the fourth piece of writing they were encouraged to use all eight techniques, but only revising for word choice and sensory details were mandatory. At the end of the study the students could not identify areas within their stories to incorporate foreshadowing. This new technique needed more time to be perfected. Practice using a technique will only make the students more comfortable using it. Teachers need to encourage and remind students of all the possible ways to get their stories out in an interesting way that is exciting to both the reader and the writer.

Overall the percentage of the students using the techniques was high. The students truly extended their writing ability and learned eight new writing techniques during the eight-week study. These techniques will also be at the students' fingertips as ways to show their story. Most people would have thought that eight new writing techniques in eight weeks were too much, but as you can see from the results it wasn't. Not all students are going to perfect a technique the first time they try it. The techniques need to be introduced and the

students need to continuously be encouraged to try them whenever possible.

At the end of the study all of the students completed a reading and writing survey. From the results of the surveys it is evident that the students are very well read. They enjoy reading, read approximately 15 novels in a year, and high priority is put on reading in the home. Since the students are surrounded by literature they are able to comprehend literature on and above their grade level.

The writing survey was distributed to the students to allow them to evaluate how their writing had improved over the course of the eight-week study. Almost all of the students felt that the mentor texts used to teach the writing techniques were helpful. The result of this part of the survey coincides with the high percentages of students applying the writing techniques to their stories. It was also nice to see that the students felt they grew as writers over the course of the study. They view themselves as writers and are able to critique a piece of writing as a writer.

The study allowed students to integrate reading and writing to help learn new writing techniques. First the students were presented with a mentor text that taught them a specific writing technique. After the text was comprehended as a reader the students had to go back and reread the text to

comprehend how the author got their point across by analyzing the writing technique. If the students were able to comprehend how the writing technique was used in the text they were able to model it in their own writing. The writing techniques that they did not comprehend we saw were not evident in the students' writing. In order for a technique to be carried over and applied to a students' writing, it must be comprehended first as a reader and then as a writer. Comprehension is the key to learning. When a student reads a text they are involved in the comprehension process. When a student writes a text they are also involved in the comprehension process.

Based on what was learned in the review of the literature, the study took this knowledge to the next level by trying to see if students could comprehend a mentor text as both a reader and writer and carry the knowledge over to their own expressive writing. The study also looked at the capability of fifth grade students to carry over writing techniques that they learned in previous weeks. A technique is mastered when it is used time and time again correctly. We learned from the literature review that reading and writing go hand in hand in the writing process. Students continually go back and forth from writing to reading and rewriting to rereading. Writers need to reread their text to improve their stories during the revision process. Writers continuously question if they got their point across in the best

way possible. They often reread and ask themselves if another word might be more appropriate to help in the meaning of the text.

The current study proves that students are able to comprehend writing techniques present in mentor texts and apply them to their own expressive writing. If a teacher presents the material to the students and shows them how to read a text like a writer they will begin to use this strategy on their own. Students need exposure to a number of different writing techniques. As long as the techniques are introduced in each students' own time they will be mastered.

If the study was replicated, the results could be improved by extending the length of the study. Eight weeks was not a very long time to collect data. The study could also be improved by keeping the genre constant and only changing the writing techniques. I believe the results would have been more accurate if the students all wrote personal narratives each time new writing techniques were introduced.

To extend this study one could compare the use of the same writing techniques using fiction and nonfiction writing. This would further the field of reading and writing to see if it is better to have our students writing fiction or nonfiction writing pieces. Most of what the students and adults read are nonfiction pieces of material. The novels students read in

school consist mostly of fiction. While students read fiction they in turn are told to write nonfiction. For reading and writing to be totally integrated shouldn't these two things coincide? A further study analyzing if nonfiction texts enhance the writing process more than the current fiction novels the students have been reading.

REFERENCES

Aihara, K. Au, K., Carroll, J., Nakanishi, P., Sheu, J., & Wong-Kam, J. (1999). The reading-writing connection for struggling readers. The Reading Teacher, 53(3), 206-208.

Atwell, N. (1984). Writing and reading literature from the inside out. Language Arts, 61(3), 240-252.

Aulls, M.W. (1975). Relating reading comprehension and writing competency. Language Arts, 52, 808-812.

Biberstine, R.D. (1977). Response to personal writing. Language Arts, 54(7), 791-793.

Boutwell, M.A. (1983). Reading and writing process: a reciprocal agreement. Language Arts, 60(6), 723-730.

Bromley, K. & Mannix, D. (1993). Beyond the classroom: publishing student work in magazines. The Reading Teacher, 47(1), 72-77.

Brookes, G.H. (1988). Exploring the world through reading and writing. Language Arts, 65(3), 245-254.

Burns, P.C., Roe, B.D., & Ross, E.P. (1999). Comprehension: part 1. Teaching Reading in Today's Elementary Schools, 7, 190-196.

Calkins, L.M. (1978). Children write-and their writing becomes their textbook. Language Arts, 55(7), 804-810.

Collins, C. (1985). The power of expressive writing in reading comprehension. Language Arts, 62(1), 48-54.

Craig, S.T. (1983). Perspectives self-discovery through writing personal journals. Language Arts, 60(3), 373-379.

DeFord, D.E. (1981). Literacy: reading, writing, and other essentials. Language Arts, 58(6), 652-658.

Eckhoff, B. (1983). How reading affects children's writing. Language Arts, 60(5), 607-616.

Fitzgerald, J. (1999). What is this thing called balance? The Reading Teacher, 53(2), 100-107.

Goodman, K. & Goodman, Y. (1983). Reading and writing relationships: pragmatic functions. Language Arts, 60(5), 590-599.

Hancock, M.E. (1992). Literature response journals: insights beyond the printed page. Language Arts, 69, 36-42.

Harp, B. (1988). When you do whole language instruction, how will you keep track of reading and writing skills? The Reading Teacher, 42(2), 160-161

Hassid, T. (1977). Children as authors and publishers. Language Arts, 54(7), 793-795.

Hayes, D.A. (1987). The potential for directing study in combined reading and writing activity. Journal of Reading Behavior, XIX (4), 333-349.

Kantor, K. & Perron, J. (1977). Thinking and writing: creativity in the modes of discourse. Language Arts, 54(7), 742-749.

Konopak, B.C., Martin, M.A., & Martin, S.H. (1987). Reading and writing: aids to learning in the content areas. Journal of Reading, 31(2), 109-115.

Koskinen, P.S. (1993). Motivating independent reading and writing in the primary grades through social cooperative literacy experiences. The Reading Teacher, 47(2), 162-164.

Langer, J.A. (1994). Focus on research a response - based approach to reading literature. Language Arts, 71, 203-211.

Le, T. (1984). Cognitive and meditative aspects of reading. Language Arts, 61(4), 351-355.

Manning, M. & Kamii, C. (2000). Whole language vs. isolated phonics instruction: a longitudinal study in kindergarten with reading and writing tasks. Journal of Research in Childhood Education, 15(1), 53-65.

Mayher, J.S. & Lester, N.B. (1983). Putting learning first in writing to learn. Language Arts, 60(6), 717-721.

McGee, L. (1992). Focus on research: exploring the literature-based reading revolution. Language Arts, 69, 529-537.

McGinley, W. (1992). The role of reading and writing while composing from sources. Reading Research Quarterly, 27(3), 226-248.

Perez, S.A. (1977). Teaching the art of writing personal letters. Language Arts, 54(7), 795-797.

Pressley, M. (2000). What should comprehension instruction be the instruction of? In Handbook of reading research: Vol. III. (Eds. M. Kamil, P. Mosenthal, P. Pearson, & R. Barr, pp. 545-561). Mahwah: NJ.

Smith, F. (1981). Myths of writing. Language Arts, 58(7), 792-798.

Smith, F. (1983). Reading like a writer. Language Arts, 60(5), 558-567.

Squire, J.R. (1983). Composing and comprehending: two sides of the same basic process. Language Arts, 60(5), 581-589.

Stotsky, S. (1983). Research on reading/writing relationships: a synthesis and suggested directions. Language Arts, 60(5), 627-642.

Tierney, R.J. & Pearson, P.D. (1983). Toward a composing model of reading. Language Arts, 60(5), 568-579.

White, M.C. & Lawrence, S.M. (1992). Integrating reading and writing through literature study. The Reading Teacher, 45(9), 740-743.

APPENDIX A

Student: _____
Date: _____

Reading Survey

1. If you had to guess…
   a. How many books would you say you owned? _____
   b. How many books would you say there are in your house? _____
   c. How many novels would you say you have read in the last twelve months? _____

2. How did you learn to read?

_____

_____

3. Why do people read?

_____

_____

4. What does someone have to do in order to be a good reader?

_____

_____

5. What kind of books do you like to read?

_____

_____

6. How do you decide which book you will read?

_____

_____

7. Have you ever reread a book? _____ If so, list the books you have reread.

8. Do you ever read at home for pleasure? _____ If so, how often do you read at home for pleasure?

9. Do you like to have your teacher read to you? _____ If so, is there anything special you like to hear?

10. In general, how do you feel about reading?

APPENDIX B

Student: _____
Date: _____

Writing Survey

1. Are you a writer? _____
   (If your answer is YES, answer question 1a. If your answer is NO, answer question 1b…)

1a. How did you learn to write?

_____

_____

1b. How do people learn to write?

_____

_____

2. Why do people write?

_____

_____

3. What do you think a good writer needs to do in order to write well?

_____

_____

4. How does your teacher decide which pieces of writing are the good ones?

_____

_____

_____

5. In general, how do you feel about what you write?

_____

_____

6. Out of the eight writing techniques that were taught, how many do you feel you have mastered?

_____

7. Were the mentor texts helpful in learning the writing process? _____ If so, which ones taught you the most about writing?

_____

_____

_____

8. Do you feel like you can read a mentor text like a reader?

_____

9. Do you feel like you can read a mentor text like a writer?

_____

10. Do you feel like you have grown as a writer?

_____ If so, in what ways have you grown as a writer?

_____

_____

_____

_____

ERIC/RCS
2805 East Tenth St.
Bloomington, IN 47405

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND IMPROVEMENT (OERI)

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

REPRODUCTION RELEASE (Specific Document)

CS 510 888

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION

Title: Comprehension Promotes the Retention and Utilization of Literary Writing Techniques

Author(s): Heather L. Blackmore

Corporate Source (if appropriate): Kean University

Publication Date: April 2002

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, Resources in Education (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche and paper copy (or microfiche only) and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the options and sign the release below.

CHECK HERE ➧ ☑ Microfiche (4" x 6" film) and paper copy (8½" x 11") reproduction

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Heather L. Blackmore
[PERSONAL NAME OR ORGANIZATION, AS APPROPRIATE]
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

OR ☐ Microfiche (4" x 6" film) reproduction only

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
[PERSONAL NAME OR ORGANIZATION, AS APPROPRIATE]
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits. If permission to reproduce is granted, but neither box is checked, documents will be processed in both microfiche and paper copy.

SIGN HERE ➧

"I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction of microfiche by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries."

Signature: Heather L. Blackmore Printed Name: Heather L. Blackmore

Organization: The Kean University Position: Graduate Student

Address: 109 Bethany Road (Home) Tel. No.: (732) 335-9097 (Home)

Holmdel, NJ 07733-1505 Zip Code: 07733-1505 Date: 4/16/02

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (Non-ERIC Source)

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents which cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:

Address:

Price Per Copy: Quantity Price:

IV. REFERRAL TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER

If the right to grant reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address: