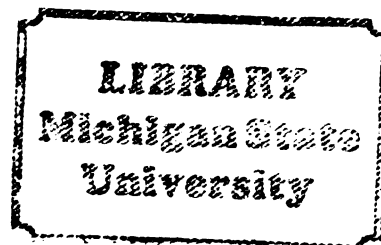


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The Cognitive Processes Of Competent Third Grade  
Writers: A Descriptive Study

presented by

Barbara J. Diamond

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THE COGNITIVE PROCESSES OF  
COMPETENT THIRD GRADE WRITERS:  
A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

By

Barbara J. Diamond

A DISSERTATION

submitted to  
Michigan State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

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1985



## ABSTRACT

### THE COGNITIVE PROCESSES OF COMPETENT THIRD GRADE WRITERS: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

By

Barbara J. Diamond

The purpose of this study was to describe and explain the task environmental influences of three competent third grade writers and to describe the underlying cognitive processes involved in their writing. Key elements of the task environment identified for examination were the students' socio-cultural background, the teachers instruction, the student's interactions, and their oral language use. The writing processes of the students were examined for descriptions of the planning, transcribing and revising processes.

This ethnographic study was conducted by the classroom teacher in her combination third/fourth grade classroom. While the teacher directed the study, observations were made by a research assistant, who was the investigator's teaching partner. The data consisted of field notes of writing instruction and student writing, student and parent interviews, student writing samples, and the teacher's journal. Two units of analysis, the group literacy episode and the individual literacy episode were structures in the observational data from which inductively reached categories were formed and charted. Within the individual literacy episodes writing behaviors of the students were analyzed by examining their "problem solving stops".

The major findings revealed that the following elements of the task environment influenced the writing processes of the students: 1) the writing content of organization and structure that was emphasized by the teacher, and her de-emphasis on mechanics; 2) the formality of the group literacy episode; 3) the time restrictions imposed upon subjects and upon the school day; 4) the

literate socio-cultural backgrounds of the target students; and 5) the nature of student's interactions with peers, which were both distracting and helpful.

The findings related to cognitive processes revealed that: 1) these competent students were able to balance the cognitive constraints so that they could effectively express the meaning desired; 2) they each planned for writing, but in different ways; 3) they revised during the process of writing, two primarily for orthographics, structure, and handwriting, and one for meaning and audience; and 4) they could readily express meaning because of the wide store of available knowledge.

## DEDICATION

To Mom and Dad, John, Kim and Johnny

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

One of the major goals of research on writing should be to impart information that can help teachers be more effective in providing writing instruction. In an effort to achieve this goal, research on writing has begun to flourish in the decade of the 1970s and has continued in the 1980s. Researchers have looked at specific kinds of knowledge that writers possess and bring to bear as they formulate meanings and express these meanings in writing (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Nold, 1981; Scardamalia, 1981). These researchers have looked at the cognitive processes that enable the generation of meaning. In doing this, they have contributed to the understanding of writing as a cognitive activity. This knowledge in isolation, however, cannot readily be translated into implications for effective writing instruction.

Other researchers have conducted investigations which examine the context or situation in which a person writes and its influence on writing processes (Graves, 1982; Florio & Clark, 1979). These situations and goals can be closely associated with instructional writing tasks and affect to a great extent how these tasks are structured. These contexts also include specific functions of written language that are defined within a writer's social and cultural group and his/her classroom community.

Additionally, oral language functions as a part of social context of students' lives and is shown to influence written language in yet another way. Cook-Gumperz & Gumperz (1982) have contributed to the understanding of writing as a contextual activity. While the studies of context of writing are



crucial to an understanding of the writing process, in order to actualize the goal of effective writing instruction this perspective alone is also inadequate.

One approach to achieving this goal of providing information which can help teachers increase their effectiveness is to study the cognitive processes of students as they are involved in different kinds of writing activities in the classroom setting. Such an approach reflects the interdependences of the two perspectives--the cognitive and the contextual--on the process of writing. In conducting such an investigation, an attempt is made to bring together the internal and cognitive processes the writer uses to construct meaning with the external environment that shapes and constrains this meaning. The research undertaken here takes this approach.

### The Problem

The purpose of this study is to describe and explain the task environmental influences of three competent third grade writers and to describe the underlying cognitive processes involved in their writing. The task environment includes the context of writing--instruction, situations in which these students write, and their purpose for writing (Frederiksen & Dominic, 1981). It also includes the socio-cultural environment and the social interaction that can influence writing as a cognitive activity. Cognitive processes are those mental activities employed in activating different kinds of knowledge that the writer has and can elicit in constructing meanings and expressing them in writing. Writing in this investigation is defined as the process of selecting, combining, arranging, and developing ideas in effective sentences, paragraphs, and often longer units of discourse (NCTE, 1981).

The two major research questions entailed in the study are as follows.

1. In what ways does the task environment constrain (influence) the writing process of three competent third grade writers?

- How does each student's socio-cultural background affect the process of writing?
  - How does the teacher's instruction affect the process?
  - What influences do students' interactions with each other have on these students as they write?
  - What is the relationship between the children's oral language and what they do during the writing process?
2. What cognitive processes do these three competent third grade writers use in generating written text?
- Do students evidence planning or pre-writing activities?
  - What does the transcribing process (the written representation of ideas) look like?
  - Do students evidence the revision process? What is the nature of this process?
  - How do these processes interact?

### Significance

The study is of special interest to practitioners and researchers because the findings (a) have practical and theoretical application, (b) will extend and clarify existing information, and (c) will answer the need to contribute added meaning to knowledge about writing.

The findings will have practical application for teachers through the identification and description of environmental influences that can affect the writing process. Teachers are often faced with decisions regarding the amount of social interaction to allow in the classroom while providing an appropriate environment for learning. It is often the view held by both teachers and administrators that a quiet classroom is the most productive. The literature also shows a positive correlation between the time students spend on task and academic achievement (Fisher, Filby, Marliave, 1977; Smyth, 1979). Recently, however, in the area of writing, social interaction has been viewed as a means of

enhancing students' writing, and findings show that classrooms of this type may provide an environment that is more conducive for producing writing (Britton, 1970; Dyson & Genishi, 1981; Rosen & Rosen, 1974). An analytic description of the task environment and how it affects the writing process can help teachers in making informed decisions that pertain to social interaction and writing.

Findings that identify and describe cognitive processes of writers can also have practical applications. With the identification of these processes, a model can be developed which specifies what competent writers do. This model can serve as a guide to writing instruction and to diagnosis of writing difficulties (Hayes & Flower, 1981). Teachers, faced with the charge to teach writing, have often implemented instruction based on their knowledge of themselves as writers and conventional wisdom about what is important to teach. Indeed, processes such as planning, organizing, and editing have been identified as important by teachers for some time. However, investigation into the nature and use of these processes and the possible identification of other processes, particularly in young children, can lend support to already established practices and serve as a guide to the development of new practices.

The identification of writing processes in children can help in establishing a theory of writing. Several researchers have worked toward the development of such a theory and have called for more data that can aid in its development (Collins & Gentner, 1980; Shuy, 1981). Collins and Gentner envision a theory that would be both prescriptive and descriptive and one that would explicate underlying principles of the writing process. An ethnographic study, as is the one proposed, can be particularly effective in theoretical formulations because it is discovery-oriented, concerned with the particulars of context, the dynamics of social interactions, and the construction of meanings. It places the researcher in

classrooms and allows him/her to develop a grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) based on what occurs in those settings (Kantor, Kirby, & Goetz, 1981).

Information from the study can be significant to teachers and researchers in clarifying existing knowledge regarding the type of instructional support that is most appropriate for the development of competent writers. The literature offers essentially two views regarding the development of writing abilities and the roles that teachers should play. The first view held by some researchers is that learning to write is an extension of language development. These researchers view children's writing as a natural state in the overall development of language (Emig, 1981; Britton, 1970; Loban, 1976). This view sets forth the belief that although writing is natural, it is activated by enabling environments--safe, structured, private, unobtrusive, and literate. Adults in these environments do not directly and explicitly teach information about writing; rather, they are fellow practitioners and providers of possible content and experiences.

Bereiter (1980), on the other hand, holds that it is important for educational purposes to look at and identify the distinctive features of writing, rather than to treat it as an extension of other kinds of language development. By identifying these distinctive features of writing, Bereiter maintains that researchers and others can identify whatever is potentially susceptible to direct influence. One of the distinctive features identified, for example, is that because written utterances can be shaped and reshaped, writing lends itself to development of craftsmanlike skills not normally found in speaking. Educators feel that direct instruction may serve a useful purpose in helping students acquire these skills.

These two views of writing development and teacher intervention reflect the types of decisions about instruction that teachers must make. They must

decide when to directly intervene in students' writing development and/or how best to provide an "enabling environment" for the maximum growth of students. They must determine how much intervention is good and necessary in what is considered by some to be a naturally occurring process? The proposed study can aid in clarifying knowledge related to this issue.

The study can also help to clarify conflicting findings regarding the identification of writing processes in young children. For example, many researchers and theorists hold the view that the planning and reviewing processes are late-blooming processes, not found in young children (Bereiter, 1980; Flavell, 1977). In fact, some experiments have shown that necessary activities for both planning and reviewing, such as examining the message for faults and taking the role of the audience are late-developing activities (Markman, 1977). The research shows that children simply write down thoughts as they come to mind, giving no thought to clarity of message and reader understanding.

Other researchers have reported conflicting findings. Scardamalia (1981) has found that children displayed a sense of audience in an essay writing task by addressing the reader. Graves (1980) has identified the process of rehearsal for writing in first graders. These students use drawing and talking as a means of planning topic and story content. This rehearsal process in children is analogous to the planning process identified in older students and adults. Graves (1979) has also identified the beginnings of the reviewing process in young writers, and Calkins (1981) has found that third graders review their writing frequently and in different ways.

With the conflicting evidence among researchers about the existence of given processes in children, there is a clear need for clarification as to what processes are evidenced in young children and an extension of knowledge about the nature of these processes.

Finally, and significantly, there is a need to contribute added meaning to knowledge about writing. This study proposes to identify and describe the cognitive nature of processes in competent third grade writers. This analytic description will add support and meaning to information about processes that has been identified by other researchers. Graves and his colleagues have conducted extensive research on writing processes of children over a two year period. They have stated, however, that

More needs to be learned about what occurs within the writing episode in the 80s. We are just beginning to get a sense of the ingredients in the process, but far more data are needed to explain how children function (Graves, 1981, p. 199).

This study can provide a portion of the needed data.

### Overview

The chapters which follow are arranged in the following manner: Chapter II presents a review of the literature related to the study; Chapter III gives the design of the study, the procedures used, and the method of data analysis; Chapter IV presents findings which answer the questions raised at the outset; and Chapter V provides discussion of the findings and implications of the study for instruction and future research.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Introduction

In recent years much of the research on writing has shifted from product-oriented research from which processes were inferred to research directed toward actual behavior of writers throughout the composing process. Studies which sought to determine the relative efficacy of one treatment over another have become less frequent. Rather, descriptive investigations and case studies from which relevant hypotheses can be generated and a theoretical framework about written discourse can emerge have become prevalent (Cooper & Odell, 1978).

The type of inquiry which looked at the conditions under which students wrote became prominent as an outgrowth of basic research in the last two decades on syntactic development (Hunt, 1965; O'Donnel, Griffin, & Norris, 1967; Smith & Swan, 1978; Loban, 1976), rhetorical development (Britton et al., 1975; Kroll, 1978; Moffett, 1968), and composing processes (Emig, 1971; Stallard, 1974; Graves, 1975; Flowers & Hayes, 1977). Because of findings from this body of research on processes involved in producing written discourse, it became a natural next step to ask questions about how the observed phenomena occurred in the natural setting of the school and the classroom.

This literature review reflects the view advanced in this study that writing occurs (and thus should be studied) within a task environment in the classroom which interfaces with the cognitive activities and processes in which the writer engages. Therefore, the literature related to the study addresses the area of

interest by categorizing the research about (a) the composing process in the classroom, primarily reflecting the orientation of English and language arts' educators; (b) the more detailed cognitive processes in writing, reflecting the views of cognitive psychologists; and (c) writers' social and academic interactions within the classroom environment, reflecting the views of educational anthropologists and sociolinguists. Because literature is being assimilated that will help to construct a "story of writing" and because research on writing processes is relatively new and somewhat limited, the literature bearing on this study does not always deal with child writers as subjects. In studies in which adult or older student writers are used as subjects, the studies are discussed because of the systematic and detailed identification and description of cognitive processes they provide. In these cases, care has been taken to clearly identify the age of the sample group or individual.

### Composing Processes in the Classroom

During the last six years, Graves and his colleagues have done extensive research in the classroom setting with young children, which, in addition to providing insight into behaviors children engage in during the process of writing, raises questions about specific cognitive activities in which students engage during writing. Graves' initial study (1975) involved the use of the case study method, analysis of broad samples of children's writing, and the naturalistic observations of children while writing. He identified characteristic behaviors of students as they wrote, which categorized them into two types:

1. reactive writers: these children showed erratic problem solving strategies, the use of overt language strategies, the use of overt language to accompany pre-writing and composing phases, isolation that evolved in action-reaction couplets, proof reading at the word unit level, a need for immediate rehearsal in order to write, rare contemplation or reviewing of products, characterizations that exhibited general behaviors similar to



their own, a lack of a sense of audience when writing, and an inability to use reasons beyond the affective domain in evaluating their writing; and

2. reflective writers: these children exhibited little rehearsal before writing, little overt language to accompany writing, periodic rereadings to adjust small units of writing at the word or phrase level, growing sense of audience connected with their writing, characterizations that exhibit general behaviors similar to their own in the expression of feelings, and the ability to give examples to support their reasons for evaluating writing.

This Graves study was the first of elementary aged children as they actually engaged in writing in the classroom. Identification of these characteristic behaviors gave subsequent researchers a provocative point of departure from which to investigate more deeply. In fact, Graves (1979) himself engaged in further research, looking at revision as an important aspect of writing. He examined and documented how and in what order primary children change their composing, spelling, and motor behavior during the writing process. In this study of three students in a first grade classroom, several findings related to revision were presented. These included the following:

1. children revise in other media forms such as block building, drawing, and painting before they revise in writing. Children who demonstrate an overall learning stance toward revision in another area are more likely to demonstrate it in an area such as writing;
2. when children try a new approach to writing, other areas in which they might have been competent may suffer temporarily;
3. beginning writers do not revise;
4. toward the end of the primary years, many children reach a point of equilibrium when handwriting and spelling problems are behind them and messages flow easily onto the paper. Children do not revise these messages;
5. peer audiences have an effect on children's revision and their use of new approaches to the writing process; and
6. when children no longer erase but cross out, draw lines and arrows for new information arrangements, or change their handwriting to a scrawl, they indicate a changed view toward words.

In another research report related to revision, Calkins (1979), a colleague of Graves', discussed findings based on her study of one advanced third grader and the sequence of problems she faced as she changed her approach to revision. The student found that writing consisted initially of choosing a topic and putting down ideas. The writer's words at this time were pre-determined and final. Calkins documents the change that occurred over a three month period as the writer made her first revision, became less bound to one neat paper and made several drafts, and depended less on teacher intervention for approval. For this student the process of revision was gradually internalized.

The revisions made by the subject in the Calkins study were made initially as a result of teacher intervention in the writing process. This leaves the question unanswered as to when in the process children see the need to revise on their own and what knowledge or mental activity brings this to bear. This study of cognitive process can address this issue.

Another phase of the writing process that has been investigated is what has been identified as the pre-writing phase. Sowers (1979) looked at the writing of a beginning first grader over a five month period. The pre-writing phase was marked by activities of talking and drawing. Before the subject wrote, she would draw a scene, then talk about it. As she progressed through the writing, she continued to compose aloud.

Sower's findings about children's behaviors during the pre-writing period are consistent with those of other researchers (Britton, 1970; Graves, 1975; Rosen, 1979). Gundlach (1981) used compositions by primary children to make inferences about the nature of writing processes. He, too, saw a connection between writing and speaking. He stated the following about one incident:

We have observed children occasionally producing a soundtrack as they compose--as in the case of the second grade boy who made the sounds of a revving engine and squealing tires as he draw a

picture of a racing car, then wrote about the new toy racing car he had recently acquired (Gundlach & Moses, 1976, p. 140).

Dyson and Genishi (1982) studied the writing processes of two six-year old first graders to determine (a) the purposes for which each child used oral language when composing and (b) how the writing was affected by social context. The findings showed that both children used oral language chiefly to encode words to print, to transform their messages from something spoken to something written. The results showed further that the "muttering" of young children to themselves and their "chattering" with each other can be valuable and, for some children, critical factors in the process of learning to write.

Dyson (1983) used participant observation to examine the role of oral language in early writing. In a writing corner set up in a kindergarten classroom, children were simply asked to write according to their own definitions of writing. The researcher observed and interacted with the children to gain insight into their perceptions of writing and their reasoning about writing behaviors. Dyson found that the writing center was a hub of both oral and graphic activity. The oral language was an integral part of the early writing processes. Talk provided both meaning and, for some children, the systematic means for getting that meaning on paper. Any thematic content of the writing product often evolved in the task preceding writing. Talk was also used to elaborate on the full meaning of products to audiences. Further, oral language was a tool for seeking needed information, assisting self in encoding and decoding, and, finally, distancing self from work (i.e., expressing evaluation of completed work).

This study strongly suggests a relationship of oral language and written language. It would appear that it is a means of assisting in encoding for young writers and perhaps is useful in helping the student understand and incorporate meaning from his/her external environment into his/her writing. Literature

which contributes to an understanding of the latter area will be presented in the category of "Writers Interacting Within the Classroom Community."

The behavior that the writer shows from the time first words are put on paper until all drafts are completed is referred to by Graves (1983) as composing. He enlists data from three writers in pointing out the complexity and variance in how writers compose. Each writer has an image of what s/he is trying to say, and each begins by laboring to write the correct words to portray the image. Of himself, Graves writes, "I write a line. It doesn't fit. I try another line. A dead end. I clean my study, make phone calls, eat, return and write some more . . . . I wonder when the great breakthrough will come." Graves contention that all writers follow a simple pattern is not easily documented in the literature. What is clear is that composing is a process in which several different behaviors can occur.

Two other studies are worthy of mention here. The first, Emig's (1971), is important not only because it was the first to examine writing behaviors as students engaged in writing, but because it looked at nine components of the composing process. While this study does not deal with young children as subjects, the components of the composing process and behaviors identified may be useful as points of comparisons between young writers and older writers. Emig examined the writing behavior of eight 12th grade student writers using case study procedures. Each subject met four times with the investigator in an experimental setting in which s/he was asked to compose aloud and/or generate a written selection. Nine components of the composing process were identified: (a) context, (b) nature of stimuli, (c) pre-writing and planning, (d) starting, (e) composing aloud, (f) stopping and contemplating the product, (g) reformulation, and (h) seeming influence on writing by teachers of composition.

Emig also identified two modes of composing that students exhibited.

These are:

1. reflexive: this writing was most often poetry, characterized as having a long pre-writing period in which starting, stopping, and contemplating the product occurred and reformulation occurred frequently. The self is the chief audience in this mode; and
2. extensive: this writing was chiefly prose and characterized by writing discourse that is often detached and reportorial. Audience is adult others, notably teachers.

The second study, Stallard's (1974), also looked at senior high school writers who were asked to write on a preselected assignment topic area. Student behaviors observed included the following: (a) planning behavior, (b) revision, (c) rate of writing, (d) audience awareness, (e) consideration of purpose, (f) stylistic concerns, (g) attitudes toward writing, and (h) the practice of stopping to read during the composing process. Stallard found that good writers spent more time both contemplating and completing the writing task than did randomly selected students. He also found that good writers made more revisions and made them during the process of re-reading their papers.

The next category of research presents literature that looks more deeply into the mental activities which can account for some of the student writing behaviors identified here.

### Cognitive Processes in Writing

Studies which look in greater depth at some of the processes cited above can provide additional information from the theoretical perspective of cognitive and developmental psychology. Flowers and Hayes (1981) and Nold (1981) identified component processes of writing that, at a gross level, can be segmented into the following categories:

1. pre-writing or planning during which the writer plans, organizes, and discovers information;

2. articulating/ translating/ transcribing when the writer puts ideas into words; and
3. post-writing/ reviewing/ revising when the writer evaluates and modifies text.

These processes were more finely delineated by Hayes and Flowers (1980) through a technique of protocol analysis, a technique typically used by cognitive psychologists in problem solving tasks, in which novice college writers were asked to think aloud into a tape recorder as they wrote. Through the analysis of a number of protocols over a two year period, the authors proposed a tentative model of the writing process. The authors divided the writer's world into three major parts: (a) the task environment, (b) the writer's long-term memory, and (c) the writing process. The model describes the writing process. The task environment and the writer's long-term memory are the context in which the model operates. A brief description of the model follows:

1. task environment: includes everything outside the writer's skin that influences the performance of the task--writing assignment, intended audience, motivation, and, once writing has begun, the text which the writer has produced;
2. writer's long-term memory: includes writer's world knowledge (about people, games, story, characters, and many audiences); also includes generalized writing plans, perhaps in the form of a story grammar; and
3. the writing process: consists of three major processes: planning, translating, and reviewing. The planning process consists of sub-processes of generating, organizing, and goal setting. The reviewing process consists of reading and editing.

The authors feel that "although the model is provisional, it provides a first approximate description of normal composition that can guide research and afford a valuable starting point in the search for more refined models" (p. 10).

Nold (1981) advanced a model of the writing process which is similar to that of Hayes and Flowers. Her model of plan/transcribe/review describes these component processes of writing as recursive and occurring in irregular patterns.

She asserts, for example, that planning occurs regularly in the middle of draft writing, not only before transcribing, and rewriting actually occurs throughout the writing of the draft. Nold identified the products of the planning sub-process as a representation of (a) the writer's intended meaning, (b) the writer's intended audience, and (c) the persona the writer wishes to project through his/her writing. She identified two kinds of constraints that influence the transcribing process:

1. global plans that reflect a writer's conception of meaning, audience, and persona; and
2. local plans that reflect the writer's knowledge about language such as syntax, vocabulary, and orthography.

The reviewing sub-process is bounded by the planning sub-process that has preceded it. Consequently, young writers who do not make elaborate plans about meaning, audience, and persona can be expected to review their texts only against the conventions of written English they hold in memory. Nold cautions against the assumption that review and revision are one-time processes that occur at the end of a writing session. Rather, revising and rewriting occur throughout the writing of a draft.

The development of a model of writing which has much in common with models of speech production was advanced by Bereiter (1979). It includes:

1. high level executive schema which directs the whole operation (of writing);
2. genre schemas which consist of knowledge available for directing certain kinds of writing;
3. content processor which draws semantic material from memory and organizes it according to instruction from genre schema. Its output is called a gist; and
4. language processor which receives the gist and puts it into explicit language.

With this model in mind, Bereiter feels that one interpretation of writing development is that it consists of the gradual elaboration and refinement of relevant schemes at different processing levels.

The above models of the writing process are based on data obtained from adult skilled writers. However, the models can provide a body of information against which to examine and understand data obtained in this study and to see which part(s) of a model fit child writers.

Scardamalia, Bereiter, and Goelman (1981) have examined and advanced their views about ways in which the conditions of text production may influence cognitive processes in composition. Two of the conditions are particularly relevant here because of the focus of this study on both the internal (cognitive) and the external (environmental) processes of writing. The first condition was based on the hypothesis that interference from the mechanical requirements of the written language interferes with high level concerns of composition. This belief is firmly embedded in conventional wisdom. In an experimental procedure with fourth and sixth graders, the researchers were able to separate results of the effects of mechanical (spelling, punctuation) interference from effects of rate. This was done by introducing a third production mode in addition to writing and normal dictation. This third mode, slow dictation, was dictated by the child to an experimenter who transcribed according to each child's previously-determined writing rate. Thus it was possible to isolate the effects of mechanical interference by comparing writing with slow dictation, since they were equivalent in speed.

The results indicated that the low level requirements of writing do make a difference to children. If these are removed, children produce more and do it a great deal faster. With respect to quality, however, the differences were small (significant at the .06 level) and indicated that they had only a weak effect, if



any, on higher level components of the writing process. In fact, after getting students to increase their quantity by production signaling, the researchers found that writing was the superior medium for producing coherent and well-expressed composition.

The second condition was based on the hypothesis that there is discoordination in processing resulting from lack of external signals. This presupposes a model of the composing process consisting of sub-processes governed by an executive system which orchestrates or regulates the sub-processes of writing. Scardamalia et al. state that "it is probably this factor more than any other that limits the novice's ability to profit from being taught the strategies of the expert." The novice is so involved in mastering the sub-processes that s/he has little spare capacity for implementing more sophisticated executive procedures.

The theory behind this second investigation stems from a theory of speech production. The executive system controls speech production, and this same executive system is adapted to writing. The authors contend that because the system is initially oriented to speech production and thus designed to respond to signals from the external environment, without such input the system has trouble functioning.

Thus, in their experiment, the authors provided an external cue (normally missing in writing) to increase quantity of text produced by fourth and sixth grade subjects. The results showed that (a) children added more material by elaborating on points they had made previously and (b) this intervention led children to extend a coherent string of text units. How children learn to sustain language production without external signals is a question raised by this study. Scardamalia et al. give a more refined view of the writing process in looking at component processes and two of the production factors that impinge upon them.

Matsuhashi (1982) gave yet another close view of the writing process as she looked at the writing process "in motion; the writer engaged." She held that the temporal aspect of writing can give clues to the writing process; specifically, the pause between words. Her purpose was to locate some patterns in observational pause data that could suggest how planning requirements for generalizing and reporting (writing) differ. Although her subjects were adult writers, Matsuhashi's method of analysis and her findings could have implications for this study. She found that:

1. whatever range of plans--whether local or global--the writer was operating under, schematic representation of knowledge and experience inform text production at all times; and
2. when subjects paused to re-read, they were planning for new content that would move the discourse forward.

Matsuhashi further made two broad claims about planning:

1. planning does not correspond to grammatical units; rather it corresponds to psychological processing and is based on underlying conceptual content; and
2. long pauses accompanied by gazing or re-reading activity and by removing the pen from the page corresponded to multiple decisions, generally ones which encompass global issues as well as local ones.

It is apparent that there are many constraints and cognitive demands placed on the writer as s/he plans, transcribes, and reviews his/her writing (Bereiter, 1980). Scardamalia (1982) looked at one aspect of how children cope with the cognitive demands of writing specifically in their ability to coordinate an increasing number of ideas in writing. Children of different ages (10-14) were asked to (a) write about the information contained in a four-celled matrix and (b) defend a thesis. In the first task children were taught how to read matrices and instructed to write a paragraph or sentence containing all the information in the matrix. The results of student writing were classified into four levels of integration from low to high. In the second task students were asked to express

a position on an issue. Scardamalia found that students had great difficulty in putting thought together in writing. In fact, she found that writing presented obstacles to complex idea coordination. In further discussing the findings, she stated

There is a paradox underlying children's difficulties with idea integration in writing. Young children who are particularly constrained by limited resources do less planning, less notetaking, less revising, and less reading than adults. Thus, the very activities adults use to break up this complex activity into manageable sub-routines are what children fail to take advantage of. (p. 100)

While Scardamalia explained the "demandingness" of writing and held that there were no easy solutions, she offered, "The challenge to researchers and educators is to understand the various cognitive processes that accompany writing, their demand characteristics and how the multiple processes involved in writing get coordinated" (p. 101).

Thus far, processes at the gross levels of planning, transcribing, and reviewing have been identified. Researchers have offered evidence and conceptual discussion about cognitive activities that occur when the planning, transcribing, and reviewing, are being actualized. Although many of the studies discussed conceptions of how adult writers use cognitive activities as they write, they are important here because they (a) increase the state of knowledge about these processes and (b) underscore the need for this study in helping to describe these processes in children. Research which looks at the environment in which these processes occur can give added information and insight into writing in the classroom.

#### Writers Interacting Within the Classroom Community

The third category of research that has implications for this study is the research reflecting the perspectives of the sociolinguists and anthropologists. Researchers in this group provide a richer understanding of life in classrooms,

revealing the diversity of students and the complexity of communicating in context. These descriptions serve as a source of new ideas for investigating the processes of teaching and learning. The fact that writing is a process of communications and that it is learned/developed in a context dominated by oral interactions make it important for this study to examine findings from these perspectives.

Cook-Gumperz and Gumperz (1981) point out the primacy of oral language in the child's culture in the early years and that the attribution of meaning, both cognitive and social must be mediated through the oral medium during this time. When children enter school, however, adults study and evaluate their performance and competence from a written literacy perspective. Students must not only learn to write but learn to read and get meaning from the written word. They must learn to move from the contextually-oriented oral tradition of the home to the decontextualized, literate tradition of the school (Cook-Gumperz & Gumperz, 1981; Olson & Torrence, 1981).

There is a differential distribution of ability to move from the oral to the literate tradition which may have an effect on acquisition of written competence in students. Scollon and Scollon (1978), in studying their daughter Rachel's socialization into literacy, found that before she reached the age of three, she had adopted many of the important literacy skills necessary to success in school that her parents possessed. Examples of socialization in the child's life before school were continuous with the school preparation of literacy in many segments of Western society. Scollon and Scollon express the view that children from orientations other than those of the majority culture might find it difficult to develop the literate orientation in spite of heavy teaching of grammar, spelling, and oral display of reading.

Collins and Michaels (1980) in studying oral narratives of first and fourth grade students were able to discover distinct differences in discourse strategies among the students. The oral narratives of some of the children showed consistent use of lexical and syntactic devices which resembled the discourse style of middle class, literate adults. Other children relied more on prosodic cues which reflected an oral discourse style. Further, in the written version of two fourth grade narratives, the same stylistic dichotomy was evident.

Because children first learn to communicate through oral language, it might be expected that students' background plays an important part in literacy learning and in the processes involved in that learning. The interaction between teacher and student and the context in which children are exposed to literacy instruction has an effect in determining student competency in both receiving and producing language and can influence cognitive processes involved in both modes. DeStefano, Pepinsky, and Sanders (1982) described rules of discourse operating within the framework of literacy instruction (in a desegregated classroom) of first graders. The researchers examined (a) teacher-initiated talk and their replies to talk initiated by others, concentrating on academic rather than social interaction; (b) cohesion in text to determine whether student talk tended to become more related to teacher talk; and (c) grammatical structuring of student talk to determine structural changes in patterns of talk over time.

The results of the various analyses showed that there were relatively few open bids on the teacher's part for initiating talk in the classroom. Most student discourse consisted of student responses to nominations by their teacher to have them talk. Spontaneous bids on the students' part tended to be relatively infrequent as the teacher, for the most part, demanded, commanded, questioned, and exhorted, eliciting largely single words in response from students. There appeared to be no mutually devised "social construction of reality"--no

reciprocity between teacher and students. The teacher clearly controlled the discourse. The study points out the teacher's influence in shaping and structuring the processes of literacy learning.

Mosenthal and Jin Na (1981), in investigating the way students compose text, found that differences are related to the type of speech register or verbal response pattern students most often adopted in verbally interacting with a teacher. The subjects were first classified into those who employed either a non-contingent, imitative, or contingent response register. Students were then asked to compose a description of a picture stimulus. Noncontingent students tended to write more interpretive essays and use more interpretive propositions in devising their compositions than did the other two register groups.

The authors felt that one interpretation of these findings is that in addition to the writer attending to the form and meaning of external and internal events, the writer attends to a third type of meaning which is social or situated meaning (Cook-Gumperz, 1977). The manner in which writers integrate external form and meaning with schemata is determined, in part, by the way the writers understand the social context in which they are writing (Doyle, 1979; Winograd, 1977; Freedle & Duran, 1979).

Erickson (1982) views talk in lessons and interactions between teacher and student "as the collective improvisation of meaning and social organization from moment to moment." He views school lessons in terms of an academic task structure and a social participation structure and sees both aspects of organization as mutually constitutive. Successful participation in a lesson requires the student to have knowledge of both subject matter organization and its logical organization as well as knowledge of discourse and its social organization.

In examining a number of instances of the performance of a small lesson sequence, Erickson discovers an underlying ideal model of a lesson. He finds, however, in looking at an instance of the lesson sequence, that some features of specific organization deviate from the general inferred model. These discrepancies represent "adoptive" action taken by teacher and student (in one instance) and have consequences for both the academic task structure and the social participation structure. As students gain meaning for writing, these two structures interact. The nature of the interaction can influence processes in writing.

The inseparability of the academic-cognitive and social-interpersonal dimensions of classroom life are underscored in a study by Florio and Clark (1982) in which they examine children's use of writing in the classroom. The study was conducted over a two year period in a second/third grade classroom. In this open-space type classroom, students were encouraged to make choices about timing and format of their academic and social activities. They also worked in a variety of interactional arrangements, including small groups, teacher-led groups, mixed-age tutorials, and learning centers. The organization of the classroom in this way encouraged and legitimized writing. Through such an organization, teacher and children interacted and negotiation of choice in learning was possible. Further, the organization helped to "ensure that more than formal, teacher-generated, written monologues were undertaken."

Florio and Clark identified the following four functions of writing:

1. writing to participate in community,
2. writing to know oneself and others,
3. writing to occupy free time, and
4. writing to demonstrate academic competence.

These functions reflect both the oral tradition and literate tradition and allow for practice of discourse functions which differ from those normally associated with school writing.

### Summary

The purpose of this study is to describe and explain the task environmental influence of three competent third grade writers and to describe and explain the underlying cognitive processes involved in writing. The literature review has presented the research in three categories that are relevant to this study in an attempt to provide insight into the state of the knowledge in the area of writing process research.

The literature in the first category provides a good background of the composing processes but, at the same time, offers support for the need for this study. While the literature makes clear that children can make revisions in their writing when teachers intervene, for example, it raises the question of the presence of revision in writers without teacher intervention. It also leaves the question of the nature of this revision unanswered. The importance of oral language and writing is identified in studies of beginning writers. However, the relationship of orality and writing in older children needs further explication. Pre-writing as a component process of writing is established and explained in younger writers, but what and how older elementary writers plan and rehearse for writing needs further clarification. Finally, certain patterns of behavior in composing are advanced, but there is clearly a need to look more deeply into the mental activities involved in composing, especially in light of information provided by more detailed studies of older writers.

The second category of research, that related to cognitive processes of writers, provides models of the writing process which identify three sub-



processes (planning, transcribing, and reviewing). The literature further addresses the influences on cognitive processes that the conditions of text production may have. Researchers also examine pause data and the implication of pauses between words for the planning and transcribing sub-processes. The thrust of the literature presented points out the number of demands placed on writers, particularly young writers, and the importance of attempting to understand how processes involved in writing get coordinated by these young writers. This study of competent writers will further examine these processes.

The third category of research relates the importance of oral language as the basis of written language for young writers. The literature also suggests oral language is important because it is the medium through which communication between students and teachers and between students and students occurs and that this communicative interaction has implications for what writers understand as meaning and how these writers use this meaning as they engage in the writing process.

Studies presented in this category point out the fact that learning occurs within a task environment that includes academic-cognitive and social-interpersonal structures. This fact makes a strong case for the study of writing processes within a framework that takes these two structures into account.

## CHAPTER III

### THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY, PROCEDURES, AND METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The major questions of this study related to the issues of task environment for writing and the cognitive processes in which competent students engage as they write within the task environment. Specifically, the major questions are:

1. In what ways does the task environment constrain (influence) the writing process of three competent third grade writers?
  - How does each student's socio-cultural background affect the process of writing?
  - How does the teacher's instruction affect the process?
  - What influences do students' interactions with each other have on these students as they write?
  - What is the relationship between the children's oral language and what they do during the writing process?
2. What cognitive processes do these three competent third grade writers use in generating written text?
  - Do students evidence planning or pre-writing activities?
  - What does the transcribing process (the written representation of ideas) look like?
  - Do students evidence the revision process? What is the nature of this process?
  - How do these processes interact?

#### Research Method

The investigation of cognitive processes of competent third grade writers was conducted using ethnographic methodology with the teacher as principal investigator. Ethnography was found to be most suitable because it (a) supports

the notion of researcher as participant, (b) is discovery-oriented, and (c) is concerned with the particulars of context and social interactions. In this study all of these factors are vital.

The first factor, support for researcher as participant was important because this researcher served a dual role--that of researcher and teacher in the classroom. Therefore, she was a participant in the fullest sense of the word. It was important that the teacher role not be viewed as intrusive to the research process, but as a useful and even necessary part of the inquiry. As teacher, certain background knowledge, experiences, and predispositions were present and bound to be continually forming as the study proceeded. Ethnography supports the subjective judgments of the researcher in a way that allows her to combine her responses with a systematic scrutiny of participants' behavior. Wax (1971) maintains that the successful ethnographer develops the ability to maintain a dual identity, insider and outsider, and to present authentically the experiences of people being studied. This methodology, more than any other, lends itself to teacher as investigator and holds that there can be advantages to the dual role.

This study is concerned with process. Because processes are dynamic, continually developing, and occur in real time, it was important to use a method that could be sensitive to the sometimes subtle changes in behavior that signal the occurrences of cognitive processes in writing. Implicit in most ethnographic inquiry is a discovery process in which a variety of questions are addressed, possible answers proposed, and alternative explanations suggested as the study proceeds. Because of the probing, discovery-oriented process, ethnography provides the most appropriate method of inquiry of a study of the cognitive processes in writing.

The fact that this investigation is concerned with the task environment in which writing occurs underscores the importance of the third characteristic of

the ethnographic method cited above. Contextual elements in ethnographic inquiry are deeply rooted and reflective of the research model developed by anthropologists and fieldwork sociologists. Human behavior and values as manifested in group interaction are viewed as significant in both disciplines. It is the view advanced in this investigation that a study of processes in which the physical, natural, and socio-cultural environments are also studied is crucial to understanding and explaining these writing processes. Ethnography is highly compatible with this aspect of the study.

### Procedures

This teacher-investigator was concerned with capturing the context in which target students wrote and the cognitive processes they used within this context. It was important then to focus on both the student and the wider social context of the environment. As teacher, it was impossible to conduct systematic observations and to effectively carry on normal teaching duties. For this reason, observation of the classroom procedures and individual students were made by a research assistant who was also the afternoon teacher of the students, the person with whom the teacher-investigator shared teaching responsibilities. Prior to data collection, the research assistant was trained in data collection techniques. Training was conducted during two Saturday afternoon sessions and two after school sessions in which literature on ethnographic techniques was read and discussed. In addition, fieldnotes taken by the investigator and other ethnographic researchers during other research studies were examined by the research assistant. The investigator pointed out salient features of note taking and observation during this time. Two practice sessions were conducted in the classroom to further train the research assistant and to de-sensitize all the

students to her presence in the room as participant observer rather than as teacher.

During note-taking and observations, the research assistant moved to several different locations in the room. When making observations of the whole class, she distanced herself from the group and sat or stood in the back of the room. At other times, the research assistant was interested in observing two or three writers at once. During these observations, she positioned herself in the aisle between the writers. Finally, when observing one writer only, the observer sat to the writer's side and slightly behind him/her. The writers seemed comfortable with this arrangement; and from this vantage point, the research assistant was able to observe in detail when necessary and also interact and informally question students about their writing behaviors as the writing progressed.

The teacher-investigator made every attempt to teach writing as she had before the study began, as she made a conscious effort to maintain consistency in teaching style and delivery. Procedurally, writing was conducted in the same way, also, with a pre-writing experience designed to provide background and information about writing before the students began to write, followed by independent writing with the teacher's providing help as needed. This help was with idea development, language usage, word choice, and other writing skills. The only conscious change was that writing was scheduled at least three times a week rather than the usual two times.

Students were informed that a study was being conducted, the purpose of which was to learn more about students' writing. Because the study was not an experiment in which one group's performance was measured against or compared to another's, the effect of subject contamination or the Hawthorne effect was not an issue. Rather, the fact that all writers were observed during the study

would make the possibility of effects of increased writing performance, if any, likely to occur across all writers. Further, the most important factor in maintaining the validity of the study in regard to subjects is the intensity of the observations. As the amount of direct observation increased, the students became increasingly desensitized to the fact that they were being observed. Therefore, the likelihood of the subjects "faking" or "putting on an act" was decreased.

The observations were conducted first with a broad focus to capture the physical and social context in which learners operate. The focus was then narrowed to target students as they engaged in writing. What was ultimately required were changes and shifts in focus as individuals were intently involved in writing, in social interactions, and in the overall learning environment. These observational focus decisions were guided by the teacher-investigator when feasible.

The data were collected during the months including the end of January through April, 1983, and consisted of the following:

1. observation and field notes of classroom writing activities and target individuals, gathered two mornings a week;
2. student journals written in three or four mornings a week, which provided a data source of unassigned, uncorrected writing, representative of students' feelings, concerns, and daily experiences;
3. student writing samples including letters, creative writing, expository writing, and informal notes generated by teacher request and by the students themselves, both in school and at home;
4. student interviews of target students (one formal and several informal) by which to capture the students' thoughts and feelings about writing. These were both formal and informal; and
5. teacher journal kept two or three days a week and including plans for and reflections on the teaching of writing, observations of the students' reactions to their writing, and theoretical notes as insights occurred.

Field notes provided the most extensive source of data and were reviewed daily with the research assistant. The student journals provided data about how students write when given a free rein. Student interviews were useful as students reflected on their writing and shared their perceptions of themselves as writers. The interviews also served as triangulation<sup>1</sup> with the fieldnotes, teacher journals, and writing samples. The teacher journal provided an important link between the field notes taken by the research assistant and the teacher's perceptions of what was occurring. Three videotape recordings were made and were to be a part of the data source. However, due to the quality of the tapes, analysis was difficult and the tapes did not contribute enough significant additional information to warrant their use.

### Setting

Riverton School<sup>2</sup> was the site of the study. This school is the oldest school in Riverton, a mid-Michigan community which is the home of a large university. There are two stories to the school, with primary classrooms housed on the first floor and intermediate classrooms (grades 3-5) housed on the second floor. The rooms are large and airy, and most rooms have a small room adjoining the large room which provides additional work space.

The student population of Riverton School is 210. The population is predominantly white, with black, Hispanic, and Asian students comprising approximately 18% of the student enrollment. The attendance area includes three distinct neighborhoods. One-third of the students come from an area of middle income residences that surround the school. Many of the parents of these

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<sup>1</sup>The process of comparing different types of data with one another to test working hypotheses.

<sup>2</sup>Pseudonyms are used for the school, town, and students.

students are employed by the nearby University. Another one-third come from the student population that is bussed from a middle income area of single family homes. The final one-third reside in a low-middle income housing development of town houses; they are also bussed to the school. The racial composition from the latter areas reflects the racial composition of the general school population.

The classroom was a third/fourth grade combination with 24 students: two Asians, four blacks, and 18 Caucasian students. The students represented a range of academic achievement from slightly below grade level equivalent in reading/language arts and mathematics to well above grade level in these areas, as measured by standardized achievement tests. In the teacher's judgment, about three-fourths of the class was highly motivated in all academic areas. The other one-fourth often had to be motivated by external means, such as small rewards. The three target students were highly motivated.

The room was arranged so that students were seated in rows facing the chalkboard as noted in Figure 1. Earlier in the year the desks had been arranged in clusters of four and a horseshoe arrangement. While this facilitated group interaction, the students' attentiveness and completion of assignments declined. A discussion between the teacher-investigator and her teaching partner resulted in the decision to use the arrangement described in the study which helped increase attentiveness and still allowed for student interaction in other areas. The room was bright and airy, with tall windows on one wall of the room. There was student work displayed on the bulletin board, along the walls under the chalkboard, and in the small adjoining room. The carpeted area in the back of the room was used for class discussion and small informal group meetings. The table in the back was used for individual and group meetings of a more formal nature.



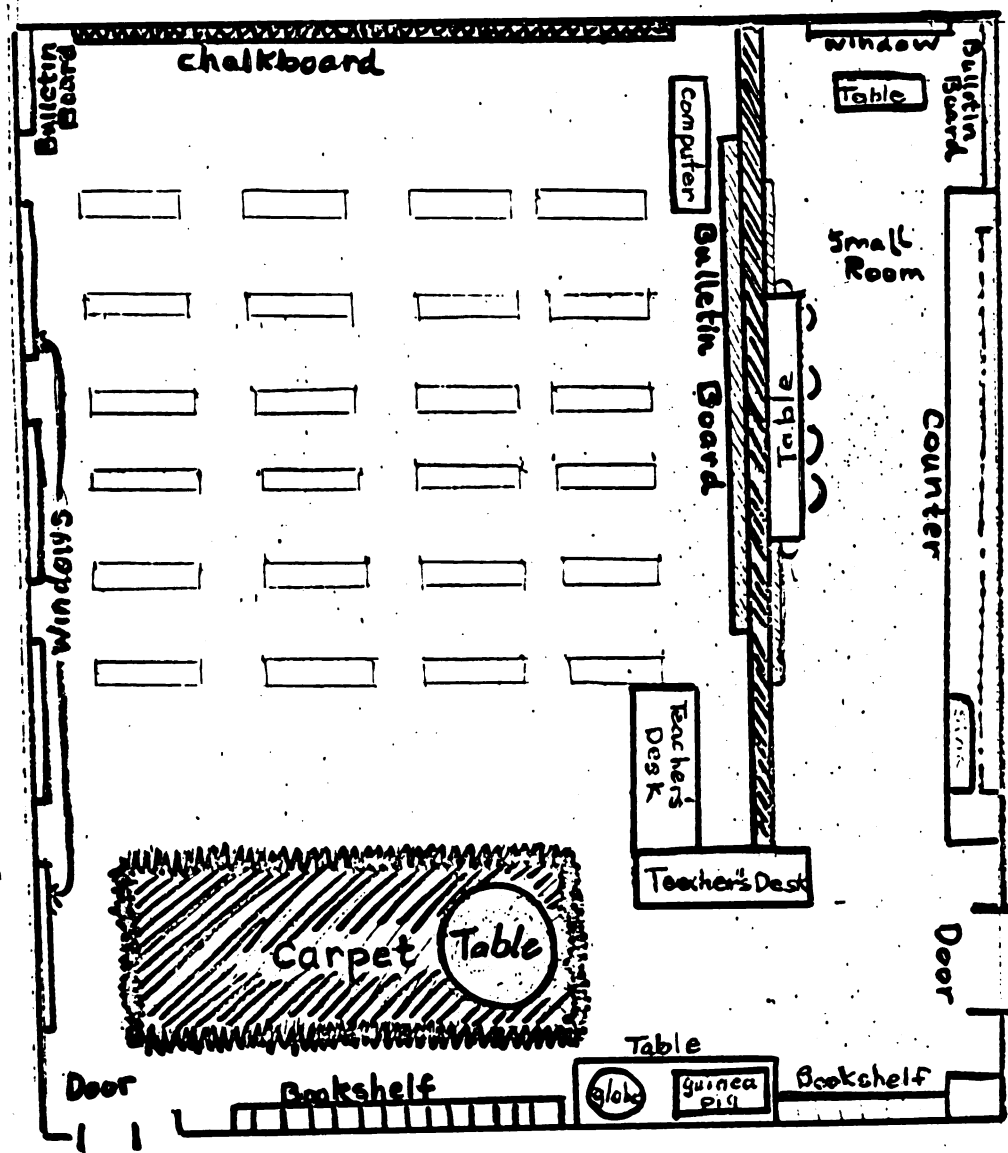


Figure 1. Physical layout of the classroom.

In the small room, students worked in pairs or in groups on a variety of activities such as practicing a play or writing a group report. This room had the advantage of allowing students to talk more freely without disturbing others. The following example highlights this point.

Mindy, Kathy, Kate, Yvette, Shelly are all working in small room.  
Teacher working in other room helping students individually.

Mary and Kathy working together on George Washington Carver report. Exchanging ideas. There is disharmony; arguing over who would write and who would look the information up in the book.  
(Fieldnotes, 2/17/83)

The general atmosphere in the room was of "relaxed control." The teacher controlled the ebb and flow of classroom activity, giving students explicit cues as to what behavior was expected and when. During the beginning of one writing period, for example, after passing out papers the teacher told the students, "You have 10 minutes until recess--either use that time to write or think of an idea for writing." A few minutes later, she said, "The people in the front of the room are off to a good start." And later in the same 10-minute period, "Many of you should be working a lot quieter" (Fieldnotes, 1/27/83).

With the exception of discussion times, students were generally able to move freely around the room. In addition they could go to the library to read, write, or complete assignments. The student did not have to ask permission, but would take a pass and place it on his/her desk so the teacher would know where the student was. During independent writing time, students were allowed to talk quietly and move around if they were not disturbing others. In fact, peer discussion about their writing was encouraged. For example, students were told that they could read portions of their text to each other and ask others for help with ideas.

During class discussion periods the teacher stood at the front of the room to conduct the lesson. Students sat at their seats and were usually quiet,

directing verbalizations to the class as a whole. Roles and behaviors were well understood and firmly established by this time of year. Further and specific elaboration on the environment as it relates to the writing processes will be discussed in Chapter IV, Findings.

The elementary school curriculum was prescribed by the district and set forth guidelines in the form of objectives in the subject areas of science, social studies, reading, and math for grades one through five. The writing curriculum was prescribed in the Common Writings Program. This program specified a group of writing objectives for each of the grades; two of the objectives were minimum objectives specified for mastery. The objectives for the first, second and third grade students are appended (Appendix A).

These objectives were guidelines, but teachers typically went beyond them in teaching writing. What occurred was that each teacher taught writing in the way that she saw appropriate, as long as the objectives were achieved. Each student was to have two samples of his/her writing in a Common Writings Folder to be passed on as part of the student's permanent record. This was the only link with the previous year's writing instruction other than informal conversations with teachers.

Writing in this third/fourth grade classroom was usually done twice a week, but varied depending on emphases on other areas of the curriculum. Sometimes it was done more frequently, sometimes less frequently. The teacher had noted in her plan book the types of writing activities that she would have students engage in. These were autobiography and biography, journal writing, creative writing--poetry and stories, report writing, and classroom newspaper publications. The teacher embedded the teaching of skills in the specific genre in which the students were writing. Typically, instruction centered around either structure, content, or purpose. For example, when concentrating on content, emphasis

would be on what ideas were to be expressed in the given genre and how they were related. While all three emphases were important in writing instruction, one element was usually made the object of primary focus.

Students wrote drafts of writing when it was going to be published (in book form or newspaper format for others to read). When writing in journals and for other assignments (i.e., some stories or essays not to be published), they were not always required to write a first and then final draft. The teacher made her decision based on her perception of the benefit to the students. In fact, sometimes the student's expectation that s/he would have to write a paper over, limited the amount s/he would write and negatively affected his/her willingness to write.

Oral language development was encouraged through announcements at the beginning of each morning during which students would bring to the class' attention items of interest (an incident, possession, poem). Class elections were held three times a year, and during this time campaign speeches were written and delivered by supporters of candidates and the candidates themselves. A microphone was available and was used during speech time.

The teacher had taught for 14 years, maintaining a one-half time teaching position for the last four years. During these last four years, she has been in the unique position of being able to (a) engage in writing instruction in her classroom, (b) work on a research project focusing on language arts--particularly writing, and (c) study the literature on writing pursuant to her academic studies. The teacher brings to this study teaching that reflects the practical knowledge that comes from many years of teaching and the theoretical knowledge gained from several years of research and study. As a result, teaching decisions, strategies, and procedures in the study reflect the blending of knowledge gained in these three areas.

The three target students selected for primary focus exhibited a high level of competence in writing as determined by the following criteria:

1. a modified, focused, holistic evaluation (Greenhalgh & Townsend, 1981) of current writing samples. Included in the evaluation criteria were attention to purpose and audience, ability to organize ideas, use of varied and rich vocabulary, and overall ideational content and development;
2. teacher evaluation of in-class performance during writing assignments. This included appropriate contributions to oral discussion and questions related to writing tasks and task completion; and
3. evaluation of samples from previous years' writing folder.

The focused, holistic evaluation was chosen because it could effectively evaluate writing based on specific criteria set in a classroom and not by some general criteria established elsewhere. The teacher-investigator and research assistant (afternoon teacher) made the evaluations.

Each student had a Common Writings folder, required by the school system, that followed her/him through her/his school career. Several writing samples were specified to be included in the folder. Evaluation of these samples, using the criteria of ability of organize ideas and overall ideational content, was made. This, again, was done by the teacher investigator and research assistant.

After evaluation of the students' writing samples and in-class performance, three students were chosen to be the target students: Mindy, Kathy, and Anne. The fact that they were all female was based solely on the fact that these three best fit the selection criteria. It is acknowledged that male students exhibit differences in writing behavior from females (Graves, 1975), and an examination of male students could have proved fruitful. However, it was decided that including male students who did not meet the criteria would compromise the purpose of the study.

In addition to their writing competence, each of the target students had qualities, noted below, which helped with the analysis and understanding of their behavior as it related to the task environment and cognitive processes in writing. Profiles of each target student follow.

### Mindy

Mindy lived in the area of Riverton which had rental townhouses. She was an only child, living with her mother who was a college graduate and worked as a secretary at the nearby university. This is what Mindy's mother said about Mindy's early years:

Well, when she was a little baby, about six or seven months, I gave her books, and I let her tear them up just so that she would be exposed to handling them. They were old books. I just let her play around with them and tear them up . . . . Then afterwards I started reading and since the father was not in the home, even at that young age I talked to her a lot and she was the only one with me . . . . We were on welfare at the time. (Interview with mother, 4/9/83)

Mindy was bubbly, enthusiastic and eager to perform well, always oriented toward completing a task well. She was a capable student, an avid reader who scored above average on standardized tests. She was an extremely informative subject because of her ability to be in tune with her feelings and express her thoughts and intentions.

Mindy was well liked by her fellow students. She was elected president during one of the three class election cycles. She was able to lead and be a leader without alienating others.

### Kathy

Kathy lived in the middle class neighborhood of older homes surrounding the school. The students in this area all walk to school and knew each other both in and out of school. Her father was a fiscal analyst and her mother was a college graduate not employed outside the home. Kathy's mother was active in school activities such as the PTA and school carnival. Academic achievement was important to Kathy, much of which seemed to be self-imposed. While her mother seemed to want her to do well, she seemed to prefer that she make an overall good adjustment in school. Learning came easy for Kathy, and she scored extremely well on standardized tests.

Kathy had a traditional, middle class family background with a strong family orientation. Her cultural sketch stated:

My family celebrates all of our holidays at home, but later on in the day we visit one of our grandparents' homes. On Easter we go to my grandparents' house that we live closer to so that we can also go to our church. We go to church every Sunday, and we are Catholic. I like Christmas because we get presents to help entertain us, and also because Jesus was born on Christmas.

Our family spends a lot of time together, and I am proud that our family is happy most of the time. (Writing sample, cultural sketch, 2/3/83).

Personally, Kathy was friendly but somewhat reserved. She was not likely to be spontaneous in her relationships with others, although she would speak up once she had established a level of trust. She was an honest, dependable subject--consistent in her responses, if not prolific in words. In a group, she was a strong contributing member but seldom the leader.

### Anne

Anne lived in a an area of middle income housing in Riverton in which students were bussed to school. Her mother was a nurse and her father a CPA. Her parents were born in China, and Anne and her sister were born in a town near Riverton.

Her family appeared to have a strong bond, and she seemed especially fond of her small sister who was in kindergarten. The family made a conscious effort to maintain their Chinese-American heritage. Anne wrote:

Since I am Chinese, I have to eat Chinese food and soon it gets boring. So on special days we have American food instead . . . . My mother and father just love Chinese food. They don't let us have American food very often.

Anne was somewhat of a "loner" and did not make friends easily. She seemed to want to be friends with the other students, but said that they rejected her. In one of her writing samples, she closed by saying,

Sometimes people put me down on purpose by calling me "Chinese eyes" or "Wang Tang eyes." (Cultural sketch, 2/3/83)

Anne was a very bright student who scored well on standardized tests. As a subject, she was not given to detailed verbalizations and was somewhat constrained in her descriptions. She was an extremely warm and affectionate student, however, giving hugs to the teacher and stating "I love you."

### Data Analysis

Because data were collected in a way that attempted to capture the naturally occurring classroom events, the field notes and writing samples contained facts of classroom life that might not directly pertain to the major questions advanced in the study. While all the data were useful in formulating general impressions of classroom life and writing in the classroom, there also needed to be units of the data which could be closely analyzed in order to answer the questions entailed in the study. These units of data were an outgrowth of two major social participation structures<sup>3</sup> in the classroom that related to writing. The first was the whole group social participation structure. Within this structure, certain writing-related events continuously appeared in which the teacher discussed writing with the class in general. The unit of analysis had the following features:

1. a writing content focus initiated by the teacher and addressed to the entire class,
2. student-teacher verbal exchange centered around this writing content, and
3. a connected sequence of time bounded by teacher beginning statements and ending statements about writing time.

These units were designated group literacy episodes. Group literacy episode is used here rather than group writing episode because both oral and written language behaviors are observed and analyzed. These units of analysis yielded information about the general task environment for writing--the teacher's instruction, the purpose for writing, and the situation and context in which students wrote. There were six group literacy episodes that centered around the following topics: (a) trip narrative, (b) cultural sketches (autobiographical), (c)

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<sup>3</sup>The teacher made arrangements for the presentation of content which determined how the students may acceptably interact during the lesson (Phillips, 1972; Mehan, 1979).



story writing for publication, (d) newspaper publication. Two of the episodes covered the same topics.

The second type of social participation structure was characterized by the students' individually and independently engaging in writing activities (thinking, transcribing--pencil to paper, conversing about ideas) that were initiated during the group literacy episodes. The teacher was not directly involved with all the students at any one time, but available to them on an individual basis as needed. What emerged from this social participation structure was a second unit of analysis having the following features:

1. a period of writing time that extended over at least two separate class periods and usually more,
2. focus on the target students' engagement in writing (paper-to-pencil as well as pauses in writing), from the initiation of an idea for writing to production of a finished writing piece, and
3. social interaction from a given target student's perspective.

These units collectively yielded information about the target students and their cognitive processes as well as the task environment in which they wrote. They provided information from the inception of an idea to the completion of the written product. These events were termed individual literacy episodes.

Each individual target student began the writing process in the whole group literacy episode, often getting their ideas during this time. Therefore, the individual literacy episode was often a direct extension of the whole group episode. The separation of the two types of episodes was for analytic purposes only. These types of episodes are discussed in detail below.

#### Analysis of Group Literacy Episodes

Three specific categories were used in the analysis of the group literacy episodes. These categories were (a) academic tasks, (b) teacher verbal behaviors, and (c) student verbal behaviors.

Academic tasks were those specified by the teacher and set the direction for the lesson. In one episode, for example, the teacher's journal entry specifies the following, "I want to help the students organize their ideas into sequential units and to identify how to develop main ideas and supportive details in paragraphs. By using the trip sequence, they should be able to accomplish this" (Journal entry, 1/24/83). Here we can see that the teacher had a definite planned task for students to accomplish. Doyle (1982) supported the importance of identification of task, asserting that "students' academic work in school is defined by academic tasks that are embedded in the context that they encounter on a daily basis." Tasks regulate the selection of information and the choice of strategies for processing information. Clearly the identification of academic tasks is requisite to an understanding of how students gather and process information.

Teacher behavior is the category in which an examination of verbal interaction reveals steps and strategies that teachers and students use in completion of the literacy episode. This was done through connected sequences of verbal interaction. These verbal interactions were coded in such a way that identified teacher-initiated questions and statements and the resultant student responses and comments. Figure 2 details an example of a coded episode using this category. Once the episodes were coded, certain patterns became apparent. These patterns became important in determining how the lesson was shaped, who determined changes in the direction of the lesson, and generally how learning occurred. From these data, a narrative description of the lesson was written.

Included in the episode was the what of instruction--a second step in the analysis in this category. Each teacher statement about content was identified, read, and re-read before elements of content emerged. These categories were:

1. idea production which involved simulation of background experiences and world knowledge,
2. overall text structure which involved the organization and grouping of ideas to form a meaningful and coherent text,
3. paragraph structure involving the identification and development of a single idea through use of related details, and
4. orthographics which involves concerns about spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

These writing content elements provided detailed information about the type of content emphasized as the teacher worked to meet the task objectives.

#### Key to Coding Designations

T: Teacher	S: Student
T <sub>ex</sub> : Teacher explanation	S <sub>r</sub> : Student response
T <sub>qu</sub> : Teacher question	S <sub>qu</sub> : Student question
T <sub>r</sub> : Teacher response	S <sub>c</sub> : Student comment
TB: Teacher request for behavior	SB: Student behavior*

A sequence was comprised of (a) a comment initiated about a topic and (b) resultant responses related to that topic.

A change of topic signalled a new sequence.

Interrupted sequence occurred when unrelated or inappropriate questions occurred or disturbing behavior occurred (that was noted by teacher).

\_\_\_\_\_ shows connected sequence

- - - - - shows interruption of sequence

\* indicates inappropriate behavior

Group Literacy Episode #1

[TB] [Tex	All right, you should be sitting like K, K, and A. Boys and girls-- I'm waiting for J. The spelling test will be after our writing exercise so put away your spelling lists.
T <sub>qu</sub>	Yesterday, we took a trip to the MSU Museum. Who can tell me what we said about writing that was related to our trip?
S <sub>r</sub>	You need to think about the things that happened and get the main idea and details and the order that things happened. We write what happened first, second, and like that.
T <sub>r</sub>	Yes. We start with one main idea from the trip . . . the thing that happened first, then fill in the details. Who has an idea about a way to begin?
T <sub>qu</sub>	
S <sub>qu</sub> *	(looking at the outline on the board) Do we write it like that?
T <sub>r</sub>	No. I'll explain that in a minute. (T starts calling on students as they raise their hands to give the teacher ideas for starting their stories.)
S <sub>r</sub>	We came into the room . . .
S <sub>r</sub>	One day . . .
S <sub>r</sub>	(looking at Ki) Once upon a time . . . (she giggles)
SB, TB*	(Yo is bothering Er. Teacher told her to stop.)
Tex	(Writing on the board) One day our class took a field trip to the Museum. It was a cold day when we came upstairs and started a discussion about our trip.
	(Teacher explains how to develop this with other sentences that tell what the discussion included.)
	Okay, if you start your story with the bus as the main idea of your first paragraph, you fill in with details about what happened once you were on the bus.
S <sub>c</sub>	You wrote "It was cold day" (corrected the teacher).
T <sub>qu</sub>	(inserts a) Okay, are there other ways that you can think of for starting?
S <sub>r</sub>	It started out with our class or "Back in the 19th century . . ." (She laughs.)

Figure 2. Example of group literacy episode.

The student behavior category identifies salient student verbal behaviors including student questions of the teacher, student responses to the teacher's questions, and student-initiated comments. The nature of these responses were specifically defined. From these data it was possible to determine whether students tended to ask procedural questions (concentrating on local concerns) or content-related questions (concentrating on global concerns); whether they initiated comments about content or commented primarily on ways to complete the task; whether they expressed themselves orally at length and in detail, or in short phrases and in a cursory way.

Data from each literacy episode was charted using the categories specified above. A narrative description of each episode was written based on this information. Additionally, a narrative description of instruction across these episodes was made.

### Analysis of Individual Literacy Episodes

In each individual literacy episode, the range of behaviors in which target students engaged was examined and charted on a continuum from the beginning of the written selection initiated in the group literacy episode to its completion several days later; Figure 3 is an excerpt from the charting of an episode. These behaviors were all-inclusive, from non-verbal behaviors dealing with the position of the pencil when pausing, to walking around the room to relieve tension. Verbal behaviors documented the teacher-student interaction and student-student interaction (both social and academic-related). Also documented and analyzed were instances of vocalizations and sub-vocalization by students while writing. Additional information was gained from student and parent interviews. After extensive readings and re-readings of the episodes, salient dimensions of the students' writing behaviors and social interactions were categorized under

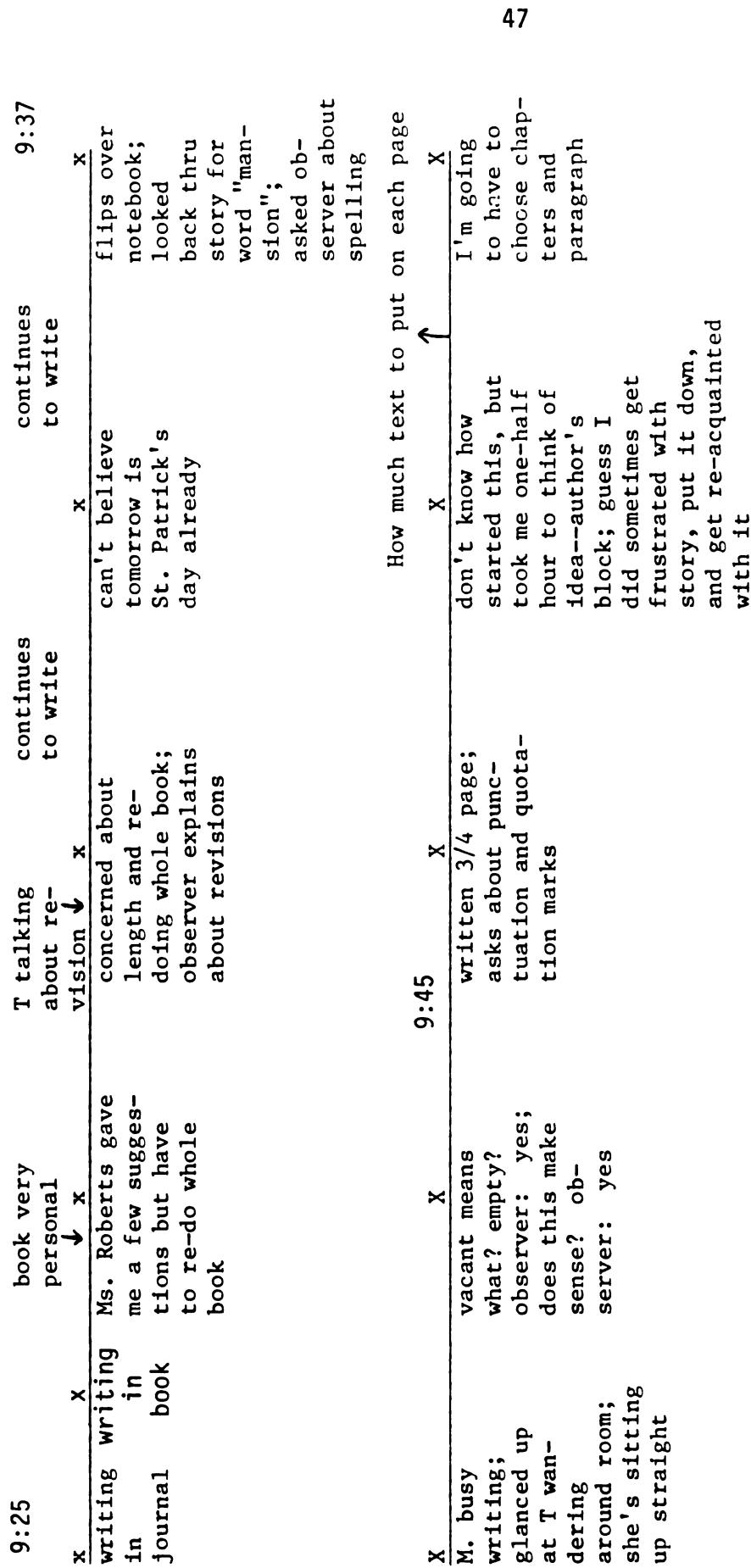


Figure 3. Example of charting of individual literacy episode (excerpt).

X

↓

observer:  
how long  
should story  
be? M  
counts pages  
(18); don't  
know how to  
divide Nancy  
Drew's organi-  
zation; Carolyn  
Keene died  
last year--  
thought of  
writing it in  
chapter--have  
a reason, but  
can't think  
of it

mom says it's  
important to get  
ideas down; afraid  
might forget if  
don't write down  
right away

X

↓

Yolanda asks how  
how she's doing;  
sometimes c very  
short in kinder-  
garten; four years  
old; summer time  
wrote bed time  
stories

Yolanda: you're  
a good illustrator;  
M: don't like to  
draw; my mom's good  
at it.

X

↓

what call  
card? that  
says own  
house? (to  
observer)  
observer--  
deed

Key to Coding Designations:

- \_\_\_\_\_

 = writing in progress
- x

 = target student verbalization
- ↓

 = teacher talking to student
- \_\_\_\_\_

 = observer talking to student or other student talking to student
- ↑

 = target student talking to teacher

Figure 3. Continued

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the sub-processes of writing: planning, transcribing, and revision. A fourth category of social interaction was added to capture the task environmental aspects of writing. While ascribing to the literature that points out that these processes do not occur in discreetly defined stages, for purposes of analysis, such categories seemed the most effective way to provide insight. These categories are discussed in further detail below.

### Planning

Even though the literature clearly identifies planning as a key part of the writing process (Graves, 1982; Hayes & Flower, 1981), the degree to which the planning is evident in children's writing and what the process looks like is still unclear. In fact, planning and prewriting are sometimes confused. In this analysis, an adherence is to the distinction made by Emig (1971) which states that

Prewriting is that part of the composing process that extends from the time a writer begins to perceive selectively certain features of his inner and/or outer environment with a view toward writing about them . . . planning refers to any oral and written establishment of elements and parameters before or during a discursive formulation. (p. 38)

For the purposes of this analysis, prewriting is considered as a part of the group lecture/discussion episode and occurs but once in a writing period. Planning, on the other hand, can occur many times during the writing episodes. In this category, behaviors relative to planning before the transcribing process such as notes and oral discussion were recorded. The relative ease or difficulty of the planning in target students is also documented. Additionally, any prohibitions to planning and the role that the teacher plays are the types of information that are included in this category.



### Transcribing

The student writes--formulates ideas and meanings, may think about spelling and punctuation--and may consider audience during the transcribing process. What is ultimately transcribed reflects the juggling of all these several concerns and decisions about what to attend to and at what point in the process to deal with them. Thus, planning and transcribing are intricately bound.

In this analytic category certain behaviors tended to recur. Pauses were examined, for example, and what was written after the pause seemed to be indicative of the student's thoughts and decisions about writing at this point. What writers said as they wrote was also a way to capture their cognitive processes. While the degree to which target students verbalized as they wrote varied, each of the subjects yielded some data in this area.

The ability to monitor one's writing is another behavior that is manifested during the transcribing process. Student decisions about getting started, where to go next, and keeping track of where they have been is necessary for the control over the writing process itself. While the literature shows that most young writers lack this ability, certain behaviors that seemed to reflect this ability were recorded and analyzed when they were seen.

### Reviewing/Revision

Reviewing is the reading and evaluating of a text for some elements perceived to be present. It has been said that younger children generally review their text for punctuation and spelling rather than for meaning and audience awareness (Bereiter, 1980). Instances in which target writers went back to read the text, upon analysis, give information about how sophisticated their review and revisions can be and the degree to which they engage in review.

In revising, writers add or delete elements of the text--letters, punctuation, words, phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs--because they have examined them as faulty and think of a good way to change them. This is not a one time only process that occurs at the end of a written episode. Examples of changes in text as the student went along were recorded and the nature of changes made were analyzed in this category.

### Social Interaction

This final category, more than any other, is reflective of behaviors that are occurring throughout the writing process. The social interaction that occurs is intricately a part of the task environment. What was observed was overt behavior and the nuances of behavior between students, the student and the teacher, and student and the participant observer. This category provided information about how the students' cognitive processes were affected by the social interaction behaviors.

While the use of analytic categories are linear and appear to lack depth, it was felt that certain elements and moments within the writing process need particular attention and need to be isolated in order to ultimately be described most fully and clearly. The purpose here is to establish a category system against which the literacy episodes can be examined. The narratives of the collective episodes of each student, in contrast to the analytic categories, convey the richness, density, and the interconnectedness of the writing process.

### Other Considerations in the Data Analysis

Important to this analysis was the written product. This was considered in the analysis in two ways. When the target student was the primary focus for an extended length of time, the student behaviors and actual writing of text were documented at the same time. In other words, written text and student behavior

were recorded simultaneously. Thus pauses, re-scanning, erasures were noted, and the thought processes contributing to these behaviors could be determined either by what the student wrote next or by questioning from the observer. In these instances, the product became a dynamic part of the task environment and was analyzed as being integrally related to the range of behavior exhibited by the students.

A second consideration was the written product in its completed form. In this type of analysis, student behaviors were documented but were not linked with the specific wording of the text in progress. Thus the product was analyzed after completion by examining it for reflection of contextual constraints (purpose, audience, persona) and textual constraints (grammatical and thematic cohesion). Through this analysis, inferences about processes could be made.

### Summary

In this chapter, the ethnographic method was purported to be particularly useful as the method of inquiry for the study of students' cognitive processes in writing. Three main reasons are that ethnography supports the notion of researcher as participant, is discovery-oriented, and is concerned with the environment and interactions of participants in the environment.

Procedures for conducting the study were presented. These procedures were non-traditional in the sense that the teacher in the study was the principal investigator. Advantages of this situation were reported. Additionally, precautions taken because of the teacher's close involvement in the situation were explained. One of the primary procedural adjustments was that observations were made by a research assistant. Data were collected from several sources--field notes (the primary source), student journals and writing samples, student and parent interviews, and the teacher's journal.

The setting for the study, a classroom of 24 third/fourth graders, yielded information about how three target students interacted with the teacher and peers as they engaged in writing. Two distinct units of analysis were identified and were used to analyze the data. The group literacy episode was the first unit of analysis, and the individual literacy episode was the second. These became broad organizers from which analytic categories emerged. From these data, charts and narrative accounts were developed which, when assimilated, produced answers to the major research questions entailed in the study. These findings are reported in Chapter IV.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

The major questions of this study are:

1. In what ways does the task environment constrain (influence) the writing process?
  - How does the student's socio-cultural background affect the process of writing?
  - How does the teacher's instruction affect the process?
  - What influences do student interactions with each other have on students as they write?
  - What is the relationship between children's oral language and what they do during the writing process?
2. What cognitive processes do competent third grade writers use in generating written text?
  - Do students evidence planning or pre-writing activities?
  - What does the transcribing process (the written representation of ideas) look like?
  - Do students evidence the revision process? What is the nature of this process?
  - How do these processes interact?

These questions reflect the approach taken in this study, which looks at two perspectives on writing. The first perspective, addressed in question one, looks at the external contextual environment for writing (influences outside the writer's skin). The second perspective, addressed in question two, looks at the internal and cognitive processes (influences within the writer's head). As the findings are reported, these two perspectives can provide a point of reference.

The findings, a result of the analyses described in Chapter III, first answer the question of the task environment by (a) describing the students' socio-cultural background as it relates to writing, (b) describing and explaining the teacher's instruction and the students' verbal behavior as it related to this instruction, (c) describing student interactions and their relationship to writing, and (d) describing the target students' oral language and its relationship to the writing process. Findings which are related to the cognitive processes of the students are reported next by describing the mental activities of the target students as they wrote during the three component phases of pre-writing/planning, transcribing, and review/revision.

## TASK ENVIRONMENT

### Socio-Cultural Background

The findings related to the backgrounds of each of the students identify aspects of this background that can influence students' writing. These are (a) parents' interests in writing and discussions centered around students' writing, (b) the presence of books in the home and students' interest in reading, (c) students' actual writing in the home, and (d) the presence of a variety of experiences. The findings regarding each of the students' backgrounds are presented below.

#### Mindy's Background

Mindy lived with her mother who spent a lot of time with her. Mindy talked about the influence that her mother had on her writing. She discussed her story that was to be published: "I don't know how I started this, but it took me just a half hour to think of this idea. Mom said I had author's block. I guess I did" (Fieldnotes, 3/16/83). Then, later, as she continued to write, Mindy said, "Mom said it's important to get the ideas down--I'm afraid I might forget my ideas if I don't write them down right away" (Fieldnotes, 3/16/83). Mindy's

mother took time to react to her writing and to Mindy as a writer. Her mother explained the relationship between her economic plight and the value she placed on writing.

But I have always, Ms. D., I've always encouraged her what she can do herself, like all her math papers and reading assignments from grade one I threw out. I kept what she wrote, what she has done, what she has made, because I felt that when I was on welfare if I had resources I would have lived well if I could sew, fix the heater, fix the refrigerator. I felt that our own inner resources were more important than money. So this is where I got the idea of encouraging her to do things on her own, you know? To see if she could make up a play or if she could think of things herself. (Interview, 4/18/83)

Mindy's mother valued the self-expression and creativity that writing encourages. She also felt it was important to expose Mindy to children and to all kinds of children, as she explained:

. . . I always had a lot of children in our room. I always brought in a lot of kids because she was alone. So I wanted her exposed to all kinds of children. So I brought her all kinds of kids. Kids that had parents who were on drugs. All kinds . . . . (Interview, 4/18/83)

This emphasis on exposure to all kinds of children again underscored the feeling that Mindy's mother had about her child's exposure to the "real world" and her ability to cope as a result of this exposure.

Finally, discussions of emotions at home seemed to be reflected in Mindy's writing at school. Her mother stated:

We try to straighten out our emotional problems by discussions; and if she gets angry, I tell her don't be made at your own anger. Anger is all right if it's not destructive, and we have discussions on anger because I feel that anger is an important emotion, not something to be discarded and put away. That's too big of an emotion, and I have anger. (Interview, 4/18/83)

Mindy spent a good deal of time having her characters react with just the right emotions. this emphasis probably stems, in part, from reactions to emotions in her home.

Mindy's family was not a traditional one, but a single parent family. Her mother made a great effort to give Mindy support and security and took an

active interest in what she was doing in school, particularly things that enabled her to call on her inner resources to produce. Thus, she had stimulated Mindy to write and to value writing.

### Kathy's Background

Kathy lived with her mother, father, and brother, and she got help with her schoolwork and with writing from her family. Kathy's mother was not employed outside the home but was active in school activities as a volunteer. Kathy did writing at home and stated that she was writing a book. When asked what kind it was, she said, "Well, it's not the kind that we learn in school. It's like just a little book, because I'm trying to help my brother learn to read" (Interview, 4/11/83).

Kathy stated that a neighbor helped her learn to read, "During the summer before I went into kindergarten we had a neighbor who had a bunch of books and I'd go over there and he'd help me read." The fact that Kathy's neighbor and not Kathy's mother taught her to read is indicative of the fact that although Kathy was bright, her mother and father did not exert excessive pressure on her to excel academically. Conversations with her mother pointed out that she was as concerned with Kathy's social adjustment as well as her academic adjustment.

In an interview Kathy was asked if her mother and father helped her with writing. She stated that they did and that they helped her if she was having trouble wording a sentence or having trouble spelling a word.

Kathy's cultural sketch indicated that the family enjoyed holidays and birthdays together and that they went to church every Sunday. An example of the influence of the family Christian values came out in the statement that Kathy made as she was writing a paragraph about her favorite holiday.

Kathy started writing. "My favorite holiday is . . . "

Kathy: I can't write that Christmas is my favorite holiday because of the presents or else my mom will be mad.



Kathy continued writing ". . . because Jesus was born." (Fieldnotes, 4/2/83).

Kathy's family values and background influenced her writing directly as shown in the excerpt above. They also indirectly affected her writing as she had experiences that built a knowledge source from which to draw as she wrote.

### Anne's Background

Anne lived with her mother, father, and sister in a close-knit family situation. Her parents were interested in what occurred in school and came to conferences and other school activities. When asked if her mother and father helped her with her writing, Anne said that her mother helped because her father was so busy. She stated, "When I finish a rough draft of a letter, she will correct it and then I'll go write it over . . ." (Interview, 4/13/83). Anne also indicated that she wrote letters to her grandfather and her babysitter who moved to California. She also said that "Usually I end up writing in Chinese rather than English. Writing in Chinese is something different. It's a character for each word so it is totally different."

Anne's mother indicated that Anne has to practice her Chinese at the sitter's after school before she can watch television. (This was revealed when Anne's mother stopped by the school to leave something for Anne. The teacher had been concerned that Anne was doing her Chinese writing rather than other assigned work. Anne's mother and teacher discovered that Anne had decided the more Chinese she could get done in school, the more television she could watch at her sitter's.)

Anne said that her mother also read her writing and told her that ". . . she doesn't know what that means." Then Anne did rewriting.

Anne was encouraged to read. She stated that she liked Carolyn Keene books and that is her favorite author. In the interview she said, ". . . My mom

hates those books 'cause I never look at the books she buys. I keep on checking them out and keep reading for hours." When asked what kind of books her mother bought, she said, "She buys stuff like the Wizard of Oz and I've seen the movie . . . Pinocchio and Robin Hood, and so they are kind of boring."

It is apparent that Anne's mother wanted her to engage in activities at home that would reinforce the literate environment of the school. Anne's cultural sketch indicated that the family engaged in many activities together, both cultural and recreational. Those experiences provided her with a strong background from which to draw when writing.

In summary, the socio-cultural backgrounds of the students show that they were given support and encouragement for learning and for academic success. The students were from literate environments in which exposure to books, reading, and writing were the norm. Writing served a functional purpose in the homes of two of the students, Kathy and Anne. In Mindy's home, writing was also encouraged because it stimulated creativity and the development of critical thinking that could be useful in life. All three students received critical feedback from their parents on their written products.

#### Teacher's Instruction

The teacher's instruction comprised an important part of the context for writing and, therefore, could provide valuable information about the relationship of instruction to cognitive processes in writing. Three aspects of the instruction were examined and are reported here. These were (a) what was included--the tasks assigned and the content emphasized, (b) how the instruction was delivered, and (c) how the students verbal behavior related to this instruction and the cognitive operations necessary for participation in instruction.

### What--Tasks Assigned/Content Emphasized

The tasks assigned and the content emphasized were closely related. The tasks specify in a general way the work that the student was to do. These tasks were delineated in the teacher's journal and were determined before the episode began. The content or the "what" of instruction was the specific, substantive portion of instruction that the student needed to understand and internalize in order that learning occur. This was taken from the fieldnotes and was the content that was actually taught. Figure 3 gives a synoptic view of the six literacy episodes. In looking down the first two columns for each episode (task set and content emphasized), it was clear that the content emphasis and the tasks were primarily focused on the organizational and structural components of writing. The first two episodes dealt with the organization of a paragraph, while the third, fourth, and fifth dealt with overall text organization.

In the first episode, the teacher built on the common experience of a trip to the museum to show temporal organization as well as hierarchical organization. Figure 4 shows a chart used to help students understand this organization. The students were first asked to tell what the major events of the trip were. The teacher explained that these were the main idea of each paragraph. Then the details about each paragraph were elicited by the questions who? what? where? and how? (as seen in Figure 4). This type of main idea structure demonstrated to students how ideas were arranged hierarchically. It was then pointed out that each major event was ordered according to what happened first, second, third, and fourth. Therefore, a second type of structure was developed because each event could be ordered temporally.

In Episode 3 (Figure 3), the task emphasis was again on structure although a part of the task emphasizes cultural background. The students were to write autobiographical sketches using cultural information and using the concept of

paragraphing--the use of main ideas and detail--which was developed in the two previous episodes. The teacher again used an organizational framework (see Figure 5), this time in the form of an outline. The structure developed was hierarchical only, since the main ideas were in categories such as family traditions, foods, music/dance, and did not need to be arranged temporally. The fieldnotes show how the content was developed.

	<u>Task Set by Teacher</u>	<u>Content Emphasized</u>	<u>How Teacher Taught</u>	<u>Student Verbal Behaviors</u>
Episode 1 (story about trip)	Organization of ideas into sequential units for writing; identifying main idea of paragraph--elaborating on ideas and adding details to logically expand idea).	Paragraph development (main idea, detail, idea development; ordering of events in sequence; use of ditto marks (incidental teaching); main idea of paragraph; logical ordering of events.	Asks questions; gives explanation; uses chart (Frome); writes on board; answers questions.	Responds to teacher's questions; questions teacher about procedures, length; makes comments that teacher corrects; concern about doing what teacher wants.
Episode 2 (story about trip)	Same as Episode 1 (review).		Reads example of student paper; questions about main idea; explains how to achieve coherent text.	Response to teacher questions.
Episode 3 (auto-biographical sketch)	Student understanding of concept of culture and identification of practices unique to his/her own culture; write autobiographical sketch including cultural information and <u>correct</u> paragraphing.	Cultural background of different groups organization of information about backgrounds; content-family tradition, holidays celebrated, etc.; nothing about mechanics.	"Lecturette"; explanation of organization with chart; response to student questions.	Comments about culture; response to questions and content (about content).
Episode 4 (prepara-	Identification of story structure that is	Elements of story structure; what's	Explanation with transparency; ques-	Comments response to teacher ques-

	<u>Task Set by Teacher</u>	<u>Content Emphasized</u>	<u>How Teacher Taught</u>	<u>Student Verbal Behaviors</u>
tion for story writing)	embedded in text to aid in reading com- prehension and story writing.	included in each element in the setting; initiating event.	tions; reads student ex- ample; re- views.	tions; student reads.
Episode 5 (story to be published in book form)	Same as epi- sode story structure to be used in writing (review).	Same as epi- sode 4 (review).	Questions; records stu- dents' re- sponse; teacher re- views; ex- plains by example.	Responds, com- ments (ini- tiates); ques- tions proce- dures; clari- fies content.
Episode 6 (article for class news- paper)	Identification of how news- paper article is written; write news- paper article for class newspaper.	Headline, by- line, lead paragraph of news article; how these function; what's in- cluded; nouns, verbs as used in headlines; definitions of words.	Explanation with article as example; questions; calls on stu- dent to read responds to student ques- tions.	Respond; read volunteer information.

Figure 3. Synoptic chart of group literacy episodes

TEMPORAL ORGANIZATIONHIERARCHICAL ORGANIZATION

<u>Questions</u>	<u>Main Idea</u>	<u>Details</u>
What happened first?	We came in and talked about the trip.	Who? Ms. D., Ms. M., class What? talked about behavior Where? in the room How? whole class discussion
What happened next?	We got on the bus.	Who? our class and Ms. K's How? noisy/quiet What? did you talk? about what? who did you sit by?
What happened next?	We arrived at the museum.	Who? tour guides met us Where? entrance to museum What? took off coats, went to lecture room, passed around rocks and tools
What happened next?	We took a tour of the museum.	Who? two classes and tour guides What? saw things from pioneer life; saw different kinds of dinosaur bones.

Figure 4. Chart showing hierarchical and temporal organization.

Introduction	Music and dance
name	
American	
heritage or culture	People like me that I am proud of
Family traditions	
holidays	
special celebrations	
things we do as a group	
Foods	
examples: Greeks--baklava	
Church	
what is it like?	

Figure 5. Organization for autobiographical sketch.

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The teacher uses the chart on the board.

T: This is the introduction. This will be your first paragraph. I want you to do it in sentences, expressing the main idea first. Then add details. Your next paragraph will be about family traditions with a sentence as the main idea, then details about these traditions.

As the teacher passes out paper for writing after the discussion, she again stresses the organizational structure.

T: I want you to think of the main idea and some examples. Use specific details (Fieldnotes, 2/3/83).

In Episode 4 (Figure 3), the emphasis was on the underlying story structure that was embedded in text. The teacher presents this structure on the board:

Setting  
Initiating Event  
Reaction  
Action  
Conclusion (Fieldnotes, 2/24/83).

She explained what each part meant, and then used a short story on a transparency, asking the class to select the parts of the story that correspond to the story structure elements.



It can be seen from the episodes described above that the organizational and structural elements of writing were a major content emphasis of the teacher's writing instruction.

A second emphasis of instruction was idea production. The fieldnotes in several episodes showed the teacher eliciting ideas of what to write about from the students. In Episode 1, for example, the fieldnotes show the following:

T: . . . who has an idea about starting?

The students started to give the teacher ideas for starting their stories:

Mindy: We came into the room . . .

Alice: One day . . .

Shelly: Once upon a time . . .

The teacher wrote these on the board.

Later in the episode, the teacher asked for ideas for topics to write about. Students generated many topics which the teacher wrote on the board. As students began to write independently, the fieldnotes showed:

The teacher is asking Alice questions to stimulate ideas for her story (Fieldnotes, 1/27).

In Episode 3, a discussion about culture was used to stimulate students to think about their own backgrounds. The teacher asked the students, "How do you celebrate? What are your family traditions?" They shared their experiences, drawing on their personal backgrounds to respond.

While these are examples of initial generation of ideas, they do not show the teacher explaining ways that these ideas can be developed. The teacher encouraged students to write details about the ideas, but there was no documentation that they were shown how to do this. In the discussion of story structure, however (Episode 5), there was an approximation to this idea development. The teacher and students together generated ideas that could be

used in given parts of the story structure. The teacher began by asking why it was important to learn about story structure and then used the chart on the board that outlined story structure to have students generate types of information that could be included in each part of the structure. In this episode, the students were lead in thinking about ways of developing a setting by including certain information. During the discussion, some students were also stimulated to talk about books they had read in which the author either enhanced the story by adding certain ideas or made the story less interesting for the reader by including seemingly unnecessary information.

It has been pointed out thus far that emphasis on structure and idea generation formed the primary focus of the teacher's instructional content in writing. In further analysis of the data, it became apparent that the teacher de-emphasized orthographics (spelling, sentence structure, and grammar) during writing. Several statements were made during the instruction which showed this.

T: Boys and girls, if you don't know how to spell a word, leave a space for it and come back to it later.

And later:

T: Don't be overly concerned about handwriting and spelling.

In another episode, story structure and development were emphasized and spelling was de-emphasized.

T: If you have a burning idea, then let me know. Include characters, setting, plot, what will be happening, and a good conclusion. Remember the film that we saw about story endings. I'd like a well-developed story. First copy; don't worry about spelling. You will do this after on your final copy (Fieldnotes, 4/18/83).

It must be noted here that spelling was taught as a separate subject in this classroom, however. The students were divided into three spelling ability groups, and there was a weekly list and a daily assignment for each group. The words were taken from a commercial spelling series, and the lessons were developed

from the suggestions in the series and the teacher's judgment about what was important for the students to know.

One spelling lesson was developed from the information below that was on the chalkboard.

On Board: noun: the name of a person, place, or thing

toes  
 potatoes/s  
 calves  
 calf: change the f to v and add es  
 fairy: change the y to i and add es

singular

plural

child  
 foot

children  
 feet

boys  
 keys  
 toys

9:30: The teacher is discussing plural and singular endings to nouns in preparation for spelling assignment to be done.

T: This is what I want you to do now.

(1) finish yesterday's spelling assignment

(2) do today's assignment

(3) work on reports on black Americans

I will check them in the back of the room (Fieldnotes, 2/23/83).

This excerpt documents the type of isolated spelling lesson that is a part of the instruction in the classroom. The teacher explained the lesson which dealt with adding s or es to nouns and had written the words on the board as she explained. During the lesson, accuracy was stressed. However, when students wrote during writing time, they were told not to concern themselves with correct spelling, at least for the first draft. There was a change in behavior expected on the part of the students during spelling time and during writing time.

Grammar was taught during one episode in which the use of nouns and verbs was explained in the context of writing newspaper articles. Here the teacher discusses the succinct way that headlines are written.

- T: All right, the headline consists of just two words. Think of the parts of speech they are. What is hijacker?
- Tammy: Verb?
- T: No. (She calls on Sandy.)
- Sandy: A noun.
- T: Yes, hijacker is a noun. Seized is a verb, Tammy, an action word. The important thing is that a noun and a verb only are used here. The articles, or small words like a and the are not important here. The headline is made up of action words; they should catch attention (Fieldnotes, 4/27/83).

While grammar was taught in this example, it was in the context of a specific use in writing.

In summary, the content emphasis from the analysis of the episodes and other data was strongly geared toward the way students organize their writing at the paragraph and whole text levels. Secondly, an emphasis was put on the generation of different ideas and, to a very limited degree, development of these ideas within a logical structure. Orthographics were de-emphasized during the writing instruction, but spelling was emphasized and taught as a subject separate from writing instruction.

#### How the Episodes Developed

As data from each of the individual episodes were analyzed, patterns of behavior for teacher and student became apparent. The verbal interaction coding in every episode was marked by teacher questions/student responses. The teacher controlled the direction of the episodes through use of strategically placed questions. The following example shows a student asking a question about

procedure during a time in the lesson when the focus was on the content of idea generation. The teacher answered the student's question, then got back to content by asking a question herself.

Anne: Can we write more than four paragraphs?

T: Yes. Don't be overly concerned about handwriting. Who has other ideas for writing? (Fieldnotes, 1/27/83)

In another exchange the teacher had been eliciting responses from the students about elements of story structure. They discussed the setting and what was included, and the teacher asked them what was included in the initiating event. Several students responded, then one went back to a comment about the setting which moved the direction backwards rather than forward. The teacher used a directive to get back to the immediate focus as the excerpt shows.

Mindy: I read some authors do put more in the setting. If Nancy Drew talks to dad, it tells what she said. Sometimes authors will say what her face looked like and lots of details.

T: Right. Mitchener's Hawaii had lots of details in the setting. He went on and on for many pages describing the land and how it looked and how people came to live there.

Alice: In a book I read, it was boring for a while because it took so long to get to the interesting part.

T: Yes, sometimes there are a lot of details. Back to the initiating event. As your story develops, many times there is more than one initiating event (Fieldnotes, 3/3/83).

Immediately after this exchange, the student who changed the direction initially asked another question which was off the focus.

Mindy: We're going to get an author, aren't we?

T: Yes. Next Wednesday. Sheila Roberts. OK, let's see what's next (teacher is referring to next element in the lesson).

The teacher asked a question to get students focused again. What seemed to have occurred in all of the episodes was the allowance of a temporary and short

deviation from the content focus, then the teacher drew students back in the direction she wanted them to go.

In addition to the questioning pattern and its use, findings from the data show that questions served important functions for the teacher in guiding student thinking. These functions were:

1. to have students focus at the beginning of a lesson,
2. to have students retrieve information from memory and apply it to text,
3. to have students spontaneously generate ideas, and
4. to elicit from students their knowledge and understanding of word meanings used in context.

The first function was used at the outset of the episode to have students focus on what the lesson was to be about. In Episode 1, for example, after the teacher stated that the day before the class took a fieldtrip to a museum, she asked, "Who can tell me what we said about writing that was related to the trip?" In another episode, the teacher said, "Before you start your books, let's review what we said about story structure. Who remembers why we use a structure?" In instances such as these, questions focus and alert students to the emphasis of the lesson.

Another function of the questions was to have students retrieve and apply knowledge. As the teacher read a story that a student had written, she asked students to identify the main idea. Here the students must (a) retrieve from memory the definition of a main idea and (b) select from the information in the paragraph that which corresponds to the definition of a main idea. This type of processing was repeated several times in the data. In another episode, for example, students were asked to identify story elements from a story that was projected on a transparency and match it with the corresponding element in the story structure (Episode 4).

Another function of questions was shown by the teacher when she used them to elicit students' ideas and had them brainstorm topics for writing. These ideas were listed and form a reference for all students to use. In these cases the teacher took all the ideas that students had without condition or judgment.

Finally, students were questioned to see if they had specific word knowledge for understanding of the teacher's talk. The teacher might use a word in an explanation and then question to see if students knew what the word meant. It almost seemed as if it were a deliberate attempt to "stretch" students' vocabularies while in the process of teaching about something else or giving an explanation. An example follows:

Mary had told the class about finding several books about George Washington Carver in the library and using these to do her report.

T: (enthusiastically and smiling) You'll have information overload. Sometimes there are discrepancies among books in the information given. Does anyone know what discrepancy means?

Several students responded with the wrong answer before teacher explained.

Teacher put example of a discrepancy on board . . . George Washington Carver resource books give two dates for his birth . . . She pointed out the fact that there was a discrepancy because he could only have one birth date. Pointed out the fact that they didn't keep accurate records then (Fieldnotes, 2/1/83).

The teacher might not expect the students to know the answer, but she encouraged their use of context to come up with an educated guess. This use of questions was seen several times in the data.

Explanations of concepts were usually given after a questioning/response sequence. In Episode 2, for example, the students were asked to identify the main idea of each of the paragraphs in Mary's writing. At the end of the reading and the identification of the paragraphs, the teacher said, "You see how Mary took the idea of a trip to Ann Arbor and told about several things? She then developed each one and arranged them in the order that they occurred"

(Fieldnotes, 2/1/83). The explanations were usually brief and to the point as is the one above. This was the teacher's way of bringing closure to the content focus and of preparing students to begin to write.

In only one episode did the teacher lecture to the students. This was a short lecture--"lecturette"--in which the teacher talked about different ethnic traditions in an attempt to give students an understanding of things that make up a person's cultural background. In this case she spoke for a somewhat prolonged period of time without eliciting questions or having students initiate questions (Fieldnotes, 2/3/83).

#### How Students' Verbal Behaviors Related to Instruction

There were three major categories of students' verbal behavior that provided data about instruction. The three major categories were (a) student responses to teacher questions, (b) questions asked by students, and (c) comments initiated by students. As is shown in Figure 7, student responses to teacher questions made up the largest category of student verbal behavior, as might be expected. The recall of specific information was observed most frequently as students responded to teacher questions. Students answered in this category by selecting from their knowledge in a specific area. In the following example the student was asked about the parts of speech.

T:           Think of the parts of speech they are ("Hijacker Seized").  
              What's hijacker?

Student:    A noun?

This response involved recall of specific information. Another example of a response in this category:



### Student Responses to Teacher Questions

1. recall of information
2. free production of ideas (brainstorming)
3. generation of experiences
4. generation and application of knowledge

### Questions Asked by Students

1. procedural
2. writing content/subject matter related
3. general informational

### Comments Initiated by Students

1. extension/elaboration of concept
2. concerns about task completion
3. application of previous reading experiences

Figure 7. Functional typology of student verbal behavior during group literacy episodes.

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T: OK, what's an accomplice?

Lolita: A companion?

Teacher explained that it is a little more than a companion.

Here the student drew on knowledge of word meaning.

A second response type was "freely produced (brainstormed) ideas in response to the teacher's questions." In this category, students' ideas could flow in an uninhibited manner. This was in contrast to the specific selection of knowledge needed to generate answers in the previous category. Students' responses in giving ideas of ways to start a story showed the nature of these responses:

Mary:	We came into the room . . .
Alice:	Once upon a time . . .
Shelly:	One day . . .
Mindy:	It started out with our class . . .
Lolita:	Twass the date of January 20 . . .
Curtis:	It was a cold day . . .

Another response similar to brainstorming was the "generation of experiences that related to a specific topic." In response to teacher questions about trips to write about, students responded by generating several. In a sense students were engaging in brainstorming, but there was a greater condition placed on the ideas that they came up with because students had experienced the trip.

The fourth response, and the least frequently seen, was the "generation of specific knowledge and its application into a content-specific text situation." In these responses, student not only generated knowledge, but were called upon to apply this knowledge. These response types made greater demand on the students' cognitive abilities.

Students also asked questions of the teacher, although this was seen far less frequently than the "response to teacher questions" category. When asking questions, students generally asked "procedural questions," wanting to know how to do a writing assignment that the teacher had made. Specifically, questions were about such things as how long their writing had to be and if they had to write the headings. Students sometimes wanted information of a more general nature, asking questions such as "We're going to get an author, aren't we?" or "Will we get to write adventure stories?" These were "general informational questions" and were asked considerably less frequently than procedural questions.

A third type of question was "related to the writing content/subject matter focus" of the episode. For example, when discussing story structure, one student was confused about the story elements of action and reaction and said, "I got a

question with action and reaction. It seems you're skipping something between action and conclusion" (Fieldnotes, 3/3/83). Another question was about the focus on racial and ethnic differences. One student asked, "Is it true that black people couldn't sit where they wanted to at the movies?" Only a small number of verbal behaviors were questions initiated by students, and only a small percentage of those were related to content.

Students sometimes initiated comments or shared their ideas that were related to a given topic being discussed. At times this would take the form of extensor or elaboration of a concept--as when a student told about a book she had read that had a long setting that was boring. Another student told about things she had learned by viewing Roots on television and how she learned things about her cultural background. This showed a greater level of involvement of the student and longer duration of speaking.

#### Summary of Teacher's Instruction

In summary, the teacher orchestrated the episodes by determining the topic to be discussed and by employing questions in an effort to achieve the purposes for the lesson and for the students. Students responded by giving the teacher the types of responses she desired. These appeared to be short and to the point, primarily responding with the naming of specific information or concepts.

There was only limited discourse from the students as they did not volunteer information or elaborate on ideas to any extent. Rather, while allowing students to initiate comments, the teacher did not encourage them, as she would soon get back to the topic and the direction she had in mind for the lesson. One notable exception to this pattern was the episode on culture. In this episode, although the teacher led the discussion, students volunteered

information and initiated comments and opinions. The teacher not only allowed this to develop during the episode, but seemed to encourage it.

Because of the nature of the interactions in the group literacy episodes, certain cognitive situations were most relevant. Students were primarily retrieving information from long term memory and sorting this information in order to select a specific information requested by the teacher. They were not involved in making planning decisions directed at goal setting and purpose setting because this was done by the teacher in the episodes. Providing the organizational frames, in particular, precluded students' need to make planning decisions to set purpose.

### Student Interactions

Students interacted with each other primarily during the individual literacy episodes, inasmuch as the teacher controlled the interactions during the group literacy episodes. The nature of these interactions and how they affected the writing process (either helping students write or hindering the writing process) are reported here. These interactions were analyzed from the perspective of the individual target students; therefore, findings will be reported from the perspective of each of the three students.

### Mindy's Interactions

Mindy showed several types of interactions with other students. Several instances were seen where students approached Mindy for help and she assisted them. Sometimes these were short exchanges in which she helped another student spell a word. Other instances were for longer periods as when she volunteered to have a "conference" to help another student as described below.

- Mindy: (reading Debra's story, playing with hair braid): OK, let's see; well, maybe like Garfield, I don't know. Garfield could be planning something on his birthday that Jon didn't know about (Mindy is helping Debra with ideas). (to Debra) Did Garfield open all his presents?
- Debra: Only the teddy bear.
- Mindy: (giving suggestions to Debra for what Garfield could do, questioning her about comic strip) What is your Garfield? Different? shy? nice?
- Debra: Funny.
- Mindy: Funny Garfield goes with a funny teddy bear. What do you think? (moving her arms as she talks to Debra; many hand gestures)
- Debra: (moves away, seemingly satisfied with the help she received from Mindy). (Fieldnotes, 3/8/83)

Another kind of interaction was noted when Mindy left her writing completely and walked around. This occurred after she had been working for a sustained period of time. She had been writing a report on Ethel Waters in the classroom; she got up and took a walk to the small room. As she approached Kathy and Mary, she said, "Teacher said I could walk around since I've been working so hard" (Fieldnotes, 2/17/83). She then went back to her seat and continued reading and talking notes for her report. In another instance she said she needed to "walk off tension."

A third type of interaction with Mindy and other students occurred when students came over just to talk--usually the conversation centered on writing, however. Two examples follow.

Jendy came over to Mindy who was working on the cover of her report. Mindy asked Jendy what she did her report on.

- Jendy: O. J. Simpson, but I'm not through yet. (Fieldnotes, 3/1/83).

In another episode:

Yvette began conversing with Mindy.

Mindy: Sometimes chapters end up being very short. Once in kindergarten, I wrote a story about a princess who wanted a toy. It was very long, and I guess kind of boring. When I was four years old, I wrote "The Mischievous Mouse." I couldn't pronounce it, though. My printing was big and lopsided. In summertime, I wrote "Bedtime Stories" which is a collection of my short stores.

Yvette: You're a good illustrator.

Mindy: I don't like to draw. My mom is good at it. (Fieldnotes, 3/16/83).

Mindy was able to interact with other students, and in some cases it seemed to move her writing forward as many of the interactions were centered around writing.

Mindy would sometimes test her characters' reactions by asking her friends how they would react to an incident. Mindy's response in an interview pointed out her she questioned her friends.

Often in parts there'd be a part and I wouldn't know how to explain it . . . I had to ask my friends about their emotions or the reaction to something because if I had her just smile when her grandmother was kidnapped, you know, so I asked, "What would you do?" you know, and then took those ideas and put them down. (Interview, 4/21/83)

Mindy talked further about the importance of having a "kid" read her story.

. . . I know you read it and I took some of your suggestions, but a kid, you know, because it's really based on a kid's story, and I wanted to know what a kid would think about it. So I tried reading it to Jackie and she's six years old and it's kind of hard when you're reading in cursive—you get impatient; so I'm asking people if, do you want to read my story? But it's awfully long to read. (Interview, 4/21/83)

Finally, an exchange between Mindy and Kathy seemed to be counter to the characteristic behaviors that Mindy exhibited in other interactions. In the following exchange, Mindy and Kathy were discussing how they would start their

writing. Kathy asked Mindy to tell her what she was writing about. The following conversation ensued.

Mindy: OK, but not all (reluctant to show Kathy).

Kathy: You can tell me the initiating event. On her paper, in 1984 . . . .

Mindy: (shows Kathy what she's written) What are you writing about?

Kathy: I don't know.

Mindy: (asks observer how hot it is in China)

Kathy: (writes) In 1984 there was a new school being . . . (she covers up her page as Mindy tries to look)

Mindy: I told you now, so tell me.

Kathy: I'll tell you at recess.

Observer note: social problems between the two girls.

After recess the class continued writing for about 15 minutes. The fieldnotes note that Kathy and Mindy wrote notes back and forth--something about being sorry and playing together. In this exchange there seemed to be competitiveness between the two girls. However, in the interview, Mindy explained her reluctance to share her story with Kathy in this way, "I wasn't feeling good about Kathy reading my story, not so much that I didn't want her to because I was afraid she was going to copy, but I wanted it to be a surprise . . . " (Interview, 4/21/83). There is definite tension between the two girls which may be one of the unintended outcomes of school writing. It does not seem to be constructive in helping Mindy's writing.

### Kathy's Interactions

In reading the interactions that Kathy engaged in during the individual literacy episodes, certain patterns emerged. Unlike her behavior in the whole group episodes, Kathy initiated interactions frequently, was assertive and

sometimes competitive as a writer. The two major behaviors seen were interactions that showed her monitoring the work of others and a general awareness and curiosity about what was occurring in the room. These behaviors were interspersed throughout the writing process.

This inclination to monitor the work of others was noted several times in the fieldnotes. In one episode in which she was working on her book, the fieldnotes read:

11:03        Page 9 in her writing . . . "During the night Jean . . . " pencil point on paper . . . pauses for two seconds to see if Mindy's done with her story yet . . . asks her.

Mindy: no.

Mindy and Mary are adjacent to Kathy. Mindy is finishing her story while Mary is copying it over for her. Mindy is questioning Mary as to how she'd feel (see page 40 of draft) in a situation.

11:07:        Kathy playing with her pencil. Continues to write, interrupted easily. Glances over to Mary and Mindy to help out . . . . (Fieldnotes, 4/21/83)

Several instances were noted when Kathy asked other students if they were finished already. Another episode showed Kathy again looking at Mindy's paper. She said, "Mindy, you have to do those" (pointing to questions on the front page of a spelling assignment) (Fieldnotes, 4/28/83). In another instance, she asked Mary if she wrote on the back. These and other exchanges pointed out that Kathy was constantly aware of what Mindy, in particular, was doing. She appeared to feel that it was important to know where she was (whether finished or not) and how she was going about completing the task. It is difficult to tell whether this was a concern for Mindy's doing the work correctly or whether she wanted to make sure that others didn't complete the work before she did.

In the interaction described earlier between Mindy and Kathy as they discussed how they would begin their writing and their reluctance to share,



Kathy was eager to find out what Mindy had written but reluctant to tell what she herself had written. While her behavior could be indicative of insecurity about the value of what she had written, it could also indicate a desire to have a story that was better. More important than the motivation of the behavior, however, was the result. Her preoccupation with what Mindy was doing was not productive in helping Kathy write.

Kathy was also aware of what was occurring in the classroom. In the middle of her writing, she would stop as this notation suggests:

Kathy: Mary, I want my story back. (puts in desk; writes name, date, language arts)

Kathy looks at paper; writes "one day during school . . ." Kathy turns around to look at the class (five seconds), whispers to Mindy that Anne's seat has been moved. (Fieldnotes, 4/17/83)

In another instance while she was writing, she stopped and commented:

Kathy: (to Ray, laughing) You're putting all the states in the world . . . (Ray was at the map in the front of the room)

Ray: No, I'm just trying to locate the states I need for my story.

Kathy started talking about math homework to Ray. (Fieldnotes, 4/17/83)

The observer commented in the fieldnotes that Kathy was easily distracted. She always returned to her writing, however, and she was able to continue and to complete it. In an interview Kathy stated that she preferred to "write alone" because she could get more work done. It was apparent that most of her interactions with other students were not centered around the content of what she was writing.

### Anne's Interactions

Anne had few interactions with other students while writing. She tended to write alone and stated in an interview, when asked if she liked to write with

friends or alone in a quiet place, that she liked a quiet place because she could "concentrate and get better ideas." Although she interacted very little with the other students, she was aware of what was occurring in the room, particularly what the other students were doing. In an interview, for example, she knew the types of stories her classmates had written and some of the details.

Instances when she did interact with other students were only tangentially related to writing. She was asked by other students to illustrate their books, report covers, and other work. In these instances Anne would write her own story and illustrate for someone else simultaneously. An example illustrates how she worked.

9:53	Continues writing, looking intently at paper.
9:55	Sits back in chair, stretches, sighs. Anne asked the observer if she should start a new paragraph of a quotation "Mother knows . . ." Continued to write.
9:57	Got up to get another sheet of paper.
9:59	Started talking about how she liked her new pants.
10:00	Left seat to talk to Shelly and Yvette about their stories (which she is illustrating).
10:02	Rearranges her pages in order.
10:03	Yvette came over to read Anne a poem ("The Circus") and watched her illustrate it by drawing a horse.

Note that in this sequence Anne was involved in three different activities--writing her story, illustrating her poem, and planning illustrations for her classmates.

Another example is further illustrative of Anne's interactions with other students. The students were writing cinquains; Anne had written a poem that was not a cinquain, and she was decorating the background.

11:14 Anne finished with decoration. Pencil in hand, she looked up at the blackboard (one second), write "Mother," said to herself "adjective--let's see . . . " (four second pause). Asked "how do you spell lovable? Let's see . . . " Scratched head, looked up at blackboard, right board. "I want one with two syllables . . . " (paused 16 seconds). Jumped up, "Yeech!" Went to wash glue off of hands.

11:17 Sitting back in chair, leg bent, elbow resting on knee. Then wrote, "sweet, kind."

11:19 Julie asked Anne if she could draw a butterfly.

Anne: I don't know; you mean like this? (She drew.)

Julie: "Yes. Thanks, Anne." (Fieldnotes, 4/5/83)

Julie went back to her seat, and Anne went back to writing her poem. Then another student came over and interrupted Anne, asking her to draw a butterfly. Anne again complied, then went back to her writing.

While preferring to work alone, Anne seemed able to interact with others, to do several things simultaneously and still get back to her writing. It was through her artistic ability that she seemed to be able to interact with the other students. Her writing did not appear to be negatively affected by these interactions.

In summary, an examination of the interactions of the three target students indicated that they responded and initiated contacts with other students in a variety of ways and for a variety of purposes. What seems to be common to all the students, however, is the fact that these interactions were a distraction, but they were able to handle the distractions in their own ways and successfully get back to the writing at hand. In Mindy's case, she was able to use the interactions to help her with decisions about her writing. Kathy's interactions showed her concern for completing the task at hand and how other students sometimes distracted her. Anne was able to concentrate on her writing but her

interactions point to her love for art, its importance for her, and how she "made room for it" in her writing.

### Oral Language and Its Relationship to Writing

There were three ways that oral language and writing were examined in this study. These were in looking at (a) students' verbal behavior during group literacy episodes; (b) target students' verbalizations with other students, teachers, and observers during individual literacy episodes; and (c) target students' sub-vocalizations while writing.

#### Students' Verbal Behaviors During Group Literacy Episodes

The oral language behaviors of students in the classroom were reported in some detail under "Teacher's Instruction" and "Students' Verbal Behaviors." The primary oral behaviors seen, as reported, were responses to teacher's questions and these were of short duration. Students did not engage in extensive discourse or in exchanges of ideas to any great extent.

Specifically, during group literacy episodes, the amount and type of oral language behavior varied among the target students. Mindy was the most verbally involved in the group episodes. Of the 10 types of verbal behaviors identified (Figure 7), she exhibited seven of these behaviors. The major categories of verbal behavior for Mindy were questions asked of the teacher and initiation of comments. In asking procedural questions, Mindy primarily showed concern that the task be done correctly and that the expectations of the task be understood. A typical example occurred after the teacher and students had discussed story structure and had been told that they would be writing their own stories. Mindy asked, "How long are you going to let us work on these things?" (Fieldnotes, 3/3/83) and "Does it have to be one of those topics?" In adding to

and initiating comments about concepts being discussed, Mindy demonstrated involvement in the episode beyond a simple recall of information and showed a degree of interest in and knowledge about what was being discussed. At one point in the group literacy episode, the teacher was discussing different cultures. Mindy offered, "Here are some Indian legends," and she opened her desk to show the book. Another time she stated, "I read some authors do put more in the setting. If Nancy Drew talks to Dad, it tells what she said; sometimes authors will say what her face looked like and lots of details" (Fieldnotes, 3/3/83).

Kathy's verbalizations during the group literacy episodes were few. She responded to questions by recalling specific information. In fact this was her primary way of responding. The teacher asked, for example, "What is the next element of story structure after the setting?" Kathy responded, "The initiating event" (Fieldnotes, 3/3/83). When she answered questions, most were answered with short phrases.

Kathy had only one verbalization in which she initiated a comment. At that time, she elaborated on a point made by the teacher. She volunteered the following, "Sometimes you put weather in the setting" (Fieldnotes, 3/3/83). Again, the comment was short and direct.

Anne showed two types of behavior. She asked procedural questions and responded to the teacher's questions by recalling specific information. A typical procedural question was asked by Anne during the group literacy episode when they were discussing the trip essays when she asked, "Can we write more than four paragraphs?" (Fieldnotes, 1/27/83). Her primary concern expressed by her verbal behavior seemed to be in making the teacher's expectations of the task clear.

A second type of verbal behavior was responses to questions asked, which required recall of information. Anne responded correctly and her answers were

short and to the point. She responded only twice in this category. In looking at these responses, it is clear that there was a difference in the number and type of behavior displayed by the verbal target students. Mindy and Anne used language to gain information about how to proceed with the writing ask. Mindy, however, engaged more in extensive talk about writing concepts than did the other two students. Kathy and Anne's verbalizations were primarily responses rather than generations of ideas or talk about concepts.

#### Students' Oral Language During Interactions in Individual Literacy Episodes

The students' oral language during individual literacy episodes, as they interacted with the teacher, observer, and peers, was shown to be related to writing in three major ways. Students used oral language to clarify meanings and stimulate ideas. they asked their peers and others about whether a portion of text made sense or whether a character's reaction was the way they would react if they were that character. Other examples show students using language to question other students in an effort to stimulate their thinking, to help them generate ideas. In writing an article about a carnival, for example, Kathy stated, "I was thinking about how I should put this; I want to tell about the people who make the carnival a success" (Fieldnotes, 4/28/83).

Oral language was used to share writing experiences, to verbalize how their writing was progressing, and what they were writing about. These sharings were outlets for both positive and negative feelings about their writing. Anne, in writing her autobiographical sketch, stated that it was easy to write about her culture and showed a great deal of enthusiasm (Fieldnotes, 2/3/83). On the other hand, when writing a report on Martin Luther King, she stated, "I wish we didn't have to do this--this is so stupid."

Students occasionally went to one another's desks and asked what they were writing about and shared with each other more specific information about their writing. Jendy came over to Mindy's desk, and Mindy asked what her report was one. Jendy replied, "O. J. Simpson." Mindy went on to talk about her report on Ethel Waters, that "Ethel started out by singing songs that she knew. I think that's really good she went so far" (Fieldnotes, 3/1/83).

Students used oral language as a means of seeking approval for their writing. They asked the teacher, observer, and other students to react to what they had written or wanted to know if their work were neat. This approval seeking occurred while the writing was in progress and seemed to encourage students to continue with more confidence.

Finally, oral language was used in a way that showed no relationship to writing. Students engaged in general conversation about school, play, home, reading or spelling, or relationships with each other. While these conversations did not seem to directly aid writing, they may have helped indirectly in that they provided a "break" from writing. In Mindy's case, this oral change of pace served to relieve tension. In other cases it appeared to be a distraction for students.

Oral language then appears to be an integral part of writing as students used it as a way to test their understanding and perceptions of the environment. Language appeared to be a bridge between meanings and experiences in the environment and students' ability to internally represent meaning as they wrote.

#### Sub-vocalization During Individual Literacy Episodes

Careful examination of the individual literacy episodes for the three target students showed surprisingly few instances of sub-vocalization of students while writing. In fact there were only three instances noted in the data: two of Mindy and one of Kathy. The literature suggested that sub-vocalization among young

children (six year olds) was quite prevalent and that talk provided both meaning and, for some children, a systematic means for getting that meaning on paper (Dyson, 1981; Dyson & Genishi, 1982).

The target students in this study showed similar behaviors to those of the reflective writers described by Graves (1975). These reflective writers were more similar to competent adult writers--exhibiting little overt language to accompany writing, a growing sense of audience, and periodic re-readings of their text. The absence of sub-vocalization suggested that the target students had completed the transition from the contextually oriented oral tradition of early home environment to the de-contextualized literate tradition of the school.

#### Summary of Task Environment

The findings which describe the task environment and its influence on the writing process were reported from four perspectives: (a) the socio-cultural background of the students, (b) the teacher's instruction and students' verbal behavior, (c) the social interaction of the students with each other, and (d) the oral language and its relationship to writing. Figure 8 summarizes these findings.

In examining the aspects of task environment related to the socio-cultural backgrounds, Figure 8 shows that the target students had somewhat similar home environments which supported the goals of the teacher for written literacy. Both reading and writing were done in the home of each student, and parents offered support for student achievement and writing.



	MINDY	KATHY	ANNE
Socio-Cultural Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Mother college graduate single parent</li> <li>-self expression and creativity valued</li> <li>-expression of emotions encouraged</li> <li>-support for school activities was given</li> <li>-writing was valued</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Mother and father college graduates</li> <li>Books were present in home and valued her writing</li> <li>-parents helped her with writing</li> <li>-strong family ties-did many activities together</li> <li>-wrote at home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Mother and father college graduates</li> <li>Wrote at home, mother helped</li> <li>-Wrote in Chinese as well as English</li> <li>-Reading was encouraged and Mom bought classics</li> <li>-Family engaged in social and cultural activities together</li> </ul>
Teacher's Instruction	<p>Content</p> <p>Organization of events and ideas and structure of text at paragraph and whole text level</p> <p>generation of ideas</p> <p>de-emphasis on mechanics</p> <p>Questions/answers, short student responses, limited student discourse.</p> <p>Procedure</p> <p>Teacher controlled episodes.</p>		
Student Interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-students approached for help</li> <li>students came to talk</li> <li>-talked to others to test character's reactions</li> <li>-walked around to relieve tension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-monitored the work of other students</li> <li>-constant awareness of and curiosity about what was occurring in the room</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-illustrated books, covers for students</li> <li>interactions centered around this</li> <li>-silently monitored what was occurring in the room</li> </ul>
Oral Language Group Episode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Asked questions of teacher</li> <li>-initiated comments about concepts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-responded to teacher questions</li> <li>-initiated a comment about setting of the story</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-asked questions of teacher</li> <li>-responded to teachers questions</li> </ul>
Oral Language Individ. Episode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Oral language used to clarify meanings and stimulate ideas</li> <li>-Oral language used to share writing experiences, to verbalize how writing was progressing and what they were writing about</li> <li>-Oral language used as means of seeking approval for writing</li> </ul>		

FIGURE 8. TASK ENVIRONMENT FOR WRITING

In the teacher's instruction, the content for writing stressed organization and structure at the paragraph and whole text level. Idea development was also a part of the writing content, whereas a de-emphasis was placed on orthography. The teacher orchestrated the whole group episodes by determining the topic to be discussed and by asking questions in an effort to achieve the purposes for the lesson and for the students. The findings showed that there was only limited discourse from the students as they did not volunteer information or elaborate on their ideas to any great extent.

The interactions of the students indicated that some were helpful in moving the writing forward, and other interactions hindered the process. For all three students, there were instances in which the interactions were a distraction. The target students in the group episodes varied somewhat in their verbal behavior, with Mindy being more assertive and asking questions of the teacher and initiating comments. Anne and Kathy did more responding to the teacher's questions. Finally, the oral language of the students was an important part of writing as it was used to clarify meanings and stimulate ideas. It was also used to share writing experiences and to assess how writing was progressing.

The findings thus far have addressed the first perspective on writing with which the study deals, that of the contextual environment for writing. The second perspective on writing, that of the cognitive processes of competent writers, is reported below. In this section, we look at the three target students and their writing processes.

### COGNITIVE PROCESSES OF THE TARGET STUDENTS

As the students wrote, they each exhibited ways that they employed

mental activities to bring forth different kinds of knowledge that they possessed and how they used this knowledge to express themselves in writing. Because data were collected from writers in action, the dynamics of composing were reported. There were no neat packages of behavior that were necessarily common to all three students, as they experienced writing as individuals. The behaviors of the students were reported under the three major processes of writing, those of planning, transcribing, and reviewing/revising.

The planning process consists of the generation of ideas, organizing of these ideas, and setting of goals in order to establish a writing plan to guide the production of text to meet these goals. In the target students, behaviors which were indicators of these subprocesses of planning were observed to varying degrees. These behaviors indicated (a) ways that the students came up with ideas; (b) the kind of specific framework or schema, if any, that they had in place to guide organization; and (c) whether there were an internal criterion for judging the text.

The transcribing process acts under the guidance of the writing plan to produce language that corresponds to the information and ideas that the writer attempts to convey. What has been done is to directly observe competent writers at work. As they wrote, they made stops or "surfacing" which allowed a view of problem solving attempts. These surfacings or problem solving stops are the glimpses of the underlying mental processes of the writer. These problem solving stops revealed the writer's attention to constraints that are imposed on the writing process. These constraints reflect global plans (meaning audience, persona) and local plans (orthography, grammar, syntax) and reveal how the writer gets to her goal. The constraints that the writers attend to during these problem solving stops are reported in the transcribing section.

The reviewing/revising process consists of reading and editing of what was transcribed to detect and correct perceived inaccuracies in expression of meaning and/or linguistic and orthographic conventions. The findings about the rewriting/revising report the target students' incidences of and purposes for reading what they have written and the types of changes (revisions) made as a result of this reading.

The planning, transcribing, and reviewing processes of individual students are reported in narrative form for each student with emphasis on the writing strategies and problem solving stops that they exhibited while writing.

A figure at the end of the narrative further elucidates these processes in graphic form.

### Mindy

#### Planning

It's like a square frame; it starts here and I've got my idea all planned out and the details go around it; and if I want to change a place, I've got to work those details in, but I've still got to have that basic idea in there somewhere. (Interview, 4/21/83)

Mindy's statement about planning was supported in the observational data. She seemed to have a definite idea of what she wanted to write about and wanted to adhere closely to this plan. In fact, in writing a story to be published in book form, she resisted suggestions to make some changes in her text by both the teacher and an author who visited the classroom. On one occasion, the teacher suggested that she might want to leave out a portion of text (note teacher's comments encircled page 20 of her draft, Figure 9). Mindy stated, however, that her characters' conversation and involvement with her teaching (Mrs. Longing) was important to the plot. The author who visited the classroom took Mindy's story, along with others, to read outside of class and to critique. Mindy stated, "Ms. Roberts told me a few suggestions; but to follow those, I'd

have to change my whole book around, and I don't have a whole year to do that!" (smiled). Here, again, she resisted deviating from her plan, partly because of the time involved, but she also seemed committed to her original plan.

When having to make an initial decision about what to write, Mindy had difficulty. In the writing of their stories, Mindy and Kathy sat together talking for a while. Mindy was heard stating, "I don't know how to start." She began to write about seven minutes later. She and Kathy were involved in a controversy about sharing what they had written which added little to Mindy's productivity in getting off to a good start. She continued writing after recess, however, but was not "overly enthusiastic" as the observer noted.

Mindy discussed her difficulty with the teacher the next day as the journal excerpt notes, ". . . Mindy wanted to talk to me in private and waited until the others . . . " In this conference, she was very concerned that her story be "right" for her and that it make sense. Here she was concerned in her planning with audience. In the interview, too, she also expressed concern for sufficient time to plan.

I feel that when you write, like I should be given some time because when I write and just all of a sudden write, and you've got, let's say--okay, Mindy, you've got a week to do it, like it's rushing me and I can't put down all the ideas like I want them, so I think I like it better when I've got the idea and have time to think about it and time to plan my story because I plan my story in my head, you know; because I've got my story and then I add details and what I want as I go along. (Interview, 4/21/83)

Three points about Mindy's planning were brought out in the excerpts. First, it was clear that she herself had to feel that what she had come up with was "right." She seemed to have criteria for what was an acceptable piece of writing and that influenced her planning. The second thing that came out was that Mindy did not want to be restricted by time in making decisions about her writing, as was usually the case in school. She talked about its taking her a week

or two to think about her ideas. Finally, she was concerned that the text make sense, that it seem "right" to the reader who would see it. Here she considered the audience in her planning.

teachers house chapter 12 When  
 Tassie awakened she  
 thought of the day before  
 things that had happened  
 the day that she had to do  
 before something to help her  
 grandma. When Tassie  
 got downstairs  
 she found Mrs  
 Longing eating break  
 breakfast. When  
 Mrs. Longing saw  
 Tassie she asked  
 would you like  
 some breakfast  
 dear? Tassie responded  
 yes please.  
 so they both sat  
 down to breakfast  
 Mrs. Longing questioned  
 Tassie I know  
 this has all been  
 hard for you and I  
 know you cant go  
 outside but remember  
 your also

You could  
 leave off  
 here and  
 go into  
 how Tassie's  
 helps.  
 Grandma  
 rather than  
 having her  
 go to Mrs. Longing

all taken care of

Figure 9. Excerpt of Mindy's story with teacher's comments.

Planning was not a one-time process of Mindy; rather, it occurred over and over as her writing progressed. It had to occur each time a decision was made. This type of planning will be considered in the discussion of the transcribing process.

### Transcribing

While Mindy actually engaged in writing as a paper/pencil process, it was possible to observe the several cognitive processes that were used as she constructed meaning. One way to observe these processes was to examine her behavior when she paused during writing. As these pauses were examined closely, it became clear that most of them were centered around global concerns (expression of meaning, audience response). For example, she focused on meaning when she stopped frequently to plan the actions of her characters. Typical of this was the instance in which she decided on the course of the "breakfast conversation" between two of the main characters in her story. She gave considerable thought to who would initiate the conversation and the course that the conversation would take.

During another pause she deliberated on a character reaction.

She's writing (pauses one second). Looked up, continued writing . . . (paused 30 seconds), put pencil down. Huddles; seemed to sense something was wrong.

Then she said to the observer, "Do you think a cat could know that?" (Fieldnotes, 3/22/83)

Here as Mindy wrote, her attention was focused on the authenticity of meaning that is conveyed to her audience. Again, Mindy stopped to consider the action of her main character, Tassie, discussing how she would react to the "tragedy" of her grandmother's kidnapping: "Well, when something tragic happens, people usually hug their pets so that could be Tassie's reaction--right?" (Fieldnotes, 3/22/83)



These examples underscore Mindy's concern for meaning and audience. she drew information from her memory and selected that which was correct and appropriate to the concept she was trying to express to her audience.

During transcribing, other pauses were illustrative of Mindy's attempts to use language in a way that appropriately expressed the meaning that she was working to express. In writing her text, Mindy had to draw on her knowledge of language forms and how to use these forms correctly in written language. In the example below, while writing her story, she stopped to think about how to rephrase a sentence that she had just written, explaining that Tassie had no relatives. "Mindy paused. 'Tassie didn't have many uncles and aunts, let alone (really bothered her).' Mindy said this didn't sound right. Changed to "... aunts that lived nearby" (Fieldnotes, 3/16/83). She had probably used the expression let alone in oral language, but seemed to draw on her knowledge of written language usage to realize that this was not appropriate.

Mindy gave attention to choice of words as she wrote. She tried to use words that showed excitement or created interest. This seemed to reflect a definite influence of instruction. In one example she explained to the observer that "Mrs. D. said the words should be more interesting, exciting." Mindy then went on to show her an example in which she used the words, "'... a hidden message,' gasped Tassie" instead of the less interesting version "'... so that's the note' said Tassie." She also used "Tassie responded wearily" instead of "Tassie said."

When transcribing, Mindy became concerned about the physical layout of her story. This occurred after the teacher was overheard discussing chapter organization with other students. Mindy said aloud to the observer, "I'm going to have to choose chapters and paragraphs!" Up to this time, Mindy had not been concerned with how the overall text would be structured. She was organizing

and expressing thoughts into cohesive units, but physically there was no indication of where one paragraph ended and another began. In other writing that was not as long (report, trip essay, newspaper essay), Mindy was able to structure her paragraphs, although much of this was done by the teacher when she provided the organizational framework during the whole group episodes. In an interview, when asked about whether she was aware of thinking of such things as paragraphing and punctuation, Mindy said, "I put them aside . . . I know it's awfully hard to read, but I think I'd rather write than worry about the paragraphs. As for Kathy, she writes and paragraphs and automatically it comes down; she can't help it." In terms of spelling and punctuation, Mindy was able to put these on hold. She felt it was more important to concentrate on "getting her ideas down." Indeed in examining the draft of her story, it's clear that she had not given attention to spelling. It is noteworthy, too, that of the questions and comments to the observer and teacher, not one of them involved concern about how to spell a word.

### Review/Revisions

Mindy did much of her revision as she went along. She would stop to evaluate what she had written, then she would make a change. Sometimes she would ask the observer or teacher how her writing was going. Other times she would ask a classmate when writing her story. The fieldnotes give this account of Mindy's changing a portion of text: "Paused, pencil eraser to mouth, 'When Tas got downstairs she found breakfast ready . . . ' Paused to change sentence structure; wanted two ideas instead of just one" (Fieldnotes, 3/17/83). Much of Mindy's writing was characterized by these types of changes as the writing progressed. In a sample page of her story (Appendix E), she inserted a part at

the asterisk to keep the story line in tact. She realized that she left out a part of the story that was important to the credibility of the plot.

She reviewed her text often to see where she left off and to check to see if something made sense. When she hadn't written for a while, she had to review to "reacquaint herself with the story." When she reviewed her text the final time after it was completed, she tried to check for spelling. The draft shows how she wrote over words to correct spelling errors. This was how she addressed spelling concerns and grammatical concerns. She inserted words that were missing and added correct punctuation and capitalization (see Appendix E).

Some revision was not observed by the observer. In the interview, however, the question was asked:

Q: So, do you go back a lot while you're writing and read something over and then see if it really makes sense?

M: Well, if it combines, like if I read a part of it, and I stopped, and I skipped some, and then I read what I had written, and I want to see if those two have some sense of connection; because if they don't, then; I've got to change something. (Interview, 4/21/83)

The observation data supported this statement and showed that Mindy attempted to make changes which would keep the meaning in tact.

### Summary

Mindy's writing seemed to be guided by global concerns, and that was where the primary cognitive processes seemed to focus. The planning process was marked by Mindy, beginning with a basic idea and then adding to it as she continued to write. Planning was adversely affected by imposition of time restrictions. When Mindy was engaged in the transcribing process, global plans guided cognitive activities. She searched for meaning and authenticity in character reactions and story line. She also expended effort in searching for language that expressed the desired meaning and specific words that not only

were functional but aesthetically pleasing in that they needed to be interesting and exciting. The local concerns (physical layout, orthography) were put aside during transcribing. For example, words were frequently misspelled and handwriting was often messy. Revisions were made in progress (as the writing occurred), particularly those having to do with meaning. Other revisions related to spelling, paragraphing, punctuation, and chapter organization were done after the text was completed. The final draft of the story to be published was typed, based on the revisions of the first draft.

### Kathy

#### Planning

The first thing I do is think about if you have a choice, what will be easier to write about, and I get my characters. Usually, I think about what they will be doing . . . . Usually, I get to my plot and then that's when I start thinking about how my story is going to end . . . . It is hard to have a good ending to a story you have if it is really complicated or it is really a big scene or something so it's kind of hard to have a good ending. . . . The story could build up to that. Sometimes I do know what my ending will be, and I just build my story up to that. (Interview, 4/1/83)

Initial planning began for Kathy during the whole group episodes so that when she got her paper, she did, indeed, have an idea and a plan of sorts to write about. She stated in the interview that she started thinking while the teacher was talking and explaining the writing assignment. However, when writing her story initially, Kathy seemed to have difficulty getting started. She stated that while usually she could start right away, sometimes she waited because she had to think awhile. There was evidence in the observation data that she and Mindy did sit and discuss their stories and hesitantly share the beginnings as they slowly developed. At the second writing session, Kathy asked the teacher for help with her story, stating that she was having trouble getting from the setting to the initiating event. She also stated that she wasn't satisfied with her setting.

It is significant here that in her planning, Kathy used the elements of story structure given by the teacher in whole group episode #3. she seemed to use these elements as an organizational guide for her writing. This type of organization framework seemed to help Kathy in all her writing and eliminate her need to do her own planning related to organizing.

In examining Kathy's story (see Appendix E), it was clear that she began her planning with her characters. The characters were a projection of her friends, and she used some of their personality traits in her story. She drew on her knowledge of very familiar behavior patterns and gave them to her characters. Her emphasis was primarily on character development and less on the development of her plot. This explained part of her difficulty in getting from the setting to the initiating event.

In her planning, Kathy did not seem very restricted by time for planning, and she stated that she started getting her ideas as the teacher was talking. " ... sometimes, I'll wait, though (until the teacher finishes talking), 'cuz, like when we were writing our books, I waited, then I started. I had to think awhile. Usually, I think while you're talking" (Interview, 4/1/83). Here it seemed that Kathy could do her initial planning rather quickly. Again, this underscores her planning for characters and working her way to the plot as she clarified in her mind what her characters would be "doing."

### Transcribing

As Kathy wrote, like Mindy, it was possible to observe the type of mental activities in which she engaged. In closely examining her behaviors, it appeared that most of her activities were centered around local concerns (physical layout, orthographics, and word choice). She seemed particularly concerned with physical aspects of paragraphing. In one instance, Kathy was waiting for the

teacher to read her paper and began looking it over, realizing she forgot to indent. She said to Mindy, "'Oops, I forgot to indent.' Quickly corrects this" (Fieldnotes, 2/3/83). In another example, as Kathy was writing, the following observation appeared in the fieldnotes: "Wrote one line, looked over again to Mindy and Mary (two seconds); continued writing, turned back to page 9 to see how long her paragraph was. She told me then she'd know when to start a new one" (Fieldnotes, 4/21/83). Her statement to the observer indicated again that there was a formula for Kathy which told her how long her paragraphs should be, based not on the cohesiveness of ideational content, but on physical length.

As she wrote, Kathy took note of her choice of words several times. In some cases it seemed to be motivated by a sense that a given word would simply be good to use. In the draft of her story, for example, Kathy said, "I'm going to use the word passage--that's one of our spelling words" (Fieldnotes, 4/21/83). On other occasions, she was concerned about whether the word was aesthetically appropriate. In a portion of her writing, she was concerned about the repeated use of the pronoun they. "It's funny; I have eight characters, so I always use the word they. It's kind of boring. I have to use the girls or something" (Fieldnotes, 4/21/83). This also showed a sense of awareness of audience and what was pleasing to them.

Spelling concerns were very evident during the time when Kathy was transcribing. In fact, most of Kathy's interactions with the observer were centered around the spelling of words. Among those that the observer noted were the following:

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| 10:21 | Out at r____; Kathy pausing (six seconds), looked around room. She asked me if "recess" is correct spelling . . .                             |
| 10:27 | Kathy erased. "I was spelling <u>from</u> . I always put an <u>n</u> instead of an <u>m</u> . Kathy asked me how to spell <u>amazement</u> ." |

11:05

Kathy paused for five seconds and yawned, looked at fingernails and pencil in hand; started to write. She asked me how to spell introduce. (Fieldnotes, 4/17/83)

Several other examples show the emphasis that Kathy placed on the spelling of words correctly. This emphasis on correctness along with her concern for the physical layout of her writing underscored Kathy's orientation toward local rather than global concerns.

Only one occasion was noted in which Kathy paused to concentrate on the meaning conveyed. When Kathy was writing an article for the class newspaper, the fieldnotes report, "Kathy is working on carnival article . . . pause (three seconds); new paragraph. She says, 'I was thinking about how I should put this. I want to tell about the people who make the carnival a success'" (Fieldnotes, 4/21/83). Her concern for meaning here may have been due to a personal interest in the carnival and who helped because both of her parents were very much involved.

A statement Kathy made as she was writing seemed to express her feeling about writing and the lack of time she devoted to attending to meaning. As she wrote, the fieldnotes state, " . . . Kathy went back up to the word haunted on page 9 and made it neater. She turned the page over. 'Finally, I'm in the lens!'" (Fieldnotes, 4/21/83).

In response to an interview question, when asked about punctuation, paragraphing, spelling, Kathy stated, "Sometimes like if I want to get done quickly, I then . . . I'll put the punctuation in later; but most of the time, I'll put them in as I go. Then I don't have to do it later." For Kathy, the punctuation, paragraphing, and even spelling did not appear difficult. Rather, it seemed that she was doing much of this automatically. She stated this, "Yup, all of it is automatic . . . " (Interview, 4/21/83).

### Review/Revision

The reviewing of the text that Kathy did was done intermittently throughout the time she was writing. The primary reason for reviewing the text was to see where she left off. Other reasons were nearly always to indent for a new paragraph which she forgot to do several times and to make her writing neater. Because of the care she took with spelling and neatness, in her mind there was very little need to revise her text after she completed it. The first two pages from the first draft (Figure 9) of her story graphically demonstrate why Kathy felt little need to revise. The final draft, that was typed, bore close resemblance to her initial writing because of the very few revisions made. In view of the fact that she seemed to be content with the initial meaning and plot development of the story as it evolved and her original copy was accurate and neat, she revised very little after her writing was completed.

In an attempt to get Kathy to think more about global issues in her writing, the teacher suggested that Kathy add more elaboration in one of her stories. She resisted, as the following excerpt shows.

Kathy: Mrs. D., first of all, the way my story is, I don't want to do that.

Teacher: Why not?

Kathy: Just because I don't want that in there.

Teacher: Well, by writing "the week was over," you really left the reader hanging. Maybe if you added what went on during the week, it would make it more interesting.

Kathy: Smiles and agrees.

9:55 Kathy starts writing about the week. She giggles at first as she writes. How'd you think of ideas to start writing so soon?

Kathy: I started thinking when Mrs. D. was talking . . . I told her during my interview that I start to think while she's talking (smiles).



## The Girls Haunted Meeting

[C] In 1984 there was a new school being built in New York. Everyone in New York city was glad that some people would be moved to the new school, that is except for eight girls. The reason the girls were upset was because they would have to be split up, 4 at one school and 4 at the other school. The reason that this was ~~so~~ <sup>such a</sup> big deal to them was that they were in a club that everyone in ~~the~~ <sup>there</sup> school knew about. They held a short meeting everyday at recess. There were two leaders, Megan, and Kristen. Both leaders would be sent to a different school and they were best friends. Megan knew her new school would be pretty nice

Figure 10. Excerpts from the final draft of Kathy's story.

the school. The playground would be neat and the school itself would have nice big windows to let in fresh air. Megan didn't want to go to a new school away from Kristen and 3 other girls.

All of the girls were also upset because they wanted to have one big club and not two small clubs and they didn't have time to do it on weekends or after school. So they knew they had to stop the club. C.H.

C.J. School had started and the girls were more upset than ever because of their teachers. The teachers were not so mean but when someone did even a little thing wrong they got too crabby.

One day Kristen got a letter

- 9:57 Kathy is writing diligently . . . "thought she would make it and she did/I"
- Kathy: Started to talk about Mary's birthday party and roller skating.
- 10:00 Kathy continues with her story. LEft hand holding paper down. She erased. I asked if she spelled something wrong. "Whenever I write a line thinking ahead, so I wrote the next word--ahead." Kathy asked me how to spell committee. Pause (three seconds); turned to see what Paul and Ross were doing. Kathy with a smile, "I hope she's (Mrs. D) satisfied!"
- 10:04 Kathy got up to show Mrs. D.

Here the teacher's attempt to have Kathy look more closely at the meaning expressed in her writing had little positive affect in terms of changing her attitude about the need for more concern in this area.

In response to a question about revision, Kathy said, "Sometimes I'll look back to see if it makes sense or should I put something else in later in the story. Like I was reading a book and they didn't even look back or anything and they put . . . there was . . ." She gave an example of a book she read that didn't make sense because of conflicting information given by the author.

There was inconsistency in the observation data and the interview data on the revision process for Kathy. She showed very little evidence of making substantive changes, although she articulated that she did in the interview data. In the book written for publication, she showed no evidence of revisions in the longhand version other than spelling and punctuation changes.

### Summary

Kathy was a confident writer who was guided by local concerns and plans for completing the writing tasks. The planning process was relatively easy for her when the teacher provided an organizational framework. There were times when she wrote about a trip, an autobiographical sketch, a newspaper article,

and a story to be published that Kathy responded attentively and welcomed the "schema" for writing provided by the teacher.

Transcribing for Kathy was marked by cognitive processes dealing with orthographic concerns and about the physical layout of the text. She was able to use the language in clearly expressing meaning. She did not concentrate on this aspect of writing to refine her meaning, but, rather, it seemed less important than completing the task.

Kathy made only minor revisions because of the careful attention she gave to spelling, neatness, and paragraphing as she transcribed. She showed a satisfaction for the meaning conveyed the first time and saw no need to change it.

### Anne

#### Planning

The first thing I do is think of an idea--something to write about . . . then I think how I'm going to put it into words. I have all my ideas, then go along, figure out that doesn't make sense, so change it . . . . I usually know how it's going to end. (Interview, 4/13/83)

At first glance, Anne's first two sentences seemed to be an obvious assertion. However, the statement showed a great deal of insight. She presented the fact that not only did she need to come up with an idea, but putting this idea into words required thought. She realized that writing required a specific way of connecting words and sentences and that she had to deal with that. Anne stated that she thought about how she was going to put her ideas into words at the beginning. It is reasonable to assume that she thought about this as she got into her text as well. In fact, she stated that she went along and made determinations that something didn't make sense, so she changed it. Based on the interview statement then, it can be said that Anne planned for producing a

paper by generating specific ideas and by planning how to translate those ideas into language.

In planning for writing, Anne also showed that she was aware of the need for procedural plans. In some cases these plans were specified by the teacher. Anne was usually quick to ask questions about how the writing should be done. For example, the teacher had an outline on the board and was discussing the content of the paper when, referring to the outline, Anne asked, "Do we do it like that?" (Fieldnotes, 1/27/83). At this point, she was thinking ahead, planning while the teacher was explaining what to include in the paper. She realized that she needed to plan her format in terms of sequencing and clumping together of ideas. Later, she also asked about length, asking if she could write more than four paragraphs.

When the plan (topic and format) was not provided by the teacher, Anne wrestled with coming up with an idea. In writing her story to be published in a book, she stated that she didn't know what to write about. She eventually came up with the idea to write a story entitled "The Jungle." When asked how she came up with that idea, she stated, "That's all I can think about now" (Fieldnotes, 3/3/83). Anne seemed limited by time as she said now. The implication was that if she had longer to think, she might possibly come up with something different.

Beyond the initial planning, Anne seemed to sense the need to have what she was writing make sense to the reader. She stated this in an interview. Other planning during writing was focused on physical features of the text. Anne was quite preoccupied with this; in fact, this concern is graphically illustrated in the findings reported during the transcribing process which follows.

### Transcribing

Anne's transcribing behavior was analyzed through observational data, through analysis of her written products, and through interview data. Her behavior, more than that of either of the other two students, seemed to be most affected by the particular genre in which she was writing. When writing the autobiographical sketch, she was very enthusiastic and wrote extensively without many pauses. The fieldnotes state, "Anne has written one side of a page, is diligently working on the back sheet." Later in the episode, the following note is made, "Anne still working neatly. I asked her if it's easy to write about her culture. 'Yes.' She was very enthused." The text of that paper (see Appendix E) demonstrated that Anne, on her first draft, was able to attend to the physical and organizational aspects of paragraphing as she indented appropriately for the most part and had appropriate information included within each paragraph. She considered and used punctuation as she transcribed, using not only periods but colons as well. While the colons were not always used properly, in most instances they were. Anne also used commas when separating things in a series which is a fairly advanced skill. Additionally, Anne capitalized holidays appropriately and only failed to capitalize Chinese and American.

What is evident here is that Anne was able to employ cognitive processes necessary to attend to orthographic concerns while conveying the meaning that was necessary for the reader to have. This was probably possible because of the freedom Anne had from planning and organizing of informational content. The outline that the teacher provided gave Anne an external framework to use in organizing and selecting information about which to write.

This point was clearly made when Anne's writing behavior when writing her story is contrasted with the writing above. In the writing of a story, Anne had to choose her own topic, plan for the organization of the content, and make

decisions about what to include. In other words, she had to engage in more complex cognitive processes. While the physical layout and orthography were correct, the meaning and logical were somewhat inconsistent (see Appendix E). To examine this more closely, the most consistently observed type of cognitive activity was related to physical layout and orthographic concerns. She was especially concerned about handwriting as the following excerpt shows, "Anne is being very careful about her handwriting. She erases almost every six or seven words because she doesn't think they're neat enough" (Fieldnotes, 4/20/83). And, if Anne stopped writing after two minutes, the fieldnotes pointed out her attending to paragraphing: "Anne sat back in chair, stretched and sighed. Anne asked me if she could start a new paragraph for a quotation 'Mother knows . . . ' (p. 6 of copy)" (Fieldnotes, 4/20/83).

As Anne attended to the physical layout of her text, she was at the same time constructing meaning for the reader. At only one time was it noted that Anne interrupted her writing to consider global concerns (meaning, audience, persona). This was written in the fieldnotes in the following manner. "Anne said, 'Gosh, I was thinking about the part of the story that doesn't make sense.'" The observer responded, "Why not?" Anne said, "I wrote a part that mother told Joy a story and wanted her to pass it down. It doesn't make sense to me." The observer asked Anne, "Why leave it in if it doesn't make sense?" Anne told the observer that she might take it out. Anne never revised or deleted that part of the story, however.

It appears then that Anne's cognitive processes were involved most in local concerns and that attention to global details was secondary. It also appears that when having to decide on topics and organization as well as content of her writing, she faced the problem of excessive constraints on her as a writer. She appeared to have set priorities and "satisficed" on meanings and concentrate on

organization and orthographics. She made a decision about where she would concentrate her efforts.

### Review/Revision

Anne's review of her writing involved looking at her text to see if it were neatly done, as in the case when she erased an e to "make it fatter" (Fieldnotes, 4/20/83). She also went back to read where she left off so that she would know where to begin again.

The fieldnotes document no revisions such as the one above in which she was attending to letter formation and neatness. But examination of the draft of Anne's story showed places where Anne went back and made changes in the text in preparation for having the story typed. These changes give information about the nature of the revisions.

Several revisions were designed to give added information to the reader. Note in Figure 11, portions of the text from pages 1 and 2 showed insertions that Anne made. On page one she wrote, "She had no brothers and sisters (but she had a cat)." It is not clear what the importance of this revision is to the story since the significance of the cat was never mentioned again. It seems as if Anne wanted to give more detail to the reader about her characters and place. Similarly, she added the name of the hotel where her characters slept when she inserted "called the Holly Hotel." This name was not mentioned again in the story.

Anne made other revisions that demonstrated her awareness that she needed a referent that the audience could identify without ambiguity. In writing about a conversation between two female characters, Anne had initially used she referring to both. After re-reading, she realized that she had to identify each by



They lived in Honolulu, Hawaii. Joy was ~~a~~ very happy, but for one thing, she had no brothers or sister. Joy was nine. Her mother was 37; her father was 39. It was dry in Hawaii, and Joy would rather live in a wet place.

Pg 1

So she started to pack, she put her cat in a cage. Soon she was all set. They took a plane to Florida, it took around four or five hours. They slept at a hotel <sup>Call it Holly Hotel</sup> over the first night. Then when they woke up they next morning, it was sunny and cool, so they decided to go explore a little in the woods.

Figure 11: Excerpts from pages 1 and 2 of Anne's text, showing insertions.

name so she could be understood. This revision helped to clarify meaning for the reader.

These reflect the only two types of revision that were related to meaning concerns. Anne also read through the story and added phrases that had been left out but needed to be added to clarify the meaning of the sentence. For example, she had written, "The time probably wouldn't be till morning and came to her mother's room." She inserted "at morning she" after and which gave the sentence meaning.

Although changes were made, there were no major revisions in content of the story as far as plot and characterization were concerned. Her one reference to concern about the story's making sense was never addressed as she decided to leave it as it was.

### Summary

Anne's writing was guided by a determination to efficiently complete the task at hand. This was reflected in her planning, transcribing, and revision. The planning process saw Anne's major cognitive activity directed toward deciding on an idea and addressing the linguistic concerns necessary to put these ideas in writing. She also planned procedurally how she was going to complete a task (i.e., use teacher's outline, write several paragraphs).

Transcribing varied depending on the genre in which Anne was writing. Her primary cognitive processes were directed toward fine motor concerns of handwriting and orthographic concerns of spelling and punctuation. Attention to global concerns were minimal as Anne seemed content to go with her first expression of meaning.

Revisions made by Anne were primarily concerned with handwriting and neatness. She made some changes in wording to decrease ambiguity.

### Summary of Findings Related to Specific Cognitive Processes of the Target Students

The findings are summarized in Figure 12 and show strategies and problem solving stops observed in the three students. During planning, Mindy seemed to have the most developed schema of the three students. She would fill in and modify as she wrote. Kathy's writing was less dependent on a general plan than on character development and actions. She would also use elements of story structure in guiding her planning, switching to this when she got lost. Anne started with general ideas and added to them and modified as she went along. She was also guided by procedural concerns such as length and format. Both Mindy and Anne were aware of audience and sense making.

The transcribing process (Figure 12) shows that Mindy was most concerned with global plans (meaning and audience) and less concerned with local concerns such as physical layout. On the other hand, Kathy and Anne were making "stops" that placed attention on local concerns such as physical layout and spelling with few stops that focused on global concerns such as meaning and audience.

The review and revising followed along the same lines as the transcribing. Mindy reviewed her text frequently as she wrote to find her place and to check to see if what she had written made sense. She revised as she went along, primarily for meaning. Kathy reviewed her text frequently, checking on paragraphing and neatness of her writing. She made revisions as she was writing. These were primarily punctuation revisions. Anne reviewed frequently for neatness and to find her place. She revised in progress for word meaning on only two occasions.

	MINDY	KATHY	ANNE
PLANNING	<u>General Plan-(square frame)</u> -fills in details -refers to during process <u>Internal Standard guided planning</u> <u>Sense-Making to audience</u>	<u>Idea Built around Characters rather than plot</u> <u>Teacher's outline and Elements of Story Structure guided planning</u>	<u>General Ideas</u> -how to translate to language <u>Procedural concerns guided planning</u> -length/format <u>Sense-Making</u>
TRANSCRIBING	<u>Meaning</u> -authenticity of meaning -audience <u>Language</u> -appropriate for getting ideas down <u>Word Choice</u> -excitement/interest <u>Physical Lay-Out</u> -minimal concern	<u>Physical Layout</u> -paragraghing -structural concerns <u>Orthography</u> -spelling concerns <u>Word Choice</u> -spelling work, -aesthetically pleasing Meaning -(minimal emphasis)	<u>Physical Layout</u> -paragraghing -structural ideational <u>Orthography</u> -punctuation -handwriting (neatness) <u>Meaning</u> -stated awareness of the importance of
REVIEWING AND REVISING	<u>Reviewed Frequently</u> -find place to check for meaning <u>Revised in Progress</u> -meaning <u>Revised after Completion</u> -Orthographics	<u>Reviewed Frequently</u> -paragraghing -neatness <u>Revised in Progress</u> -punctuation	<u>Reviewed Frequently</u> -neatness -find place <u>Revised in Progress</u> -meaning

FIGURE 12. PLANNING, TRANSCRIBING, REVIEWING/REVISING PROCESSES OF TARGET STUDENTS

Findings related to the task environment for writing and the specific cognitive processes of the target students have been presented in this chapter. The discussion of what these findings mean and their implications for the classroom, methodology, and further research are presented in Chapter V.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

Two major questions guided the study and were cited at the beginning of Chapter IV as the findings were reported. It is appropriate to draw conclusions from these findings--to discuss the meaning of what was reported--by referring again to the two questions. The first addresses the task environment for writing and seeks to identify the ways that the task environment influences the writing process. The second question seeks to identify the cognitive processes used by competent third grade writers. Conclusions about these two aspects of the study are discussed below.

#### The Task Environment for Writing

The issue of task environment was raised in the study because it was the view of this investigator that to look closely at students during writing without taking into account the environmental influences that can affect the writing process would produce a far less complete and understandable account of writing. Therefore, four elements that could affect the process of writing were identified. These elements--the students' socio-cultural background, the teacher's instruction, the students' interactions, and the students' oral language--were not viewed evaluatively as to whether they were good or bad, but, rather, descriptively and in a manner that could elucidate the relationship of these elements to the processes of writing of the target students. It was found that the major influences from the task environment were:

1. the content stressed by the teacher in her instruction, which was her emphasis on organization and structure in writing, and her de-emphasis on mechanics;
2. the formality of the social participation structure of the group literacy episode;
3. the time restrictions imposed upon both the group literacy episodes and the individual literacy episodes;
4. the literate socio-cultural backgrounds of the target students; and
5. the students' interactions with peers, both writing-related and non-writing-related.

These elements of the task environment affected the target students and their writing processes to varying degrees and, in some cases, in different ways. The impact of these elements is, therefore, discussed in greater detail.

The teacher's emphasis on organization and structure was apparent in the writing behavior and samples of the three students. They were able to incorporate the organization in their writing at both the paragraph level and the whole text level, with relative ease. For these students, then, the primary instructional emphasis, that of organization and structure in writing, was realized. In fact, it seems that the teacher's continued emphasis through several episodes may have been superfluous for these students. Two of the students (Kathy and Anne) were careful to use the organization and structure prescribed by the teacher and, perhaps, came to believe that writing was primarily paragraphing, indenting, and organization of similar ideas. For these competent students, a one time exposure to the content could very well have been sufficient for them to apply this knowledge to their writing. Emphasis on other aspects of writing may have been indicated, and their writing development may have been better served.

Significant in the teacher's instruction was the teacher's lack of emphasis on spelling and handwriting during the literacy episodes. Two of the target

students (Kathy and Anne) who adhered closely to the structural and organization emphasis that was stressed by the teacher, paid close attention to spelling during writing, which was not stressed by the teacher. There are two possible explanations that could account for these students' behavior. The first is that they felt compelled to spell correctly because of previous conditioning by teachers and parents. This conditioning may have been so strong that they chose to concentrate on spelling in spite of the teacher's frequent statements to the contrary.

The second explanation, relative to spelling in particular, is that the teacher may have given a "mixed" message to the students. By emphasizing correct spelling when it was taught as a separate subject, she led the students to believe that, indeed, spelling was important. On the other hand, by teaching the students to ignore spelling during writing on the first draft, seemingly she refuted her first message. The students may have been unable or unwilling to change their behavior as their situations changed. The second explanation seems most plausible, but it is possible that both explanations could account for the students' behavior. The other student (Mindy) sorted out the teacher's message, put orthographics on hold, and concentrated on meaning and other aspects of writing.

Another part of the task environment that affected the students' writing processes was the time restrictions imposed because of recess, lunch breaks, and changes to other subjects. The students all seemed bothered by "not enough time to think." Also having an affect on their writing were the more subtle time problems imposed because the students knew that their writing had to be completed within a given period of time. There was pressure (from themselves and from other students) to think quickly, to come up with an idea so that they wouldn't "get behind." The structure of the school day and the imposition of



deadlines (even though loosely enforced) seemed to work against the give and take, the mellowing of ideas and thoughts that otherwise might have occurred.

Along with time, the way the group episodes were structured also was an important element of the environment that affected writing. The episodes were shaped by the teacher through questioning patterns. First, the teacher was able to elicit specific response about what had been taught and direct the amount of discussion in which the students engaged. Secondly, she was able to guide student thinking by the questions she asked. As a result the students were able to encode the information, retrieve it, and use it in their writing (as seen in their writing samples). This type of structure was useful in imparting knowledge about writing in an efficient way. What may have occurred as a result of the formal structure of the group episodes was the loss of verbal exchange among students about ideas and information and about ways to express these in writing.

The target students functioned easily in the setting and complied with the teacher's expectations. Two of the students (Kathy and Anne) found this structure very comfortable. In fact, it appears that the structure reinforced their view of writing as a subject to be completed to teacher specifications like math and reading. They did not question, reorganize, and assess ideas in the group episode as it was structured to allow only limited verbal exchanges between teacher and student. When these students wrote during the individual literacy episodes, their writing was organized and coherent, but did not reflect a conscientious assessment of ideas and intended meaning. The other student (Mindy) questioned more, commented more in the group literacy episode. During individual writing, she became involved in questioning and probing for meaning as she wrote.

The socio-cultural backgrounds of the three students were similar and were important in giving them real experiences from which to build a store of world

knowledge. They were also given support and encouragement for learning and academic success. The students were from literate environments in which books, reading, and writing were the norm. Writing served a functional purpose in the home of each of the students in that they wrote letters to grandparents and to friends. Kathy also wrote a book to use in teaching her brother to read. Additionally, in Mindy's family writing was encouraged, not only for its functional purpose, but also because her mother felt it stimulated creativity and the development of critical thinking that could be useful in life. All three students received critical feedback from their parents on what they had written.

As might be expected, this literate background is reflected in the students' competence in writing. Even the emphasis on writing as a creative process appears to have a relationship to Mindy's orientation to meaning and creativity in her writing. What is more significant is that in their homes they were involved in writing in which they used cognitive processes in planning, goal setting, and decision making as they wrote letters and books for others to read.

While the students did not interact with each other during the group literacy episodes, they interacted quite freely in the individual literacy episodes. were able to initiate conversations related to any topic and walk around and work together as they chose. The teacher was there as a resource, providing individual help to students.

There were basically two types of interactions across target students--those that moved the writing forward and those that impeded the writing. The types of interactions that seemed to be helpful to students as they wrote were those in which students (a) helped other students, (b) visited to "relieve tensions," and (c) asked peers to react to their writing. Interactions which seemed to impede the students' writing were those in which students (a) monitored other

student work, (b) engaged in conversations marked by competitiveness, and (c) questioned others aimlessly and responded to classroom activity.

All three students experienced interactions that were distracting. They expressed a preference for writing in a quiet place in the interview. One of the students, Kathy, seemed to be the most distracted and least helped by the social interactions, whereas Mindy seemed to be the least distracted and most helped by the interactions. The student interactions seemed to have the least affect on Anne, as she interacted very little with the other students.

What seems significant about these interactions, in addition to students' desire to have a quiet place in which to write, is the fact that these competent students were quickly able to return to writing--to pick up at the point where they had been interrupted.

#### Cognitive Processes of the Writers

The selected cognitive processes addressed in this study--those that were identified as a result of the "problem stops" made by the target students--yielded several commonalities among these students. These competent writers:

1. planned by beginning with a basic idea initially then developing this idea and/or modifying it as they went along;
2. worked out a system of balancing cognitive constraints that are necessary while transcribing;
3. readily called on world knowledge--experiences, books read--and transferred this knowledge to their writing; and
4. did a majority of their revisions during the transcribing process--as they went along.

Planning was of two types for these target students: (a) pre-writing planning and (b) in-process planning. The pre-writing planning occurred as the ideas "incubated" before the pencil touched the paper. The pre-writing planning was of short duration for these students, due in part to the nature of the task

environment. The students had much of the planning done cooperatively as the teacher discussed the topic and purpose and provided an organizational frame for much of the writing. During the group literacy episodes, the students were undoubtedly engaged in individual planning while the teacher was talking and the episode progressed.

For the time when the pre-writing period was not structured by the teacher, the data showed that the students began with an idea in which some details were in place. These details were filled in and modified as the writing progressed. There was no pre-conceived outline or well-developed schema, rather a loosely-formed schema that was filled in as the students wrote.

The in-process planning showed differences among the students in the choice of procedures used in guiding the development of their writing. For example, one student used her own system of organization for planning her story based on her knowledge of mysteries and on a series of books that she had read. Another student planned using the story structure outlined by the teacher during the group literacy episode. Her planning also placed strong emphasis on character development. The third student sought to bring together the teacher's suggestions with her knowledge of story and how it should be structured. Even with these differences that influenced how they planned and what guided their planning, they all made many planning decisions as the writing progressed.

An important ability that the three writers possessed was an ability to develop a system of managing the complex demands made on their cognitive abilities. As they transcribed their ideas into written form, they used processes that called on their knowledge of language, ideas, and information to create text that was coherent and rhetorically appropriate for the genre in which they were writing. They also had to deal with word choice, syntax, physical layout, handwriting, and spelling as they composed. While the way they dealt with these

demands was different, they were all able to work out strategies to manage the writing process.

The cognitive processes used by two of the students, Kathy and Anne, addressed primarily the local plans during transcribing. They spent most of their pauses on word choice, spelling, punctuation, letter-formation, and neatness. Consequently, they did not spend time dealing with the intricacies of meaning expressed, but, rather, put meaning on automatic processing. The other student, Mindy, spent much of her cognitive activity on global concerns dealing with clear expression and consistency of intended meanings and concern for audience. She put the local concerns, particularly spelling and handwriting, on hold. The ability to balance these demands, to put some elements on automatic processing, to ignore, or to minimally deal with them is to allow the writing process to move forward with a degree of effectiveness. These students possessed this ability.

The ability to retrieve information from a broad store of world knowledge was another common process that these students possessed. The fact that they were from environments which had a literate orientation has been discussed. This type of background provided them with a range of ideas and information that they could readily draw on in writing text. This ability made one less constraint with which they had to deal. In other words, they could readily expend energy on other elements of writing rather than expend it on attempts to create meaningful text from a limited store of knowledge.

These common elements found in the problem stops of competent writers can be useful in aiding the understanding of how these writers function. It is not surprising, however, that there were differences found among the three writers. The one major difference that is significant is the consistency throughout the data in which Mindy addressed global concerns, and Anne and Kathy addressed local concerns. This pattern was evident in the group episode as Mindy not only

asked questions about procedures, but initiated comments that would elaborate on concepts that were being discussed. Anne and Kathy primarily responded to the teacher's questions or asked procedural questions.

This difference in behavior was also present in the pre-writing literary episodes of the writers when they had to choose a topic. None of the three was really pleased with her initial topic. Mindy, however, was the only one who thought about her topic and writing at home, changed her topic, and began re-writing at school. From the several behaviors and comments throughout the data, it appeared that the students had different views of writing as a subject. Anne and Kathy appeared to view writing as a subject in which tasks were assigned and had to be completed according to certain guidelines, most of which were established by the teacher. Mindy, on the other hand, viewed writing as "different from other subjects." She seemed to have her own standards of acceptability for completing a writing task. She was intricately involved in the process of writing. In her mind, this made writing different from mathematics or reading.

It could be that Mindy's view of writing was a natural pre-disposition to thinking in terms of the meaning-based concerns expressed in writing and that students like Anne and Kathy who have a more product-oriented view may be inclined to local concerns. This relationship can be further explored.

Finally, after examining the findings about the processes in which the students engaged, it is clear that the processes of planning, transcribing, and reviewing/revising do not occur in stages. These processes are dynamic and must be integrated in order for the writer to produce written text. A look back at writers in the act of writing shows how these processes are interrelated. Planning occurred during transcribing when Mindy was writing about the conversation of two characters in her story: "Mindy paused, played with lips--

pencil relaxed in hand--thinking of way to get into the conversation. Changed 'Tassie questioned' to 'Mrs. L. questioned'" (Fieldnotes, 3/17). Here Mindy is planning how conversation should be fitted into the story line. she was in the process of transcribing when she realized she was not expressing the meaning she wanted. Consequently, she made a change--she revised her text, based on the planning that she did.

Another example shows Kathy concerned with her choice of referent:

Kathy: It's funny; I have eight characters, so I always use the word they. It's kind of boring. I have to use the girls or something else instead.

In the process of transcribing, Kathy paused, reflected, and planned for changes in her writing as it related to use of referent. This behavior is typical of the way the processes are interacted in the study. What was seen throughout was that the tasks of planning, retrieving information, creating ideas, and producing and revising language all interact with one another throughout composing.

### Implications for Practice

One of the major goals of research on writing should be to provide information that can help teachers to be more effective in providing writing instruction. This lead statement from the introduction of this study is repeated here to underscore a view widely held by some researchers and practitioners and by the teacher/investigator in this study. Therefore, this section is devoted to a discussion of what the conclusions of the study can say to teachers of writing.

It has been pointed out that one of the characteristics of the target students was their ability to cope with all of the cognitive demands of writing by employing specific strategies. Teaching students to specify priorities on which they will concentrate can help to free them from many conflicting demands. When students write in school, they tend to feel that they are expected to

produce a perfect paper. However, when they learn to plan in order to isolate key elements and/or ideas in a given piece of writing, they are freed of the myriad details of written language that can immobilize them.

A teacher might tell students to write and create events in a story that have authenticity and excitement. At the same time, s/he might explain to the students that s/he is going to be much less concerned about telling details about characters or about paragraphing and spelling. In fact, the student is to make a point of ignoring these things and is instructed to be satisfied with a lowered standard of acceptability. Newell and Simon (1972) hold that as a corollary to giving some constraints high priority, writers choose to "satisfice" on others. A writer "satisfices" by choosing to take the first acceptable solution. For instance, instead of struggling to find the 'best' way to say something, the writer satisfices with the first acceptable sentence" and moves on to other matters (Flower & Hayes, 1981). What teachers can do is explain the strategy and have students make it work for them. This can be useful because in addition to reducing the cognitive task, it also lowers a writer's anxiety.

Another implication for teachers is based on the finding that there may be a relationship between the way students view writing as a subject and their focus of attention to the meaning based concerns or the mechanical concerns of writing. The teacher who creates an environment in which writers have ample time to write, in which deadlines are relaxed and discussions and feedback are the norms, may effect a change in students' views of writing. Students may come to see writing as an important process that evolves as the writer learns to express intended meanings and that the final product is not always what is so highly valued in learning to write. Young writers who learn this may be more inclined to spend time on developing, sorting, and rearranging ideas and less time



on letter formation, spelling, and punctuation. The teacher's attitude and encouragement can legitimize this behavior.

Planning how to proceed was something that each target student worked out in her own way because she had the knowledge to do so. For teachers of writing, helping students work out procedural plans can be important. Some students may not be capable of incorporating what they know about how authors write and what they know about the genre in which they are writing to help them proceed. A teacher can explicitly present story structure to students as well as reading to them, thereby encouraging them to read different types of stories, articles, and essays in order to build background. In this way students will know, for example, that mysteries have certain key elements that they can plan to develop as they write. They can also be made aware of the various schemata that are common to this genre, adapt them, and modify them to make the writing truly their own. A teacher can provide them with strategies designed to help them plan and proceed with their writing so that they will not be lost and immobilized as so often happens.

Another aid to planning is the use of oral language. Students in the study used oral language to stimulate their thinking and to help them generate ideas. Teachers can afford opportunities for students to informally discuss and refine their ideas for writing and to give feedback to each other. Further, students need to be taught how to do this kind of small group exchange so that it is beneficial to both writer and helpers.

In the findings, it was noted that perhaps the teacher gave a "mixed" message to the students when directing them to ignore spelling during the transcribing of their first drafts, but stressing correctness in spelling when it was taught as a separate subject. It seems that there are two issues raised here. First, it would appear that if there was indeed an equivocal message given to the

students, teachers need to take extreme care in what it is they express to students. For example, when students are told that spelling is not important, that it can be put on hold during the writing of the first draft, the teacher must underscore the fact that the correctness in spelling that is emphasized applies only to final drafts or pieces for publication, not to first drafts done during initial transcribing.

The second issue raised, however, is that the students may have understood the teacher's message, but chose to attend to correctness in spite of what the teacher said. It is not uncommon for teachers to tell students to ignore correct spelling and to concentrate on expressing their ideas. Nor is it uncommon for many students to continue to attend to spelling concerns and correctness. Indeed, Scardamalia (1981) found that telling children they need not be concerned with correctness does not ensure that they won't be. In fact, she found that not only had this instructional treatment failed to free children from concern, but that it has meant that they have not mastered the mechanics over the years and were doomed to go on worrying about them.

It would appear then, that for some students--those who are determined to expend cognitive activity on correct spelling--the teacher, rather than attempting to eliminate this concern, might strongly encourage students to attend to their higher level concerns of writing in addition to spelling. The repeated emphasis on selecting, sorting, and/or refining meaning by the teacher could help the student adopt another emphasis for writing and allow him/her to still be able to concentrate on spelling. Certainly some students may be quite capable of dealing with the meaning and spelling constraints during writing if properly instructed on how to do so.

The issue of drafting (transcribing) and revising was particularly available for scrutiny because of the freedom in decision making that was given the

students. As they made their choices, information was learned about what these children were capable of, what they chose to write about, and what they viewed as important. It would appear that for teachers of writing, attention to the students thoughts about revision should be considered because these thoughts are often consistent with the students' view of audience and purpose. When competent students in the study saw the importance of revision, they were capable of making these revisions and did so in their own way. They chose to revise based on their view of purpose and audience. It is extremely important, then, for teachers of average and poor writers to help them identify audience and purpose. It is important to provide the kind of writing opportunities that are meaningful and that afford students the opportunity to see the need to revise. Florio and Clark (1982) identify these meaningful opportunities as occasions for writing. When meaningful opportunities are provided, teachers legitimize their emphasis on revision because it isn't viewed by the students as a writing exercise, but as a necessity in order that the reader will understand the writer's message.

Imbedded in the conventional wisdom of many practitioners has been the belief that writers need "quiet" in order to write. This study found this to be true--to a degree. There were times, however, when verbal interactions were very important in moving writing forward. There were other times that students wanted to work, free from intrusion and distraction. What this says to a teacher is that the physical arrangement of a room should accommodate the varied needs of students so that they may write in relative quiet or ask questions and discuss their writing as necessary.

Finally, as the students wrote, it seemed important to have a person available at a given point in their writing to which the writer could address a question. When 20 or more writers are in a classroom, it becomes impossible for

a teacher to fulfill their needs as they write. It is important for the teacher to have other adults available during writing time to conference with students. Graves' (1982) research underscores the value of conferencing, particularly after a draft has been written. Conferencing during the transcribing was extremely useful for the students in this study and is an important consideration for teachers to explore. In addition to parent volunteers, other older students who have some competency as writers could be used.

Underlying the implications for teachers of writing that are presented here is the belief that teachers should intervene in the writing process. Their primary purpose is in helping students unlock the knowledge they have and coordinate this into their writing. There is no one way that is satisfactory for all students in a given class. Rather, the teacher can personalize the instruction so that the varied needs of the students can be met.

#### Implications for Further Research

Upon examining the findings, it was noted that there were several commonalities among the processes of competent writers. These findings are important for practitioners and for researchers. They also provoke other questions which may be addressed in future research. One of the questions raised is how these processes differ, if at all, in the writers who are less competent, average, or poor. Do they use the same processes that competent writers do, but to a less intense degree? Do they have a system in place for coping with the demands of writing? An inquiry which looks at less competent writers in a similar context could prove useful information in either supporting the findings of this study or in adding to knowledge about writers.

Another issue raised by the study is whether the students' writing behaviors were consistent across genre. Findings of processes during both narrative and

expository writing showed a degree of consistency across genres. Because there was more data of the three students' writing narratives than expository text, however, a strong statement of consistency could not be made. A study of student writing process across genres is certainly a fruitful area for future investigation.

Much of the research on child writers has been conducted with no attention to the writers' conceptions of writing as a task. This study shows a possible relationship between writers' conceptions of writing and the cognitive processes that they display. This relationship needs to be investigated further. It is possible that a correlational study could be designed with this problem as its basis. This understanding of the students' conception of writing could have broad interest among researchers and teachers.

Finally, this study looked at students over a period of 12 weeks, two days a week. While there were important findings from the investigation, clearly looking at competent students and the processes and environment over a longer period of time could yield more far reaching results. One wonders, for example, if and when changes occur in the nature of the cognitive processes exhibited? Another issue is whether views toward writing change over time so that the more the student writes, the better s/he understands the nature of the process. A study conducted for a longer period could also allow for the investigator to look at the processes far more intently and perhaps every day, to further explain the nature of these processes.

#### A Final Thought

As teacher and researcher in the classroom in which the study was conducted, this writer attempted to be constantly aware of the process of conducting the study and what it meant to be so intimately involved. The role of

being both teacher and researcher was unique and had several dimensions. It was demanding and difficult as one worked to balance the researcher's objectivity with the useful insights that a teacher has as a result of being a part of the "scene." There were times that observing students rather than teaching or giving assistance to students was desirable for the study, but impossible at a given moment. There was a need to be vigilant in guarding against the intrusion of one's pre-disposition about possible findings on the students and on the classroom environment. The teacher/researcher had to allow the roles to complement each other without doing a disservice to either.

The role of teacher/researcher was, at the same time, exciting and energizing as one saw more clearly, and in some cases for the first time, events and behaviors that had gone unnoticed before. As data were collected, sorted, and organized, events and behaviors that had had little meaning prior to the study took on new meaning and significance. The excitement of discovery or support for findings from other studies seemed to generate new energy as the study progressed.

Rare is the teacher who teaches and never questions the meaning of this teaching. For the teacher who wants to begin to clarify and find answers to questions of practice, research in the classroom can be a powerful mechanism. Not only does the knowledge gained make the effort worthwhile, but the process of being both teacher and researcher enhances the individual's way of viewing teaching, giving her renewed confidence in her ability to make sound and effective decisions about practice.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### THE COMMON WRITINGS



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### THE COMMON WRITINGS

I - 3

#### GRADE 1

The students will make a picture book with short sentences telling about themselves; e.g., family, house, foods they like, pets, favorite activities, etc.

The students will write a complete sentence.

The students will alphabetize by first letter and learn how to check out a book from the library.

FOLDER Upon completion of an art project (puppets, picture, etc.) the student will write an imaginative sentence to go with the project.

The students will copy numerals and the alphabet from a model on the desk. Product should be on grade level paper.

#### GRADE 2

The students will bring in 5 or 6 photographs that were taken during their life or that they have taken from a magazine as representative of themselves. They will assemble these and write about their significance in their life.

FOLDER The students will write interrogative, declarative, imperative and exclamatory sentences.

The students will alphabetize by second letter and gain familiarity with library arrangement.

The students will copy a short paragraph from the blackboard.

#### GRADE 3

The students will write directions; e.g., How do you play \_\_\_\_\_? (a game)

The students will prepare a main points biography of a famous person.

The students will present written summary sentences of the basic four components: main idea, characters, time, place.

The students will, given a model in writing, expand a sentence with describing words.

The students will use encyclopedia, dictionary, and other general references and take notes (copy facts) from the source on one subject.

FOLDER The students will list words and phrases that deal with sensory impressions of places and things observed at first hand.

The students will use the idea of a treasure hunt. Have students draw a map and write simple directions so that others can find the treasure.

The students will copy from a model in cursive writing.

## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEWS

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### INTERVIEWS

#### Parent Interview Schedule

1. Do you remember when \_\_\_\_\_ became interested in books (at what age)?
2. When did she begin drawing or show an interest in paper and pencil tasks?
3. What does she do when alone or left to choose an activity?
4. Does she write to friends and relatives?
5. Do you do a lot of writing (letters, scholarly, lists, etc.)?
6. What do you do with the samples of writing that \_\_\_\_\_ brings home from school?
7. What types of reading ;material do you have at home?
8. What were some of the characteristics of play activities in which \_\_\_\_\_ engaged?
9. What are her good friends?

## Parent Interview

I: This is parent interviews. And um, that's Ok (she asked if she could smoke).

I'm interested in getting information about students and the kinds of things they do at home. Especially as it pertains to writing. So, I'm going to try and keep it informal. And, but I do have some questions written down. So why don't I start and then you can add anything you want. I wonder if you remember when \_\_\_\_\_ became interested in books?

P: Well, when she was a little baby about 6 or 7 months I gave her books and I let her tear them up, just so that she would be exposed to handling them and I didn't care what she did with them. They were old books. I just let her play around with them and tear them up.

I: Oh, what a good idea.

P: Then afterwards I started reading and since the father was not in the home, even at that young age, I talked to her alot and she was the only one with me.

I: I see,

P: We were on welfare at the time

I: I see.

P: and, um, sort of trying to find a place to live and get myself situated again, um and so it was she that I conversed with alot.

I: How did she, did you talk to her in regualr adult language?

P: Yes, no goo goo gaa gaa

I: No goo goo gaa gaa

P: No baby talk, none of that.

I: I see

P: I wanted someone to talk to after a day of being outside, living in California we could live outside all day long, and then I would take her to the parks and take her to different child care centers and I would talk to the teachers while she played with the children, as long as I was there they didn't mind, that (inaudible) was in the playground.

I: Great.

P: So she had alot of exposure to all kinds of things, even though I was at a low economic level she was exposed to all kinds of things at the University of California campus.

I: I see, you were there.

P: Yeah. But having money, for different books, or teaching things I didn't have. I somehow was able through garage sales to get different things for her all kinds of things to play with.

I: That is interesting. Was she always able to sustain her efforts for a long period of time. Was she becoming ingrossed in something for a long period of time. Let's say at an early age. did you notice that, you probably didn't have much of a comparison since she's an only child. (Parent "Right") But did it seem unusually long?

P: You mean like her attention span?

I: Her attention span, yeah.

P: I thought it was just like other children because I always had alot of children in our room. I always brought in alot of kids because she was alone, so I wanted her exposed to all kinds of children. So I brought her all kinds of kids. Kids that had parents were on drugs. All kinds...

I: Is that so?

P: Right, cuz that's when we lived in some hotel, about a year. And then after that, I noticed that her attentions span might be longer than I expected her to be just a little bit, but not more so.

I: Cuz I noticed that.

P: I'm trying to go backwards and think.

I: I noticed that she likes to go and complete, complete something she's started. Some of the other students will stop and maybe have a short length of time they will work, but Marra seems to be driven enough to complete something. And I'm wondering if it's something sort of natural, especially writing. She just seems to really like to go on complete, maybe because she has all these ideas she wants to get out and she thinks to stop and stop that flow.

P: Right, but there are projects she has started but not finished.

I: And not finished, I see. Then this is just sort of peculiar to just writing.

P: But I have always, Mrs. Diamond, I've always encouraged her what she can do herself like all her math papers and reading assignments from grade one I threw out I kept what she wrote what she has done, what she has made because I felt that when I was on welfare if I had resources I would have lived well if I could sew, fix the heater, fix the refrigerator, I felt that our own inner resources were more important than money. so this is where I got the idea of encouraging her to do things on her own. You know. To see if she could make up a play, or if she could think of things herself.

I: Yeah, so you kind of encouraged her to be creative? to think rather than getting things from other sources.

P: Yeah.

I: That may explain...

P: I wish I could have sewen then...

I: Cuz she has even made up worksheets for the rest of the class, and that kind of thing.

P: So has the other...

I: So has the other kids.

P: That's what I heard, you see we lived in upper middle class family and I just went through some bad times and living and the welfare taught me a few lessons that what you can do for yourself is more valuable and when it comes to clothes or just ordinary things its just what you have that you can use and you know, perhaps I could have sewen and maybe made money that way.

I: I see, I think I'm gonna find you an ashtray.

P: I'm gonna use this.

I: Can you use that?

P: Yes.

I: Great, ok, um, what about paper and pencil tasks, I was wondering if she um, if you noticed a time when she did that.

P: Um, (thinking) I think I started fairly early, but no earlier than anybody else. As soon as she could get a crayon or something I would just let her scribble or something. And if there was an older child in the room then they would do it together. Um when she was about 2, I think, we were still living in that room, there was a boy 6 years old that could not read, and she was having fun with books and trying to work with words or something or tell about the picture, the little boy was not up to reading he liked math. So there was sort of like a little thing going on between this boy.

I: And she was 2?

P: That wasn't 4 because we came here. It had to be very young, no it was reading because we would stop at the stop signs, when it says stop and walk, in Berkley they have stop, walk and I would repeat it to her at a very young age, see what does that say, so it was repetition, and sometimes I would take this little boy down the street and try to read words, perhaps off the signs and I remember that very vividly. Then like we sang a song "love you in the park" and we love you all the T-I-M-E time (spelled time



out). It was just, perhaps (inaudible of children. I've always had kids around. I was always so sure that she had kids around.

I: I see. Um, if she is left alone to chose an activity, this is now, and even maybe you could reflect backwards, what kinds of things does she usually do?

P: It used to be reading until we got the TV. We didn't have a TV until this last year.

I: Is that so? Oh, that's interesting. Was this a conscience think that you just didn't want?

P: I didn't want it cuz I thought TV just talked down to you. I had one and I dumped it. When she was six she listened to records and read, and we would play games. Now it's TV. Of course with Nickelodeon, I approve the programing. It's such a good cable station that I don't mind her watching it at all. It stimulates her and we have discussions through it and we're exposed to all kinds of issues that come up.

I: Do you have a special time that you talk? Do you set aside time, or do you just sort of let it happen?

P: Well, if she's home sick then I stay home with her and we get a chance to sort out all sorts of problems and we discuss every night at dinnertime-- things that have happened during the day and problems and I try to keep my office work and my problems somewhat light. I try not to have her involved in those worries.

I: She seems awfully sensitive.

P: Very true.

I: So she actually would choose reading rather than TV.

P: Very much. She was onto Nancy Drew rather than TV.

I: Does she write to friends and relatives without being asked or is ti something that is spontaneous?

- P: Sometimes yes, sometimes no. But I encourage her. If I ever want to send a note to my mother I say "Would you write a sentence or two to Grandma?" and she'll write a sentence or two. I started out with a little bit like that, and now she writes letters to her friends. It's pretty normal.
- I: Do you, um, do you do alot of writing?
- P: No. Zero.
- I: Is that so?
- P: I just write letters. None.
- I: You mentioned, cause I was interested in the things that came home, and you mentioned that the writing, the creative kinds of things you tend to keep, the other things you don't.
- P: Because I like art and dance, myself, and I know schoolwork--math and reading--are important and the assignments are important but I also wanted her to know that what she can do from her herself. Perhaps I realized that too late for myself and if I had gone into a different field in school perhaps I would be doing something I really enjoyed. Office work is okay. But I can't do what I want to do and see I never developed that. But she has a good side, I mean she's disciplined enough to do her math and reading and we did alot of art projects at home when I moved here and we got a place to stay for ourselves and I got a job we did alot of art projects before she really got into reading and I have other kids in on it too and we make our own Christmas decorations and all that kind of things.
- I: I'm going to let you talk 'cause I know you had some things written down and your time is short. Most of the things I had written down I think were answered.
- P: I think you know, M., well enough now, after your second year, but I think sometimes just what happens in my home might have a bearing on how that long story might have developed. Now I asked her specifically, we had a

quiet time, Dr. Wagner has posed a question -- if you were in an airplane and it exploded, what would happen afterwards -- and I guess he wanted them to write a story and it started out there at that point and I gave her some suggestions because she was really after me to give her some ideas, but she wouldn't take them -- she wouldn't take mine, and she wouldn't take Dr. Wagner's. So she had some of hers and she didn't like them, something about falling into a volcano and a city developed and all this and she didn't like that. So she threw that out, but it was getting close to the time she had to start writing and she got a writer's block and she said "Mom, I can't think and I'm very nervous," so I explained to her that it must be writer's block...

I: Oh, she said something and mentioned writer's block...

P: So she said that and she sat and thought and thought perhaps about some ideas and finally it came out and she had the ideas and she started writing at the babysitters and then didn't stop for thirty-some pages, right... and I wanted her to stop. I really wanted her to be brief, I really did and she was thinking of, instead of a kidnapping, a grandnapping. Did she explain that to you?

I: Uh, uh. No she didn't.

P: Well, there's a grandmother who's kidnapped in there so she was thinking of having in the title "grandnapping."

I: That's cute! Instead of a ked, okay.

P: And, uh, she had asked both teachers for some ideas, too, and she discarded those, but after she had that big block, she was very worried, then it just poured out and she had read a book just prior to that time, "Who Stole Cat DeJonge" so it had to do somethin with stealing anyway, there.

I: So she kind of got the idea from the book plus some of her own ideas.

P: Uh, huh. She had read that book and then I asked her specifically, and she said "some of it, mom, not all of it." She said it's mostly the ideas and feeling of being scared she was working at. She wanted to get all those emotions out, so she asked her friends if they were kidnapped how would they feel. Because the story doesn't just have plot and action, it has...

I: Really alot of emotions...

P: Yes, uh, huh. We try to straighten out our emotional problems by discussions, and if she gets angry I tell her don't be mad at your own anger. Anger is alright if it's not distructive, and we have discussions on anger because I feel that anger is an important emotion, not something to be discarded and put away. That's too big of an emotion and I have anger.

I: Well, we all do. It's a normal thing, you know.

P: And, um, I had gone through some very bad times before I had M., so I think I had to cope with some very basic emotions and I had to know for myself, and I think it's now helping me to cope with my job and raising M., and I hope that I can help her when she's older and when she has to really tune into herself...

I: And make some decisions, too...

P: Uh, huh, right. but she's more ideal oriented. I get my ideas from doing. If I'm painting a picture I just go ahead, M. thinks first.

I: And make some decisions, too...

P: Uh, huh, right. But she's more ideal oriented. I get my ideas from doing. If I'm painting a picture I just go ahead, M. thinks first.

I: Yeah, that's interesting, because I was thinking about the data that I had collected already and trying to pull some ideas together, and not just on M., but on some of the other kids and I said that it seems that some of the kids will develop their ideas as they go along. The process of writing helps them think of things, but I think that M. thinks first, and I guess she has a

plan before she even starts to write. A lot of writers don't do that. That's what I'd read somewhere, that a lot of adult writers even write and, I'm not thinking professional writers, but people who just write, think of ideas as they go along and it sort of develops. I've found that in several parts and pieces of literature where they just do that and it's interesting, isn't it, because you'd think they'd have a plan. And even college writers, they said, tend to plan as they go along. And sometimes they don't know where it's going, where the story's going.

P: That's interesting. See I don't know anything about that. And I think, too other children help, just being around and discussion with M. and K. and all these other kiddies who talk a lot.

I: That's one of the things I've been trying to see to, is the part that interaction plays, and when I interview kids I'm going to ask them if they like, um, writing by themselves in a quiet place they like to be with other children, and I imagine they'd say they'd like to be with other kids. I'll see, I'll find out, cause I think they'll be honest -- I think they'll be very honest.

P: Inaudible

I: Okay, well, is there anything else that you want to share, or... Well, I know you mentioned that... who are M.'s friends?

P: She has B. S. who lives across the way and she's six years old, and she's like a little mother to B., and M. and K...

I: ... are her good friends...

P: ... yes, and she was separated last year and I didn't realize what it meant. I felt you should learn new friends, but she was down for two months. Remember when I had talked to you about that?

I: Right.

P: And I see the difference in her this year, and her enthusiasm. And they're becoming quite buddy-buddy, and so perhaps they should stay together. I

tried it last year with Mrs. D., and she had you, but she felt alone -- two months it took her, two months to come out of it.

I: And then there were some, uh, first graders in there, too, which, I mean there were girls, but they were younger and obviously she didn't know them as well. Were they together in nursery school, the whole group?

P: Kindergarten.

I: Kindergarten and then they went to first grade together with Mrs. M. and then they were separated.

P: I thought it might be good so she could learn new friends. One of the reasons I'm still here, because this weather gets me down... After living in California and moving here and having to face the weather, but seeing how she's doing so well here, and the fact that my sister and her family are nearby and there's a very nice closeness there, there's some feeling of roots, it's hard for me to leave, because I...

I: ...You'll never know what you'll find out there...

P: I know, but, we have friends out there, I have friends out there and it's just hard, but the longer she stays here the harder for me to go. Being a single parent, I don't feel single parents are accepted so well here. It's a very conservative community.

I: Yeah, it is. I know I was talking about, to someone about that, you know, and I think there're certain conventions people expect and...

## Student Interview Schedule

1. What topics do you most like to write about?
2. What type of writing do you enjoy most--reports, stories, letters to friends, or some other type?
3. Do you seem to write better when; you are at home, at school, in a quiet corner of the classroom, or sitting near a friend? Is there another location that you prefer for writing? Why do you write better in this location?
4. Can you tell me where most of your ideas for writing come from?
5. Can you name some of your favorite books? What types do you seem to prefer?
6. Do you write at home? What type of writing do you do?
7. Does your mom or dad help you with your writing? If so, in what way?
8. When you are going to write a selection--a story or report, for example, what do you do first (provide concrete example . . . in the story you wrote yesterday, what did you do at the very beginning of the writing period)?
9. When you write, do you continue writing until you have completed your selection or do you stop, take a break, then go back to it? Can you explain why you do this?
10. How do you usually feel about what you have written?
11. If you don't like what you have written, are you likely to change it or leave it the way it is? If you make changes, when is this likely to occur?
12. Some students think that writing is a complicated process. How do you feel about this?
13. Would you rather write a story or tell a story?
14. What kinds of books do you like to read?
15. Who are your favorite authors?
16. What is your favorite subject in school?
17. On a scale from one to ten, with ten being excellent and one being poor, where would you rate yourself as a writer?

## Student Interview (Excerpt)

Mindy

- I: What I want to ask here are some things about writing, why you write, and what you think about, and just a lot of questions and you can tell me anything you want me to know, okay? Alright, and if there's a question you don't understand, then you can let me know and I'll try to word it a little differently. Okay, um, first question is, when do you seem to enjoy writing most, when a topic is assigned to you or when you can pick your own topic?
- S: Well, I feel that when you write, like I should be given some time because when I write and just all of a sudden write, and you've got, let's say -- okay, Mindy, you've got a week to do it, like it's rushing me and I can't put down all the ideas like I want them so I think I like it better when I've got the idea and have time to think about it and time to plan my story because I plan my story in my head, you know, because I've got my story and then I add details and what I want as I go along. So it takes me, I don't know, a week or two to think about it and I put the ideas down as they come, because I don't want to lose any of the ideas, because if I have my ideas in my head and I all of a sudden think of another idea totally it ruins my story and makes it have a different base. I think I'd rather be able to spend time, but when people assign assignments like you did for that one book, I had time to think about it. Like my mom said, I guess I had a writer's block, but I spent like that night thinking about it and I thought about it at my babysitter's for about an hour then I started writing it down and I felt -- it took a lot of courage to throw away that one paper -- I didn't think that was my idea, it was Dr. Wagner's idea and was going along with the way he thought.



- I: Oh, did you ask him about that, about what kind of thing you could write about?
- S: Well, I was thinking about, you know, in some island and end up in a volcano, but that was so fictionary I didn't like the way it was like, students take tours sometimes and meet on a school trip to go and do some research on something and I had to do research in Europe except they passed the island and then they fell into the volcano and started a city, and that's kind of a lot of fiction.
- I: How did Dr. W. enter into the picture?
- S: Well, he put it like there is an island here and you fall down.
- I: Did you ask him about it or...
- S: No...
- I: Oh, but he was kind of telling a story like that...
- S: Right, he was saying, okay, pretend and he gave me the idea and I didn't like the feeling of that.
- I: So you really got the idea from something Dr. W. said in social studies...
- S: Right, and I didn't like that because it was something that I wasn't, it wasn't my idea because he had already did half of the story and it would be all laid out so I tried to draw a different ending and tried to go into a volcano or something except that I feel it was too much fiction and it was like a fact, you know, it's okay to have research and then there was all this fiction, and that really concerned me. This scared me and I was afraid that I didn't finish, I think my fear and all my feelings, a lot of my emotion went into the story I'm writing now instead of something someone else wanted me to write.
- I: So, you think you'd rather have, if the topic is assigned it's all right as long as you have time to do it. (Agreement) Okay. All right, now, do you write at home?

S: Yes, I do. When I'm bored sometimes I take up reading or sometimes I do something like play with my friends, but one day I had like this urge of writing and so I started typing a story, but, and the typewriter, you go one...

I: ...you know how fingers go...

S: ...yeah, and I was doing terrible so I figured that I might as well write it, so I wrote a story and I figured I don't like this story, so I add more to the story, so I added more as I went on and then I stopped and then it took me like the whole summer to finish this book. I started a little bit of last year, it took me the whole summer because I really put a lot of time into it instead of looking all of the time I (inaudible) when I felt like it. And I used one story from school and then I put some poems in it, and I put stories that I liked and I made one that's called "The Girl Who Had Too Many Toys" and mom said it was something like a dream, you know, something that I wanted, and another story that I put in was one I did with Mrs. Fuller, it was just from school and I put that in, too.

I: Was this the "Fractured Fairy Tale?"

S: Yeah, this had fractured fairy tales and was called "Bedtime Stories."

I: Oh, yeah.

S: And then there's the one about the talking tree, 'cause I always wanted trees to talk and that's where my idea came in.

I: So your ideas come from all different places...

S: Yeah.

I: And then they both (inaudible)

S: Well I think it's books and my feelings and things I might want all combined together and making something of that, like what you've got clay and you've got to mold it and it takes ideas from your head. And that gave me some ideas. I don't know. I guess I got them from all around.

I: The room is quiet then.

- S: The room is quiet and I can get my ideas and, because when I finish my story I had my ideas set on the paper, they're like set there and I just wrote them down because I had the whole story in my head, but I've kind of changed it around and I switched different things and I didn't have down exactly what I'd planned at the beginning but I evened it out so it wouldn't seem like it's a totally different idea. Because sometimes I feel that when I'm writing a long story or something and you say, well, guys, you've got a week to finish it I rush myself and I'm not able to put down what I want on the paper.
- I: So you think this time with your story you had enough time to write it.
- S: Right, because you didn't mind that I wrote what I wanted because I knew I had to finish it but I knew that I wanted a good story, also, and it wasn't just to have a lot of pages because all my ideas drifted down on the paper and I couldn't help it being long.
- I: Did you have a hard time, ever, finally writing your story, thinking of what to say next? What to do next?
- S: Often in parts there'd be a part and I wouldn't exactly know how to explain it to get to the next thing I was doing. Like during the middle and during the conclusion that was a hard time because I had to write down things, because if you leave an unanswered question and the reader's saying "Hey, you forgot to leave out that, you know, you forgot to put that in," it gets me mixed up, you know. I think I'd prefer like... yeah, there were some hard parts down that time. I had to ask, sometimes I'd ask my friends about the emotion or the reaction to something because if I had her just smile when her grandmother was kidnapped, you know, so I asked "What would you do?", you know, and then took these ideas and then put them down. I wanted something real, not something that she wouldn't do. How would they feel if somebody really close was kidnapped, or like, Jody had her accident. I think

that people who are really close to her had just as much trouble as she did, but in a different way -- 'cause it's hard to go on when you felt something terrible happened. So I had an incident in school and the teacher took place a lot and I think that teacher was you, in a way, (inaudible) and it wasn't you, you know, but I think that you were there all the time, you know, and not exactly guiding, but there, you know, to help me here and there, and that's where the teacher part came in. But it was kind of hard to get into a conversation sometimes if you were in the middle of locking the door.

I: So you had to put together all those pieces so that they hang together and draw the conclusion. But it seems like you have a framework in your mind but the details and how they're going to weave together is sometimes what causes...

S: It's like a square frame, and, so, it starts here and I've got my idea all planned out and the details go around it, and if I want to change a place I've got to work those details in, but I've still got to have that basic idea in there somewhere because if I change that whole part around, you know, it just doesn't sound right. It feels like I'm changing my story all the way, and that's what I felt on my other story -- that I was changing it too much in a totally different way because they were on this (inaudible) trip and all of a sudden they fall into this volcano? You know, that sounds kind of funny because my ideas were okay with Dr. Wagner, you know I thought everything okay, and then I thought, I worried. So that's where I think my other idea came in and I didn't (inaudible).

I: When we have a discussion or I explain a paragraph, explain paragraph writing, or writing in general, like writing a newspaper article, before you actually begin to write does that make a difference in your writing? If I give an explanation or if I kind of set up a scene?

S: Well, I like to draw my own ideas as I said and sometimes it makes me feel like, not that bad, but, you know, like maybe I should change a certain part and when you discuss something I feel like I know what you're trying to discuss so I can see if my story is somewhat of you're discussing. Like when you're talking to me at the back table about my story and how it's going, I felt like I, um, knew what you were talking about and that it wasn't hard for me to tell you because it was all on tape but I wanted to get my ideas down before I switched to a totally different idea. Because if I, I like to like keep going on my story because if I wait like a long, long period like maybe two weeks or three weeks and don't, and not work on my story at all, I, it's hard to come back to like when I finish my reading. It was kind of hard to get the jist, so I had to read like two pages to know where I was and to get the feel of the story, because in order for me to write I've got to know what my story's about. I hadn't read my story in general, or haven't read it, but, you know, I've got the feeling of it inside myself and know what I'm writing. I think that's important, because if I don't know what I'm writing then I get mixed up and I can't write at all and I think that's what happened, you know, with Dr. Wagner.

I: Do you think that, uh, do you think a lot about the reader when you're writing -- the person who's reading the story -- or do you think more about how it makes sense and feels to you?

S: I think, like, I wasn't feeling good about Kathy reading my story, not so much that I didn't want her to because I was afraid she was going to copy, but I wanted it to be a surprise. But I still wanted somebody to read it, so I feel their point of view, see what they think about it, and I know you read it and I took some of your suggestions, but a kid, you know, because it's really based on a kid's story and I wanted to know what a kid would think about it.

So, I tried reading it to Jackie and she's six years old and it's kind of hard when you're reading a story in cursive. You get impatient, so I'm asking people if, do you want to read my story, but it's awfully long to read. So, I like to go by their ideas and what they think that would really happen, not so much that, in a sense, go by their ideas in a way, well my story's based on that, but I take some of their suggestions and some of my suggestions and put them together and see what I can get.

I: Okay, I was thinking about when you finally get it done and you know that somebody's going to read it, do you think about the people that are going to be reading it and do you kind of write for them or do you write for yourself, do you write to satisfy what your audience might be or do you write for yourself? Or do you even think about how it's going to sound to them?

S: I think I'd better satisfy myself first, and I'll sometimes say "does this make sense to you" and have them read that paragraph or part over and see what they think, and if they think it doesn't make sense, I try to change my thinking but still take their opinions because I don't want something that isn't going to make sense. Because often when I write, I say something and it wouldn't exactly tell the part that the other people might want it to tell.

I: Let me see. What's your favorite, of all the writing that you've done in class, what is the time you've liked the most? Like your E.T. story, or about a trip that you've taken and the book that you're working on, you wrote about pioneer times and wrote letters to pen pals and journals and tall tales, book reports, and reports on things -- Black American -- cardfs and letters to families and friends.

S: I think that writing the book has been my favorite time because I put in what I really want to say, and when I'm writing my letter or even in my journal, I also like writing in my journal pretty much because I put my

feelings and try not to have too many private pages because I know you want to know where I'm thinking of you at, so I put "Mrs.? what do I do" in a part, but I like writing in my journal because it's taking out some of my feelings, but I think it's more my feelings than when I want to do. But I think that writing books has been my favorite time because I put out something that I'm good at, and I put it down on paper and I see if I like that . So I think that's my favorite time, you know, other things are good, too, but...

I: Do you ever talk to yourself when you write?

S: Yeah.

I: You do?

S: I say, like, "Mindy, come on, this doesn't make sense" because sometimes my mind goes to something else. So I read it over to myself and say, "hold on, does that sound right to you or doesn't it?"

I: So you go back a lot while you're writing and read something over and then see if it really makes sense?

S: Well, if it combines, like if I read a part of it, and I stopped and I skipped some and then I read what I had read and I want to see if those two have some sense of connection, because if they don't then I've got to change something.



## Student Interview (Excerpt)

Kathy

- I: This is Kathy, and I'm going to be asking her some questions. Kathy, when do you enjoy writing the most, when a topic is assigned and it's explained to you like we did this morning or when you can choose your own topic.
- K: Well, I think most of the time I like to choose my own topic because I know I have a choice and it's easier to think and use one of my own then to use one that is given to me.
- I: Why do you think it's easier to think?
- K: I don't know, it's just like you thought about it awhile and you know what to write, like if I know what I'm going to do on an assignment before I go home and we'll be doing it the next day, I might be able to think more. But if we have to write one that's assigned and it's kinda hard.
- I: When it's your own, then you have your ideas already ready, is that what you're saying? Okay, um, do you write at home?
- K: Um, hum. I'm writing a book right now at home, too.
- I: Oh, are you? What kind of a book is it?
- K: Well, it's not the kind that we learn in school, it's like just a little book, because I'm trying to help my brother learn how to read.
- I: Oh, I see. Would you bring that sometime so I can see?
- K: Okay.
- I: Okay, what's the topic of it?
- K: It's about a clown.
- I: I think that's cute. How'd you happen to think about that?
- K: I don't know. He just likes funny things (inaudible)
- I: That's nice. How old's your brother?

- K: He's six.
- I: He's just in kindergarten. A lot of kindergarteners can't read. Were you reading in kindergarten?
- K: Um, hum. During the summer before I went into kindergarten we had a neighbor who had a whole bunch of books and I'd go over there and he'd help me read.
- I: He did? Your mother didn't help you then, just a neighbor and you picked it up.
- K: Yup.
- I: Oh, I see. Was your mother surprised?
- K: Yeah. She let me go though.
- I: Okay. Um, do your mom and dad help you with writing?
- K: Yeah.
- I: How do they help you?
- K: Well, if I'm having trouble, like how to put a sentence or how to spell a word. . .
- I: Do you prefer to sit and write with friends or do you like writing alone in a quiet place?
- K: I usually like writing alone because I can get more work done.
- I: Are you able to think better, or ...
- K: Yeah.
- I: What about (inaudible) what if you're trying to get your ideas together, does it help to discuss it with somebody or would you rather think about it on your own?
- K: Most of the time it's easier to talk it over with somebody and ask them like what would they do if something happened to them, a certain thing

K: He's six.

I: He's just in kindergarten. A lot of kindergarteners can't read. Were you reading in kindergarten?

K: Um, hum. During the summer before I went into kindergarten we had a neighbor who had a whole bunch of books and I'd go over there and he'd help me read.

I: He did? Your mother didn't help you then, just a neighbor and you picked it up.

K: Yup.

I: Oh, I see. Was your mother surprised?

K: Yeah. She let me go though.

I: Okay. Um, do your mom and dad help you with writing?

K: Yeah.

I: How do they help you?

K: Well, if I'm having trouble, like how to put a sentence or how to spell a word. . .

I: Do you prefer to sit and write with friends or do you like writing alone in a quiet place?

K: I usually like writing alone because I can get more work done.

I: Are you able to think better, or ...

K: Yeah.

I: What about (inaudible) what if you're trying to get your ideas together, does it help to discuss it with somebody or would you rather think about it on your own?

K: Most of the time it's easier to talk it over with somebody and ask them like what would they do if something happened to them, a certain thing

happened to them that happened in the story. Like you can ask a lot of people and then sort of put them together.

I: But if you're working by yourself, you can't do that. So you go back and maybe ask them, and then go back to your own place. Is there a location that you prefer to write in like around in the classroom, say at school is there a place where you prefer to write? Most of the time we do it in the room.

I: Does other students talking bother you when you write?

K: It depends on what they are talking about.

I: Can you tell me a little bit more about that?

K: Well, if they talk about the book I'm writing or they're writing I usually (inaudible)

I: Um, do you ever talk to yourself as you write?

K: Yeah, like, as I write something like a sentence or something I tell myself what I want to write over and over I say write the words.

I: So that helps you then. Um, I can't ask you this question, if you would rather write to a friend or talk on the telephone. Ok, when you are going to write a story or a report or a news article or a letter to a friend, what's, can you think about the first thing you do. Like this morning when I assigned that um, story, this morning. What was the very first thing you did?

K: Think about, like if you have a choice, like what will be easier to write about and I get my characters; usually I think about what they will be doing.

I: So you probably have a plan, you've got some kind of plan when you start.

K: Yeah.

I: Do you know how long that usually takes?

- K: It doesn't take long, usually I think about things as you're talking.
- I: I knew you'd say that! When I was talking this morning, I thought . . . I bet some people started thinking while I was talking. So when I finished, I wondered how you could start writing right away, some people by the time they get their paper are ready to write, and there are some who are just still trying to find something to think about or write about, like 10 minutes into the writing time.
- K: Sometimes I'll wait though, cuz, like when we were writing our books, I waited then, I started, I had to think awhile. Usually I think while you're talking.
- I: There is nothing wrong with that, it's just interesting that I'm talking and I'm thinking they're listening and some people are thinking about and some people can hear what I'm saying and still be thinking, or thinking along with listening.
- K: I do that. At home, sometimes I'll be reading a book and I won't stop because I like have a paragraph left, and my mom will be telling me something and screaming at me cuz ....
- I: Why do you like to stop at paragraphs?
- K: Cuz it's easier to get my place if I'm not at the end of a paragraph.
- I: Yeah, Ok, um, when you're thinking about your story, and you say you get your characters and what they are going to be doing, um, do you know how it is going to end right from the start?
- K: No, usually I have to get to my plot and then that's when I start thinking about how my story is going to end.
- I: Is that the hardest part? To ....
- K: yeah
- I: Um, ending, why do you think that is?

- K: It is hard to like have a good ending for a story you have if it is really complicated or it is really a big scene or something so it's kind of hard to have a good ending, ...the story could build up to that. Sometimes I do know what my ending will be and I just build my story up to that.
- I: Sometimes you might think of the ending first, but most of the time you kind of think about your ending after you get your climax or plot. Does that filmstrip help, Friday I didn't see it, but I just read about it.
- K: It was really crazy.
- I: Was it?
- K: The endings that they had you would have thought they'd be the endings, yet, they would have a little more.
- I: It kind of left you hanging. Um, are you aware of thinking about such things as punctuation and paragraphing and spelling when you write your stories or whatever you're writing the first time. Are you aware of thinking about that?
- K: Sometimes, like if I want to get done really quickly, I then I'll put the (inaudible) but most of the time I'll put them in as I go and I (inaudible)
- I: So you kind of think about it as you go along. Ok, sometimes you don't even recall thinking about it, you sort of automatic, do you think with you it's automatic?
- K: Yup, all of it is automatic. Instead of a colon I'll put a comma or stop it there or put an exclamation point.
- I: Ok, where do you get most of your ideas for writing?
- K: Usually it is stuff that has happened but I change it around a little and I get my ideas from things that have happened to other people.
- I: So, even if it's like a fiction story, then you kind of build it on something that's like a real experience.

K: Yeah.

I: Ok, sometimes writers seem to have difficulty with keeping going or even with what to write next, has this ever happened to you?

K: Yes.

I: Ok, when is it likely to happen? Can you think of a time or is it just anytime.

K: Well when I was writing (inaudible) after I do the setting, it's kind of hard to start into the real story. You have to stop and think.

I: Um, hum. Why do you think something like that happens?

K: Well, usually for me I'm always trying to be good and it usually doesn't make a lot of sense, so I usually just start (inaudible)

I: Okay, now, I think I know the answer to this, but you tell me anyway, when you are writing do you usually continued to write until you have completed you selection or do you stop and take a break and then go back to it?

K: At school I keep writing, but at home I usually take a break.

I: Oh, you do? Oh, why is that?

K: I don't know, when I'm at home, I'm just uncomfortable, do I keep on going, I just keep on going and I keep going until I get something (inaudible) I don't know why, that's just the way I am and I never can sit and watch a whole TV show without getting up and going to get something to eat or something.

I: But you don't have any trouble at school doing that?

K: No.

I: Do you think it's because there are different expectations at school that you're kind of forced to sit there and get your work done?

K: I don't know, I'm just that way.

- I: That's interesting. Um, where do you think your writing is better, at school or at home?
- K: At school.
- I: You do. Where do you have the most fun writing, at school or at home?
- K: At school.
- I: Do you? Um, do you critique your own writing and go back and look at it and think about what's good about it and what's bad about it?
- K: Yeah.
- I: When do you usually do this? As you writing it or after?
- K: Well, as I'm writing it. Sometimes I'll look back to see what I've put to see if it makes sense or should I put something else in later in the story. Like I was reading a book and they didn't even look back or anything and they put "there was a boy and a girl" and the boy said that he had 2 brothers and a little sister and the girl had 2 sisters, and then later on in the story they said they were telling about their family and the boy told about his sisters. And before he said he had 2 brothers.
- I: That doesn't seem to make sense! Who wrote that, was it...
- K: It was, I'm not sure about the first name, but it was Sacks.
- I: Oh really? Marilyn Sacks?
- K: I think so, I'm not sure. It was Bus Ride.
- I: That makes the reader think that it's not very realistic, or very authentic. Um, how would you evaluate yourself as a writer. How do you feel about what you have written?
- K: Sometimes I think it's not so good, but other times I think its good. Sometimes when it's not good I think it is.



## Student Interview (Excerpt)

Anne

I: When do you seem to enjoy writing most? When a topic is assigned and explained or when you get to choose your own?

S: When I get to choose my own.

I: Ok, and why do you suppose that is?

S: Because when I have my own idea I have more things I can write about.

I: Ok, alright, do you write at home?

S: Yes, I write letters.

I: Ok, who do you write to, friends?

S: My grandpa, and my babysitter that went to California.

I: Ok, do you do any other kind of writing? (long pause) At home? That you can think of.

S: (long pause) Usually I end up writing in Chinese rather than English.

I: Oh, I see. Is it easier for you to write in Chinese?

S: No

I: No, but you enjoy that more or is it just something different?

S: Writing in Chinese is something different. It's a character for each word so it is totally different.

I: I see, is it easier to express your ideas in Chinese or English?

S: English

I: Is it, ok, of the difficulty in making Chinese letters.

S: Yes

I: I see. Ok, but your thoughts are pretty much the same either way?

S: Right

I: Ok, do your mom and dad help you with your writing? When you sit down to write at home?

S: Yes.

I: They do?

S: Yes

I: Who helps you?

S: Usually my mom cause my dad is so busy.

I: Oh, I see, and how does your mom help you?

S: When I finish a rough draft of a letter she will correct it and trhen I'll go write it over.

I: So you usually make 2 copies?

S: (inaudible) makes us do that when we write to our pen pals.

I: Do you ever change parts when you do your rewriting?

S: Yes

I: I see, why do you change them?

S: Cause sometimes they don't make sense to me.

I: Ok, then you can pick that out when you go back and write it.

(Long pause, alot of noise)

I: You can, when you go back and rewirite it, you can make things a little bit different, you change it.

S: Yes

I: That way it makes more sense.

S: Yes

I: Ok, what things can you think of that trigger or help you realize that something isn't making sense.

S: When my mom says that that's not true, when my tells me that she doesn't know what that means.

- I: Ok, usually if you try it out on someone else you can tell.
- S: Yes
- I: What about in school, do you do that in school? Do you try...
- S: Miss M (afternoon teacher) reads it over and she tells me some parts that don't really make sense to her.
- I: But what about with, if you just do it on your own, can you tell whether or not.
- S: I usually go back and read it over, so I can figure out the parts that don't make sense to me.
- I: Do you read it over as you write, do you go back as you're writing and look back on parts...
- S: Usually I write about 2 or 3 paragraphs and then I go back and read it over.
- I: Ok, does that help you to go on to know what to write in the next paragraph?
- S: Yes.
- I: Ok, do you think you do that more now than when you were in the second grade?
- S: Yes
- I: Ok, do you prefer to sit and write with friends, or do you like to write alone in a quiet place.
- S: In a quiet place.
- I: You do. Is there any place around here that you like better to write in? Seems like most of the time you are at your desk. But if you could pick like a small room somewhere do you think you would like that better?
- S: It depends on whether it was quiet in the room or not.
- I: You wouldn't want to be in a small room if there were alot of people there?
- S: No, I wouldn't

- I: Why is it that you like a quiet place better?
- S: 'Cause I can concentrate and I get better ideas there.
- I: Ok, When we have a discussion or I explain paragraph writing or writing a newspaper article before you actually begin to write, does that make a difference in your writing? If I explain it or,
- S: It does
- I: In what way?
- S: Well, it makes more sense than it would if I just went on my own, if I just went and did it.
- I: Is there ever a time when you feel like you already know that?
- S: Yes.
- I: Alot of times, or just some of the times?
- S: Some of the times
- I: Some of the times, lets say I am talking about the main sentence in the paragraph and how you put in your ideas that add detail and then you start writing it. Do you think about those things when you are writing?
- S: Yes
- I: This is sort of related to that, does it give you ideas when I explain things or does it slow you down? When you are writing, you know, when I've explained something before, talk about...
- S: It gives me ideas.
- I: Ok, the writing we have done in class, what has been the kind that you've liked most? Say, we wrote ET stories and we wrote about a trip taken, and we wrote about pioneer times, and we wrote books, you did a book, and we wrote letters to pen pals and journals and tall tales, which one did you enjoy most?
- S: Stories.

- I: The stories?
- S: Yes
- I: The stories where you came up with your own ideas?
- S: Yes
- I: Oh, Ok, why do you think that was the case?
- S: (long pause)
- I: Did you like having it in a book or making a book cover for it or its easier, you know we did reports too and,...
- S: I think it was because I chose my own topic.
- I: Oh, ok, so you would really like it if we would let you choose your own topic most of the time.
- S: Yes
- I: Ok, how about the report on famous black Americans, did you enjoy that at all?
- S: Yes, I enjoyed reading, reading in the books.
- I: But not the writing of the report.
- S: It wasn't as good as reading, but it wasn't too bad.
- I: Cause I seem to remember that one you didn't seem to like, and I am trying of other reports that we did but I remember particularly that one. Did you do any reports in Social Studies?
- S: No
- I: Ok, you did a good job on that, especially the cover and the pictures. Ok, what is your favorite topic to write about?
- S: In what?
- I: In stories.
- S: Mysteries
- I: Mysteries, oh!

- S: Except I have a hard time tying it all up.
- I: Yeah, that is the hardest thing, and I think Mara had a hard time getting hers to end, she wrote and wrote, you know how long her story was.
- S: Yeah, it was over 54 pages long.
- I: Yeah! I think she just got involved with it and had a hard time...What is it about mysteries you think makes it...
- S: So exciting, and I would rather read a mystery than just a baby book.
- I: Yeah.
- S: Like, "The dog went to play"
- I: Do you, are you able to figure out the mysteries pretty well?
- S: Yeah, sometimes they don't make too much sense though.
- I: Ok, (long pause) Does it bother you when other students are bothering you and talking in class when you are writing?
- S: Yes
- I: It does. Why is that?
- S: Cause when I hear them talking it takes my concentration off of writing...
- I: Ok, and what about, does it ever give you any ideas or...
- S: No
- I: No, you don't hear them say a word and go "Ah, that gives me an idea, maybe I can use that"
- S: No, that never happens.
- I: Never happens, ok. I interviewed one student one time, this was a fourth and fifth grade class, and that is what she told me and that, and that is why I thought I would ask you, I was surprised when she said that she said "I like it when people are talking around me, sometimes it gives me ideas." And I was really surprised at that. Do you ever talk to yourself as you write?
- S: Yes

- I: You do?
- S: Well, it helps me to keep the idea because sometimes when you write so much ahead of it that you have to keep the idea in your head for a long time and sometimes when you get to the part when you need it, it has gone out of your head.
- I: Oh, so talking helps you do that. In a way. Oh, that's good. Ok. Sometimes writers seem to have difficulty with keeping going or even thinking about what to write next. Has this ever happened to you?
- S: Yeah, and then I have to go back and find out what I did that I didn't want in there and take it all out. Sometimes I have written so much, that I don't want to take the time to erase it all, so I just cross it out.
- I: Ok, what do you do when it hwallens and you can't think of anything else and you just sort of stop and what do you do?
- S: I go back and I read it and I figure out what I can put into it.
- I: So usually just going back kind of helps you.
- S: Yeah.
- I: To think of more thjings. Have you ever gotten to the point where you just couldn't think of anymore things and you just put it away?
- S: Yeah.
- I: You have?
- S: Tiffany does it all the time.
- I: Yeah.
- S: You just stuff it in your desk and take out drawings or something.
- I: So sometimes you just want to get away from it. I guess, then when you pull it back out is it easier to get started again?
- S: Well, I get up with an idea the next day I'll pull it back out and work on it.

- I: It's funny how that happens. Sometimes with me late at night and I'm doing some work, well sometimes I'm trying to do some work, trying to do some writing, and it just doesn't come. Nothing.
- S: That's what comes to me. When I go to bed, I get the idea. When I wake up, I forget about it. Usually I shake my arm out. Cause usually when you write alot your arm begins to tense up.
- I: What about thinking? Does it help you to think better?
- S: When I run out of ideas, I sit there and I think and I think and I then I go back to writing again.
- I: (long pause) How do you usually feel about what you have written?
- S: Usually, I'm most concerned about it not making sense. then the whole story wouldn't make any sense to the reader.
- I: Yeah. You think alot about what the readers going to.
- S: Like get into my head.
- I: Get into what?
- S: If it doesn't make sense, then the whole story won't make sense to them. There is no sense in reading the book.
- I: That's true. You know alot of people don't even think about that at all? some poeple don't realize that they are writing for the reader, and not for themselves.
- s: Sometimes they write he instead of the person, and then the reader goes who's he?
- I: Yeah, that's right. Cause he has to refer to somebody. You just can't say he and the reader doesn't know. How do you think you realize that? A good writer like that? Did it just sort of happen?
- S: Would you say that question again?
- I: I just wondered how you think you realized that you had to be aware of the reader in your writing, and not...



- S: Sometimes I read a book and it doesn't make much sense to me and so I start thinking about when I write a book I've got to put sense into it.
- I: And these are adult authors, and they probably don't realize that they don't make sense.
- S: I've never read a book by Judy Bloom before.
- I: You haven't?
- S: Yeah, and every day I hear Meggan going "Judy Bloom, Judy Bloom" and I go who is Judy Bloom?
- I: Why haven't you read pme by Judy Bloom? You just not interested in her kind of books?
- S: No, I like Nancy Drew. I like Carol Keen books.
- I: Who was your favorite author? Carol Keen
- S: Carol Keen. My mom hates those books cause I never look at the books she buys. Keep I on checking them out and sit reading for hours.
- I: What kind does she buy?
- S: She buys stuff like the Wizzard of Oz and I've already seen the movies, Pinnochio and Robin Hood and so they are kind of boring.
- I: Those are classics though. Those are books that people have read over the years. And they are considered really good literature, or well written books. So that is probably why she wants you to read them.
- S: She bought one "The Kite" that was completely new, but I didn't understand a word of it.
- I: Is that so?
- S: Yeah
- I: Is it because it wasn't expressed clearly? or was it because they used big words?

## APPENDIX C

### SAMPLE FIELDNOTES

## APPENDIX C

### SAMPLES OF FIELDNOTES

Classroom Observations - Grade 3/4  
January 27, 1983  
9:47

As I entered the room, the teacher was writing the reading assignments on the blackboard. There was a chart in one corner of the board (see the end of the fieldnotes for this date). The room was quiet as the students were involved with silent reading. Pa has been reading silently the entire time and the teacher notices this:

T I like the way Pa is reading. Also, Ki and Sh are reading well.

S is reading, however looking over shoulder; she is also looking at the pictures in her book instead of reading the words. Now, she is reading her book.

Lo reading quietly at her desk

Kathy working on book report: Romona The Brave

Mindy writing diligently; pauses to look up at the blackboard and momentarily out the window. She then continues to write.

Jo, Li reading books at their desks

Ja wanders around the room as he reads

T announces that she is really pleased with the way everyone is working.

The class started to get noisy; the students didn't want to stop working on the book reports.

T asks how many like book reports - many students raise their hands.

T asks how many like journals - only Mindy raised her hand.

T asks, Okay now we'll start our writing assignment.

Lo came up to me - told me she went from lower to higher level spelling list. She had a big smile on her face.

C Miss M, guess what?! This is the first time I got all my spelling words right! He showed me his list hanging on the Spell Well Turtle Shell.

T Alright, you should be sitting like Kathy, K, and Anne. Boys and girls I'm waiting for Ja - the spelling test will be after our writing, so put away your spelling lists. Yesterday we talked about our trip to the M.S.U. Museum and how we can relate that to writing. Who can tell me what we said about writing?

Lo You need to think about the things that happened such as main ideas, details, the order that things happened. We write what happened first, second, and so forth.

T Yes. We start with one main idea from the trip, what happened first, then we fill in the details. Now we are going to be writing individual stories about the fieldtrip using the idea of writing with a main idea for each paragraph and sequencing the paragraphs according to the order of the events. Who has an idea about starting?

Anne (looking at the outline on the board) Do we write it like that?

T No. I'll explain that later.

The students start to give the teacher ideas for starting their stories:

Me We came into the room...

An One day...

Sh (to Kim) Once upon a time... She giggles

Yo is bothering Er - teacher told her to stop.

ON THE BOARD:

One day our class...

It was a cold day when we came upstairs and started a discussion about our trip.

T Okay, if you start your story with the bus as the main idea you fill it in with details once you were on the bus. This becomes a paragraph.

Cu You wrote 'It was a cold day' - (corrected the teacher)

Mindy It started out with our class or "Back in the 19th century... She laughs.

Lo 'Twas the day of January 20th...

T Very good! 'Twas is another way of writing It was.

T You could have three or four paragraphs: write about the bus ride, the lecture, the tour, and the ending. Your paragraphs would consist of the main ideas, then the details. If you have four main ideas, you'll have four paragraphs.

Ju Does it have to be about the museum?

T Very good question. You can be creative. If you want to write about a trip to Cedar Point that is fine.

Anne Can we write more than four paragraphs? T Yes.

T Don't be overly concerned about handwriting. Who has any other ideas for writing?

#### ON THE BOARD

Our Trip the L.I.G. (Lansing Ice Skating and Gymnastics Arena)  
 A Trip the Mackinaw Island Anne corrected T spelling T I'm right!  
 A Trip to Kings Island (K)  
 A Trip to Disney World (Sh)  
 A Trip to Greenfield Village (Ro)

T Does anyone know what these lines ("") mean?

An answered correctly.

The teacher has been taking suggestions for topics to write about.

MR I got the best answer...Epcot Center (enthusiastically).  
 (I asked MR when he had been there ...He's going on 2/25.)

Ju Polynesian Culture Center  
 Kathy Detroit Museum  
 Er Boblo  
 Mindy Okay, I got a question: When we write our semi-story, is it:  
 1. a question  
 2. a main idea  
 3. the details

T No, this (pointing to writing on the board) is just an outline to follow.

Mindy Can we put fiction parts in it?

T Okay, but mainly factual - so no trips to the moon. (smiles)

Lo Some people will put things that you don't want them to put so then they have to do it all over again. (I noticed she seemed upset about this.)

T You don't have to check with me about your story - just make sure it's a trip. If it's a trip that you took and you use the ideas from that trip so that it's primarily non-fictional, you won't have to do it over.

The teacher passes out the writing paper. "You don't have to put the title first."

MR Can you write about a place you are going to visit?

T No.

- T You have ten minutes until recess - either to think or write.
- D, R, P Each write their titles.
- J (to T): Should I write about the Polynesian Village?
- P (to me): There was something disgusting at Mackinac Island.
- Me Are you telling me your story
- P I don't know.
- T The people in the front of the room are off to a good start.
- MF Can we draw a picture when we are done?
- T Yes, that would be a good idea.
- Mindy I wrote the title and 'by Mindy Gaines.'
- T Boys and girls if you don't know how to spell a word leave a space for it and come back to it later.
- Kathy (looks at Mindy's paper) notes Mindy's title then looks at Mindy's barrette on her desk - begins writing: 'A Trip to Detroit'.
- T Many of you should be working a lot quieter.
- An, Me Talking; then writing - I can't hear what they're saying.
- Jo,Sh,K sitting under table in the back of the room -
- Sh How do you spell island?
- K checked for her.
- T talking to Ja
- Anne is ringing the bell for recess. K is annoyed; Who's ringing the bell?
- Anne shows the teacher her story so far.
- 11:00
- I walked into the room as the students are writing.
- T Ro, Ja get to work or you'll stay in for recess.
- An While writing, stops to look around the room.
- T Don't forget, have ideas separated into paragraphs.
- Li leans chin on desk as she writes
- Mindy shows her paper to the teacher, Is that good so far?

T Yes

T Ja go sit at the reading table because you're not concentrating.

Kathy waiting for the teacher to read her story.

Kathy (to Mindy) "Oh no, I forgot to indent for my paragraphs. She corrects this.

Er her sister came in to read a story to her.

An asks teacher about paragraph indentation.

T An, add some detail - your whole trip has been described in one paragraph.

Ro asked if 'favorite' has an 'e' at the end.

Sh, K asked me for spelling of words.

Sh is worried about indenting paragraphs.

T (to Sh) just put a mark to show me.

Ro as he writes, he talks quietly to himself.

Me (to P) How's the story coming?

P It's decent!

Ro Are you still doing the survey?

As I look around the room I infer that the students are mostly concerned with spelling and indenting paragraphs as they write their stories.

Me (to Anne) Why do you skip lines when you write?

Anne It looks neater

T is asking An questions to stimulate ideas for her story.

K showed me her story - she numbered her lines - 21 so far.

Ja (to me) So I called Ro and he asked his mother, should I put a comma - she said yes? I showed Ja to make this into 2 sentences.

Ja Okay, wait - I have a better idea.

11:17

Room is getting much noisier now.

Ro hasn't written more than one sentence in 15 minutes

T rings the bell - Time for spelling tests - you have 5 minutes.

## Chart - (Taped on board)

## A Trip to the Museum

Questions	Main Idea	Details
What happened first	We came in and talked about trip	Who? Mrs. D, Miss M, class What? talked about behavior Where? in room How? Whole class discussion
What happened next?	Got on the bus	Who? Classes (ours & Ms. K's) How? Noisy/quiet What? Did you talk about and who did you sit by?
What happened next?	Arrived at the museum	Who? tour guides met us. Where? Entrance to museum What? Took off coats, went to lecture room, passed around rocks and tools
What happened next?	We took a tour of the museum	Who? Two class and and tour guides What? Saw things from pioneer life, Saw different kinds of dino-saur bones.



Thursday, February 3  
10:07

I walked in as the teacher was discussing culture (black) with the students.

ON THE BLACKBOARD:

Introduction	Foods
-name	Church
American	-what is it like?
culture or heritage (ethnic)	Music and dance
Family traditions	People like me that I am proud of
-holidays	Special Problems
Special celebrations	
things we do as a group	
examples: Greek - baklava	

Lo Everyday we learn more about ourselves - Roots

T Most black American descendants came from Africa as slaves, were not allowed to learn to read and write- worked on plantations  
 -mentions the Winds of War - Jews were targeted  
 I want you to think about the things in peoples' backgrounds that help explain how people act and react. The Polish are having problems now. in Poland. Not allowed freedom as we have here. I want you to be aware of cultures.

Sh Offered to bring in magazine about Black history.

T Good

T The reason for Black history month is to get blacks caught up in the history books. Most books give poor information on the role of blacks in building this country and the contributions blacks have made. Also, the Indians didn't get a fair shake.

Lo I don't think Indians were treated fairly.

T Many people agree with you.

Mindy Here are some Indian legends.

T Okay, I want you to be aware of other cultures. I want you to think if you're black what it's like to be white; if you're Chinese what's it like to be Indian, etc. But, first, I want you to be aware of your own background. We're going to write about ourselves and try to identify things that are a part of our culture.

The teacher uses the chart on board. This is the introduction. I want you to do it in sentences with main ideas.

The teacher talks about holidays - How do you celebrate? What are your family traditions?

An We have hotdogs on the 4th of July and turkey on Thanksgiving.

MR Party on the 4th of July.

Me In the summertime (August) we have a family reunion in Minnesota.

T Many people in Minnesota have Swedish background

The teacher proceeds through the chart with the students. She mentioned types of music and the class became very noisy and excited. The teacher also mentioned that dance is a part of music.

T don't forget, I want you to mention in your story someone whom you are very proud of.

MR Can it be someone way back in our family? T - Yes.

An (looking at the chart on the board) What are special problems?

T Well, when I was young, I wasn't always treated right at restaurants. That was a special problem for me. Other examples would be "They won't include me in a game because I'm Chinese, Black, etc.

K, Sh (very excited) wanted to contribute to the class discussion.  
comment - that wasn't fair.

T moves to back of room

An I told my mom that I wanted to learn about famous black people so she got me a set to learn.

T Very good. I bet you learned a lot.

Lo Is it true that black people couldn't sit where they wanted at the movies?

T Yes. Many times Blacks had to sit in the balcony of a theatre.

Mindy I'm not sure if my family has special problems.

T Any question.

10:29

The teacher passes out the paper to the students.

MF Can we start?

T Yes

The room is very noisy right now; most of the students are talking.

T Boys and girls, freeze. I want you to think of the main idea and some examples. Use specific details. We will start this right after recess.  
10:32 Melt and go outside.

I will now observe the following students: Mindy, Kathy, Anne, Lo, Li, MF, P.

10:55

Li Starting to write; most of the class is still talking. "My name is Li..."

T Alright, everyone get to work.

Mindy Miss M, I don't know if I should put Iraqi American or Iraqi and Welsh American.

Kathy My name is Kathy. She is looking at the blackboard. Then, she looks at Mindy as Mindy writes her story.

MF wrote on his paper: 'Introduction'

The teacher announce to the entire class - "Don't write 'intro., name, etc. - this chart is just an outline to follow.

MF asks me if he can keep 'intro.' - I said okay.

Anne Title - "All About Me" - writing every other line for neatness. She wrote a few lines then looked up for a few seconds. She continues to write.

Lo "My name is Lolita BEard and I'm a \_\_\_\_\_." She is drawing on her eraser and hasn't written anything else. Her hand is raised. She asked me what she should write for heritage. My reply - Black American

Lo Now what do I do? I don't understand what the teacher wants us to do.

P has written a few sentences. His parents are Chinese - he uses exclamation marks in his story. 'I'm the only American in my family!'

Kathy hasn't written anything new. Drew a dot on her paper and is circling it over and over. Wrote a few words lightly and erased them. She went to talk to An; then wandered around the room.

Mindy asked me how to spell a word.

T Boys and girls, you all tell me some exciting stories so write them down on your papers.

11:12

Anne has written one side of a page; diligently working on the back sheet.

February 17, 1983  
9:55

I entered the room during a discussion about Ben Bannaker

T Here's Mindy's report notes. They aren't very neat but that's Okay. When taking notes it's acceptable. Mindy has crossed things out and drawn lines and arrows. (T walks down center aisle to show notes to students).

(K turns to me and complained of a stomachache.)

Me Yesterday, we went to the library and got four biographies on George Washington Carver? (Says this to class after being recognized and called on.)

T (enthusiastically and smiling) You'll have information overload! Sometimes there are discrepancies among different books in the information. Does anyone know what discrepancy means?

An (raises hand, T acknowledges) You mean a lot of information?

T No. (Still standing in front of room.)

Lo Useless information?

T No.

Anne I'm guessing, Okay? (T says okay to guess, if reasonable.) Information about a lot of different things?

T No. That's not it either. (Julie comes up to teacher with complaint about sore finger. T looks at it and tells her to put towel with cold water on it. Class waits)

Puts example of a discrepancy on board ... George Washington Carver resource books gave two dates for his birth date. She points out the fact that there is a discrepancy because he could only have one birth date. Points out the fact that they didn't keep accurate records then.

Talked about Ben's birth... didn't keep accurate records.

Okay, let's get started on reports.

Anne Writing pen pal letter. I told her to put it away.

Me, Kathe, K, Yo, Sh: All working in small room.

T Working in other room helping students individually.

10:05

Me & Kathy Working together on GW Carver report. Exchanging ideas. There is disharmony; arguing over who would write and who would look the information up in the book.

Mindy I'm doing Ethel Waters (talking to me).  
Me, Me, & Kathy are gonna do a play (don't tell). Well practice on Saturdays. (She's really proud). We're doing

What happened to Uncle Albert?

Me Does that have anything to do with Ethel Waters?

Mindy yes, she was a black actor (I corrected her...Actress) and I want to see what it's like to be an actress. (ON: Mindy's very interested in acting.)

K,Yo,Sh Working together, listening to tape--copying notes and copying word for word, constantly replaying tape. All writing the same things.

Sh Held up her paper to show how much she had done. Three girls argue over playing tape and when to turn it off.

On Tape- "Ben's schooldays started at 12"

K Oh, and then ended at 15.

Sh No!

K Wanna bet?

Tape - and ended at 15.

K Told ya!

Anne Reading to herself (at her sear in the back of the room). book is Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (Not happy about having to do report or about the topic of Black history. Is very sullen).

P & Ro Lying on the counter. Ro says We're putting comedy in our notes.

Me & Kathy Working in small room. Talking about their resource book and whether or not it is a biography. Kathy wasn't sure. (ON: factual book. Don't know name).

Mindy Came up to Kathy and Me. T said I could walk around since I've been working so hard.

10:20

K,Sh,Yo Still listening to tape. Sh and K still arguing over running the tape and what it says.

Mindy (Back at seat) Has been reading.

Me Mindy, what have you learned?

Mindy Ethel was a good singer. She was a thea...(couldn't pronounce theatrical--didn't know what it meant. I showed her word 'theatre'). She read her booklet and wrote as she went along. Put report in her own words.

Anne Sitting with three books on Martin Luther King on her desk.

Me What are you doing?

Anne I don't know--just resting. I've read a lot.

K,Yo,Sh Tape: Prosperous gentleman...

Me What does prosperous mean?

No one knew so I told them.

Sh Miss M. we're writing lists of words but we don't know what they mean.

10:30 RECESS. T RINGS BELL

T Alright, back to your seats. It's time for recess.

10:58

Students return from recess. Go rather noisily to their seats.

T walks in room and walks to the front.

T Okay, let's settle down. (students quiet down)  
For the next 30 minutes we will work on reading assignments. If you need help with workbook--Mindy is the buffer and she can help out.

Yo & Ju working on Apple Computer.

T (Responding to talking) Alright--you have 15 seconds for this transition. I like the way the people in the back are working.

Mindy pointing out books for Kathy and Me in the back of the room.

Ro & Ja working in workbooks - not talking.

Lo & An reading silently in books at desks.

K Asks teacher for help in workbook

MR Reading silently in independent reading book.

Er & De Walking around room. Have questions about workbook pages.

Jo working while standing up

T I like the way MR is working.

Lo & An Playing with Lo's braid

Jo Workbook page is one dealing with the Long I sound. She doesn't understand how to do the page.

Me Miss M. this is an interesting book. (Referring to Alvin's Swap Shop)

Anne Threw up her arms--I did it? She finished her workbook.

Jo Asks me for help in her workbook.

Li,De,  
MR Working quietly.

Sh Staring at reading group activity; glanced at clock.

11:15

K working with Ja in workbook.

Ro working by himself

Je (standing in corner of room) I asked her what she was working on--she was reading material from Creative Corner. She said, well I should be doing reading. She smiled. (ON: she commented on my writing all the time. She said she wrote a lot yesterday and she hurt her fingers.

Anne Working on quilt; sewing fabric.

Sh Staring at computer

T (sitting on floor meeting with reading group.) They are working on a play in their reading book-Freedom Ground. Students in group are P, Ro, MR, Lo, An.

K Standing up--talking with Ja

Ro Tracing cartoon characters.

Yo Fought with Kim over chair.

Er Asked me if she could work in hall. I said yes.

(ON: Most of the class is working quietly. Groups of two's or just individually.)

T Still working with reading group.

Rang bell- Okay, time to get ready for lunch. (Students begin moving back to seats, put things away and sit with arms folded in order to get called on for dismissal for lunch.



February 23, 1983 - Wednesday

ON BOARD: Noun - the name of a person place or thing

toes  
 potatoes / s  
 calves  
 calf-change f to ve and add es  
 fairy change y to i then add es

<u>singular</u>	<u>plural</u>	my
child	children	
foot	feet	

boys  
 keys    kies    studies    toys

9:30

T is discussing plural and singular endings to nouns in preparation for spelling assignment to be done.

- T This is what I want you to do now:
- 1) finish yesterday's spelling assignment
  - 2) do today's assignment
  - 3) work on reports - I will check them in the back of the room.

9:35

Classroom fairly quiet. T compliments Je, Yo as good workers (orally).

(ON: Focus on Anne, Me, Mindy, Kathy)

Anne (to teacher) I have finished today's assignment. I need yesterday's assignments. (Anne was absent yesterday.)

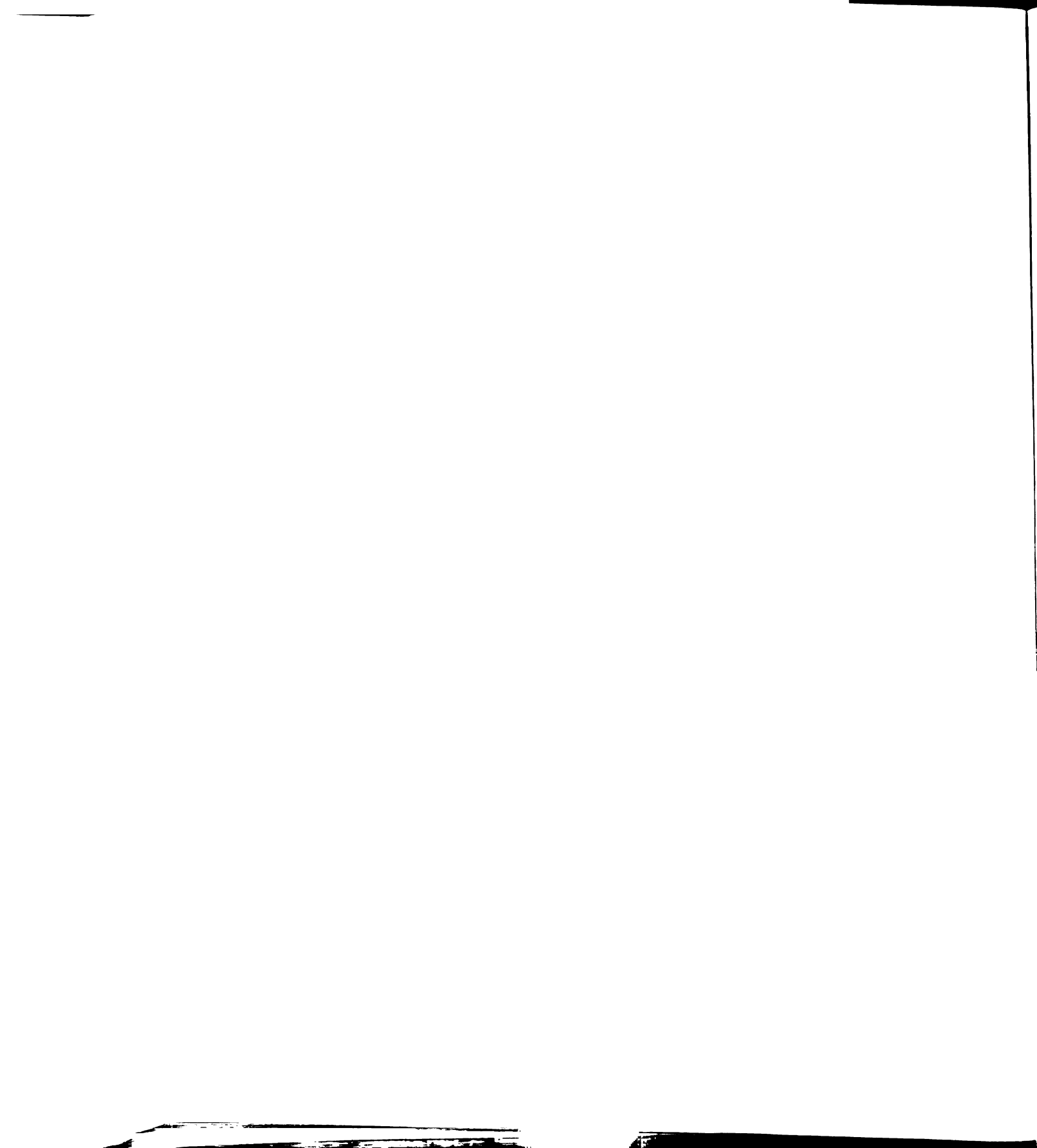
Me working on spelling sheet

Mindy working on report on Ethel Waters. Wrote title, then looked up to ceiling (left) started sentence, Ethel Waters lived an ugly childhood..

Me I asked her if she was doing her good copy? She stated that she was. She said she printed because it enabled her to gather more information, faster. She started a good copy before today but crossed out so much that she started over.

Mindy I know I won't need as much paper for my good copy because I'll write smaller and neater.

Kathy working in small room together on report.  
 & Me This is our rough draft.



Kathy We're trying to put this together but it gets messy and we forget words.

Jo working on spelling, K helping her.

Me (to Kathy) Kathy, should we put his education all in one long paragraph?

George Washington Carver didn't care about money.

Kathy Me, don't put didn't care about money yet...

(Kathy goes into big room to get biography. ON: They were trying to organize report. Me continues to read over what's written.)

Kathy (as she looks through the book) I don't believe that George Washington Carver got over 282 items from peanuts...I know the part about money is on a left hand page.

(They are still trying to locate the paragraph about Carver's lack of interest in money.)

He pays no attention to clothing either... He's weird! Oh well, I can't find it!

E comes in, wants Me in other room.

Kathy takes over writing rough draft.  
When Carver was 26 he entered Simpson Collage.  
Traces and retraces over word he.

Me comes in, reads what Kathy has written, and erases Collage.

Kathy (annoyed) What are you doing?!

Me It's ege not age.

Kathy (annoyance shows in voice) So, I still know what it means.  
Moves away and leans on counter.

Me needed to spell a word.

Kathy I'm not going to find it.  
Went to get book, couldn't find it.

Me got book.

Mindy came to see Me & Kathy. She said, with a smile, that she needed to walk some tension off.

Numbers written on paper 3  
27  
34  
35  
1  
45

I asked Kathy what the numbers are for. She and Me told me they were filmstrip pictures.

Me My mom has tickets for Treasure Island.

Jo comes into room, draws a \_\_\_\_\_ on Kathy's paper.

Kathy (annoyed) took it away, said Jo!

Me wrote on the back of paper.

Kathy I thought you said we weren't writing on the back?

Me Oh, who gives?

(ON: There is a lot of tension surrounding this exchange.)

Kathy continue writing.  
& Me

Me OK, Kathy -- you write, too -- I'm not doing the whole report.

Anne working on spelling words. Interrupted T at back of room. T asks her not to interrupt because she's working with someone else. Anne asks me about a spelling word.

10:14

she needed to unscramble words. Working on unscrambling her words; looked up at me to smile.

Mindy walks around, gets a drink of water. Actually it's not hard to copy. I think I'm doing well. (She showed me her paper -- Ethel Waters.) Do you think this is neat?

Me Yes.

Mindy I mean really!

Me Yes.

(Mindy skipped a line between paragraphs. I explained that she didn't need to do that when she indented.)

T rang bell to tell students that much of their reports should be concluding and that they would be stopping for gym in a few minutes.

Kathy Now this is the boring part.

Me What's that?

Kathy Writing down all George Washington Carver's ideas for sweet potatoes and peanuts.

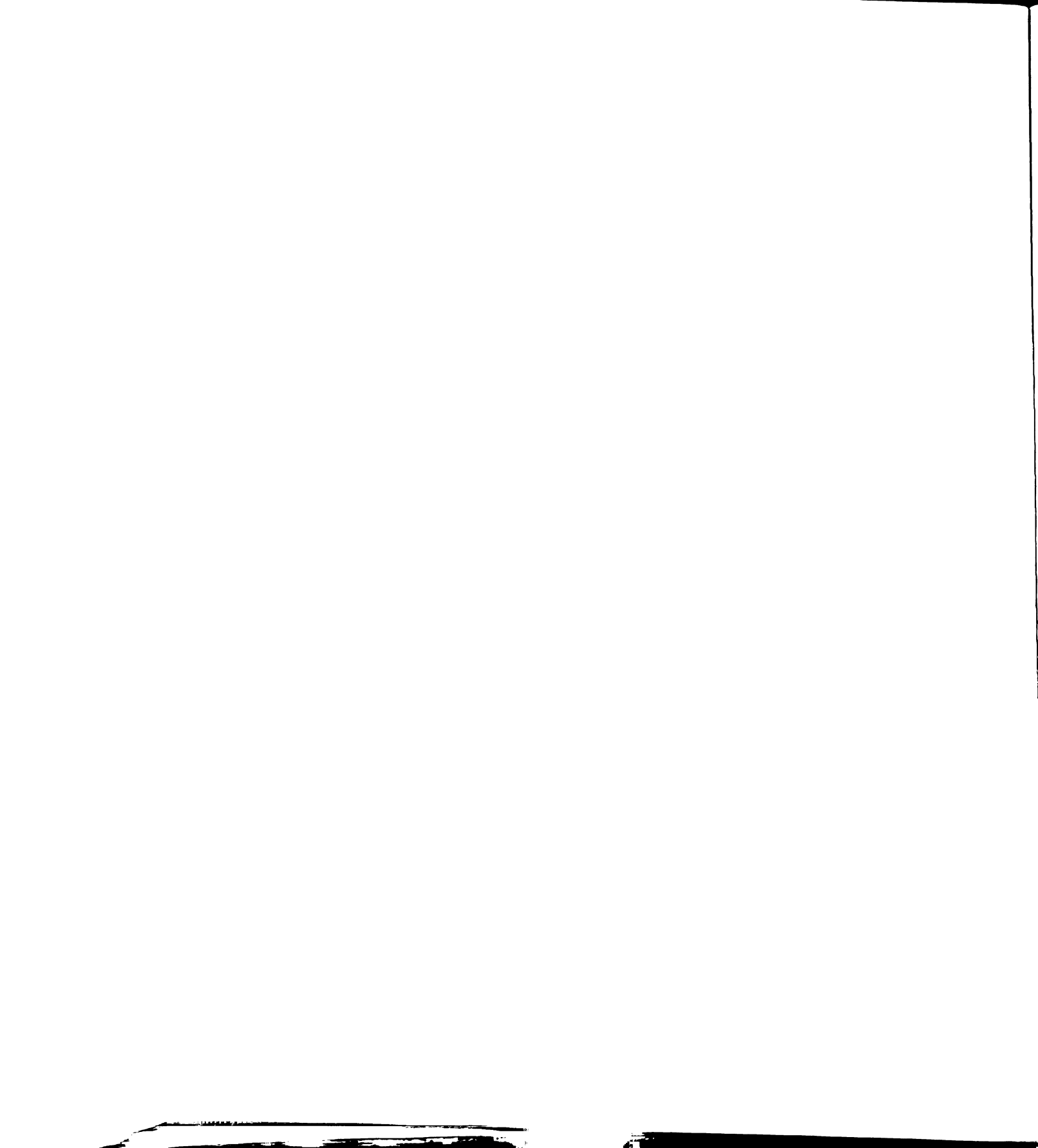
Me Well, if it's boring you can leave it out.

Kathy Well, it's interesting but it takes a long time to do. I'm finishing the rough draft and Me's starting the final copy.

10:32

T rings the bell for gym.

Mindy raised her hand.  
My book's kind of long -- oops I forgot! (to me) This is a different type of clear. (?) I don't know if I'd have time or room to copy this story over. It would take so long to change a few parts.



I explained to Mindy about making revisions -- she doesn't need to change the whole thing.

Teacher from other class came in for science materials.

Mindy Once when my cousin wrote a report she put too many " " marks and my mom couldn't figure out what she wrote.  
Mindy then continued to write.  
I can't believe tomorrow is St. Patrick's Day already.  
She continued to write. Looked up at board and flipped her notebook over. Looking back through story for the word mansion. She asked me if may-see-on was the same thing as manchian -- I think she was confused because of the spelling. When I corrected her, she said Oh, yeah, mansion looks like may-see-on. Busy writing, she glanced up at the teacher wandering around the room, then continued to write. She's sitting up straight.  
Vacant means what -- empty?

Me Yes.

Mindy Does this make sense? There were no windows in the small vacant room where grandma slept.

Me Yes.

Mindy's legs don't touch the ground in her chair so she lets them dangle and occasionally moves and kicks them back and forth.

10:00

Now Mindy has written 3/4 of a new page. Kathy is absent today so I am sitting in her desk, which is adjacent to Mindy's.

Mindy When you have a ? and ", does the ? go before the " even though this isn't a computer paper the ? might mean PRINT to someone!! (She is referring to a lesson taught about the Apple II computer and BASIC language.)  
She continues writing on next page. She looked back to previous page to see where she left off.  
I don't know how I started this but it took me just a half hour to think of this idea. Mom said I had author's block. I guess I did. Sometimes I get frustrated with the story then I put it down for a while to get re-acquainted with it.

10:07

Kathy arrived and sat down.

T talking about deciding how much text to put on each page of book.

Mindy I'm going to have to choose chapters and paragraphs!

I asked Mindy how long her story will be.





Mindy I don't know, let's see.  
 She counts pages.  
 I've got 18 pages right now. I'm not a good illustrator but... I don't know how to divide, organize my book into chapters. Like in Nancy Drew they always make you want to read more. I've read most of Nancy Drew's books. She's changed a lot. I wrote to Carolyn Keene but she died last year. I thought that would be the end of Nancy Drew books but there were some around her house.

Me getting back to organizing.

At this point, Mindy is worried about length.

Mindy I thought of writing it in chapters. I have a reason but I can't think of it. I could organize it when done, you know, but I'm not sure if I can do it. I think if I did it 2 hours at home maybe I could do it. It would be easier to arrange in chapters as I go along.  
 She continues to write.  
 Mom said it's important to get ideas down -- I'm afraid I might forget my ideas if I don't write them down right away.

Y began conversing with Mindy.

Mindy Sometimes chapters end up being very short. Once in kindergarten, I wrote a story about a princess who wanted a toy. It was very long and I guess kind of boring. Four years old I wrote the Mischevious Mouse. I couldn't pronounce it, though. My printing was big and lopsided. In summertime I wrote Bedtime Stories which is a collection of my short stories.

Y You're a good illustrator.

Mindy I don't like to draw. My mom is good at it.  
 She talked about different drawings her mom has done.  
 What do you call a card that says you own a house or something?

Me Deed.

T Remember -- think about one thing you're writing about. Don't get caught up with a lot of details. It will get too long and you'll be bogged down. You have just about five minutes to finish up for today.

Y & Je turned around to talk with me.

Mindy continues writing.

Bell rings, it is time for gym.

April 20, 1983 - Wednesday

9:50

Students finishing books/stories.

On Board:  
Choices for Assignments (?)

9:51

Anne working on her story. She is writing a good copy, glancing at scrap copy.

9:52 pencil in hand near good paper (p. 6). Using left pinky finger to hold place, writing with right hand. She is always concerned about neatness. She is erasing the word the to make the e fatter.

9:53 continues writing, looking intently at paper.

9:55 sat back in chair, stretched, and sighed. Anne asked me if she should start a new paragraph for a quotation Mother, house... (p. 6 of good copy)

9:57 Anne got up to get another sheet of paper.

9:58 Anne started talking about how she liked her new pants.

10:00 Anne left seat to talk to Sh and Y about their stories.

10:02 rearranging story pages in order.

10:03

Y came over to read Anne's poem The Circus and watch her at once illustrate it by drawing a horse.

10:04

Anne Let's see, where am I? How's your finger?... (p. 7 of good copy)

10:06 Anne is involved in discussion about tropical fish -- she has just taken a look at classroom guppies.

10:07 Anne is being very careful about her handwriting. She erases almost every six-seven words because she doesn't think they're neat enough. On page five of scrap copy, Anne asks me if was or were -- I told her since more than one wolf, were. Also talked about plural of wolf -- wolves, not wolfs.  
Gosh, I was just thinking about the part of the story that doesn't make sense.

Me Why not?

Anne I wrote a part that mother told Joy a story and wanted her to pass it down. It doesn't make sense to me.

Me If it doesn't make sense, why leave it in?

Anne I don't know, I may take it out.

10:15 Page six of scrap copy -- Anne putting \*\*\* where she wants to put a new paragraph. She'd now sitting back further in her chair with fingers to chin.

10:18 Anne told me the plot (she didn't use this word) to her story. She smiled. She seemed pleased with herself.

10:20 Anne currently working on finishing chapter three of The Sad Story.

10:22

T FREEZE  
Class had increased the noise level.  
I don't want to hear I'm starting over -- you all know how to write stories.

10:25

Anne using folder half to block out outside distractions (cubby hole). Looking around the room, she sighed and then said she was tired.

10:27 reading sentences aloud as she writes. She is sitting back in chair, hands at sides, pauses for eight seconds.

10:29

Sh came up to me and wanted to read me her story.

10:30

Anne I read Sh's story because I'm doing her illustrations.

10:32 Anne continues to copy from scrap paper.

10:33

T rings bell for gym class.

## APPENDIX D

### TEACHER JOURNAL (EXCERPTS)

Teacher's Journal

March 4, 1983

Began the morning planning to have s's do reading in texts & catch up on assignments. We began the morning with announcements - Mandy had this - calling on students to share. Jodi and Julie had lots to talk about because they had been to the circus the night before. This generated a lot of discussion and excitement. Some students wanted to know where they could get tickets.

After announcements we had silent Reading or Reports (on Black Americans) and I suggested that some students might want to work on their books. Several students in fact many opted to work on their stories. I wanted to help students as they wrote and ~~some~~ several asked me if I'd read their

3/4  
selections that they'd written the far - Audrey, Mary and Kathy. Mandy wanted to talk to me in private and waited until the others had asked their questions or had their problems settled before talking to me about her story. I sat at my desk while she stood. She expressed concern that she wasn't pleased with her story. She said she wanted to start over. I read it. It was ~~so~~ an adventure story about a family that had traveled and ended up in a volcano and managed to survive. She stated that it wasn't right. She had trouble explaining why but she thought that she wanted to start over. I finally got out of her

Teacher's Journal 3/8

Began today thinking about questions that I might ask author Sheila Roberts that are related to writing. I really want to make good use of her time so that I can be better writer. Thought about having her talk to kids about her structure but don't want to overcomplicate it because it may stop that because if they the creative flow of the story are so programmed that they're not thinking about the story. I thought about her parts of the story. I thought about paragraph. Talking about the mechanics but that's more than the of writing more than the substance of writing. Decided to focus thinking about this

3/4 (cont.)  
 fact that all the things that happened up to the time the family got to the volcano was realistic but going into the volcano and surviving was not realistic. She wanted to start over. I told her it was alright. ~~She wanted~~ that she might suggest that I suggest what I want to use. Her how story she'd written in her how story and that she should keep it, she then wondered if she could take story home and work on it. I told her she could but not to write the whole thing.

3/8 (cont.)

and to ask the kids what they wanted help on. Began the morning with Anna taking the opening. Several students had announcements to make. Jeff showed her souvenirs from the circus.

I wanted to get spelling in before 9:30 December 8th was coming to take field notes on student writing. Students would begin writing in journals because they haven't engaged in unassigned writing in a long time. I'd also like to see how their thinking has changed from the first part of school and now. I also want the students to get back to their story writing. I sense they are eager to write so I'm

3/8 (cont.)

trying to encourage this. Their attitude has really changed since my fall towards writing. It may be too that I've given them choice about what to write about. They seem much more eager to write. Also they know they'll be decorating & making a card cover for the book.

Students did spelling - then I asked them if they had any questions or ideas of things to ask Sheila Roberts the author. I put up the chart about story structure and asked if they had question about parts of the story as explained in the story structure.








## APPENDIX E

### STUDENT WRITING SAMPLES

MINDY'S JOURNAL






## Code

Great day -  Terrible day - Good day - Punct - Medium day - Boring day - Bad day - 

Read this page - \*

Do not mark this page - ©

## Weather

Sunny - Blue sky - Snowy - Hot - Cloudy - Raining - P. it  
sunny - Very snowy - Cold - warm - 

March 15,

I hear the  
were doing  
books in school.  
I'm writing a  
book about a kidnap  
case. One of my  
characters name is I  
Jassie, what a name  
a real author came  
on March 29, 11  
her name is Sheila  
Roberts she judged  
my book and  
said I put to  
much detail in it  
Megan has a piano  
book that has  
duets for commercials  
I like to sing a  
sort of commercial  
Wuhaw dog died March  
13, her dog so cute,  
it makes me want  
to cry so hard

# The Massian in the night mystery

ChI Tassie woke up wearily.  
She dreaded Friday  
mornings because after  
school Tassie's mom and dgd  
always go away one weekend  
of the month and this was  
the weekend of March that  
they were going to Traverse  
City for the weekend.

Tassie had to go over to  
her gradmas house after  
school and for the weekend  
Tassie hated it there always  
because grandma always  
would just sit around  
the house and knitt or  
crochet but Tassie knew  
she had to go. So ~~can~~

~~Tassie got out of bed got  
dressed took her book~~

after Tassie <sup>dressed</sup> <sup>had gotten</sup> ran downstairs for  
breakfast Tassie who  
was 8 years old made <sup>her</sup>  
breakfast <sup>accidentally</sup> she did her hair  
and ran out to the bus.  
The day was a very

(2)

~~long day for Tassie,~~  
~~At lunch time~~ ~~sate~~  
~~and sat down with~~  
~~her friends and talked~~  
~~with~~ ~~Tassie's teacher~~  
~~Mrs. Longing~~ ~~lived near~~  
~~Tassie so Tassie saw her~~  
~~teacher at class sometimes.~~  
~~After~~ ~~in this way~~  
~~home with her friend~~  
~~Jane.~~ Tassie stompered  
 "I don't want to go to  
 grandmas house it  
 boring there" Jane quickly  
 said "I got to go bye  
 bye see ya Monday"  
 When Tassie got  
 home to grandmas she  
 moaned "Oh grandma  
 wait you play a game  
 with me" but grandma  
 answered as usual "No  
 I have to fix your  
 snail then I want to  
 sit and croquet on the  
 porch"

Tassie's  
 teacher was  
 a good friend  
 of Tassie's

## Jobs for Children

Dear Editor,

I am upset about children not being able to work at a regular job. Children should be able to work for somebody and get paid. Kids can learn how to copy on the copy machine or be a messenger for secretaries.

My reason is that we don't get paid much except work at home or just doing chores.

I feel kids should learn what it's like to work at a real job. They would work a little after school or on the weekends. I hope it can be worked out.

Signed

sombody Engaged in learning  
Mindy

## Different People

If somebody has a different colour skin it doesn't necessarily mean they're different. People are very different in some way but yet so much the same. Different colours, religions or skin is a part of people. If people were the same it would be dull because they would all believe same and we wouldn't have the chance to hear about how people are different. Some people fight about it because they don't then so believe the same things.

# Code

Super day



Good day



Medium day



Bad day



Read



Dark Mark



Look at the end for ends

medium weather - +

cold - ☁

Windy - ~~~

Sunny - ☀

Private - X

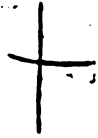
Super bad day - ☹

In between a good and super day 5



KATHY'S JOURNAL

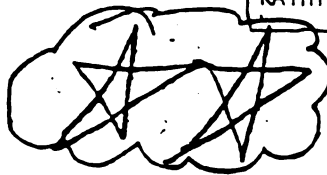
March 15, 1911



I know its a long time until August but here I go again counting until we go to Camp Dearborn. I keep thinking about it because we weren't going to go this year but now we are. We are going the 13<sup>th</sup> of August until the 27<sup>th</sup>. I'm going to think about it so much, but I don't want to because I wish I was there. And now Barbey Myers wants to have a Camp Dearborn club. Barbey's family has come up before I had to make membership cards. I can't write anymore or tell lie because I'm not there.

KATHY'S JOURNAL

April 4, 1983



I am so happy today because yesterday when I was walking home me and Megan had planned to play but Megan got mud on her pants. The reason Megan got her pants muddy because I broke ice and made some dirt into mud. For that reason she didn't play with me but today we are friends and she is playing with today. Anyway she probably couldn't play yesterday because I had soccer practice.

## The Girls <sup>①</sup> Haunted Meeting

① In 1984 there was a new school being built in New York. Everyone in New York city was glad that some people would be moved to the new school, but except for eight girls. The reason the girls were upset was because they would have to be split up, 4 at one school and 4 at the other school. The reason that this was ~~such a big deal~~ to them was that they were in a club that everyone in ~~the~~ <sup>their</sup> school knew about. They held a short meeting everyday at recess. There were two leaders, Megan, and Kristen. Both leaders would be sent to a different school and they were best friends. Megan knew her new school would be pretty with flowers all the way around

②

the school. The playground would be neat and the school itself would have nice big windows to let in fresh air. Megan didn't want to go to a new school away from Kristen and 3 other girls.

All of the girls were also upset because they wanted to have one big club and not two small clubs and they didn't have time to do it on weekends or after school. So they knew they had to stop the club. <sup>(C.1)</sup>


<sup>(C.2)</sup> School had started and the girls were more upset than ever because of their teachers. The teachers were not <sup>(+)</sup> so mean but when someone did even a little thing wrong they got too crabby. <sup>(-)</sup>

One day Kristen got a letter

## More Time For Lunch

Dear Editor,  
Children that go to School really need more time to eat lunch. When it is quiet enough to call rooms for hot lunch, the lunch people don't call rooms. By the time they call all four it's time to go outside. If children are not done and eat a little longer the lunch lady tells us we have two more minutes. Half of the lunches end up in the trash.



From, Kathy



 = Great day No peeking



 = Very Good day No peeking

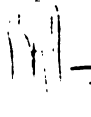

 = Good day  = Scary day



 = Medium day  = You may read

 = Not Bad day  = Cool day


 = Not on day  = Do not Mark

 = I don't know day  =

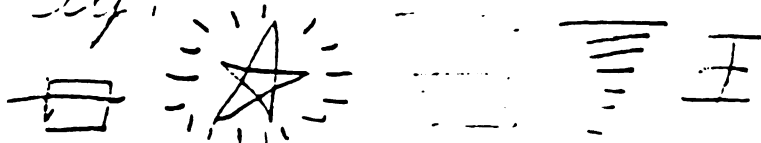
 = Rainy day  = Windy day

 = Sunny day  = Just right

 = cold day  = warm day

 = Snowy day

They said very good, (I usually don't change by myself.) And of school after they changed, I forgot today was Friday and wrote my thesis. (half a page). So Monday I shall have to write half a page! Nothing else happened to me today.



2-26-33

Today I got up at 5:30 and got dressed and went downstairs with to watch T.V. I had a bathing suit under my clothes and it was very uncomfortable, because we have swimming lessons at 9:30. My teacher's name is Jone. I have swimming twice,





you see, normally we  
 would have it for  
 1 hour. But my mom  
 payed twice the price,  
 so we swim for two  
 hours, there's 1 hour  
 and we get out take a  
 shower and get back  
 in for a second hour.  
 And then we wash  
 with soap and sham-  
 poo and stuff and go  
 home for lunch. But  
 today we didn't have  
 lunch! We had to go  
 to Ann Arbor to look  
 at a camp, it was re-  
 musty with mud.  
 When we were travel-  
 ing home it was very  
 dark, on the way there  
 to Ann Arbor we got chi-  
 li, we fell asleep. When  
 I woke I found we w-  
 ere at Ponderosa. There w-

as a long line there  
 we finally got a tray  
 and found a table.  
 Then we went home  
 and I played Violin,  
 Piano, and Cary did  
 Chinese and Piano.

P.S. There was  
 two boys in the  
 girls' locker room.

3-8-83

Today is "Good", Just good,  
 not any better not any  
 worse. I came to the  
 morning, the morning was  
 normal. Then when the after-  
 noon Kim, Tiffaney, and  
 Shalanda were making up  
 gross things and I couldn't  
 help laughing. Mrs. Lyland  
 said she was proud of me,  
 Anna, and Lolita to be able

④



DRAFT OF ANNE'S STORY  
MIDDLE 3 OF 12 PAGES

## Chapter 2 The Boring Day

The next morning they woke went to have breakfast with their friends at door. Then they went to Disney world. But it was raining so the characters didn't come out and Joy was very upset. Even though Joy was ~~was~~ nine she felt sorry for herself. She got a little popcorn a few souvenirs and went back for lunch. Then Joy took an half an hour nap and colored till dinner time, ate dinner and went to bed at camp.

⑤

At night she had a terrible dream that a wolf came to camp and bit her mother's finger off before they could escape together into the woods. When they came back, her dad said (it was not available) to her mother yet. The time probably wouldn't be till morning and came to her mother's room. "Mother how's your finger?" "What finger?" "Oh! I must of been dreaming, I didn't think there was any ~~wolf~~ around here!" "No wonder I heard you scream," said mother. ~~the old lady,~~ "joy, come here."

wolves

⑥

mother ~~the~~ said & Joy?   
 Joy ~~the~~ asked: "Well I have   
 a story to tell you."   
 a ~~little bit~~, said mom.   
 & So little by little Joy   
 came to her mother's   
 arms. "Well once, sit   
 down Joy. Well once   
 upon a time there were   
 wolves around here   
 in people killing and   
 killing until there were   
 no people to kill any   
 more. But then many very   
 strong warriors came and   
 killed many of the wolves.   
 They killed many   
 wolves every day.   
 Soon the wolf was   
 extinct. So the gover-   
 nment began protecting   
 them. Oh mom why   
 did you hear that? Joy

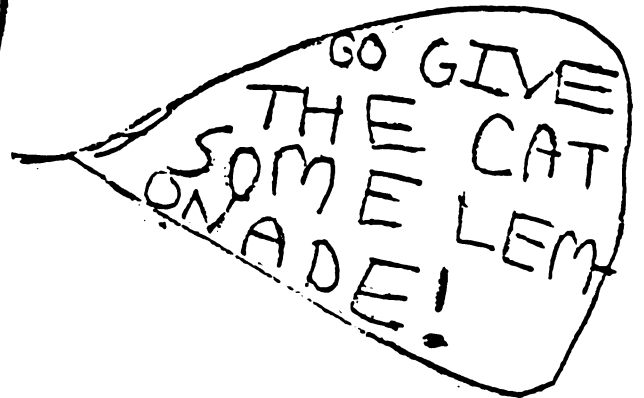
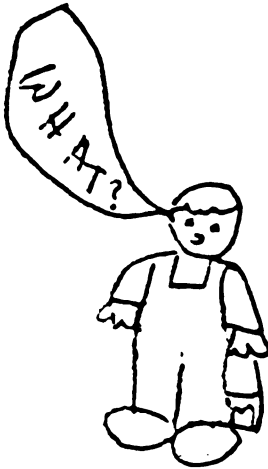
⑦

asked: "From my mother  
please pass it down if  
you have children."

So Joy agreed to pass  
it down. But when she began  
to cry. Her mother went  
out of her room and  
Joy cried and cried until  
she fell asleep.

CARTOON FOR CLASS NEWSPAPER

# Mr. Kitch feeds a cat



3



4



by Anne

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