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Jolene Reed

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**AN INVESTIGATION OF THE ROLE OF GUIDED READING IN PROFICIENT
FIRST GRADE READER'S IN-SCHOOL WRITING**

BY

JOLENE B. REED

B.S. of Elementary Education, Brigham Young University, 1979

M.A. of Elementary Education, University of New Mexico, 1997

A Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

LANGUAGE, LITERACY, AND SOCIOCULTURAL STUDIES

in the Graduate School of

The University of New Mexico

College of Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies

December 2011

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BACHELOR OF SCIENCE

MASTER OF ARTS

DOCTORATE OF PHILOSOPHY

ABSTRACT

This participant observation research study explored relationships between the role of guided reading and in-school writing of three proficient first-grade literacy learners during the first eight months of the 2007-08 school-year. Portraits of each student as a literacy learner were developed through case studies. Those individual case studies were then analyzed for themes in a cross-case analysis. Data were collected regarding text encountered during the guided reading sessions that occurred in the classroom and also in the form of writing artifacts produced by the three students during the writing workshop portion of their school day. Additional data collected included student interviews (both formal and informal), and formal interviews with parents/guardians of the three participants. Three areas of specific interest included

student views of what constituted a written composition, student development of orthography, and the student use of literary language.

Findings regarding the student view of what constituted a written composition included student experimentation with various forms of writing including a listing of facts on a given topic and personal narratives. Over the course of the study, all students developed intrinsic reasons for writing that were unique to the individual student. Regarding orthography, each student entered first-grade having already developed many complex understandings of English orthography. The specific spelling patterns and specific words negotiated by each of the three students varied according to the individual student. The final area of observation was the student use of literary language. All three students incorporated elements of literary language into their personal writing prior to the time that same literary language was encountered by them in their guided reading lessons.

Implications included that classrooms need to strike a balance between the structuring of time for literacy instruction and freedom given to students regarding topics of interest and genre of writing. Also, understanding and valuing the various journeys traveled by literacy learners needs to become a focus of professional development provided to classroom teachers.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Eric (all names in this work are pseudonyms) approached the small table quietly. His shoulders were hunched forward slightly and his eyes moved in quick, darting movements between the table in front of him and the floor. I smiled as he approached, but his eyes moved quickly away from mine. His path of movement toward the table required that he walk past where I sat, but he made no visual signs that acknowledged my presence. As he came near, I reached out my hand and placed it gently on his shoulder. He stepped slightly to the side, causing my hand to fall. I began talking—introducing myself and explaining to him how his teacher had told me about some wonderful things that he was doing in his reading and writing. It was then that he made prolonged eye contact with me for the first time. His look was puzzled, as if he found my statement difficult to believe, but he made no comment. I asked his permission to sit and listen as he and his teacher worked together. Eric nodded his approval.

His teacher joined us at this point. She touched his shoulder and smiled at him as he looked up at her. A reassured expression crossed his face and the two of them sat at the table. For the next ten minutes, Eric read three short books aloud to his teacher while I sat a short distance away and recorded some of his reading behaviors on a yellow legal pad.

Eric was a first-grade student who had been placed in Reading Recovery (Clay 1993), an early intervention for first grade students who are having difficulty learning to read and write. Reading Recovery operates on the premise that students who get off to a

slower beginning in literacy development need accelerated instruction that will catch them up to the average band of the their class. A specially trained teacher accomplishes acceleration in Reading Recovery through one-on-one tutoring for thirty minutes of daily reading and writing instruction. The goal is for the Reading Recovery student to make accelerated gains in reading and writing during a relatively short (usually 12-20 weeks) period of time (Clay, 1993).

Eric's Reading Recovery teacher telephoned me the previous day to express concerns that she had regarding Eric's reading. She had been working with Eric for approximately four weeks, but felt she had not observed any progress in his literacy development. As the Reading Recovery Teacher Leader and K-5 Literacy Coordinator for the district, one of my responsibilities was to support Eric's teacher in her efforts teach him to read and write.

In our conversation prior to Eric's entry into the room, his teacher expressed frustration with his inconsistent performance in reading text. She stated that she found it difficult to determine exactly what Eric did and did not understand in reading. She further commented that he appeared to have an excellent memory for text. This memory for the repeated textual patterns that he heard during the book introduction allowed him to perform well on text that was simple, predictable, and patterned with supportive illustrations. His teacher expounded on the observation by saying that Eric experienced difficulty when she asked him to read text that was simple and predictable, but *unpatterned*. Reading unpatterned text requires the reader to attend more closely to the visual information of the printed text. Eric's substitutions when reading unpatterned text were always meaningful and followed the storyline, but he did not appear to be using the

high-frequency words that he could write or the beginning letters in words to self-monitor and self-correct his incorrect reading.

As Eric read his short books, I observed the same behaviors his teacher had described. The books he read were comprised of simple, repetitive texts and Eric's reading sounded phrased and fluent. The tonal quality of his voice contained the inflection of a reader. He was "talking like a book" (Clay, 1991, p. 77). But then he began doing something I found extremely interesting. He began reading rapidly—albeit accurately—quickly turning the pages of his book. I leaned in for a closer look and kept my gaze focused on his eyes. As he turned each page, his eyes stared steadfastly at the picture, never moving to concentrate on the print. What his teacher described in our conversation prior to Eric's reading lesson came back to my mind. She described him as having a good memory for the text, but not appearing to monitor his reading with words that he knew. I realized that he could not visually monitor what he was not looking at. I also wondered if Eric realized that it was the print and not the pictures that were to be read (Barr, Blachowicz, & Wogman-Sadow, 1995, p.24).

I continued to watch as Eric and his teacher proceeded to the writing portion of their lesson. They engaged in a brief conversation where Eric described events of the prior evening when his grandmother helped him make a kite. After a short dialogue, Eric's teacher suggested that they write about a brief part of the conversation. Eric generated the sentence that he wanted to write: "Me and my sister and my grandma made our kites." He opened his writing journal, selected a purple marker as a writing instrument and began writing. For the next ten minutes I was mesmerized as the teacher and student worked together to record Eric's message. Eric's eyes rarely left the page

while the two of them were writing. I was fascinated as I watched Eric's total involvement with print as he produced his story on the blank page in front of him. Eric wrote the first three words independently. He articulated and recorded the /s/ and /r/ in "sister". (The notation of a letter between slash marks such as /s/ denotes that the child articulated the sound. Notation of a letter in brackets such as <s> indicates that the name of the letter was spoken.) His teacher supplied what Eric was unable to record. In "grandma", Eric said that he could hear a <g> and an <m>. Again his teacher wrote the parts that Eric did not state that he could hear. When he came to "made", Eric quickly and silently wrote "m", "a", and "d". His teacher placed the silent letter "e" at the end. For "our", Eric repeated the word and placed a solitary "r" on the paper. His teacher supplied the missing "o" and "u". Eric sounded /k/ as he wrote the "k" in "kites". His teacher finished the word.

Eric's teacher quickly wrote his sentence on a narrow strip of paper and then cut the words of the sentence apart. She asked Eric to reassemble the cut-up words to reformulate the sentence. Eric looked attentively at the small pieces of paper in front of him and began selecting each word needed to reconstruct his sentence. He quickly located "me", "and", and "my", placing them in the correct order. As Eric searched for each remaining word, he first stated the word softly and then began sounding the initial letter as his eyes attentively moved from one word to another until the word beginning with the correct letter was located. This process continued until his entire sentence was reconstructed. He completed the task independently. Not once did he appeal to his teacher for assistance.

I sat in my chair, spellbound by what just occurred. This child, identified by teachers as a struggling literacy learner, read three books with only minimal engagement of the print with his eyes. However, Eric's apparent passive approach toward print in the books changed to total involvement with print as he engaged in the writing task. During both the writing process and the reassembly of the cut-up sentence, Eric demonstrated that he was capable of monitoring and searching print for the high-frequency words that he had written independently as well as the initial letters of words.

Statement of the Problem

The *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act* was signed into law on January 8, 2002 by President George W. Bush. This act redefined the federal role of education in the United States by mandating the closure of educational achievement gaps between disadvantaged minority students and their peers (US Department of Education, 2002). The implementation of NCLB has resulted in large monetary awards being bestowed to schools through the Reading First initiative in an effort to reduce the number of children who, based on mandatory state testing, are not successful in their early endeavors in learning to read. Many public school educators feel that schools that fail in their endeavors to consistently meet the state mandated Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) of student performance on the state assessment are punitively designated as being in need of improvement.

The pressure imposed on schools to increase student performance often causes decision makers in school districts to seek out, purchase, and implement a "one size fits all" solution to improve student reading performance. Currently many publishers of reading programs tout their wares as being just such a solution. However, such programs

traditionally teach reading and writing as separate processes. This negates the opportunity for teachers to strengthen literacy instruction by capitalizing on the reciprocity of the two processes.

Observing Eric and his teacher work together as well as studying many other students throughout my career as a classroom teacher and reading specialist has helped me to realize that literacy instruction can be greatly improved through the intertwining of the reciprocal processes of writing and reading. I have often pondered how that interweaving of understanding occurs in a child's mind. If educators can gain a greater understanding of how these two processes mutually support and influence each other, then they can better utilize what children know and understand in one process to support classroom instruction in the other.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify the ways in which a child's understanding about each of these individual processes influences the child's knowledge of the other process. Specific attention was focused on how children incorporated what they are learning about print through their early attempts at reading into their early writing endeavors. Attention was also centered on how they utilized what they were learning in writing to support their early attempts at reading. My intent during this study was not to look for the existence of causal relationships in students' emerging reading and writing development. Rather, my focus was to consider the influence that each individual process has upon the other.

Research Questions

The overarching question that guided this research study was: How do the written artifacts produced by the emerging literacy learner change as the learner encounters increasingly more difficult text during classroom guided reading sessions?

Specific supporting questions that I found missing in the literature regarding the reciprocity that occurs during the reading and writing acquisition of emerging literacy learners included:

1. How did the child's view of what constituted a written composition change over time as that child encountered leveled text of increasing difficulty during guided reading instruction?
2. How did the emergent literacy learner's use of orthography in recording written language change over time as the child encountered text of increasing difficulty and containing more complex orthography during guided reading instruction?
3. What relationships exist between literary language encountered by the proficient emerging literacy learner in reading and the corresponding literary language used in that students' writing?

Definitions

Leveled text is defined as text with an increasing level of difficulty that reflects an increasing gradient of challenge for the reader. This increasing difficulty is defined by a continuum of characteristics that include consideration of various factors such as length, size and layout of print, vocabulary and concepts, language structure, text structure and genre, predictability and pattern of language, and support provided by the illustrations (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, p. 113-114).

Peterson (1991) explains that:

Describing the characteristics of books at each level is virtually an impossible task. One reason is that the best books are creative works, so there are many variations in style within a level. However, it is possible, as well as more useful to describe shifts along a continuum (p. 134).

Peterson describes the shifts that occur along that continuum as follows:

Levels 1-4

- consistent placement of print
- repetition of 1-2 sentence patterns (1-2 word changes)
- oral language structures
- familiar objects and actions
- illustrations provide high support

Levels 5-8

- repetition of 2-3 sentence patterns (phrases may change)
- opening, closing sentences vary
- or, varied simple sentence patterns
- predominantly oral language structures
- many familiar objects and actions
- illustrations provide moderate-high support

Levels 9-12

- repetition of 3 or more sentence patterns
- or, varied sentence patterns (repeated phrases or refrains)
- blend of oral and written language structures

- or, fantastic happenings in framework of familiar experiences
- illustrations provide moderate support

Levels 13-15

- varied sentence patterns (may have repeated phrases or refrains)
- or, repeated patterns in cumulative form
- written language structures
- oral structures appear in dialogue
- conventional story; literary language
- specialized vocabulary for some topics
- illustrations provide low-moderate support

Levels 16-20

- elaborated episodes and events
- extended descriptions
- links to familiar stories
- literary language
- unusual, challenging vocabulary
- illustrations provide low support

(Peterson, 1991, pp. 128-135)

Literary language will be defined as written language utilized by text in a way that differs from speech patterns encountered in oral language. What is considered literary language may vary from child to child and is specific to the emerging reader's dialect and personal background experiences. Examples of literary language include but are not limited to the incorporation of textual beginnings, use of dialogue and placement

of dialogue carriers, as well as complex sentence structures that include independent and dependent clauses and descriptive modifiers. The following examples are taken from children's text and illustrate use of words in textual language patterns that differ from the conversational patterns of a child's oral language.

Textual beginnings:

- "Once upon a time, a kind shoemaker and his wife lived above their little shoe shop" (Giles, 1998, p.3).
- "A mouse once found a wishing well" (Lobel, 1972, p.8).
- "One moonlit night a giant turtle came out of the sea" (Schaefer, 1996, p.3).

Placement of dialogue carriers:

- "Tim said, 'Can I play with you? I like playing soccer'" (Giles, 1997, p.4).
- "I'm all right, Mom,' said Tom, 'but Poppa fell off the ladder'" (Randell, 1997, p.14).
- "Can I play with you?' she asked" (Riley, 1995, p.3).

Complex sentence structures using independent clauses:

- "They rode down the hill as fast as they could, but the sky grew blacker and blacker" (Smith, 1998, p.8).
- "They had leaves to eat and water to drink, and life was good again" (Price, 1998, p.16).
- "Herman wanted to walk past the garden, but the pig wanted to stop" (Evelyn, 1999, p.12).

Complex sentence structures using dependent clauses:

- “As soon as he did, he saw the same two bumps” (Lobel, 1975, p.24).
- “But when he looked for his money, it was gone!” (Blokberg, 1999, p.7).
- “When everyone had gone home that night, Grandma and I sat on the porch swing together” (Polacco, 2002, p.28).

For purposes of this study, a proficient literacy learner will be defined as a student viewed by his/her teacher as one who is making adequate progress in their literacy acquisition process. Further, they are learners that demonstrate that progress as measured by the student’s reading of the leveled text in the Developmental Reading Assessment (Beaver, 1997). Characteristics of an emerging literacy learner include:

Emerging Readers:

- Become aware of print
- Read orally matching word by word
- Use meaning and language in simple text
- Hear sounds in words
- Recognize name and some letters
- Use information from pictures
- Connect words with names
- Notice and use spaces between words
- Read orally
- Match one spoken word to one printed word while reading 1 or 2 lines of text
- Use spaces and some visual information to check on reading

- Know names of some alphabet letters
- Know some letter-sound relationships
- Read left to right
- Recognize a few high frequency words

Emerging Writers:

- Write name left to right
- Write alphabet letters with increasingly accurate letter formation
- Hear and represent some consonant sounds at beginning and ends of words
- Use some letter names in the construction of words
- Sometimes use spaces to separate words or attempted words
- Label drawings
- Establish a relationship between print and pictures
- Remember message represented with letters or words
- Write many words phonetically
- Write a few easy words accurately
- Communicate meaning in drawings

(Adapted from Fountas & Pinnell, 2000, p. 26)

Significance of the Study

The joint position statement issued by the International Reading Association and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (1998) states:

Learning to read and write is critical to a child's success in school and later in life. One of the best predictors of whether a child will function

competently in school and go on to contribute actively in our increasingly literate society is the level to which the child progresses in reading and writing. Although reading and writing abilities continue to develop throughout the life span, the early childhood years—from birth through age 8—are the most important period for literacy development (p. 4).

Most children entering school are successful in their endeavors at learning to read and write. However, experienced teachers know that literacy learning goes wrong for some students during their early years of classroom instruction. Some students have difficulty in orchestrating their knowledge of print and how it works. These students require extra attention in learning to read and write.

My work in my present employment primarily targets concerns that arise when struggling literacy learners are encountering difficulty in learning to read and write. It is my view that one way to help struggling students attain proficiency may be found in understanding how students viewed as proficient become literate. For that reason, this study will look specifically at relationships between the emerging reading and writing processes of emerging literacy learners that are viewed as making proficient progress in their literacy acquisition development.

Positionality

I am currently employed as the Reading Recovery Teacher Leader and K-5 Literacy Coordinator for the district in which my research will be conducted. For three years my office was located at the elementary school where I collected data. As a result, a working rapport had developed between myself and the faculty and staff employed at the site. While my presence on the campus was not viewed as unusual, I was at times viewed

as someone from *the district* by teachers. If a teacher was displeased by a particular district directive or mandate, or wished to have clarification on specific procedures or policies, I was often viewed as someone who could be easily accessed for the purpose of voicing concerns or asking for explanations.

Although a generally positive working relationship existed between the staff of the campus where the research occurred and myself, I was aware that as I collected data my role as a district-level employee could affect my observations and data collection. I was aware that some participants—specifically the teacher in whose classroom I collected data—might at times feel that particular statements or answers to certain questions would need to be couched in cautious language due to my role as a district administrator.

Theoretical Stance

I also find it necessary to examine and identify my personal beliefs regarding literacy instruction in order to examine my self-awareness and identity as a researcher. I believe reading to be a socio-psycholinguistic process that involves a transaction between the reader and the text that occurs within both situational and social environments (Weaver, 2002, p. 26). These situational and social contexts combine to activate the reader's schemas and impact how the reader understands the text. Learning to read involves more than an understanding of the alphabetic relationship between letters and sounds. It also incorporates the reader's previous experiences that are brought to the task and help the reader to make meaning from the text, as well as other social interactions that occur within a literate environment.

I believe the reading and writing processes to be highly complex—both as individual processes as well as in their reciprocal and social nature. I do not view either process to be linear as in what is considered to be a bottom-to-top (phonemic awareness, phonetic decoding or encoding) process, or a top-to-bottom (recognition of the whole word prior to noticing individual parts) process. Rather, I view the literacy acquisition process as constantly moving on multi-dimensional social and experiential planes. Successful students are constantly constructing understandings that are not explicitly taught, but occur due to personal understandings and interactions with teachers and with written text. Teachers support student learning through social interaction as the *more knowledgeable other* (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86) and by providing the text material and opportunities for students to gain new understandings as well as deepen existing understandings of what is familiar or partially known.

I do not believe that there are any easy answers, quick fixes, or one-size-fits-all methods of delivery of literacy instruction. Teachers cannot be viewed as technicians delivering pre-packaged literacy programs, but rather should be viewed as professionals with the expertise to make moment-by-moment decisions regarding what is specifically needed by their individual students (Shannon, 1989). For this reason, teachers need the ability for proficient and rapid decision-making similar to that needed by trial attorneys and emergency room doctors (Schwartz, 2005).

Delimitations

This study was confined to a sample of three students from one first-grade classroom in one southwestern school district. It examined a very narrow portion of the reading and writing experiences that the students encountered. The participants interacted

with written text in many other ways and in many other parts of the school day that were not included in the study. For example, the role of texts read aloud by the teacher for the students' enjoyment or texts read for enjoyment by the students was not included.

Writing done by the participants during times other than the writing workshop portion of the day was not studied. While some information regarding the role of home literacy experiences was gathered, it was not a primary focus of the study. The study also did not examine the role of the participant's oral language development and use during the reading and writing processes.

Chapter II

Review of Related Literature

The majority of the literature available on the development of the emerging literacy process separates that process into two distinct occurrences—one of learning how to read and another of learning how to write. While the role of reciprocity between the reading and writing processes has long been well-recognized and discussed as it occurs after the child has learned to read and write (Calkins, 1983, 1991; Langer, 2002; Langer & Applebee, 1987; Smith, 1988), few researchers have studied and reported on the interrelationships occurring between the dual processes while they are still emerging.

The development of literacy acquisition in the emerging literacy learner is a highly complex process that is influenced by multiple facets of learning. In order to fully appreciate the intertwining of these processes in the emerging literacy learner, a brief review of how children learn to read and write is needed. However, the processes of learning to read and write are so heavily linked to the child's oral language development as well as the social and contextual implications of literacy acquisition that these topics must first be discussed.

Role of Oral Language

An important part of the background information that emerging literacy learners bring to the task of learning to read is that of their oral language development. The relationship between oral language development and the reading acquisition process of the emerging literacy learner is well documented in the literature (Clay, 1991, 2001; Dorn & Soffos, 2001; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Smith, 1997). A child entering elementary

school and embarking on the challenge of early literacy acquisition already possesses an amazing wealth of knowledge about how language is utilized for communicative processes in their personal command of oral language patterns (Clay, 1991; Halliday, 1975). It is important for teachers to understand the essential role that oral language development plays in the emerging literacy acquisition process. Lindfors (1987) explains that:

Children's control of the structure of their language, largely mastered by the time they come to kindergarten, is basic to all their learning. Their understanding of what they hear and what they read, and their ability to express what they know in speech and in writing, depends in no small part on their knowledge of the relationships between expression and meaning in their language (p.2).

She further emphasizes that it is important for adults who work with children to understand that "The child's knowledge of language structure lives at an unconscious level, an intuitive level. The young child *does* language; he does not talk about language or reflect upon it in a conscious way" (p. 4). As children learn language they somehow manage to internalize a vast array of grammatical rules that allow the meaningful production of an unlimited amount of oral rule-governed utterances (Genishi & Dyson, 1984, p. 9).

The potential of this meaningful production of language was discussed by Halliday (1975). He describes the child's learning of language as being driven by the child's need to make meaning. Halliday states that the multiple functions of language that the child learns to control gives the child access to a system that "has a massive potential;

in fact it is open-ended, in that it can create indefinitely many meanings and indefinitely many sentences and clauses and phrases and words for the expression of these meanings” (p. 36).

Genishi and Dyson (1984) describe this “massive potential” of the emerging literacy learner as being comprised of two types of competence. The first is described as a “*linguistic competence*, the unconscious knowledge of phonological, syntactic, and semantic rules; and *communicative competence*, the knowledge that language is used differently in different situations” (p. 21). The emerging reader utilizes these two competencies of oral language development as the basis for the anticipation and prediction that occurs as they begin to read written text.

According to Clay (1991), it is imperative that literacy instruction not neglect the complex understanding that the child has constructed regarding language and its use. Rather, teachers should utilize the child’s oral language as a basis for extending the child’s awareness into the written forms of language. Early attempts at learning to read are most successful when the child can rely on personal oral language patterns as a foundation for anticipating and predicting what is encountered in written text. This is because the child can anticipate what s/he is able to orally produce (p.89). However, as written text increases in difficulty, it incorporates literary language that differs from oral language patterns. If the child has not incorporated an awareness of this textual literary language, the use of literary language in text can make prediction more difficult for the emerging literacy learner.

Clay (1991) asserts that if the literary language encountered in text varies significantly from the language patterns that are familiar to the child, the child may find

the process of learning to read difficult and laborious. For this reason, it is important that children learn to “talk like a book” (p.78). “Talking like a book” is evidenced when a child who is not yet reading conventionally sits with an open book and “reads” the story using the tonal inflection of a reader and incorporating phrases of literary language found in text such as “Once upon a time” or “Down came the spider”. According to Clay (1991) this child is beginning to acquire “a feeling for the kinds of language that s/he can expect to find in books” (p.73). The child is also demonstrating knowledge that books at times use language in ways that differ from oral language. Learning to read is facilitated by this familiarity with book language because the emerging reader identifies with and is able to feel a personal affinity with the way language is utilized by books (Holdaway, 1979). Clay further elaborates on this concept by explaining that “The child with rich experience of books will have greater understanding of bookish forms of language and more motivation to master the art of reading” (1991, p. 82).

Learning to read requires the child to utilize the visual information that his/her eyes perceive on the printed page in tandem with the intuitive knowledge of the semantics and syntax of oral and written language. The student begins to analyze the relationship between the printed symbols written on a page of text and the structure of their oral language. Associations begin to form between what is being produced orally and the shapes that are printed in the text (Clay, 1991, p. 95).

Social and Contextual Influences

Traditionally, published programs that are designed to teach young children to read emphasize a view of reading defined as the correct pronunciation of individual words. This emphasis on correct pronunciation reflects an assumption that the reader’s

ultimate goal is one of accurate word calling. It is believed that if the words are pronounced correctly and if the reader knows the meaning of each individual word, then the reader will be able to comprehend the meaning intended to be conveyed by the text. Proponents of this definition, then, purport that the meaning of the text as a whole will emerge from the combined meaning of the individual words (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000).

This belief is challenged by many prominent reading researchers (Clay, 1991, 2001; Goodman and Goodman, 1994; Smith, 1988, 1997; Weaver, 2002). These experts assert that the goal of the reading process is for the reader to ascertain meaning from text. They further maintain that meaning occurs as the result of interplay between the printed words on the page and the mind of the reader. Weaver (2002) gives as an example the sentence, "It was a long run"(p. 16). She explains that the meaning of this sentence cannot be gathered from the words of the sentence alone. The sentence could be referring to the running of a marathon, a run in a woman's hose, the duration of a theatrical play, or a place intended for a dog's exercise at a kennel. The specific meaning of the sentence is dependent on the context or situation in which it occurs.

Weaver (2002) further elaborates by pointing out that context of the words in text is not enough to guarantee understanding on the part of the reader. She explains that the reader must have an appropriate mental schema. A schema is a mentally organized body of knowledge relating to specific experiences or content. These schemas develop through an individual's experiences and interactions. If the appropriate schema does not exist, meaning-making will not occur. Using the above example of "a long run", Weaver completes her illustration by stating that a child unfamiliar with the concept of a dog run

would not understand their parent's statement, "Our dog will have a long run at the boarding kennel" (p. 16). Weaver concludes her discussion on the relationship between schema and meaning by stating that, "Bizarre as it sounds, we are able to grasp the meanings of individual words only when we see how they interrelate with each other. Thus, meaning arises from whole to part more than from part to whole" (p. 17).

Rosenblatt (1994) explains that when the readers encounter text they have emotional reactions that are based on their previous experiences and schema. She defines these emotional reactions with the text as "transactions". She further describes reading as an interaction occurring along a continuum that ranges between efferent and aesthetic stances by the reader. The meaning that the reader takes from the task is dependent on where the reader is located along this continuum. A reader whose purpose is solely one of gaining information would gather different information from text than a reader whose purpose is primarily one of entertainment. Goodman (1994) builds on Rosenblatt's transactional theory by pointing out that the reader's schema continues to broaden and develop each time these transactions with the text occur.

Simultaneously interplaying with the child's contextual schema are the field and tenor with which a message is delivered (Matthiessen & Halliday, 1997). Field refers to the contextual or social setting in which language interchange occurs. Dialogue occurring among friends can carry inferred meanings that differ from the same language utilized in a different social setting. The question, "Can you locate New Mexico on the map?" when asked by a friend indicates a genuine request that seeks a "yes" or "no" answer, perhaps followed by a locating action. The identical question asked in the classroom by a teacher

to a student is in reality not an inquiry, but rather a command mandating a definitive locating response by the student.

The tenor, or pragmatic relationship between the message sender and receiver, also impacts the connotation that accompanies messages containing similar surface-level information. Two statements such as, “I’d like you to feed the cat.” and “Feed the cat.” contain comparable surface-level meanings. However, their deep-structure meanings are vastly different (Dorn & Soffos, 2005; Smith, 1997). Both sentences want the message receiver to feed the cat, but while one requests the action to occur, the other commands it to happen.

Whitmore, Martens, Goodman, and Owocki (2004, 2005) discuss the tension that exists between what they describe as the literacy learner’s personal constructions of literacy knowledge or inventions and society’s construction of socially agreed upon uses of literacy or conventions. They postulate that:

The social conventions of language keep these inventive forces in check and establish mutually comprehensible symbol systems in order for people to share meanings. As they develop, young children who want to be active literacy participants in their families and social groups, alter their inventions toward the conventions of their significant communities, taking into consideration the features of their culture’s written language system in order to read and write like others. Thus, the concept of invention embodies the notion that children construct their literacy within a societal frame (2004, p. 294).

Whitmore et al. (2004, 2005) view literacy acquisition as occurring along a continuum that includes three types of experiences that impact the understanding of an

emerging literacy learner. These three types of experiences are shown in Figure 1 and recognize that literacy learning is a combination of individual experiences, social experiences, and experiences resulting from cultural practices.

Case Studies	Clinical Qualitative Studies	Classroom Process Studies	Home, Community and School Ethnographic Studies
Literacy is Individual		Literacy is Social	Literacy is a Cultural Practice
Children simultaneously develop as readers, writers, and meaning makers from birth.		The social community influences meaning construction.	All families are literate.
Children personally invent written language.		Children construct and represent meaning through multiple symbol systems.	Identity positions are part of literacy development.
Children refine their use of written language through experience.		Play is a particular symbol system especially relevant to young children's literacy development.	Cultural tools are part of literacy development.

Figure 1. Continuum of methods and critical early literacy lessons. (Whitmore, 2004, p. 296)

While Whitmore et al. concede that the line drawn between these differing categories is not easily drawn, they suggest that each category provides a specific lens for examining data related to young literacy learners. They further expound on these critical lessons as follows:

Literacy is individual.

- Children simultaneously develop as readers, writers, and meaning makers from birth. Even children who schools label as “at-risk” students are engaged in literacy tasks long before they enter school classrooms. By the time children enter first grade they have already formulated personal understandings of how literacy works. The authors conclude that “making meaning from written text is one of the first steps in literacy development, rather than one of the last steps” (2005, p. 299).
- Children personally invent written language. Young learners experiment with recording written messages and in so doing often utilize spellings of words that “more closely resemble the distinctions linguists make than the distinctions used in the conventional writing system” (2005, p. 299).
- Children refine their written language through experience. As children write they are focusing on the multi-dimensional processes that composing involves more than they are on the final product.

Literacy is social.

- The social community influences meaning construction. The emerging literacy learner’s interpretation of printed text is elaborated upon by peers and teachers in the classroom setting. Through the social interaction of the classroom, the young learner’s personal understanding of how words work and how meaning is constructed is deepened and refined.
- Children construct and represent meaning through multiple symbol systems. In order to become literate, children need to be able to orchestrate

a variety of sign symbols. These other ways of understanding symbols include understanding of art, music, mathematics, and drama.

- Play is a particular symbol system that is especially relevant to young children's literacy development. "Play provides a safe testing ground that maintains the dynamic tension between invention and convention" (2005, p. 302).

Literacy is a cultural practice.

- All families are literate. All families use literacy for a multitude of purposes. However, the literate activities of some homes may not fit the mainstream expectations of the classroom and, therefore, may not be viewed as valuable.
- Identity positions are part of literacy development. "Children embody their cultural, racial, linguistic, class, labor, ideological, and gendered positions in their early literacy activities. Many must negotiate the culture of the mainstream, dominant society in order to succeed in school" (2005, pp. 303-304).
- Cultural tools are part of literacy development. Whitmore et al. state that "children use tools such as popular culture and narrative to situate themselves socially and textually and to mediate their environments" (2005, p. 304). They further explain that "This vision of multimodal competence expands the transactional view of literacy to include new media texts such as Pokemon cards and video games as locations where identity, culture, literacy, and learning intersect" (2005, pp. 304-305).

Whitmore et al. conclude by stating that “although children bring unique literacy histories from their specific communities, they all come to school with the same intellectual potential for literacy” (2005, p. 305). They further remind us that “children need to value and be valued for who they are and where they come from. They need to control their own literacy processes” (2005, p. 305).

Literacy acquisition involves tasks that are both cognitive and social in nature (Dorn & Soffos, 2001b, p. 2). The cognitive tasks include the conventions or mechanics of reading and writing print. It is these cognitive tasks that are most often discussed and emphasized in traditional views of teaching both reading and writing. The cognitive aspects of literacy acquisition become the focus of instruction in skills-based or back-to-basics reading instruction which is based on mastery of letter/sound associations and reading by decoding words into individual sounds and then blending sounds to formulate words (Adams, 1990).

The relevance of social aspects of literacy acquisition is often minimized or even neglected in the skills-based approach to literacy instruction. Social aspects include the accessing of previous knowledge or schema and related emotional reactions. Because no two children enter the learning environment with an identical set of previous experiences, there can be no single predetermined sequence in which all children learn to read and write. Clay (1998) compares the journey children take in learning literacy to following a path and explains that there are many different paths that lead to literacy acquisition. Children do not all travel the same path and there is no single path that is better than any other.

Dyson (2003) describes the early literacy experiences of young children by stating that they “will not be moving along a linear pathway but negotiating an expanding social landscape” (Dyson, 2003, p. 13). This landscape that children must negotiate incorporates not only the classroom of the school system, but also the physical environment and social experiences encountered by the student in their world outside of the classroom. Because no two students have identical experiences outside of the classroom, the landscapes that they must maneuver in their learning processes cannot be one and the same. Dyson further explains that these landscapes for children’s literacy learning are never static, but rather constantly transforming in their dynamics as social situations, expectations, and challenges change.

The child’s social landscape also includes his/her meaningful interactions with parents, teachers, and other students (Gundlach, McLane, Stott, & McNamee, 1985). Children learn to become meaningful literacy learners from these individuals who serve as “more knowledgeable others” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). It is through the child’s multiple social interactions with many *knowledgeable others* as well as experiences with numerous texts that literacy learners encounter opportunities that enhance the construction of their personal understanding of how print works (Schickedanz, 1990, p.109).

Children currently entering the school system are increasingly varied in their backgrounds, experiences and abilities. Kindergarten classrooms today might include students who have previously experienced rich formal preschool instruction as well as those who may be just beginning to experience and acquire basic literacy knowledge and skills. The joint position statement issued by the International Reading Association and

the National Association for the Education of Young children (1998) states that “Diversity is to be expected and embraced, but it can be overwhelming when teachers are expected to produce uniform outcomes for all, with no account taken of the initial range in abilities, experiences, interests, and personalities of individual children” (p. 5).

The way in which a child interprets, assimilates, and incorporates information from their social landscape of interaction with significant others has an immeasurable impact on his/her perception of the relationship between oral and printed text. Some of the earliest experiences a young child encounters regarding the differences between the conversational use of language and the literary use of language in text occurs as parents read stories aloud to their children. Through listening to text read aloud, the child is exposed aurally to patterns of language that vary from the patterns of conversational language. Over time, children develop an understanding that words and language are utilized differently in daily conversation than they are used in written text (Holdaway, 1970). Exposure to such language patterns occurs repeatedly over time as the child hears multiple rereadings of favorite and familiar stories as well as new and novel texts. The read aloud experience leaves those textual literary patterns of language hanging in the air and in the child’s memory, allowing them to be accessed and utilized at a later time as s/he begins reading independently and creating their own written text (Cazden, 2001, p. 96).

In summary, there are a variety of social and situational factors that contribute to the development of a young child’s understanding of how printed text operates. The way that a child thinks about and interacts with print is influenced by both past and present interactions within his/her environment. The child’s wide variety of social experiences

joins together, interweaving to formulate numerous schemas that can be accessed during the literacy acquisition journey. The child needs regular and active interaction with both oral language and written text. The emerging literacy learner combines these sources of information and formulates understandings that are then stored in a multitude of social schemas to formulate a personal perception of and approach to literacy tasks. The child accesses and utilizes these personal schemas to construct their own theory of how words work.

It is the child's early experiences that formulate their assumptions and expectations about how literacy works. These same social experiences also provide motivation for learning to read and write. Superior classroom instruction builds on the knowledge and experience individual students bring with them (International Reading Association, National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1998, p. 6).

Learning to Read

Some prominent reading researchers (Adams, 1990; Ehri, 1994; Samuels, 1994) postulate that learning to read entails a linear process beginning first with the development of phonemic awareness, learning letters and sounds, blending those sounds into words, and finally incorporating words into the phrases, sentences, and paragraphs that comprise written text. In their view, obtaining meaning from the text is a result of the above combinations. Adams writes that:

...when reading for comprehension, skilled readers tend to look at each individual word and to process its component letters quite thoroughly. The other aspect of skilled readers' performance that is underscored by this research is the

remarkable ease and speed with which they achieve such letter-based word recognition... (p. 102).

Stanovich (1991) describes this word recognition process as “the central subprocess of the complex act of reading” and suggests that “developing skill at recognizing words is the major detriment of reading ability in the early grades” (p. 442).

This view of learning to read implies that readers begin by combining sounds of individual letters to form words with the end result of accurately calling out words in the order that they have been printed across a page of text. Proponents of this linear view of the reading process propose that meaning is gathered by the reader from the text as a direct result of accurate word-by-word reading. This theory of reading operates on the assumption that correct word identification precedes comprehension in the reading process. If the reader grasps the meanings of the individual words, s/he will then be able to comprehend the meaning of the larger piece of text.

Kaye (2003, 2006), however, found in her study of second-grade readers that the proficient reader’s analysis of unknown words in text was much more varied and complex than searching letter by letter. She observed 21 students at three points of time over the course of their second-grade year of school. In her examination of 2,539 miscues in student reading, proficient students never analyzed an unknown word phoneme by phoneme. Instead, analysis of the miscues made by the students that she followed revealed more than 60 unique methods of word analysis by the student at the point of difficulty in reading. The most common type of miscue made by the students was the meaningful substitution of another word (2006, p. 51). This type of miscue implies that the student was utilizing sources of information at the point of difficulty other than

merely the printed letters on the page. They were, in addition, searching with what they knew would make sense as they concurrently searched the graphophonic information of the printed text.

Studies that occurred as early as the 1970's had similar findings. Weber (1970) found that the most common words misread by the first-grade children she studied were meaningful substitutions. Substitutions may not have maintained the meaning intended by the author, however, the passage read usually maintained meaning up to the point of the error. Her findings substantiated that meaning and syntax were important sources of information utilized by emerging literacy learners in addition to the visual information of the printed text. Biemiller (1970) had similar results on the first-grade children that he studied. He concluded that once first-grade students realized that some type of interaction with the printed text was a requirement of reading substitutions primarily consisted of words that were both meaningful and also were graphically similar to the printed word.

Based on studies of first-grade readers, Gibson and Levin (1975) stated that 90% of substitution miscues by students maintained the meaning of the text up to the point where the miscue occurred and also were graphically similar to the word that was intended to be read. They also observed that proficient readers reread to correct miscues if that miscue caused further reading of the text to become nonsensical (p. 332). Gibson & Levin further state that as the emerging literacy learner becomes more proficient, s/he becomes more efficient at their reading attempts. "As his economy of processing increases, so does the child become more aware of what he is doing, how he is controlling his own intellectual processes in an autoregulatory fashion. He is learning, in short, how to learn on his own" (p. 86).

The “skills-based” view of reading instruction is also disputed by the authors of a joint position statement issued by the International Reading Association and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (1998). These authors state that:

Teaching practices associated with outdated views of literacy development and/or learning theories are still prevalent in many classrooms. Such practices include extensive whole-group instruction and intensive drill and practice on isolated skills for groups or individuals. These practices [are] not particularly effective for primary-grade children (p.5).

In contrast to a linear view of learning to read is the multi-faceted and complex view presented by Clay (2001). She describes the complexity of reading as :

...a message-getting, problem-solving activity which increases in power and flexibility the more it is practiced and it is complex because 1) within the directional constraints of written language attention to 2) verbal and 3) perceptual behaviours [sic] is 4) purposefully directed 5) in some integrated way 6) to the problem of extracting a sequence of cues from a text 7) to yield a meaningful and specific communication (p. 102).

Clay (1993) acknowledges the importance of the student’s attention to visual information in learning to read. She states that, “The child must learn to attend to the details in print, respecting the rules of direction, the order or sequences of letters, and the order of words” (p. 23). However, Clay (1991) also emphasizes the existence and complexity of multiple sources of information involved in learning to read by stating:

...there are many strategies which a novice reader can initiate to problem-solve the challenges of new texts. The reader uses understandings of what can

happen in the world (meaning) and language knowledge (of words, structures and sound sequences) and several approaches to phonological information from oral and written sources. He mediates the appropriateness of possible responses through attention to visual information (p. 292).

Goodman (1994) depicts this mediation of visual information as a sampling of “just that information that will be most productive and useful” (p. 1122).

The multitude of information that the reader must attend to during the reading process is described in more detail by Jones (1997).

At any moment, a reader of any level of proficiency must keep in mind story meaning, sentence meaning, sentence syntax, and some metacognitive awareness of fit, while simultaneously perceiving and identifying words, word-parts, and punctuation marks...for the mature reader they [these processes] operate so automatically that they continue without conscious control and often appear effortless (p. 175).

This complexity of multiple sources of information utilized by emerging readers helps to explain how emerging readers can read text-containing words that might not be readable if presented as words in isolation. Emerging readers who are just beginning to notice initial letters of words can make predictions of what unknown words might be by thinking of something that would make sense as well as begin with the initial letter of the word. For example, if a book contained simple repetitive text with supportive illustrations and the reader came to the word *rabbit* with the corresponding picture showing a rabbit, the reader should be able to predict the word *rabbit* instead of alternatives such as *bunny* based on the initial letter of the unknown word. The reader does not necessarily need to

have the ability to read the word “rabbit” in isolation. Smith (1997) describes it as a paradox that “...because we are concentrating on meaning, we have the best chance of getting individual words right...” (p. 101). It is for this reason, he states, that “Readers must bring meaning *to* print rather than expect to receive meaning *from* it” (p. 58).

Smith’s statement is corroborated by Clay’s (1991) declaration that “Meaning is the most important source of information”. She supports her assertion by further stating that “The most important test for the child to make is ‘Does it make sense?’ because if it does not then there is clearly some more reading work to be done by the reader until it does!” (p. 292).

In this section I have presented two views of what occurs during the reading process. I subscribe to the latter view that reading is a complex meaning-making process. The emerging literacy learner is tentative in his/her efforts of utilizing multiple sources of information as s/he constructs a personal understanding of printed text. As the emerging reader is developing this awareness of the intricacies of text, links are made between the child’s oral language, schema, and surroundings. As the child gets better at making and understanding these links, the child looks for more opportunities to engage in problem-solving activities. As Clay (2005) summarizes, “Challenged by texts children discover new ways to go beyond their current operating power and lift their literacy processing across a lifetime” (p.3).

Learning to Write

Educators recognize that oral language, reading, and writing are highly complex and interwoven communicative processes that cannot be examined separately from each other. Most languages contain two modes of communication—oral and written. Each of

these modes of communication is, in turn, comprised of a receptive and an expressive language process. Oral language consists of listening and speaking. Listening is a receptive process and requires the language user to hear and decode an aural message. Conversely, speaking is an expressive process that requires the language user to encode an aural message intended to be received and decoded by another language user. The written mode of communication is comprised of the reading and writing processes. Reading is a receptive process that requires the language user to see and decode a printed message. Writing is an expressive process. The language user is required to encode a message intended to be received and visually decoded by another language user (DeStefano, 1978).

DeStefano (1978) referred to these processes (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) as communicative competencies that cannot be examined separately from each other. DeStefano explains that this is because development in any single communicative competency cannot occur without simultaneously impacting the remaining competencies. For example, progress in the child's ability to express himself orally would also benefit his ability to perform in listening, reading, and writing. Exposure to complex literary language in text will increase a child's ability to express himself verbally as those novel language structures are incorporated into use in oral language. Subsequent attempts at self-expression in writing will, in turn, incorporate that more complex literary language.

Early writing.

Dyson's (1982) research on early writing suggests that children begin their attempts at exploring the production of written language by scribbling. Between the ages of three and six, the scribbling gradually develops both into the drawing of objects that

are familiar to the child as well as into formations comprised of lines that are of linear and horizontal orientation and are characteristic of print. Gradually the curved shapes and lines of the child's first writing become more refined and letter-like in nature and eventually approximations of letters and actual letters are written. Children may *read* what they have written through the use of invented text.

Often a child's first attempts at writing include or are comprised of their own drawings. Frequently these are embedded within the framework of elaborate narratives provided by the child. In this case, the child *writes* by illustrating the event and narrates the message or story intended for the listener (Dyson, 1985, p.88).

Children also utilize other techniques of creating their first writing samples. These may include copying words from their physical environment or labeling drawings with names or titles. These labels and titles are often not spelled conventionally and often the accompanying messages that the child *reads* do not correlate conventionally with what the child has written (Dyson, 1985, p. 98). The spacing between words that is utilized in conventional writing may or may not be evident (Dyson, 1985, p.116).

The specific development of emerging writers seems to be unique for individual learners. Clay (1975) analyzed writing samples of children who ranged in age from four to seven and did not find any significant evidence that a child's writing development evolved through any set sequence or stage. She did, however, find that two essential features of children's writing emerged. She refers to these features as the flexibility principal and the generating principal.

Clay describes the flexibility principal by stating that "Children experiment with letter forms, creating a variety of new symbols by repositioning them. They explore the

limits within which each letter form may be varied and still retain its identity” (1998, p. 142). As children interact with individual letters in writing, they are learning which features of the letter are salient. They discover that specific features of the letter can be altered and still have the letter retain its identity. Altering other features can cause the letter to become a non-letter or an entirely different letter.

Clay explains the generating principal by stating that, “From the alphabet you can generate the dictionary. From the grammar you can construct all sentences in the language” (1998, p.142). Children begin generating “words” in their early attempts at writing by experimenting with the placement of letters in multiple and varied rather than set sequences.

Composing messages.

In composing written text, the emerging author works to convey a meaningful message to his/her reader. Lindfors (1987) describes the writing process as a means of allowing the child to “encounter and shape his [or her] own ideas” (p. 9). Askew (2003) states that the desire to convey a meaningful message to the reader is the essence of the writer’s intent. This writing process is as complex as its counterpart in reading. First, the writer must formulate a thought or message to be conveyed and then put together an appropriate series of words that will convey the desired message. While holding the desired message in his/her head, the writer works to encode the message into print that can be later read. In order to be successful, the writer must have a well-orchestrated program for holding the desired message in his/her working memory long enough to transcribe those thoughts onto paper (Clay, 1993, p.28).

The child is able to notice details about print as they write that might be overlooked during reading. This is because the very act of writing occurs at a much slower rate than any of the other communicative processes. According to Skandalaris (1998) speaking can occur at a rate of 200-300 words per minute and still be understood by the intended listener. While reading can also occur at a rate of 200-300 words per minute, legible handwriting occurs at the rate of approximately twenty-five words per minute (p. 102). The result of this slowed-down process is that students can attend more closely to the details of the printed text as they record their message.

DeFord (1991) explains that the construction of written messages helps children to notice things about print that they might not have noticed as they read because writing occurs at a much slower rate than does reading. She states that:

when young children write, the reading/writing process is conveniently slowed down; to form messages and print, children must work on a variety of levels. They have to think about what they want to say, what they hear and how to represent it, what they expect to see if they can't hear it and it doesn't look right, where they are in their message, and how they can make their message clear to other readers" (p. 86).

Clay (2002) further expounds on how the emergent writer is forced to more closely attend to print while writing by explaining that:

As a reader he may ignore some of the information in print and lean upon the anchor points of the information he knows. In writing, however, there is no other way to write than letter-by-letter, one after the other; it is an analytical activity which takes words apart. He may omit letters, or use substitutes for the

ones in orthodox spelling, but he is forced by the nature of the task to act analytically on print when he is writing (p. 20).

Orthography.

One of the challenges the emerging literacy learner faces in writing a message for an intended recipient is deciding how to represent the orthography of unknown words. Adults are often puzzled by the child's choice of letters utilized to record individual phonemes in words. However, an analysis of the child's choice of letters can offer insights into what they child might actually be hearing. Wilde (1997) describes relationships that occur between English alphabetic sounds that could explain what otherwise might appear to be random recordings of letters by emerging literacy learners. She divides the sounds of consonants into categories of stops, fricatives, affricates, and nasals.

Stops are consonants whose sound is formed by completely closing off the stream of breath in the mouth. The sound represented by these letters cannot be made in isolation. Rather, articulation of their corresponding sound must include the sound of a vowel immediately following the sound represented by that consonant. Stops include the sounds represented by the letters "b", "d", "g", "k", "p", and "t". Each of these consonants has a corresponding letter in this same category whose sound is made by identical placement of the lips, tongue, and mouth. The difference in the corresponding sound results from movement in the vocal cords. We refer to a sound requiring movement of the vocal cords as being voiced and a sound requiring no movement in the vocal cords as being unvoiced. Wilde (1997) illustrates the resulting paradigm in Table 1.

voiced	unvoiced
/b/	/p/
/d/	/t/
/g/	/k/

Table 1 Stops

Sounds categorized as fricatives occur as friction is created in the mouth. These include sounds represented by the letters “f”, “s”, “v”, and “z”. They also include the two /th/ sounds that are heard at the beginning of *thy* and *thigh* as well as /sh/ and its closely related sound of /zh/ (as heard in *azure*). Again, each sound in this category correlates with another sound created through identical placement of the mouth, tongue, and lips; the difference is whether or not the vocal cords are in motion. The resulting relationships between sounds are shown in Table 2.

voiced	unvoiced
/v/	/f/
/z/	/s/
/th/y	/th/igh
a/z/ure	/sh/ip

Table 2 Fricatives

Affricates are created through a combination of closing off the stream of breath and creating friction in the mouth. This group includes /ch/ and /j/. The mouth, tongue, and lips are placed in identical locations and formations in order to create the two sounds.

The difference in sounds is a result of whether or not the vocal cords are placed in movement and are displayed in Table 3.

voiced	unvoiced
/j/	/ch/

Table 3 Affricates

The last category of sounds to consider for comparison is the nasals. Nasals are produced when the mouth is closed off, forcing the air to go out the nasal cavity. Nasals include sounds represented by the letters “m”, “n”, and /ng/ (as in “ring”). Each of these sounds is created by placing the mouth, lips, and tongue in the same position as a corresponding set of sounds in the “stops” category as illustrated by Table 4.

voiced	unvoiced	nasal
/b/	/p/	/m/
/d/	/t/	/n/
/g/	/k/	/ng/

Table 4 Stops and Nasals (Wilde, 1997, pp. 8-14)

Understanding the relative similarity in how voiced and unvoiced sounds are created and recognizing that adults have had a lifetime to develop an awareness of the difference between similar sounds helps in understanding why a child might write the word “butter” as “budr”. Some children have not yet learned to distinguish between the similar sounds of /t/ and /d/. They hear a /d/ in the middle of the word and record it.

Read (1971, 1986) explains additional anomalies such as “jragin” for “dragon” and “chrie” for “try”. Substitutions of /jɹ/ for /dɹ/ or /chr/ for /tɹ/ often appear in the writing of emergent learners. Both pairs of blends are articulated in the same part of the

mouth. Some young children have not yet developed an awareness of the slight differences in the sounds. They are, in fact, recording what they hear. Read (1971) concludes that:

Considering the abstract nature of children's invented spellings, we find that phonemic accuracy in pedagogical spellings may be an inappropriate goal.

The question is really deeper: which phonetic facts are relevant in the child's own phonological system as he begins to read and write? (p.175).

Read (1971) admonishes adults who work with emerging writers that "Perhaps as a result of knowledge of this [orthographic] system, most adults do not recognize these phonetic relations; they have to learn, or re-learn, them in order to understand the children's judgments" (pp.175-176).

Some parents and educators discourage the use of children's *invented* spelling arguing that it contributes to poor spelling in later years. Invented spelling refers to a beginning writer's recording of words according to phonemes as s/he might hear them rather than the use of conventional spelling. However, both Chomsky (1979) and Clarke (1988) maintain that the child's use of invented spelling may contribute to their literacy acquisition process. The child's process of analysis utilized in the slow articulation of words as well as in listening and recording letters for corresponding phonemes encourages active reflection on letter-sound relationships.

Clarke (1988) found in her study on the use of invented spelling in emerging literacy learners that those children who were encouraged to utilize invented (as opposed to traditional) spelling when writing had developed greater skill in word analysis in both spelling and reading by the second half of their first-grade year at school. She further

found that it was the children, initially regarded as low-achieving, who accounted for the greatest gains in both reading and spelling when encouraged to use invented spelling as they wrote.

Chomsky (1979) promotes the use of invented spelling in children's writing by describing it as a *creative endeavor*. She states that children using invented spelling figure out for themselves the relationships between letters and sounds as well as the left to right serial order in which they occur in words as they attempt to express themselves in writing (p. 46). Children using invented spellings are not limited in the message that they wish to create. Rather, they discover that they have the means to record whatever they wish to say. They are practicing word analysis and phonetic relationships before they have learned to read (p. 47). Chomsky recommends that:

children be taught to read by beginning with writing. This reversal of the usual order of instruction allows children to practice with the more concrete activities of word composition before they undertake the relatively abstract task of reading. It provides the background information that they will need in a particularly active and functional way (p. 64).

Gentry and Gillet (1993) maintain that the child's process of learning complexity in spelling patterns correlates closely to the same process utilized as the child learns to develop complexity in oral speech patterns. It is based on a combination of imitation, invention, interaction, and risk-taking (p. 14). Children begin experimenting with the written word by creating imitations of what is observed and then modifying those first attempts based on further observations and interactions with significant others. Gentry and Gillet further expound on the importance of interaction by explaining that:

Just as children interact with oral language in order to speak, they must interact with written language in order to learn to write and spell. They must be read to and have books to look at and pretend to read. They must have their attention drawn to print in books, in advertisements, on grocery labels, and on signs. They must see adults writing things like grocery lists, birthday cards, phone messages, notes and letters. They must have materials and opportunities to try to write, and have their efforts remarked on and appreciated. This kind of interaction with print is critical to learning to produce written language (p. 16).

Gentry and Gillet (1993) explain the importance of risk-taking in learning to spell by comparing it to the risk-taking involved by the child as they learn to walk and talk. The child must make many unsuccessful attempts before they experience success. They point out that adults often forget the necessity of valuing approximations in the child's work in recording written messages. They state:

Especially in the area of spelling, we often act as though we can somehow prevent children from making mistakes, and that doing so will help them. Both of these ideas are wrong. If we try to prevent mistakes, we limit children's opportunities to learn. Doing so inhibits rather than improves, learning. Children must experiment with print, making innumerable mistakes along the way (p. 18).

Wilde (1997) suggests that phonics instruction might more appropriately occur during spelling instruction rather than reading instruction. Such a shift in instruction could more fully support the emerging reader's reliance upon searching for meaning in reading unknown text, and would also allow the novice reader to transfer his/her attention briefly to graphophonic information when needed. She supports this suggestion by

pointing out that in the English language there are often more possible variations for encoding unknown phonemes than exist for decoding combinations of letters that represent single phonemes. For example, in reading the “ea” combination usually represents one of three phonemes, long *e*, short *e*, or a long *a*. (This example does not address possibility of the “ea” combination representing two separate sounds as in *readvertise*.) However, the writer’s task of deciding how to represent the sound of a long *e* is even more complex with an even larger selection of possibilities. This relationship is represented in Figure 2.

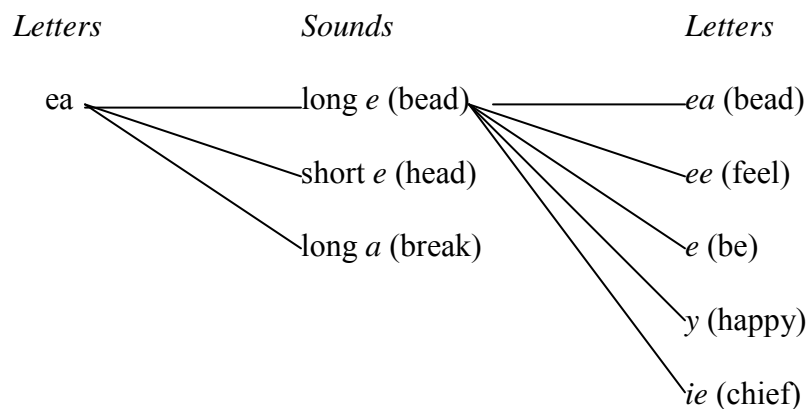


Figure 2 Sample Relationship in Letters and Sounds in Reading and Writing (Wilde, 1997, p. 74)

The illustration demonstrates that as complex as the process of decoding letters to sounds may become in reading, the encoding process of going from sounds to letters that occurs during writing involves even more complex decision making by the emerging literacy learner.

Summary

The processes of oral language development, learning to read, and learning to write are all inseparably connected as they relate to literacy acquisition in the emerging

literacy learner. One cannot be studied or discussed in isolation from the others. A child entering elementary school and embarking on the challenge of early literacy acquisition already possesses an amazing wealth of knowledge about how language is utilized for communicative processes in their personal command of oral language patterns. Early attempts at learning to read and write are most successful when the child relies on personal oral language patterns as a foundation for anticipating and predicting what is encountered in written text. However, as text levels become more difficult, they incorporate literary language that differs from oral language patterns.

Given the complexity of the multiple tasks children must attend to as they learn to read and write, adults should be more accepting of approximations that occur in their work as they continue to refine their personal understanding of how spoken language is represented by printed text (Graves, 1983). Clay (1998) specifies some of these complex processes that the child must attend to while focusing on both the message and the conventions of print. As children write, they:

- attend closely to the features of letters
- learn about letters, distinguishing one from another
- access this letter knowledge in several different ways
- work with letter clusters, as sequences or chunks
- work with words, constructing them from letters, letter clusters, or patterns
- work with syntactic knowledge of what is likely to occur in the language and what does not happen
- use their knowledge of the world to compose the message and anticipate upcoming content

- direct attention to page placement of text, directional rules, serial order, and spaces
- work with some sense of the sequence rules and probability status of any part of the print
- break down the task to its smallest segments while at the same time synthesizing it into words and sentences (pp. 130-131).

Clay (1991) further states that the child utilizes what s/he has learned and attended to in reading as a resource in these emerging attempts at writing. The opposite is also true. What the child has noticed while writing becomes a resource in their further attempts at reading (p. 96). Therefore, Clay concludes, “what the child writes is a rough indicator of what he is attending to in print, and demonstrates the programmes [sic] of action he is using for word production. The building-up processes complement the visual analysis of text which is a breaking-down process” (p. 109).

Writers incorporate oral language with multiple other aspects of textual information such as the visual forms of letters, sound sequences of words, and personal knowledge of how words work to encode messages to their readers. It is a highly complex task that forces attention to the detail of printed word and involves the interweaving of multiple facets of all communicative competencies as the writer explores the world of text (Clay 2002 p. 21).

What is noticeably missing from the literature regarding the reciprocity between the emerging reading and emerging writing processes is a description of the relationships that occur between those processes as the learner encounters increasingly more difficult text during classroom guided reading sessions. Information about relationships such as

the child's view of writing, changes in orthography utilized by the learner, and the incorporation of literacy text into written artifacts is important in the educational development of proficient readers and writers. Such information would be beneficial to educators of emerging literacy learners so that they might better support young students on the path toward becoming expert readers and writers. It is the missing information on these relationships that will become the focus of this study.

Chapter III

Method

This research was an ethnographic multi-case study analysis of three proficient first-grade emerging literacy learners. The study followed those three participants from the commencement of their first-grade year of school through the end of the third nine-week grading period of the same school year. During that period of time, each participant was observed as s/he interacted with print during guided reading and writing workshop in the classroom. Each individual case study will be described in a narrative that strives to paint a portrait of the participant's complex and dynamic experience of literacy acquisition (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1997). Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) describe portraiture as:

a method framed by the traditions and values of the phenomenological paradigm, sharing many of the techniques, standards, and goals of ethnography. But it pushes against the constraints of those traditions and practices in its explicit effort to combine empirical and aesthetic description, in its focus on the convergence of narrative and analysis, in its goal of speaking to broader audiences beyond the academy (thus linking inquiry to public discourse and social transformation), in its standard of authenticity rather than reliability and validity (the traditional standards of quantitative and qualitative inquiry), and in its explicit recognition of the use of the self as the primary research instrument for documenting and interpreting the perspectives and experiences of the people and the cultures being studied (pp. 13-14).

Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) explain that portraiture is “designed to capture the richness, complexity, and dimensionality of human experience in social and cultural context, conveying the perspectives of the people who are negotiating those experiences” (p. 3). Portraiture is utilized to document the complexity, dynamics, and subtlety of human experiences.

The use of case study analysis was selected for this study because it is through the intensive study of individual children that we can begin to gain insight into the complexity of the multitude of facets involved in the literacy acquisition process of emerging literacy learners (Stake, 1995). Analyses of individual children as they acquire literacy through involvement with printed text during guided reading and writing workshop will help educators deepen their personal understanding of the interrelatedness of the two literary processes. Through such a study, clarification and enlightenment on how a child’s understanding in each of these processes is influenced and supported by the other may be gained. It is through the detailed description, or portrait, of individual emerging literacy learners that insight will be provided into how emerging literacy learners may be supported in their efforts at learning to read and write. It is also the close study of individual students that allows their differing approaches to literacy acquisition to be noticed (Dyson, 1985).

Each individual student’s progress was analyzed for themes as a single case study or unique portrait of the participant. The analyses of these individual portraits were followed by a thematic analysis across the cases (Creswell, 1998). This method of study was selected because it allowed the relationships that percolated between text encountered by the proficient emerging literacy learner during guided reading instruction

and the corresponding artifacts produced as that student wrote to emerge and be observable. Both the reading and writing processes were closely observed as they occurred so that changes over time in the student's view of what constituted a written composition, the student's use of orthography and the use of literary language during reading and writing by the student could be documented as relationships emerged.

The research methods used in this study can generally be described as participant observation (Creswell, 1998). Data collection was divided into two phases; the first was a collection of preliminary background information, the second involved collection of data for the case studies. During the initial phase of data collection, a wide range of holistic data on the classroom environment was gathered. This included observations regarding children's usage of oral language as well as their general interactions with print during reading and writing. The primary goal during this preliminary observation period was to familiarize myself with the students, the teacher, and the classroom environment. It also allowed the students to become familiar and comfortable with my presence in the classroom.

The second phase of data collection commenced during the fourth week of the study. At this time, three students were selected for the case studies and became the focus of observation as they interacted with text during the guided reading and writing workshop portions of the day. A more detailed description of the specific protocol utilized during both phases of data collection will be discussed in the "Observation" segment of the *Data Collection* section.

Time Line

August 2007

- Began initial observation phase (Observation sessions were 1 hour daily for weeks)

September 2007

- Selected students for case studies and obtained assent/consent forms
- Began data collection on case study students with a full day observation focused on those students
- 45 minute observations occurring 3 times weekly thereafter
- On-going data analysis

October/November/December 2007

- 45 minute observations occurring 3 times weekly
- On-going data analysis

January 2008

- 45 minute observations occurring 3 times weekly
- On-going data analysis
- Formal interviews with all 3 participants
- Interviewed Gracie's grandmother and Michael's parents

February 2008

- 45 minute observations occurring 3 times weekly
- On-going data analysis
- Interviewed Eden's mother

March 2008

- 45 minute observation occurring 3 times weekly
- On-going data analysis

Demographic Data

The site of this study was a single first-grade classroom in an elementary school located in the southwestern part of the United States. The school district served approximately 13,000 students at the time the data was collected. However, the community serviced by this school district was experiencing rapid growth and that rapid growth directly impacted the size of all schools within the district. The site where this research occurred housed slightly over 1,000 students during the 2007-08 school-year when data for this research was collected. During that same school year when this data was collected, the school housed eight heterogeneously grouped first-grade classrooms. The site where this research occurred was comprised of a culturally diverse population. During the 2007-08 school-year, the school's ethnic distribution was 46% Hispanic, 45% White, 5% Native American, 3% Black, and 1% Asian. Two students with Hispanic heritage and one with White heritage were included in this study.

Due to the high numbers of students who qualified for the federal free and reduced lunch program, the school where the research occurred was designated as a Title I school when it first opened in 1995. The school has retained that designation since that time.

Participants

The study followed three participants from a single first-grade classroom who were viewed by their teacher as proficient literacy learners both in reading and writing. The teacher's perception of the student as a proficient literacy learner was substantiated through the use of reading and writing assessments that were utilized by the school district. Three students, one male and two female, participated in this study. This sample of students was targeted because an understanding of how proficient readers and writers develop relationships between the reading and writing processes must be understood in order for that knowledge to be used to help struggling students attain proficiency.

Voluntary participation in the study was solicited from these three current students (and their parents) because they were viewed as being proficient in their emerging literacy processes. Selection and study of students from who are proficient readers and writers will enhance reading and writing instruction in first-grade classrooms and information gained may help inform the type of instruction needed for struggling literacy learners. Identity of these students and the participating teacher will remain confidential through the use of pseudonyms in all written reports and oral presentations.

Assessments

The reading assessment used by the school district in which this research occurred is the *Developmental Reading Assessment* (Beaver, 1997). The *Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)* involves reading texts at a gradually increasing gradient of difficulty until the highest level with a 90% accuracy or better is determined. During this assessment, the teacher records oral reading behaviors by using a running record during the task. A running record is a graphic method used to record oral reading behavior

devised by Clay (2002) in which the teacher uses a shorthand recording of a student's reading behavior as the student reads aloud. As the student is reading, the teacher records words read accurately, substitutions made, omissions and insertions of words or phrases, repetitions of words or phrases, self-corrections, and the child's visual analysis of words that present some difficulty. The purpose of the text reading task is to both determine an appropriate level of text difficulty and to record the child's physical and reading behaviors exhibited while reading continuous text. An analysis of the child's reading behaviors helps the teacher in formulating specific reading instruction needed by individual or small groups of students.

The *DRA* (Beaver, 1997) is composed of small books that increase in gradients of reading difficulty as the levels increase. At the early levels (A-2) teachers note the presence of emerging reading behaviors and skills. These behaviors and skills include items such as the child's awareness that print and not the picture carries the message, understanding that reading incorporates the use of left to right directionality, utilizing a return sweep at the end of a written line, and recognizing that one spoken word corresponds to a word written on the page. Teachers can also note whether students are able to read text when given a supportive book introduction by the teacher in texts that use patterned language structures and supportive illustrations. Students can succeed on these early levels of text if they control the above-mentioned early reading behaviors. It is not necessary for the student to do any conventional reading of text until approximately level three.

DRA (Beaver, 1997) levels have been correlated by the publisher to approximate grade level equivalents as follows:

Kindergarten: Levels.....	A-2
Preprimer: Levels.....	3-8
Primer: Levels.....	10-12
First Grade: Levels.....	4-16

Because data collection for this research project was initiated at the beginning of the first-grade school year, student performance in reading and writing at the end of the kindergarten year was used for initial verification that students involved were viewed as proficient in their literacy acquisition process. This school district had also established criteria stating that a student should be reading at *DRA* (Beaver, 1997) levels four to six upon entering first-grade in order to be considered as performing at a proficient level. In addition to the *DRA* (Beaver, 1997) level, the school district had also developed a first-grade reading rubric that was used in determining a student’s reading proficiency as the student progressed through the first-grade year of instruction.

The school district had also developed kindergarten and first-grade writing rubrics that contained the criteria necessary for students to be regarded by the district as proficient in the emerging writing process. The kindergarten writing rubric was used to determine writing proficiency upon the students’ entry to first grade. The first-grade writing rubric was used to determine proficient progress over the course of the first-grade year of school. The *DRA* (Beaver, 1997) level and the first-grade reading and writing rubrics were utilized to substantiate that participants were continuing to demonstrate proficiency in their literacy acquisition processes. Copies of the district’s kindergarten and first-grade writing rubrics and the first-grade reading rubric are located at the end of this document and are labeled as Appendix A, Appendix B, and Appendix C.

Data Collection

Observations.

Classroom observations were divided into two segments. During the initial observation phase, I visited the classroom daily for one hour for eleven days. The purpose of this observation phase was to observe and interact informally with the children as they participated in their daily classroom routines. During these early interactions, I strove to establish my role in the classroom as a participant rather than a teacher or other authoritative figure. I observed and interacted with the students as they participated in classroom routines and provided supportive comments to them generally as they engaged in assignments made by the classroom teacher. I strove not to be viewed by the students as another teacher or authoritative adult in the classroom. As students made requests for my attention or asked for help in the completion of class work, I responded in a manner that promoted the development of a positive rapport, while at the same time avoided any responses that promoted the development of myself as an authoritative figure. Some of my comments to the children included, “Tell me what you are doing” or “what are you going to do now?” Every attempt to be non-authoritative and non-disruptive in my observations was made.

At the same time I worked to establish a positive relationship between myself and the students in the classroom. It was vital that a rapport be developed early so that my presence in the classroom was viewed by the students as non-threatening and unthreatening as possible.

This phase of data collection also involved the gathering of holistic background data of the classroom environment. This included a detailed description of the physical

environment of the classroom as well as general interactions that occurred between the teacher and the students, children's language and behavior, and the ways that print were generally encountered and utilized in the classroom environment. In addition to this general process of becoming acquainted with the children and the classroom environment, this initial observation period provided an opportunity to identify students who appeared to be proficient in their emerging literacy processes. From among this pool of proficient literacy learners, I noted those students who appeared to be calmly receptive of my presence. Specifically, I looked for proficient students who did not change their activities due to my presence and who were willing to freely interact and dialogue with me regarding their reading and writing activities.

The second phase of data collection commenced the sixth week of the study. For the second phase of data collection, three students were selected for case study investigation. These three students were selected based on two criteria:

1. The students appeared to be proficient literacy learners as identified by teacher observation and by their performance on district reading and writing rubrics.
2. The students appeared to be willing to discuss their experiences in reading and writing with me.

The first criterion was essential because it aligned with the focus of the research questions. The second was necessary in order to enhance and expound on classroom observations and the physical artifacts that were to be collected.

Forty-five minute observations of students occurred three times weekly commencing during the sixth week of the study and continued until the end of the third quarter of the school year. The specific student who was the focus of an individual

observation rotated with each observation. A single student was the focal point of the observation during each classroom visit, with the other two students being the focal point of the observation during the two subsequent weekly visits. The purpose of these observations was to study the change over time in the emerging relationships between the guided reading and writing processes utilized by children as they engaged in guided reading and writing workshop instruction.

Research journal.

Observations were recorded in a research journal. This research journal was maintained throughout the course of the study. Personal insights on what was observed and notes regarding possible emerging relationships were recorded in a separate section of the same journal.

Artifacts.

The classroom teacher collected and saved daily writing samples created by each of the participants during the writing workshop portion of the school day in their individual writing folders. These were collected by me during my regular observation visits to the classroom. Copies were made for my analysis purposes and the originals were returned to the individual student's writing folder. Text read by the students during the guided reading portion of the school day was also collected during my regular visits to the classroom. Copies were made of the text read by the students in their guided reading group. Contents of these artifacts were examined for examples of the orthography and literary language utilized, as well as other emerging relationships.

Interviews.

Each participating student was formally interviewed in an attempt to ascertain insights into their personal perceptions of text in the reading and writing processes. These interviews occurred during the first week of school following the students' winter break. This interview was audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis. These interviews occurred at the students' school campus in a room that was not being used for student instruction at the time of the interview. The interview questions are included at the end of this document as Appendix D.

Participants were also informally interviewed throughout the course of the observation period regarding pieces of writing that they produced. Questions regarding these specific pieces are listed in Appendix E at the end of this document and included:

1. Why did you write this piece?
2. Were there any tricky or difficult parts?
3. If so, what did you do when it was tricky or difficult? If not, what would you have done if there had been a tricky or difficult part?

Parents or guardians of the participants were also interviewed once at the mid-point of the study to learn about literacy events and exposure to text that the children encountered in their home environments. These interviews occurred at a location of the parent's choosing and were also audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis. While home literacy was not the focus of this study, this information contributed to and enhanced the understanding of information gathered from the classroom environment.

Analysis

Analysis of data collected included looking for themes that emerged across several aspects of the reading and writing material collected and relationships between those themes. Data was examined for changes that occurred over time in the student writing samples. Areas of interest for analysis included conventions of printed text, orthography, incorporation of literary language, and social interactions within the classroom that impacted the participants' writing samples.

Conventions of print.

Student artifacts were examined to determine what each participant viewed as writing and how that concept changed over the course of the first three nine-week periods of the school year. Specific areas of interest included whether the participant understood the difference between words and letters and how words and letters were utilized in written text. The process by which each student elected to select and group letters into words and how that process changed over time was examined.

Closely related to the concept of letters and words was the use of white space in the participating students' written compositions. Each student's use of white space between words as well as between sentences of the compositions and how that use changed over time was also observed. Student artifacts were analyzed to see if the student's concept of a sentence required that each sentence began on a new line on the left side of the page and occupied only one written line of text or how written text that required more than one line on the page was handled. Changes that occurred in text written during the writing workshop part of the school day was examined for

relationships to similar changes that occurred in text encountered during guided reading lessons.

An analysis of changes in the physical length of the written compositions was also made. This included counting the number of words in sentences and sentences in the compositions and observing how that physical aspect of writing changed over time.

Finally, the students' use of punctuation within the text was examined as it changed over time. The incorporation of punctuation both within the sentence (such as commas, apostrophes, and quotation marks) and at the end of sentences (such as periods, question marks, and exclamation marks) was also analyzed as changes occurred as it was used throughout the course of time that data was collected for this study. Relationships occurring between student-generated text and published text encountered during guided reading was noted.

Orthography.

The way in which students analyzed words to select the corresponding letter or letters needed to record phonemes was studied. Specific attention was paid to the process that the proficient first-grade literacy learner utilized to hear and record sounds within words. Relationships that emerged between the hearing and recording of sounds that were formed in similar parts of the mouth and whose resulting sounds were similar but somewhat difficult to distinguish was analyzed.

Analysis of the data occurred on three levels (Merriam, 1998). The first level of analysis involved a description of the text encountered during guided reading and the written artifacts produced during writing workshop. Orthographic patterns were analyzed according to relationships between conventional recording and Wilde's (1997) categories

of stops, fricatives, affricates, and nasals. Initially, I planned to place literary language into conceptual categories based on a preliminary list of literary definitions and examples adapted from Weaver's (1996) "Glossary of Grammatical Terms". This tentative first list is included as Appendix F at the end of this document and was intended to provide initial categorical designations. However, other categories of literary language emerged once data collection commenced. As these other forms of literary language emerged, they were categorized as well.

The second level of data analysis involved a cross-analysis of the orthography and literary language encountered during writing workshop. The data was examined for relationships that existed between the sets of information and how those relationships changed over time.

As a result of the cross case analyses, a theory regarding emerging literacy learners and how those young writers are impacted by classroom education evolved. This theory is discussed in-depth at a later time in this work.

Trustworthiness.

Trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of the research was maintained throughout the study through the collection of several sources of information. Observational notes that recorded what was directly viewed in the classroom were recorded separately from the recorded opinions and reactions to what was observed. Artifacts collected and interview transcriptions helped maintain and promoted the use of the participants' emic voice. Development of the categories of literary language encountered and utilized occurred within the framework from which the data was collected.

Audit checking occurred on a regular basis as I met with my dissertation chair, Dr. Rick Meyer. During these meetings, artifacts collected were examined and discussed. Evolving hypotheses were also discussed to ensure that the data supported the developing conclusions and theories.

Limitations.

The primary limitation of this study was that it examined a very narrow portion of the reading and writing experiences that the participants encountered. The participants interacted with text in many other ways and in many other parts of the school day that were not included in the study. For example, the role of texts read aloud to the students by the classroom teacher and peers, or texts that the participants read or wrote at other times during the day were not included. While some information was gathered regarding the role of home literacy experiences, it was not the primary focus of the study. The study also did not examine the role of the participants' oral language development and use during the reading and writing processes.

The study was limited to a small group of three participants and occurred for a relatively short time during the literacy acquisition process of the participants. Clay (1998) maintains that children do not follow the same path during their literacy acquisition processes. The paths followed by the participants in this study are not necessarily representative of paths followed by other first grade students.

Chapter IV

Meet the Classroom

Two years prior to the collection of data for this research, the school district in which Mrs. Cook teaches implemented the Comprehensive Literacy Model (CLM) developed by Linda Dorn and Carla Soffos of the University of Arkansas Little Rock (UALR). The CLM “is a school reform model dedicated to increasing student achievement. The model uses literacy as a tool for improvement in four related areas; student learning, teacher perceptions, school climate, and school processes” (University of Arkansas, Little Rock [UALR], 2007). This literacy model places an emphasis on embedded teacher professional development delivered by a site-based literacy coach who works with teachers in order to expand and deepen their beliefs and understandings related to the literacy acquisition process.

The CLM emphasizes that a well designed model is critical for the implementation of quality literacy curriculum instruction (Dorn & Soffos, 2001b). For this reason, certain classrooms in schools implementing the CLM are designated as model classrooms. Dorn and Soffos (2001b) explain that “These model classrooms become literacy learning labs where other teachers can observe the program in action” (p.95). The literacy coach at each site works closely with teachers who have been designated to serve as model classrooms for the CLM in order to develop increased expertise in literacy instruction. Model classroom teachers meet with their site coach on a regular basis. The coach works with the teacher to hone the teacher’s ability to provide quality literacy instruction. As the teacher’s competence in one area of instruction

increases, the level of the coaches scaffolding decreases and/or moves to another area of literacy instruction to be targeted. Model classrooms become available for other teachers to visit and observe quality instruction. Model classroom teachers may become mentor teachers for colleagues wishing to implement various aspects of the Comprehensive Literacy Model. During the time of this study, Mrs. Cook's classroom was designated as a model classroom and Mrs. Cook was working closely with her site's literacy coach.

Prior to the beginning of the new school year, the literacy coach and Mrs. Cook worked together to discuss how literacy instruction might be enhanced by the physical organization of the classroom. CLM classrooms are arranged with the classroom library as the central meeting place for class meetings and discussions. Teachers are encouraged to develop a classroom library that contains approximately 200 books per child. Of course, this is considered to be a goal that teachers work toward. It is understood that teachers new to the model or new to teaching may not have this many books in their classroom libraries. Acquiring the quality literature needed for the classroom library is an on-going process for all teachers as new literature is continually being published. Mrs. Cook had a well-developed classroom library. As in all CLM classrooms, Mrs. Cook's books were organized in small baskets and were classified by author, subject, and/or genre. Mrs. Cook's classroom contained multiple shelves of book baskets that were clearly labeled with either their topic or their author on the outside of the basket (see Figure 3 and Figure 4).



Figure 3 Mrs. Cook's classroom library



Figure 4 Mrs. Cook's classroom library

Throughout the school year, all model classroom teachers and the building's site coach met multiple times in a variety of scenarios. Initially, the coach spent a great deal of time in each classroom with the classroom teacher. The coach helped the teachers in

establishing routines necessary for literacy instruction to occur in workshop formats. The model classroom teachers also met with grade level colleagues and the site coach in regularly scheduled study groups or professional learning communities (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). At Mrs. Cook's school, these professional learning communities met at the end of their duty day during common collaboration time that occurred after the students' school hours. During this professional study time, teachers participated in discussions led by the campus literacy coach and focusing on:

teaching and learning issues, for example, administering and analyzing running records; planning constructive activities for literacy corners; designing mini-lessons for writers' workshop; studying writing portfolios for change over time in writing development; and analyzing videotaped lessons of various literacy components (Dorn and Soffos, 2001b, p. 98).

Reading Instruction

Guided reading.

Reading instruction in the CLM classroom occurs during small-group guided reading sessions. Fountas and Pinnell (1996) define guided reading as:

a context in which a teacher supports each reader's development of effective strategies for processing novel texts at increasingly challenging levels of difficulty. The teacher works with a small group of children who use similar reading processes and are able to read similar levels of texts with support. The teacher introduces a text to this small group, works with individuals in the group as they read it, may select one or two teaching points to present to the group following the reading, and may ask the children to take part in an extension of

their reading. The text is one that offers the children a minimum of new things to learn; that is, the children can read it with the strategies they currently have, but it provides opportunity for a small amount of new learning (p. 2).

In her guided reading sessions, Mrs. Cook met with groups of four to five students who were grouped homogeneously. These small groups were initially determined by student reading levels and teacher analysis of running records taken during the *Developmental Reading Assessment* (Beaver, 1997) to determine student instructional needs. It is a basic premise of the CLM classroom that these guided reading groups do not remain static. Rather, the groups as described by Dorn, French, & Jones are to be “dynamic, flexible, changing structures based on an understanding that all children do not learn at the same pace and in the same way” (1998, p.103). Throughout the school year, the teachers utilizing the CLM model were expected to be continually observing the students’ literacy behaviors and accommodating student behaviors and progress by adjusting their group placement.

Leveled text.

The district in which Mrs. Cook taught had adopted a basal reading series. However, Mrs. Cook’s school also had a well developed leveled book room that contained sets of small books that had been leveled according to Fountas & Pinnell’s (1996) criteria for leveled text. These criteria involve leveling text along a continuum of difficulty in which text becomes more difficult as the text level increases. These levels also align with the level of text difficulty utilized by the *Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)* (Beaver, 1997), the reading assessment adopted by the school district for quarterly reading assessment of all students. Mrs. Cook elected to not utilize the basal

reading series and instead selected sets of small books from her school's leveled bookroom to meet the specific needs and interests of her guided reading groups.

The leveled book room at Mrs. Cook's school had been in existence for approximately six years when this study began. While it began small, additional sets of books had been added to it each year of its existence. During the time of this study, this book room was housed in a classroom-sized room with shelves along each wall and additional shelves in rows in the center of the room. It contained a diverse selection of multiple titles at each level consisting of both fiction and non-fiction titles. A wide variety of topics and genres were included in order to better meet the needs of students. Books in this bookroom were leveled along a continuum of difficulty that aligned with the continuum of difficulty utilized by the *Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)* (Beaver, 1997) which is the reading assessment utilized by the school district for quarterly reading assessment of all students.

Literacy corners.

While Mrs. Cook was working with a small guided reading group, other students in the classroom were working in various literacy corners. Dorn, French, and Jones (1998) define a literacy corner as "an area of the classroom where children read or write independently during the fifteen or twenty minutes the teacher is working with small groups for guided reading or assisted writing" (p. 100). Grouping for work in the literacy corners was heterogeneous. At the beginning of the school year, literacy corners in Mrs. Cook's classroom included a listening center where students listened to a recording of a book as they followed with the text and pictures in the book. Students in the spelling corner practiced writing their weekly spelling words in their learning logs. Other students

manipulated words in the “making words” corner. Still others practiced their letter formation in a handwriting corner or worked with magnetic letters in an ABC corner. As the school year progressed, other literacy corners were added. These included literacy activities on the computers, writing, poetry, working with names, and math literacy. Some literacy corners, such as the ABC corner, were eliminated as Mrs. Cook determined that students had mastered that particular knowledge and supplemental work on that specific skill was no longer needed.

As part of their task in each literacy corner, students were required to make a written entry in their learning logs that reflected that corner’s activity for the day. Mrs. Cook utilized small composition notebooks for her students’ learning logs. Each student carried his/her learning log to each corner and made appropriate entries into the learning logs to represent work completed at the corner. Students worked in each corner for approximately twenty to thirty minutes before moving to another literacy activity in another corner. Students normally worked in two corners daily. While students were working in the literacy corners, Mrs. Cook met with three homogeneously grouped guided reading groups.

Writing Instruction

Shared writing.

Mrs. Cook began working with her students on the writing process at the very beginning of the school year. Within the first two weeks of school, Mrs. Cook began involving her students in daily shared writing experiences. Dorn and Soffos (2001a) define a shared writing event as a time when:

The teacher engages the children in an interactive writing experience, for instance, writing a story, a letter, or a poem. The interaction focuses on composing a message and transcribing the text. The teacher uses the writing context to help students acquire some critical skills for learning about print. This shared event lasts about ten to fifteen minutes (pp. 35-36).

At the beginning of the school year, Mrs. Cook utilized shared writing in her classroom by having the class as a group write about one of their class members who had been selected as their ‘special student’ of the day. This activity allowed students to become better acquainted with their classmates through a shared writing activity. At the beginning of this activity, one student was selected by Mrs. Cook to come to the front of the class and sit in a rocking chair located at the front of the classroom library area. Mrs. Cook also seated herself at the front of the classroom library. Mrs. Cook’s chair was next to an easel to which she had attached a large sheet of blank newsprint.

As the student sat in the rocking chair, classmates could ask questions of this ‘special student’ regarding their family members, likes and dislikes, or other personal information that would help class members get to know each other better. After the student’s reply to each question, Mrs. Cook would orally formulate the highlighted student’s response into a complete sentence. She would then begin writing the sentence she had formulated onto the sheet of newsprint.

Occasionally, in the course of recording the sentence onto the newsprint, Mrs. Cook would call on students from the class to do the writing of high frequency words that occurred within the sentence. She also at times questioned the class on the type of letter needed at the beginning of a sentence or the type of punctuation needed to mark the end

of a sentence. She might ask the class to slowly articulate with her a word such as ‘tag’ and ask the students what letters would be used to record the phonemes heard within the word. Occasionally, she would also ask the students to instruct her as to where to begin writing a word on the newsprint.

Writing workshop.

After completing a similar shared writing activity that featured each class member as the ‘special student’ of the day, Mrs. Cook began to move the students into a more traditional writing workshop format that occurred daily during their allotted writing time.

Dorn and Soffos (2001a) define writing workshop as:

a literacy block where children learn the processes of how to write. The teacher structures the time to ensure that children have an opportunity to plan, organize, and carry out writing projects. During writers’ workshop, students learn how to select their own topics and develop these topics through multiple drafts. Thus, they acquire an understanding of the writing process (p.32).

In order to make this transition to a writers’ workshop format, Mrs. Cook and her students began by establishing guidelines to be followed during the writing workshop segment of the day. The guidelines were co-constructed by Mrs. Cook and members of the class. These guidelines were developed by the class and were recorded on a large piece of newsprint and posted on the front wall of the classroom. The guidelines that Mrs. Cook’s class developed were as follows:

- Zero noise level
- Sitting at your desk
- Do your own work

- Never say “I’m finished”
- You may never ask anyone how to spell a word!

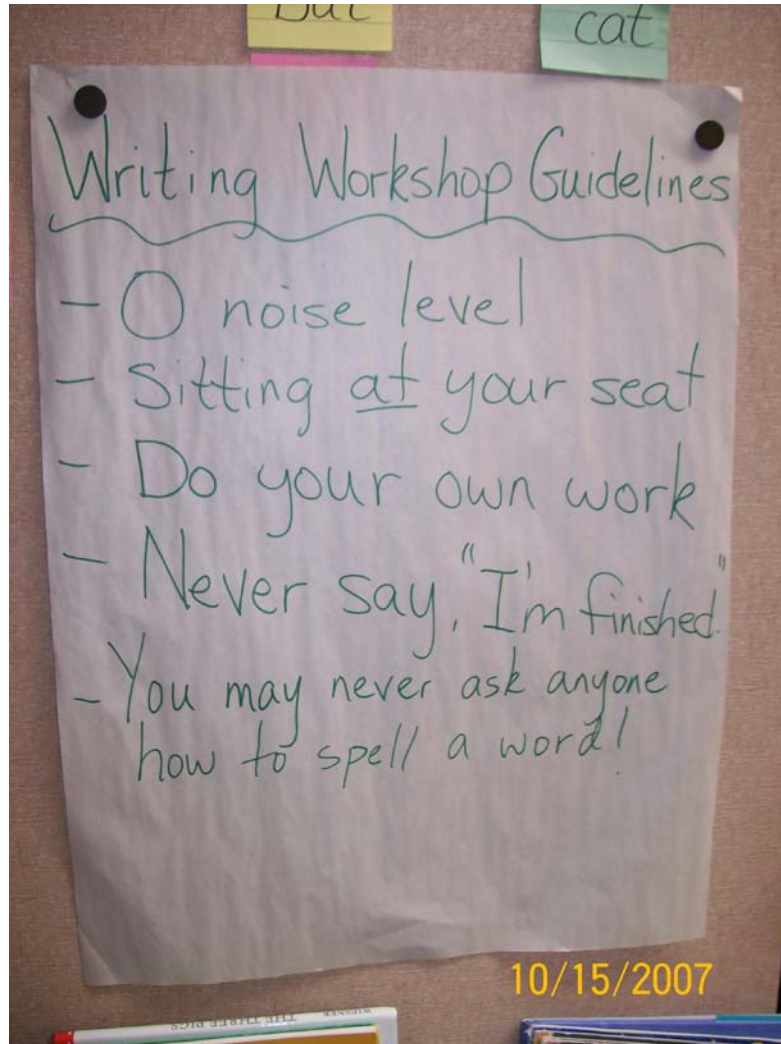


Figure 5 Co-constructed rules for writing workshop developed by Mrs. Cook and her class.

The teacher and students also together brainstormed and recorded on a chart a list of topics they could write about that included the following Table 5.

What Can We Write About?	
first day of first grade	school
yourself (me)	mom
dog	dad
cat	state fair field trip
turtle	field trips
pets	vacation
baby sister	going to Rainbow Pool
baby brother	open house
learning to ride	zoo
• dirt bikes	Christmas
• skateboards	Easter
• scooter	Halloween
• Honda	Valentine's Day
• bicycle	favorite animal
friends	favorite stuffed animal
birthday	Thanksgiving
sports I play	

Table 5 What the Students Can Write About

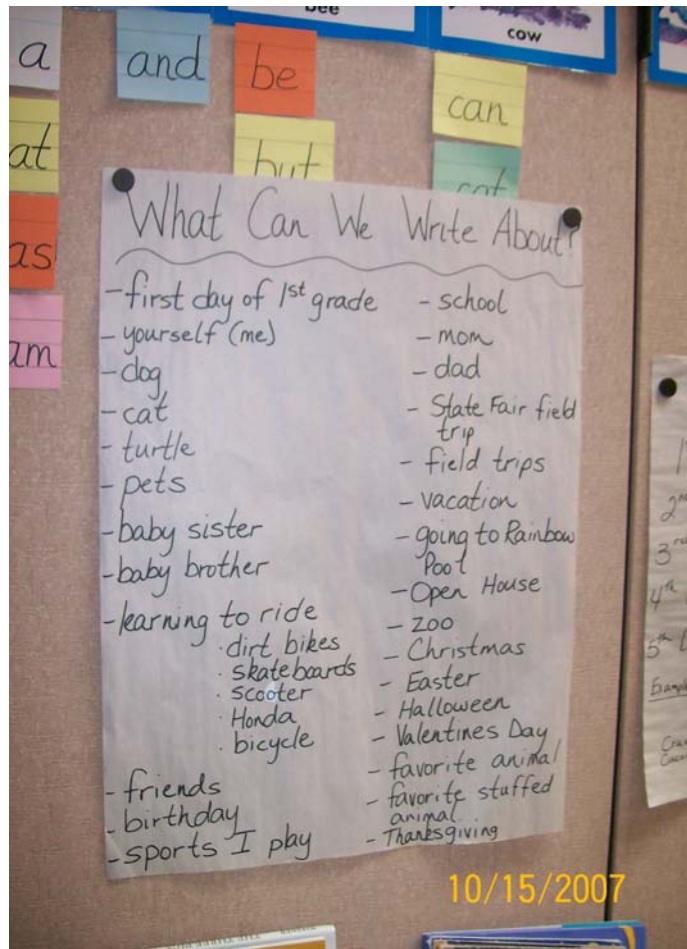


Figure 6 Class chart of possible writing topics

During writing workshop, each student utilized a writing folder that Mrs. Cook had made for them. The writing folders were created from two pocket folders, one with brads in the center and one without. The folder without brads was inverted and refolded so that the pockets were on the outside of the folder. Mrs. Cook then punched holes in this folder and fastened it into the brads in the center of the other folder. This created one folder with four pockets. Mrs. Cook then placed large labels on each pocket that denoted what was to be kept inside that pocket. The four pockets were labeled ‘Paper’, ‘In-Progress’, ‘Finished’, and ‘To Be Published’. Each student always kept a large quantity of blank writing paper in the ‘Paper’ pocket. This prevented them from having their

writing time interrupted by their need to search for or obtain additional writing paper.

Each writing folder also contained a plastic pencil pocket that was inserted into the center brads and contained a pencil and red editing pen (See Figure 7 and Figure 8.)

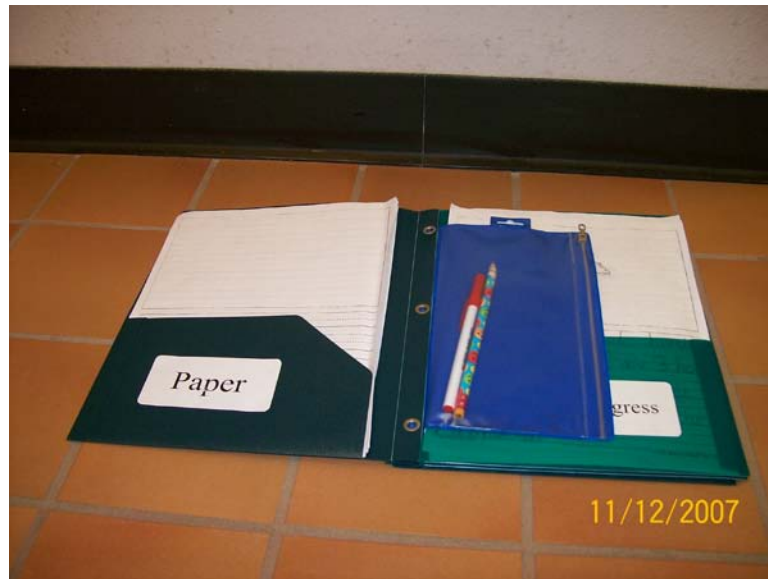


Figure 7 Student writing notebooks.

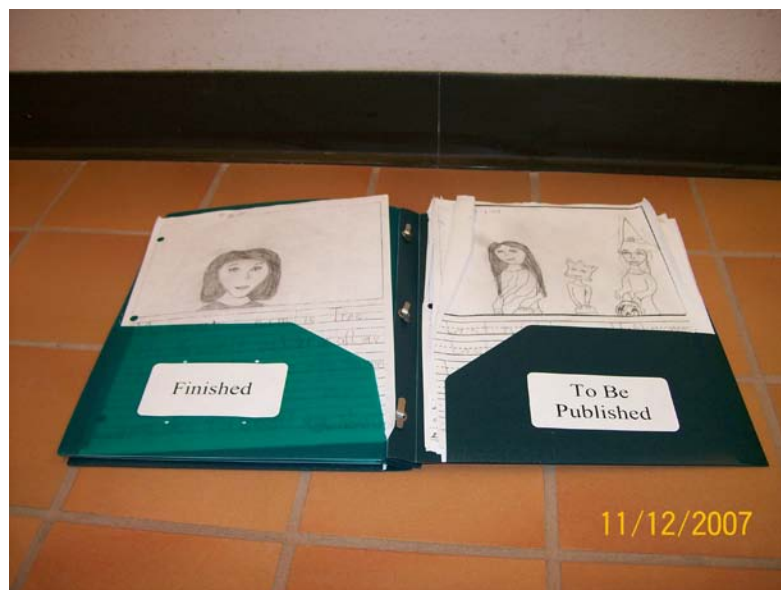


Figure 8 Student writing notebooks.

This more traditional writing workshop format always began with Mrs. Cook teaching a mini-lesson lasting for about ten minutes. Early mini-lesson topics included rereading yesterday's writing in order to continue building on a story that was begun but had not been finished on the previous day, crossing out text to revise what had already been written, and using words such as 'first', 'then', and 'after that' to show chronological sequence in writing. Later mini-lessons focused on crafting of student writing by using "interesting" describing words or developing a lead to their story that was intended to grab the interest of their reader.

Following the mini-lesson, students were given approximately twenty minutes to write independently on a topic of their choosing. As the students wrote, Mrs. Cook circulated among students at their desks, conferencing with individual students about their work. Because the conferences were individual, Mrs. Cook was able to personalize her instruction and tailor her comments to meet the needs of each individual student.

During the final ten minutes of the time allotted to writing workshop, students were instructed to find a convenient stopping point in their writing and take their writing folders with them to the classroom library area. There individual students either were called upon or volunteered to share their work. Time usually allowed for only three to five students to share their work daily. Mrs. Cook kept a record of which students shared their writing each day. This ensured that each student in the class was given the opportunity to share prior to having a student who had previously shared his/her work share an additional piece of writing. As they shared their work, Mrs. Cook modeled asking "I wonder" questions. She wondered aloud about details that students might want to include that would embellish their stories and make them more interesting to their

reader. As the year progressed, students began asking the “I wonder” questions of classmates as they shared their work.

Chapter V

Meet Mrs. Cook

Mrs. Cook was a veteran teacher with fifteen years of teaching experience. The last nine of those years prior to the time of this research had been spent teaching first grade at the school where she currently is employed. Mrs. Cook was highly regarded as an excellent teacher by both her peers and her building administrators. She described herself and her teaching style as student centered; hands-on and involved.

My initial observations in the classroom occurred at various times of the school day. Regardless of the content being taught, Mrs. Cook always exhibited a positive rapport with her students and always appeared self-assured in her ability as a teacher and was extremely well-organized. Early in the school year, Mrs. Cook taught the basic routines and procedures that she expected students to utilize in the classroom throughout the school year. Mrs. Cook expressed that adherence by students to these routines was necessary in order to maximize student time on task and student learning.

I received tremendous insight into the structure of Mrs. Cook's classroom one morning in early September. It was just slightly before 9:00 in the morning when I arrived at the school for an early morning classroom observation. The first bell signaling that students should enter the classroom rang just as I stepped onto the school grounds. The school was designed as a combination of multiple pods; each pod was a separate building containing approximately eight classrooms. The pod containing Mrs. Cook's classroom was on the far side of the campus from the parking lot. I began walking toward Mrs. Cook's classroom in the midst of the school's nearly 1300 students who, along with

some parents and school faculty members, were wending their way to various classrooms located on the campus. I entered the pod containing Mrs. Cook's classroom and turned the final corner into the last hallway, but stopped short when I arrived at her doorway.

I had expected to see students still coming through the doorway, hanging up coats and backpacks, and moving about the classroom in various activities that would prepare for another day at school. Instead, all students were already in their seats. On the table in front of each student was a small whiteboard, approximately six inches by nine inches in size. Each student had a dry erase marker in his/her hand. Mrs. Cook called out the word "can". Immediately the students rapidly wrote the word "can" on their whiteboards. Mrs. Cook circulated throughout the classroom observing what had been written. After a short amount of time, she called out, "Erase!" clapping her hands twice as she spoke. Students quickly responded to her command by erasing what had been written. Mrs. Cook called out "get". Again the students responded by immediately writing with the dry erase markers. The procedure was repeated as Mrs. Cook looked over students' shoulders to observe what they were writing, clapped as she called out the command to erase and then called out another word. As Mrs. Cook observed what the students were writing, she would make occasional comments—praising correct responses, or making statements such as "That says /a/. What says /e/?" when she noticed an incorrect student response.

Mrs. Cook's morning routine was interrupted briefly by morning announcements coming from the office over the intercom system. Mrs. Cook and the students halted their work and listened in silence while the announcements were being made, then immediately resumed the routine's brisk pace once the announcements had ceased.

The word writing task was immediately followed with a word building task in which the students used individual letters printed on small squares of paper to build words called out by Mrs. Cook. The task utilized a routine similar to that utilized in the word writing task. Following the word building task, Mrs. Cook moved to an overhead projector located in the center of the classroom and began a handwriting lesson. As Mrs. Cook instructed students to practice writing certain letters in the air and then practice them on paper at their desks, it was apparent from both her speech and the students automated responses that these were routines that were repeated daily. Students knew precisely what was expected when an action was called for, and they responded quickly and appropriately.

Later, after students had left the classroom for their morning recess, I asked Mrs. Cook about what I had observed. I expressed my surprise at finding the students in her class already on task while students in other classrooms were still straggling into the building. Mrs. Cook smiled broadly at my comments. She explained that she had emphasized getting the students into the classroom and on task quickly since the first day of the school year. Proudly, she stated that, “My students know that when they come to school, they get in line fast so that they can get into the classroom quickly when the bell rings. We have to get to work right away.” She further stated that in her classroom “transition time between activities is...” She didn’t finish her sentence orally, but snapped her fingers twice. As she spoke, she expressed pride in how quickly her students responded to classroom routines. She had recently rewarded the class with a pizza party for their hard work and excellent behavior.

Mrs. Cook further emphasized the importance she placed on such behavior by telling me about one of her students who had daily been coming to the classroom approximately thirty minutes late during the first two weeks of school. Mrs. Cook said she had talked to the student's mother and had explained, "We can't do that. We're missing learning time." She learned that this particular student's tardiness was due to his eating breakfast each morning in the school cafeteria. Mrs. Cook said, "I told his mom she would have to feed him at home. Mom was like—'OK'." With a pleased look on her face, Mrs. Cook explained that the expectation she had for her students was that when the bell rang at the beginning of school or the end of a recess, they were to be lined up and headed into the building. She concluded the conversation by saying that while students from other classrooms were still straggling in off the playground, her students were in their seats and back on task.

As the school year progressed, Mrs. Cook's early communication of her high expectations regarding student behavior appeared to reap rewards. As Mrs. Cook implemented various corner activities in her classroom, she was able to maintain high expectations for student on-task and independent behavior. While in the midst of working with a small number of students in a guided reading group, Mrs. Cook was able to look up, instruct the remainder of the students to change literacy corners, and immediately resume her conversation with her small group of students. The rest of the classroom students would then noiselessly and efficiently return the materials they were in the midst of working with, move to another activity, and begin working on a different task. The transition between tasks occurred without disruption to the teaching that was occurring in the guided reading group. Often, just to ascertain whether the students were just "keeping

quiet” or actively engaged, I would travel to various students to inquire as to what their activity involved. Always students could describe the activity they were completing and then allowed me to look in their learning logs where they were recording their learning. If the students were independently reading, I would invite them to read a small passage aloud to me in order to determine if they had selected a book that they were able to read. While the reading was not always accurate, substitutions and miscues were meaningful and the storyline stayed intact.

Chapter VI

Meet Michael

Michael was a first grade Hispanic male who lived with both parents and a three-year-old brother in a middle class neighborhood. His mother was a social worker with a state agency and his father was an officer in the United States Air Force. Michael's physical stature was slightly smaller than average for his age. He enjoyed playing hockey and was a member of a team in a local hockey league for young players. His smaller than average build and easy going personality in the classroom camouflaged the aggressive temperament that emerged when he stepped onto the rink.

Michael was competitive by nature and nowhere was that competitiveness more evident than when he talked about playing hockey. Asked what he liked to do for fun, Michael responded that the thing he enjoyed the most was going to hockey practice and playing scrimmage games with other children his age. Michael bragged that in a contest where an opponent tried to steal the hockey puck, no one was able to steal the puck from him. He enjoyed going with his friends and father to watch the local professional hockey team compete at the stadium near his home.

Michael's parents were extremely proud of his physical accomplishments on and off the hockey rink and did what they could to support his interest and competitiveness in the game. Michael's father stated that his personal interest in hockey began about the time that Michael was born. He explained that Michael's interest in hockey began while still an infant. This was when his father started to take Michael with him to hockey games. He said that Michael would sit on his lap mesmerized by the game from

beginning to end. His mother remembered that as soon as Michael could walk, he began playing with a miniature hockey set. Michael's parents dedicated much time and money in support of Michael's interest in hockey. Michael spent hours each week practicing with his team and his parents frequently drove him to tournaments that were often held in other states.

When I asked Michael and his parents about his other interests, everyone had difficulty coming up with activities that were not in some way related to the sport of hockey. His mother said that he had played baseball in the past, but that he was no longer doing so in order to spend more time practicing his skating and his hockey skills to expedite the move up to the next level in hockey. Michael's mother explained that Michael enjoyed rollerblading with the neighborhood children. Michael's parents' pride in Michael's competitive nature emerged in this discussion. Michael's mother explained that none of the neighborhood children knew how to ice skate. None of them had even known how to rollerblade prior to Michael moving into the neighborhood. When the neighborhood children observed Michael outside rollerblading, they began having their parents purchase rollerblades for them. Michael's mother's eyes sparkled as she described a situation that she said often occurred when the neighborhood children got together to rollerblade on the sidewalk in front of their houses. She stated that, "It's kind of funny, after awhile they [the other children] get frustrated because they're not as fast [as Michael]." The other children then would remove their rollerblades and replace them with tennis shoes while instructing Michael to leave his rollerblades on. Michael's mother felt that the children wanted Michael to leave his rollerblades on in order to give them a chance to move about as fast as Michael did.

Michael was also very much aware of his talent in the hockey rink and held his ability in high esteem. Once when he returned from an important out-of-state hockey tournament, he dejectedly explained to me that his team had lost their first game. Michael quickly explained that the cause of the loss was the coach's refusal to put more than one strong team member into the game at once. Michael then explained that he (Michael) had been the only strong player playing in the game. It had been his other team members' "weakness" that had caused their team to ultimately lose the game.

Michael's mother informed me that she was able to use hockey as a motivator to inspire Michael to accomplish his required tasks at home. She said that if he was reluctant to complete chores around the house or homework assignments, she could successfully hold the threat of "no hockey" over his head, and Michael finished his work.

In addition to his competitive nature, Michael could also be described as compliant when he viewed that compliance as being contributory to his ultimate success and expertise in a specific task. Michael was willing to heed his hockey coach's requests to practice isolated hockey skills repeatedly because he believed that this repetitive practice would ultimately make him an even better player. He was also willing to forego participation in other sports that he enjoyed, such as baseball, in order to dedicate more time to bettering his hockey skills. The roots of this compliance may have emanated from his family's military background. His father was currently on active duty in the air force. His mother also had previously been on active duty in the military. The family's view of how to succeed in school aligned with the values of task persistence and repetition of routines that were instilled by both military service and the sport that Michael loved. That view included obeying the directions of those who are in charge, performing tasks as

directed, and repeating work at a specific task until your performance at that task has been enhanced.

Literacy Learning at Home

Michael's parents' support of his literacy learning at home perpetuated this incorporation of embedded routines and compliance in his literacy learning. His parents purchased "fill in the blank" workbooks for Michael at local stores. They selected workbooks that were advertised as appropriate for first grade students for him to work on in his spare time at home. These workbooks contained exercises in literacy that employed the skill and drill repetition of answering questions with distinctly right and wrong answers. Both Michael and his parents perceived that the routine compliance of recording conventional responses in the blanks of these workbooks was helpful to Michael's literacy development.

There were specific routines for Michael's reading regimen at home that also included repetition of a task as well as compliance to a routine system of learning. Michael described this routine as occurring daily without exception. He stated that he read one chapter of a book such as *Henry and Mudge and the Big Sleepover* (Rylant, 2006) each day to his mother. When asked if his parents ever read to him, his reply was, "No. I always have to read to them". Learning to read was perceived as Michael's job. Michael and his parents felt that he would become a better reader through repeated daily practice of the skill at home. At no time during my conversations with either Michael or his parents was the sheer enjoyment of any story in any particular book mentioned. The enjoyment of literacy from an aesthetic stance was not a subject of discussions between

Michael and his parents. Instead, the family's view of success and mastery of the reading task was Michael's ability to conventionally read the words that were printed on the page.

Additionally, his parents supported his efforts in learning to read by purchasing books that were denoted as being on a first grade reading level from the monthly Scholastic book orders that his teacher sent home. They also took Michael to the library in order to check out additional books. Again, at the library, his parents helped him to select books that were at his reading level by having Michael quickly read a randomly selected two or three-sentence excerpt from the book. If Michael could conventionally read those two or three sentences, the book was judged to be on an appropriate reading level and the book was checked out.

Michael's primary experiences in writing at home aligned with his schoolwork. As part of his daily homework assignment from Mrs. Cook, he was required to read nightly and then write a response or short synopsis of the story in his journal which he returned to Mrs. Cook daily. When asked about the writing that he saw his parents do at home, Michael responded that he saw his mother writing addresses and that his father sometimes wrote "important things for work".

Michael commented that his parents helped him with his writing by telling him how to spell the words. This view of helping Michael with writing by helping him to spell words conventionally was substantiated by his father who described a game that they often played to pass the time while traveling long distances in the car to out of state hockey games. Michael's father called out a word and then Michael's job was to spell the word. Michael's father exemplified by saying that he might ask Michael to spell 'chair'. He described Michael's odds for a conventional response as about "fifty-fifty" and then

expounded a bit further by stating that at times Michael might spell such a word conventionally, but at other times Michael might spell the word with other plausible spellings. He explained, “You know like for ‘chair’, he might say “c-h-a-r-e” instead of the “a-i-r” type deal.”

Michael’s parents also purchased some computer games that they felt served beneficial instructional purposes in reading and writing that Michael played on the home computer. These were games that required Michael to read and then type responses that had to be spelled conventionally in order for him to advance levels in the game.

Literacy Learning at School

Consistent with the theme of compliance that was encouraged at home, Michael was dedicated to obeying Mrs. Cook’s instructions and meeting her expectations in the classroom. At our first meeting, Michael’s mother told me that at the beginning of the school year, she had some slight concerns regarding the regimen of Mrs. Cook’s classroom management style. Those concerns had disappeared after school had been in session for approximately two to four weeks. She stated that after watching Michael adapt to the classroom for that amount of time, she determined that Mrs. Cook’s structured management style was beneficial to Michael’s learning.

During my fifteen classroom observations that focused specifically on Michael during his reading and writing instruction, I observed that Michael was consistently on task. During his work in literacy corners, he consistently worked to complete whatever skill or task was required. However, he often gave the impression that completing the task was a chore requiring rote routine movements rather than an opportunity to engage with print and learn more about words. For example, on one occasion as I watched him

complete his work at the spelling corner, Michael had a list of words to practice, a small chalkboard, and a piece of chalk. The assignment was to write each spelling word five times on the chalkboard and then enter the words into his learning log. Michael completed the task rapidly, writing each word on the chalkboard with quick strokes of the hand. As he wrote he barely appeared to be looking at the letters he formed on the chalkboard. The words were written close together without any attention to the requisite spacing between words or to the lines that were intended to guide his writing across the board. The words were entered into the learning log with the same swift actions. For Michael, literacy learning was approached with the same repetition and intensity that was required of him as he practiced his drills in the hockey rink.

An Overview of Michael's Reading as Assessed in the Classroom

On his baseline reading assessment in August of his first grade year, Michael was reading a *DRA* (Beaver, 1997) level three text at an instructional level. Peterson (1991) describes books at this level as having:

memorable, repetitive language patterns. The illustrations strongly support most of the text because objects and actions are clearly portrayed without much clutter or extraneous detail. Each book presents a complete message or story that is likely to reflect the experiences or knowledge common to many beginning readers. The language of books at [this level] reflects primarily the syntax and organization of young children's speech. Sentences and books themselves are comparatively short. The print of the text is carefully laid out so that it consistently appears on the same place on the page throughout each book (p. 129).

Mrs. Cook described Michael's reading at the beginning of the school year as word by word with some short phrases. She noted that while there was some intonation in Michael's reading, he was at times reading in a monotone voice. Mrs. Cook observed that at points of difficulty, Michael paused to look at the picture, used some letter-sound associations, and reread the text. She stated that Michael's miscues while reading did not impact the meaning of the story and that Michael was not detecting and self-correcting any of his miscues.

At the end of the first nine-week grading period, Mrs. Cook again assessed Michael using the *Developmental Reading Assessment* (Beaver, 1997). At this time, Michael was reading instructionally on a *DRA* (Beaver, 1997) level six. Text at this level is described by Peterson (1991) as:

continu[ing] to have memorable, repetitive language patterns, but the same pattern does not dominate the entire text. When a pattern is repeated through most or part of [this level of text], it is with more variation than the one or two word changes found in [lower levels of text]. Some books [at this level] do not have consistent sentence patterns that are repeated. Instead, phrases or groups of words may appear to express different meanings through a slightly different sentence structure (pp. 129-130).

Michael's reading was described by his teacher as occurring in short phrases in a voice that was primarily monotone and contained very little intonation. At points of difficulty, Mrs. Cook observed that Michael looked at the picture and used some knowledge of letter-sound associations. She also noted that, at times, he problem solved by breaking words into syllables. Michael did have some miscues that interfered with the

meaning of the text. However, he did self-monitor and self-correct some significant errors. Mrs. Cook also noted that when she asked Michael if he would rather read a book to someone or to have someone read a book to him, Michael responded that he preferred to have others read books to him. Michael explained that he would rather look at the pictures while someone else did the reading.

The next time that Mrs. Cook formally assessed Michael's reading was at the end of the second nine-week grading period. At this time, Michael was reading instructionally at a *DRA* (Beaver, 1997) level ten. Peterson (1991) describes text at this level as:

exhibit[ing] a great deal of variation in sentence pattern. Some books contain repeated language patterns, but the sentences are longer than those at earlier levels or they serve as refrains rather than as primary carriers of meaning. A written style of language becomes more prominent as well as the use of some verb forms not often used by young children in oral settings (p. 131).

Mrs. Cook described Michael's oral reading at this time as occurring in longer phrases than she had observed during the previous reading assessment. However, she still described the reading as having some intonation, but being monotone at times. Mrs. Cook stated that when Michael reached a point of difficulty in his reading, he was looking at larger chunks of the unknown word such as clusters of letters or syllables of the unknown word to problem-solve. Mrs. Cook also stated that at these points of difficulty, Michael searched the picture for additional support, reread the text, and made multiple attempts at the unknown word. On this assessment, Michael had a single miscue that interfered with the meaning of the text. The text had read, "Mom got some purple and yellow flowers. She put them in a tall vase" (Beaver, 1997). In his reading, Michael substituted the word

“vest” for “vase”. Michael’s substitution was another noun that was visually similar to the noun in the text. Both nouns shared the same initial visual information (the letter “v”). However, Michael’s substitution was not meaningful and Michael did not notice or make an attempt to self-correct the miscue.

Once again, Mrs. Cook asked Michael whether he would rather read a book to someone else or have someone else read a book to him. Michael’s response was the same as it had been on the previous assessment. He stated that he preferred to have someone else read to him so that he could look more closely at the pictures while hearing the story. This statement by Michael was especially interesting given that, when asked, Michael stated that no one at home read to him. He perceived that as part of his job of learning to read, he was required to read to his parents at home.

The end of the data collection period for this study coincided with the end of the third nine-week period of classroom instruction. At this time Mrs. Cook again assessed Michael on the *DRA* (Beaver, 1997) and found that he was reading instructionally at a level 16. Peterson (1991) describes text at this level as:

longer stories or sequences of events. The events in these narratives are often developed more fully than individual books at lower levels. The vocabulary is rich and varied, and there is no effort to repeat words solely to serve as signposts for novice readers. Words used often are those that would be high-frequency words in the natural context of the language. Written language forms are more common than oral language forms. Illustrations help to create and portray the atmosphere of each story, but they do not specifically depict the content of the text. A major challenge to readers at [this level] is to follow a text

layout that might have full pages of print. At [this level], single episodes are often longer than entire books at the lower levels (p. 132).

Mrs. Cook described Michael's oral reading during this assessment as occurring in longer phrases most of the time with an appropriate reading rate. She felt that Michael's use of intonation when reading had improved and described him as adjusting his intonation appropriately to convey the meaning of the text and also to attend to the punctuation of the text. She stated that at points of difficulty, Michael was pausing and rereading to search for additional information. Mrs. Cook stated that, at times, Michael's miscues interfered with the meaning of the text, but that Michael had monitored and self-corrected those errors that had changed the meaning of the text. For example, when reading a text that read, "The elf began to jerk this way and that way" (Beaver, 1997), Michael read, "The elf began to jeerk". Realizing he had used a word that was not making sense, Michael reread to the beginning of the sentence, self-correcting his miscue on the second reading of the sentence.

In conversation following the assessment, Michael linked the story he had just read to a personal experience with his younger brother. He stated that the story, which had been about a character named Grumble being tricked by an elf, reminded him of a time when he had played a trick on his younger brother.

An Overview of the Instructional Format of Literacy Instruction Michael Encountered in the Classroom

Because this study was designed to look at the relationships that exist between literary language encountered by the proficient emerging literacy learner in reading and the corresponding literacy language used in that student's writing, I will be

interconnecting what each student produced during his/her writing instruction and integrating those observations with what was occurring during guided reading instruction. The discussion that follows will weave what was observed happening in guided reading texts encountered by Michael during his reading instruction with the text that Michael produced during his writing workshop.

Mrs. Cook utilized a writing workshop format to deliver her writing instruction. Each writing workshop session began with a mini-lesson on a particular facet of the writing process, followed by a block of time where students would write and Mrs. Cook circulated among her students to hold individual conferences. Writing workshop ended with an approximately ten minute block of time for students to share their work. The daily time allotted specifically for student writing following the mini-lesson and prior to the class's share time usually lasted approximately twenty minutes.

Mrs. Cook's reading instruction also followed a workshop format. While other children in the classroom worked in heterogeneous groups at literacy centers, Mrs. Cook worked with a homogeneous (based on *DRA* levels) reading group at a table located at the rear of the classroom.

Mrs. Cook provided a book introduction for the book she had selected for the students to read. Students previewed and discussed illustrations contained in the book. Mrs. Cook also had the students locate and discuss various vocabulary words that she felt might interfere with the students' understanding of the story. Following this introduction, students were asked to read the entire text either silently or in a soft voice. As the entire group was reading, Mrs. Cook leaned in closer one at a time to each individual student, asking that student to read a bit louder while she listened and noted the student's problem

solving strategic activity and reading fluency. Mrs. Cook prompted each student individually as needed during the short time that she listened, then moved her attention to another student where the instructional practice was repeated. Mrs. Cook's time with each reading group lasted approximately thirty minutes. When the group's reading instruction had ended, Mrs. Cook would announce to the students in the class that it was time to rotate centers and another reading group met with Mrs. Cook at the reading table.

Mrs. Cook's classroom was comprised of five reading groups. Depending on the schedule for the particular day, Mrs. Cook met with two to three reading groups daily. Over the course of a week's time, Mrs. Cook was able to meet with each reading group two to three times.

Although the school year began in August, Mrs. Cook waited until September before implementing writing workshop in her classroom. During the time of this study, Michael produced forty-four pieces of writing during his classroom writing workshop time. Michael's first piece was dated September 25th and the last piece included in this study was written on March 4th. This number of completed pieces is significantly more than that produced by his peers. By comparison, the other two participants in this study produced nineteen and fifteen written artifacts.

During his reading instruction, Michael read 21-leveled texts with his classroom teacher during his guided reading lessons over the course of time that data was collected for this study. This is the same number of books read by the other two participants in the study. Michael began the school year reading text at a level three. School district expectations were that a child exit kindergarten between a reading level four to six in order to be considered as reading at a proficient level. Some regression in reading levels

occurring over the summer break is considered by teaching staff as common. Also, because the difference in difficulty between the lower levels of texts is minute, Michael's entry into first grade at a level three was still considered to be within an average reading band for a student entering first grade. By March, Michael was reading at a level 16. The district expectation for a first grade student at the time of the third quarter reading assessment in March was level 12-14. By this standard, Michael was reading slightly above where he was expected to be performing.

In writing, Michael was able to out-produce his peers because his writing routine was unlike most of his classmates. The other students often started the twenty minutes of time set aside for writing by rereading a piece that they had been working on the day before. His peers, at times, shared a sentence or phrase that they were particularly proud of with other students sitting near them. His peers also spent some time at the beginning of the writing block sharpening pencils, rereading stories they had written on previous days, or just chatting briefly with their classmates. It was not uncommon for his classmates to continue writing for several days on a single story. Michael, on the other hand, consistently started and completed a new piece of writing each day. This behavior was noted during my initial observation of Michael and continued until the time that the observations were completed. He viewed his task as completing the story that he started within the time allotted and saw sharing pieces of what he had written with his tablemates as a distraction that interfered with the completion of his task.

Michael always began writing on his story immediately upon his return to his table following Mrs. Cook's mini-lesson. During this time, Michael appeared to be

deeply concentrating on the task at hand. This was evidenced by his following the same daily routine during the writing portion of the writing workshop block of time.

Each day he began a new story on a blank sheet of paper. For approximately twenty minutes, he wrote continuously. He viewed his task as getting as much writing onto the paper as possible. He rarely stopped to reread his work or to share his writing with other students working at his table. Michael seemed to have the necessary timing down within those twenty minutes that allowed him to begin a new piece of writing, finish it to his satisfaction, and draw an accompanying illustration. There were some days when he completed this process twice.

Michael developed a style of writing at the beginning of the year that supported his ability to accomplish this. Each story was a string of sentences about a specific topic. Michael's writing could be described as a list of autobiographical facts related to a personal event that he either had already experienced or anticipated to occur in the near future. His stories could be described as anecdotal entries in a journal or diary. Even though the events in Michael's writing are autobiographical, they were not often a chronological description of events or experiences. They were merely statements referring to an event in his life. Because most of his writing did not entail a storyline with a definitive beginning, middle, and end, Michael was able to end each piece of writing by simply finishing the sentence he was currently writing whenever Mrs. Cook signaled that the writing time was about to end. Mrs. Cook signaled the end of the writing time by telling the class that they needed to find a good stopping place for the day and return to the classroom library area in order for some students to be able to share their writing from the day. A quick glance at samples of Michael's work from throughout the school year

shows that Michael varied little from this style of writing throughout the eight months of observations.

Change Over Time in Michael's Demonstration of Understanding of Written Composition While Encountering Guided Reading Leveled Text of Increasing Difficulty

In order to more closely examine the relationships that occurred between text that Michael encountered during guided reading sessions with his classroom teacher and the text that Michael produced during the writing workshop portion of his school day, the discussion of those texts will occur simultaneously during this analysis. Examination of relationships that occurred and how those relationships changed over time in both the writing that Michael produced and the text that Michael encountered will be scrutinized side by side throughout this investigation.

The following sample of Michael's writing in Figure 9 was from the beginning of the school year and was produced by him on September 28, 2007. The text reads, "I like Mrs. Cook because she helps me make my letters because she is the best teacher in the whole wide world".

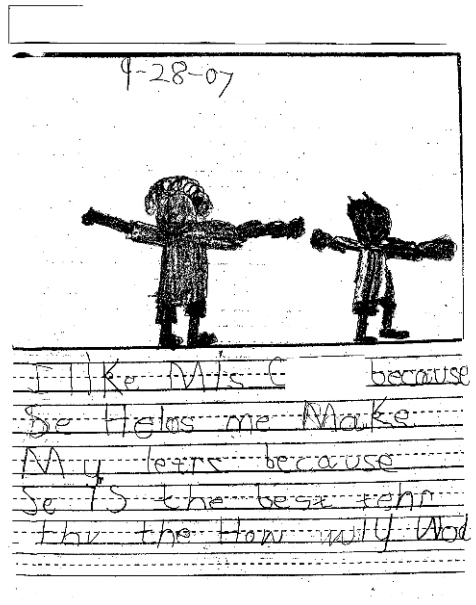


Figure 9 Michael's writing dated September 28, 2007

Michael's writing at this time followed the same structure as that utilized in his oral language. In his writing, Michael was simply telling the reader about someone he admired along with a simple explanation of why. This writing consisted of a single run-on sentence comprised of 22 words. The text is not patterned or repetitive. Michael did, however, demonstrate an understanding of basic writing conventions. He showed an understanding that letters combined to make words and that leaving spaces between words was important. He also showed an understanding that writing was used to convey a message to the reader. Michael used his writing time to convey a message that was important to him. If he understood that his main reader in the classroom would be his teacher, he was also demonstrating an understanding that writing can be a powerful tool used to flatter the reader with the implication that the reader should return the compliment by developing a liking for him.

During this same time, Michael was reading text such as *The Pond* (Boland, 1997). Each page of this level three text contained from three to eight words written on one to two lines. The text followed a simple sentence format. The first two pages of the book followed the pattern of, “The pond is . . .” followed by a single word describing the pond. The text pattern changed for the next four pages which described what various residents or elements of the habitat do. For example, “A turtle sits in the sun.” (Boland, 1997, unpagged). The final page of the text is a repetition of the text found on the first two pages of the book.

At this time of Michael’s literacy learning, he was able to produce a single sentence in writing that was longer and more complex than those he encountered in guided reading text. His written sentence contained three times as many words as any sentence contained in *The Pond* (Boland, 1997). Michael also conveyed strong feelings in his writing. *The Pond* (Boland, 1997) conveyed only simple facts regarding the subject matter of the book. No emotions pertaining to the subject were included in the text.

By October, Michael was producing longer written pieces that covered the bottom front of his writing paper and extended onto the back side. Figure 10 was produced on October 15, 2007 and reads, “I love my mom because we always play together every day and we play with my baby brother and we love each other and sometimes we play outside and we like to play every day and we all play together and we go places together and we really love each other”.

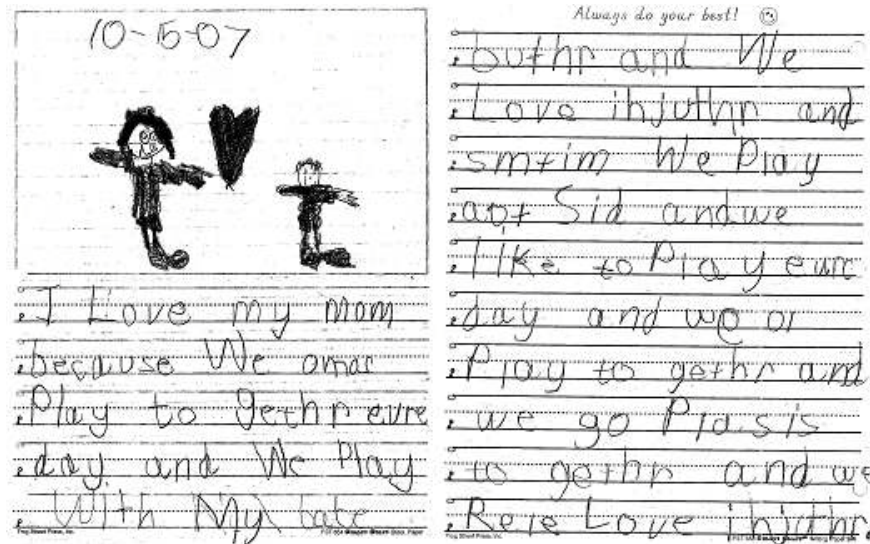


Figure 10 Michael's writing dated October 15, 2007

At this time of the school year, Michael had produced nine pieces of writing during the class's writing workshop time. Of those nine pieces, eight began with the phrase, "I like..." or "I love..." The single piece that did not begin in this manner was written about his family and began, "My mom..." The topics included places that he enjoyed playing, friends that he enjoyed playing with, places he liked to go, his teacher, and his family. His writing at this time consisted of a single run-on sentence that covered both the front and back of his writing paper. His writing was not yet showing evidence of the development of a sense of story by containing details of a story or events that are related in chronological order. He was, however, using writing as a tool to express emotional attachment to events or people that were important to him. His expression of emotion extended to the illustration that included his mother and himself with a large colored heart hanging in the air between the two. Michael was maintaining a single topic throughout the piece of writing. He was also giving many supporting details that described the emotional relationship that he had with his mother.

At this time, Michael was developing a sense that longer stories were better stories. He wrote quickly, forming letters and words quickly and fluently, using both conventionally spelled high frequency words and recording sounds that he could hear through the slow articulation of words whose conventional spelling was unfamiliar to him. As described previously, he wrote rapidly in a determined fashion to get as much writing completed as possible prior to his teacher signaling that the time for writing had come to a close.

At this time in guided reading, Michael was encountering stories in his guided reading sessions that also illustrated close familial attachments. A level seven text that Michael read with his teacher in guided reading during this time was *Sam Goes to School* (Giles, 2000). This was a story about a young girl's first day of school. Sam was hesitant to leave the security of her mother to spend the day with children and a teacher that she did not know. The book followed a common story format that presented the young student with a problem (not wanting to leave her mother to attend school) and then the resolution of that problem (the children and teacher befriend Sam and help her feel comfortable in her new surroundings).

In addition to the problem/resolution design of the guided reading story, the story also included multiple other literary elements within the text. The story began with a dialogue sequence between Sam and her mother stating that Sam would be going to school that day. Both the problem and resolution of the storyline are presented through the dialogue of the text along with the accompanying illustrations. The placement of dialogue carriers utilized within this text varied and included being located at the beginning, middle, and at the end of the dialogue. The tension that Sam felt about staying

in the classroom without her mother was implied in the text and through the illustrations rather than explicitly told. “Sam looked at the teacher. She looked at the girls and boys” (Giles, 2000, p. 7). An ellipsis was used within a sentence to portray Sam’s hesitation about remaining in the classroom without her mother. “Sam said, “Mom . . . will you stay here with me?” (Giles, 2000, p. 7).

Punctuation in this story was more elaborate than the simple use of periods at the end of sentences that Michael had encountered in previous guided reading text. In addition to the ellipsis, other punctuation marks included quotation marks, question marks, commas, and periods.

Michael began producing written pieces that described personal experiences and also incorporated a chronological passage of time during the event being described during the last week in October. Figure 11 is dated October 24, 2007 and reads, “I like to go at my hockey games first we played the M___ and they were the away post then we played the opposite team then we played the away post again and we won the three games and we got the first trophy ever.” In this piece, Michael described his recent hockey play-off series in chronological order. He used the words “first”, “then”, and “again” to describe the order in which specific events occurred. As he had often done since the beginning of the school year, Michael used writing to express emotion. The events in his story end in an extremely climatic moment with his team winning the “first trophy ever”. The reader easily feels Michael’s excitement of being a member of the winning team. In this piece, Michael introduced his topic at the beginning of the piece in what would have been the first sentence, had his writing been divided into sentences. Michael remained focused on the single event of the hockey tournament throughout his writing. He described the events

broadly as a listing of the three games that his team played, not telling the reader the results of the individual games until near the end of the piece. Michael saved his most important facts (winning three games and getting the first trophy ever) until the end of his piece. This strategic placement emphasized to the reader that these two facts were indeed the most important part of the story that he was telling. The style of writing in this piece followed Michael’s oral language patterns. His voice is readily apparent as the reader “hears” Michael telling of the events recorded in the writing.

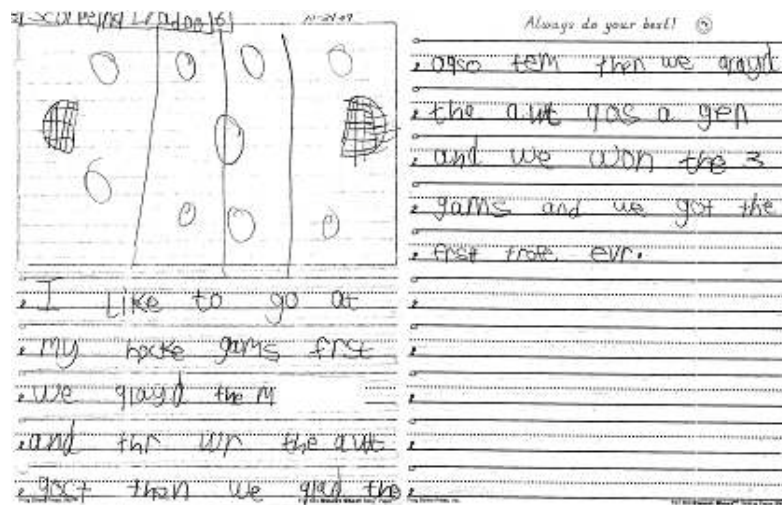


Figure 11 Michael’s writing dated October 24, 2007

While Michael almost always stayed at least generally on the topic with which he began his daily writing, he did occasionally stray from the topic he first initiated. On November 14, 2007, Michael generated the piece of writing found in Figure 12. This piece reads, “I like school. It is fantastic at school. And one time C___ and me said to R___ you are a cheater pants because you say mean words to C___ and me but you live by me so I can’t throw stuff over the fence the end.”

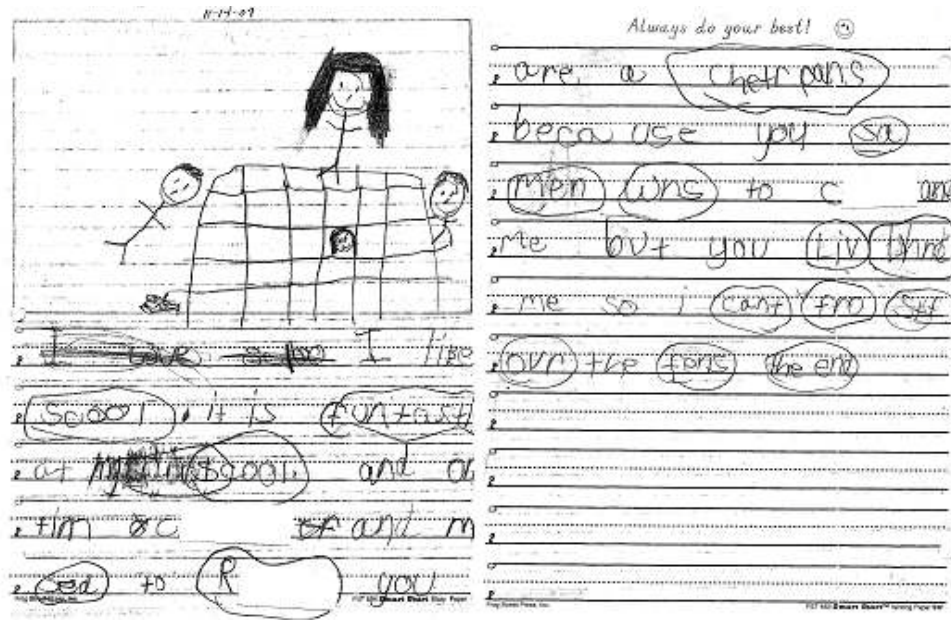


Figure 12 Michael's writing dated November 14, 2007

This piece of writing was interesting in multiple respects. First, this piece showed that Michael had begun revising and editing his work. A close look at what Michael crossed through at the beginning shows that initially, Michael wrote that he loved school. The first three words, “I love school” were scratched out and rewritten as “I like school”. Michael opted to select and use the less intensely emotional word of “like” for “love”. Michael made this revision “on the run” as soon as he had written the first three words as opposed to waiting until his piece was finished to return to the beginning of his writing to revise his work. Michael’s teacher had begun to demonstrate the process of revision. However, Mrs. Cook’s modeling of the revision process always showed revision as happening after the completion of the original draft. Michael, in fact, declined to wait until his first draft was complete before returning to the beginning of the piece to revise. In fact, Michael somehow innately knew to do what is typically done by most authors.

That is to complete initial revisions as the work progressed rather than waiting until the piece was completed before rereading the piece to make any revisions.

Michael had also learned from his teacher's writing mini-lesson that he could circle words when he was unsure of the spelling. It is interesting to note that Michael had a definite sense of what he did and did not know regarding the conventional spelling of words. This piece contained a total of 47 words. Michael circled 18 of those words because he was unsure of their conventional spelling. Of the 18 words that Michael circled, the only two words that were indeed spelled conventionally were the final two—"the end". Of the 27 words that were not circled, only one word, "time", was not spelled conventionally. It is interesting to note that in the last line, "the" is spelled conventionally both times that it appears. However, Michael only circled the second "the" and it is included with a second word "end" when it is circled. One can only speculate why this occurred at the time of this writing. Michael wrote the word "the" multiple times in his writing. He never previously doubted how it was spelled. However, "the end" is the only time that Michael circled a phrase. Prior to this, Michael circled words individually even if multiple questionable words appeared consecutively. Michael may have felt that when it appeared in "the end" it became one of two words that combined to form a single concept. Michael was unsure of whether he had spelled the concept conventionally, not realizing that this was still the word "the" that he had previously written so often and spelled conventionally.

After two sentences on the topic of liking school, Michael's writing suddenly changed course as his emotions took over and he began writing about his anger towards a fellow school-mate and neighbor who had been saying unkind things to both Michael and

his friend. Michael also expressed feelings of frustration as he was not allowed to retaliate against his adversary's unkind comments. Somehow, Michael knew that he needed to not act out his feelings of anger in order to keep peace in the neighborhood. Whether Michael came to this understanding on his own or whether he was instructed by someone in authority (such as his parents) to not react with angry acts of his own was not clear. What was evident was that Michael felt the need to express his angry emotions on paper. While it frustrated Michael that throwing objects over his neighbor's fence was a socially unacceptable method of expressing anger, putting that anger into words was acceptable. It appeared that Michael was turning to written expression as a type of socially acceptable venue for venting his anger.

As the year progressed, Michael increased the amount that he wrote daily by adding more sentences to his stories. The following example in Figure 13 was produced on November 29, 2007. The text in this sample reads, "I am going to the pool today. We are going to the grocery store. I am going to the Wal-Mart today. And we are going to the ice cream shop. I am going to a special place. We are going to my aunt's and uncle's house. And we have to go all the way to Colorado. And we are going to the Japanese place. And we are going to the other house".

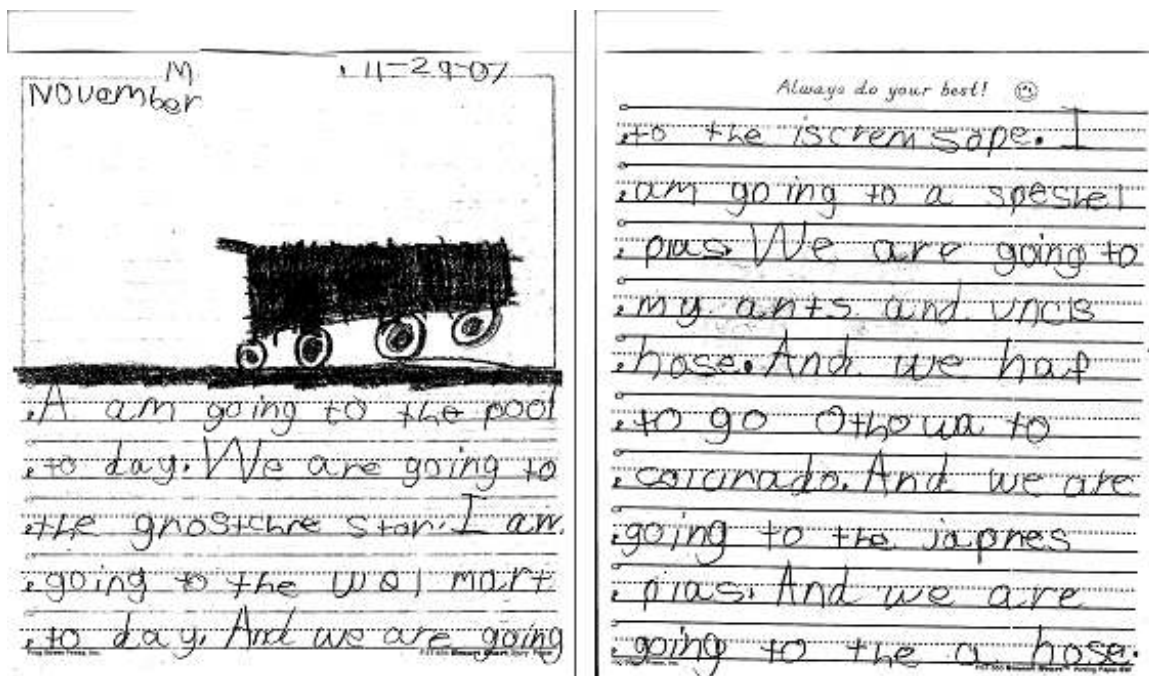


Figure 13 Michael's writing produced November, 29, 2007

At this time, Michael's daily writing procedure continued to be one of quickly getting as much writing as he could onto the paper during the allotted writing time. His style of writing was to record a compilation of related sentences resembling a diary entry listing the events that were about to unfold. Had Mrs. Cook asked the class to end their writing five minutes prior to the time that she did, Michael still would have viewed his writing for the day as complete. Had Mrs. Cook extended the writing time by five additional minutes, Michael most likely would have continued adding sentences to his composition, probably listing additional places that he would visit with his family.

During this time in Michael's writing, Michael frequently used the phrase "going to" as a transition from one event to the next event in his writing. In the above example, Michael used this phrase eight times as he listed for his reader the places that he would be visiting in a short amount of time. Michael did not expound on what would occur at each of the different places. For example, he did not state that he would be swimming at the

pool or shopping at either the grocery store or Wal-Mart. The activities that would occur at each location were usually left for the reader to infer. The above piece did include one sentence that expanded on going to his aunt and uncle's house by stating that to visit his aunt and uncle, Michael's family would be taking a long trip to Colorado.

At this time, Mrs. Cook had begun selecting several nonfiction texts for Michael's guided reading group to read. Because nonfiction genre can be more difficult for students to read and comprehend due to its different text structure and content, Mrs. Cook had selected texts at a slightly lower reading level for her students to read. An example of the text Michael was reading at this time was the level five text, *Rules* (Parkes, 2000). This was a nonfiction text. Each page consisted of a single sentence stating different types of rules that exist. The sentences ranged from five to eight words and comprised either one or two lines of text. The text print was larger than that found in books read by adults and the spaces between each word were also larger than what is conventionally found in most books. The illustrations of the text were somewhat supportive. However, the pictures found in this text provided less support than those of the level three text discussed earlier. For example, one page of the text reads, "We have rules for play" (Parkes, 2000, p.3). The accompanying illustration showed two boys rollerblading. While the picture did show two boys playing, the illustration did not support conventional reading of the specific word "play".

The content of Michael's writing at this time somewhat mirrored what he encountered in guided reading. Michael's text began by listing several different places that he would be going. Each individual sentence that Michael wrote listed a single place that he would be going. Each page of the text from his guided reading listed a single type

of rules that exist. While all of Michael's sentences were contained on two written pages, the first four sentences that he wrote were a listing similar to what Michael encountered during his guided reading text. Michael's fifth sentence, "I am going to a special place" appeared to trigger a need for him to add several details describing where this special place was and what he would do when he got there. In this regard, Michael's writing showed a sophistication that exceeded the simplicity of the leveled texts that he was reading at the time that this piece was written.

Figure 14 is a sample of Michael's writing collected near the end of this study. It showed an emerging story line as Michael wrote about spending the night at his friend's house. However, embedded within that story Michael included a listing of activities occurring at the friend's house. The sample is dated March 4, 2008 and reads, "I like to go to my friends' houses. We are spending the night at S___'s house. I love to go at S___'s house and it is fun there. Because we get to play hockey. We ate bread sticks at S___'s house and Cheetos. I was goalie and I was super good."

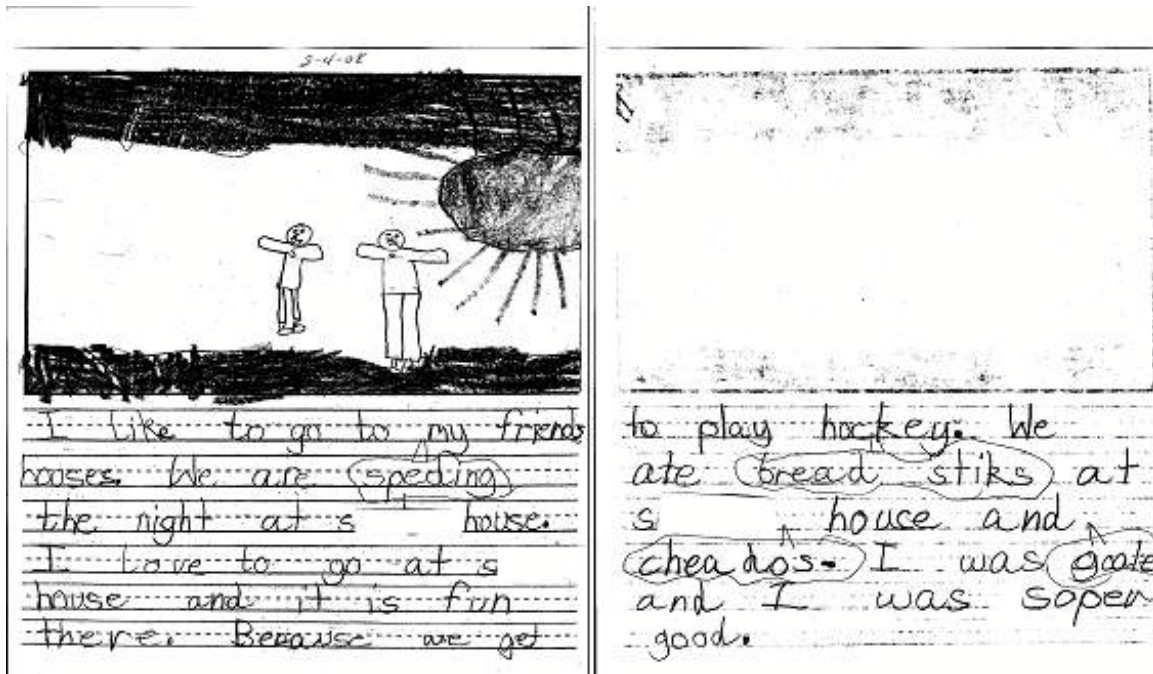


Figure 14 Michael's writing dated March 4, 2008

In this piece, Michael was beginning to come to a sense of sequence in his writing. He did not use transitional words or phrases to define the order of events. However, the piece was written logically in an order that could have occurred sequentially. The reader of this piece is left with a feeling that the writing has a sense of order. The ending leaves the reader with the feeling of emphasis that Michael placed on the knowledge that he excelled at something that was most important to him—his skill as a hockey player. This was accomplished through the incorporation of literary language in describing his skill of being a goalie as “super good”.

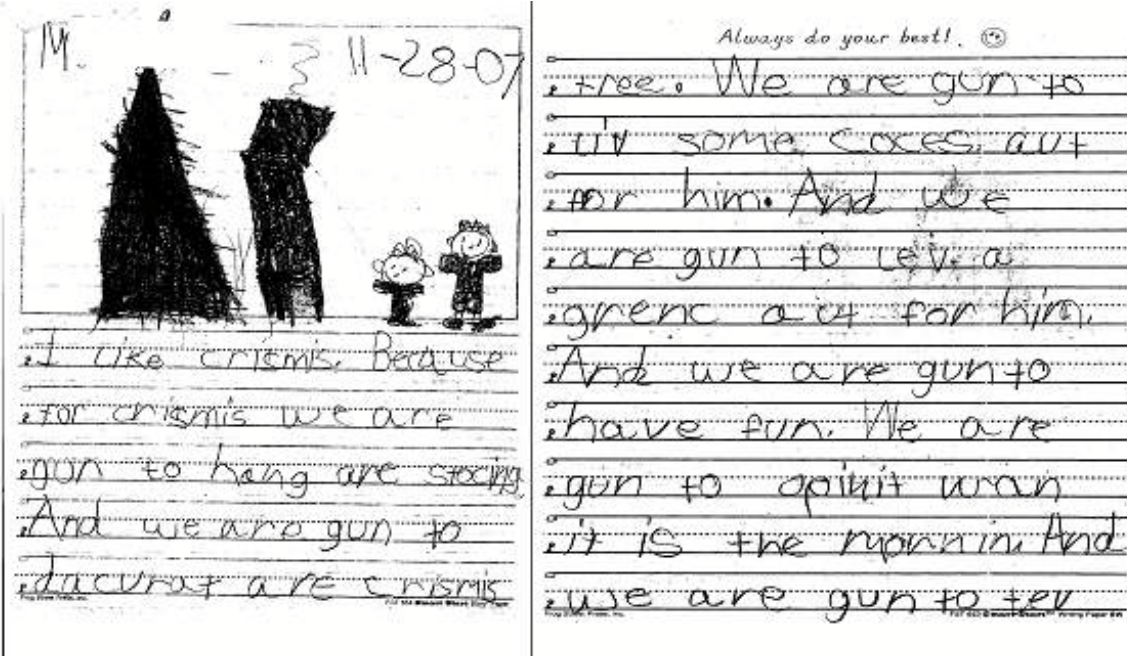
Michael was now providing details in his writing that supported his personal opinions. His development as a writer had become more literary as his sentences increased in complexity. He moved from being a writer at the beginning of the school year whose writing was composed of a single, long run-on sentence. By the end of the third quarter of the school year, Michael utilized compound sentences the nature of which

included supporting arguments and details rather than a list of events or happenings. He moved from merely telling a fact or event to showing through elaboration of events and explaining how it happened. In the previous piece of Michael's writing, Michael first told his reader that "it is fun". He then went into detail with events that illustrated to his reader why it was fun—they had played hockey and eaten snacks.

Throughout the eight months of observations, Michael's view of writing changed initially as he wrote longer pieces. His first stories contained a single, run-on sentence comprised of 16 words and covered only half of a piece of writing paper with an illustration covering the top half of his paper. Two weeks into the observation period, Michael's writing had increased to an average range of 40-50 words per piece. The writing filled the bottom half of the front page of his writing paper and also covered part of the back side. Mrs. Cook's writing paper always allocated room for an illustration to be drawn on the top half of the front page. By the end of the first month of observations, Michael was consistently writing longer stories that either continued onto the back of his writing paper or onto a second piece of paper. Michael's longest stories were written between the last of October and the end of December. During this time he wrote four pieces that contained from 72 to 92 words. His longest writing was composed on November 28 and contained 92 words. This longest piece is shown in Figure 15 and reads:

I like Christmas. Because for Christmas we are going to hang our stockings and we are going to decorate our Christmas tree. We are going to leave some cookies out for him. And we are going to leave a drink out for him. And we are going to have fun. We are going to open it when it is the morning. And we are

going to leave out a present for Santa Claus and we are going to leave some cups and plates and we are going to have a merry Christmas.

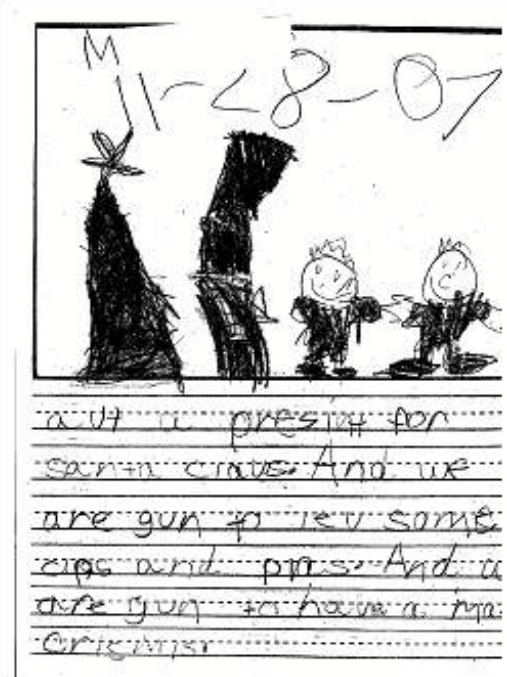


M. 11-28-07

tree. We are gun to
 get some coxes, and
 for him. And we
 are gun to let a
 grenc a ut for him.
 And we are gun to
 have fun. We are
 gun to spirit wra
 it is the mornin. And
 we are gun to let

I like crismis. Because
 for crismis we are
 gun to hang are stocking
 And we are gun to
 dactur are crismis

Always do your best! ☺



M. 11-28-07

with a present for
 santa claus. And we
 are gun to let some
 cups and plates. And we
 are gun to have a merr
 crismis

Figure 15 Michael's writing dated November 28, 2007

Michael accomplished writing longer pieces even though the amount of time that his teacher allotted for writing time remained consistent. Michael achieved this because the task of writing was becoming increasingly easier for him. As time progressed, he was able to write high frequency words more quickly than he had initially been able. His personal corpus of known high frequency words that he could write easily and fluently was increasing. The result was that these words could be written without as much attention to detail. As he developed the ability to record more words with less attention and thought, his attention could then be turned to focus on developing and adding to the content of what he was writing. His ability to hear and record the sounds in the words he was writing as he slowly articulated them was increasing. He was also learning and using more complex spelling patterns contained in more complex words. This change will be discussed in more detail in the section related to orthography in this chapter.

Change Over Time in Michael's Use of Conventions

At the beginning of the school year, Michael's written pieces consisted of either a single sentence punctuated with a period at the end of the piece or a run-on sentence that contained anywhere from two to six sentences with the only punctuation being a single period at the end of the piece. This pattern of utilizing only a single period placed at the end of his writing continued until the end of October. At this time, Michael began including multiple periods in his writing. An analysis of where Michael initially chose to place the periods in his writing shows that Michael was negotiating his understanding of the concept of a sentence. Figure 16 is what Michael wrote when he first used multiple periods in his writing. It is dated October 23, 2007 and reads, "I love to go at my hockey practice. And it is fun. At my hockey practice. And we play. Scrimmage and it is fun. At

my hockey practice. Even we play freeze tag. at my hockey practice. Even We play move the puck. Away from the pole and we have to make it to the blue line and one time i won the game that i won the game. And our team won.”

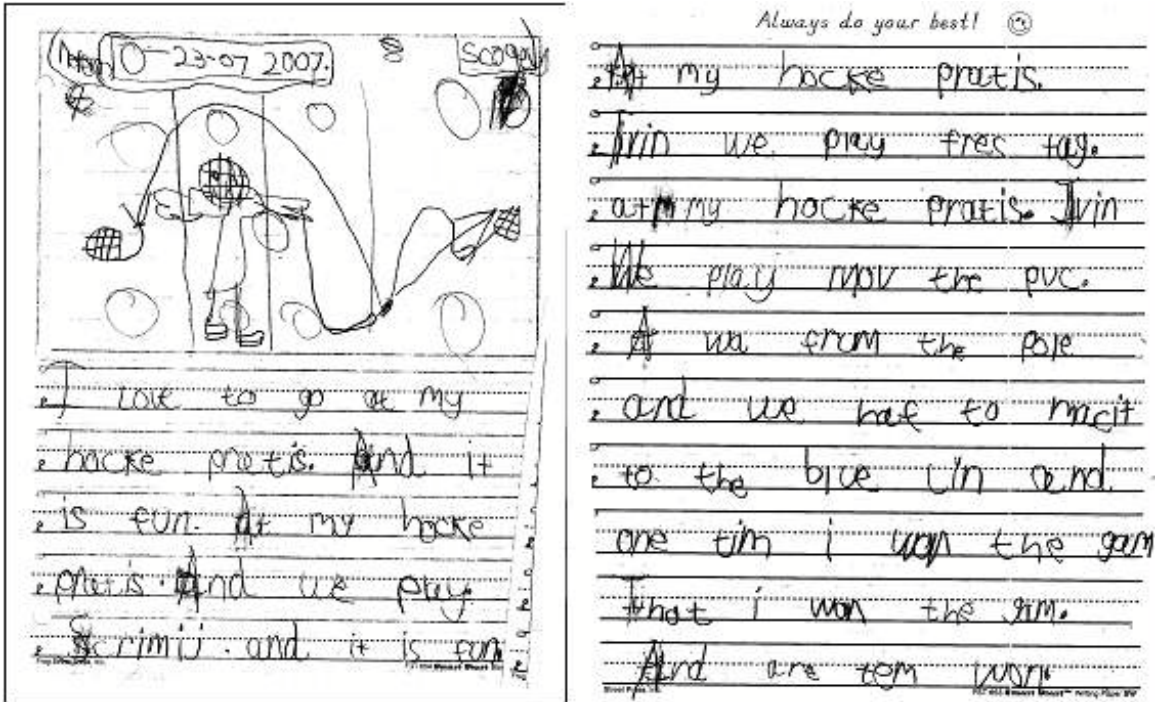


Figure 16 Michael’s writing dated October 23, 2007

Although at first glance it may appear that Michael’s placement of the periods was random and could be construed as evidence that Michael did not understand how to conventionally utilize periods at this time, a closer examination revealed that he had developed some understanding of the concept of a sentence as well as the purpose of the period. A close study of this piece revealed that Michael did have a reason for placing the periods where he did.

An inspection of the writing revealed that this piece was originally written as one very long run-on sentence. Erasure marks showed that a lower case letter was erased and replaced with an upper case letter on every word that follows his placement of a period.

Michael added the periods and capitals when he edited his original sentence. A sentence-by-sentence examination of the writing revealed Michael's thought process and rationale for placing the periods where he did. His first sentence states, "I love to go at my hockey practice." Michael placed a period at the end of this initial sentence, then erased the lower case "a" on "and" replacing it with an upper case "A".

His second sentence reads, "And it is fun." Technically these four words can be considered a sentence. Michael recognized them as a sentence and punctuated them with a period at the end. So far, Michael was grammatically correct in selecting where to place the periods. The next sentence reads, "At my hockey practice." What Michael did not realize is that these four words comprised a prepositional phrase that cannot stand alone as a sentence and should have been left in the same sentence as the four-word sentence that preceded it. Michael did realize that they did not belong with his next sentence and so made the decision to end the prepositional phrase with a period and begin a new sentence.

His next sentence reads, "And we play." Michael recognized that these three words contained a complete thought and could be punctuated as a sentence. He placed a period after the word play, erased the lower case "s" on "scrimmage" and replaced it with an upper case "S" to denote the beginning of a new sentence. A careful examination of Michael's paper revealed what might be a pencil dot placed after the "j" in Michael's rendering of the word "scrimmage". It was not possible to determine if that mark was a merely a stray pencil mark or if Michael intended that mark to be a period. It was placed farther from the last letter of the word that it followed than any of Michael's other periods. In addition, the next letter, a lower case "a" on "and" was not erased and

replaced with an upper case letter as happened at all other places in this piece where Michael had placed a period. It was unclear whether Michael intended his fifth sentence to contain only one word, “Scrimmage.” and the next sentence to contain four words, “and it is fun.” or if the fifth sentence reads, “Scrimmage and it is fun.” At any rate, Michael placed a period after the last word on the page, “fun”. The phrase “and it is fun.” could stand alone as a sentence. Once again, Michael did not understand that the prepositional phrase that followed, “At my hockey practice.” could not stand alone as a sentence and needed to be left connected to his last sentence on the first page of his writing. Michael continued this same pattern of period placement on the second page of his writing. “Even we play freeze tag.” can be considered a complete sentence. Michael realized this and placed a period after the word “tag”. He did not understand that he again had a prepositional phrase, “at my hockey practice.” which needed to remain combined with the main part of the sentence.

This same pattern occurred again in the next sentence. Michael wrote, “Even we play move the puck.” This group of words contained everything necessary to be called a sentence. Recognizing this, Michael placed a period. He did not realize that once again he had added a dependent phrase, “Away from the pole.” that needed to remain connected to the sentence that preceded it. Michael left the second half of his last page of writing as a run-on sentence. He did not edit to create more sentences until the last line of the second page.

The change to conventionally utilizing periods to denote separate sentences occurred gradually over time. Even though Michael utilized multiple periods in his October 23rd work, pieces written on October 24 and October 25 reverted back to the use

of a single run-on sentence in his writing, as shown in Figure 17 and Figure 18. Figure 17 shows Michael's writing from October 24, 2007 and reads, "I like to go at my hockey games first we played the M___ and they were the away post then we played the opposite team then we played the away post again and we won the three games and we got the first trophy ever."

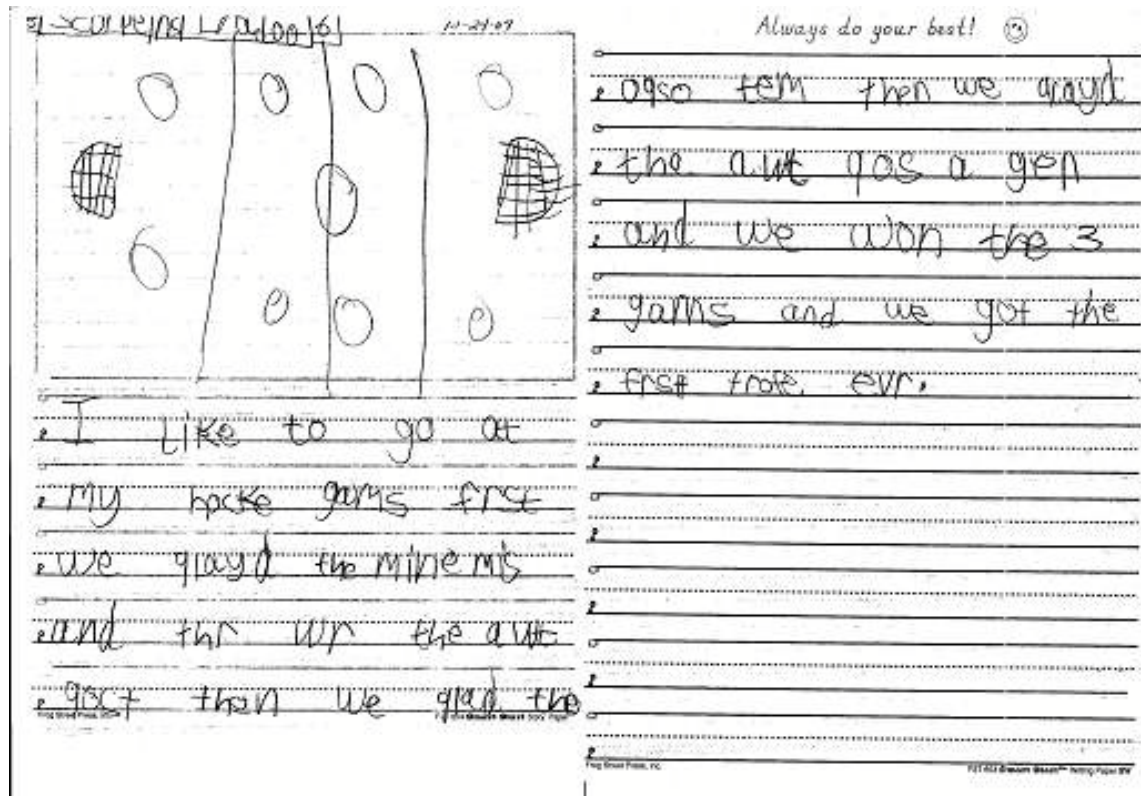


Figure 17 Michael's writing dated October 24, 2007

Figure 18 is dated October 25 and shows that again Michael reverted to the use of a single period placed at the end of the reading. This example of Michael's writing reads, "I like C___ because we play with each other at the school playground and we play with the recess and we play with Ch___ and we have fun then we go on the monkey bars then we go on the swings and we go on the monkey bars again".

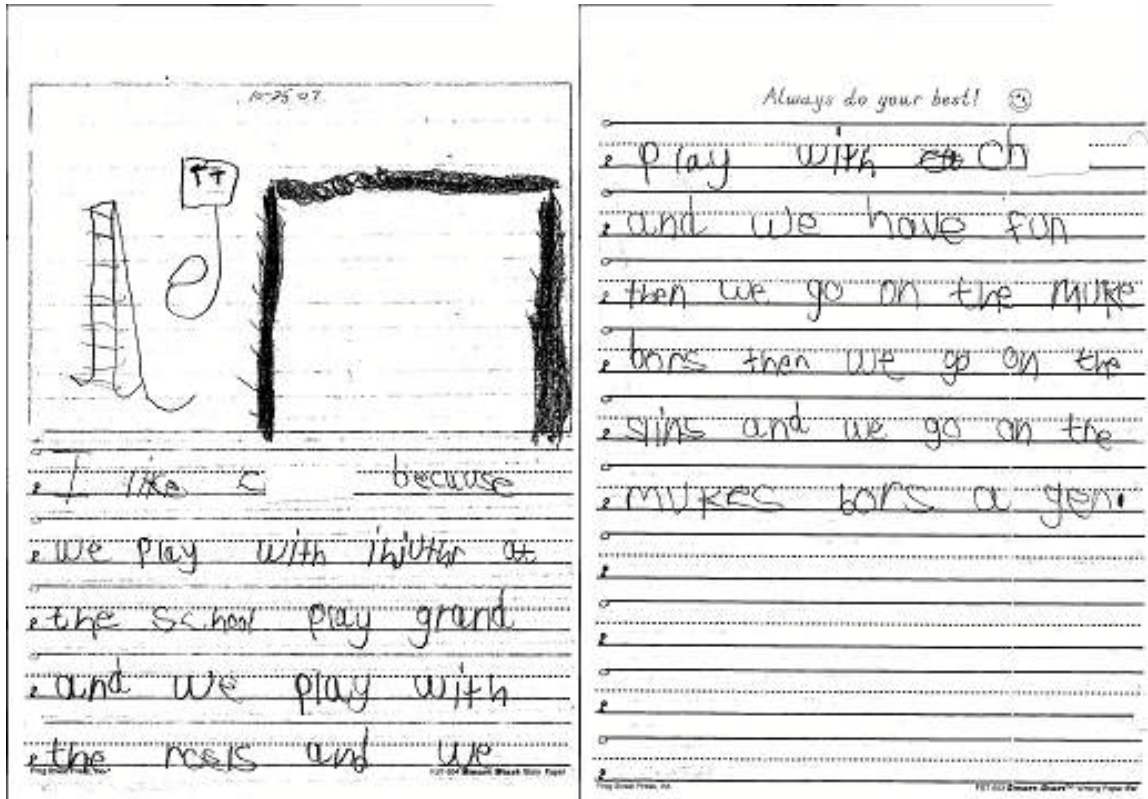


Figure 18 Michael's writing dated October 25, 2007

The use of multiple periods denoting multiple sentences did not occur again until October 29, 2007. Once again, on October 29th when multiple periods were used, Michael placed them at the end of independent phrases. However, he continued at times to place the period prior to a dependent phrase located at the end of a sentence. Figure 19 is Michael's writing dated October 29, 2007 and shows the use of multiple periods throughout the example of writing. It reads, "I like my brother because I love him. And we play in the backyard and the front yard. And we play with our cars. And when I am gone. My brother plays with J___ and he haves fun and he plays football. And my brother plays with Ja___ too. And my brother. Has fun. Super fun".

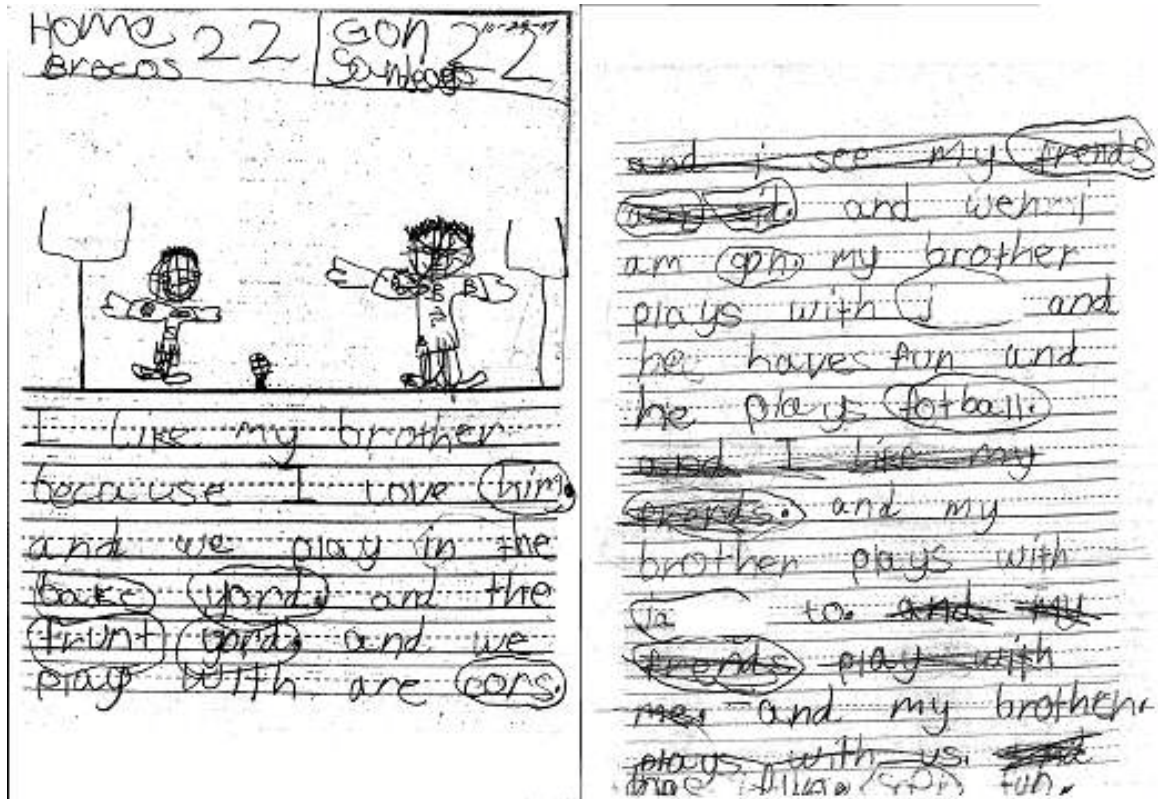


Figure 19 Michael's writing dated October 29, 2007

This piece also appears to have been initially written as one long run-on sentence with the periods having been inserted into the piece of writing upon completion of the piece. Even though Michael had previously exhibited an understanding that each sentence needed to begin with an upper case letter, he did not erase and capitalize letters at the beginnings of his new sentences. Even though this piece of writing occurred only six days after the example where he first utilized multiple periods, Michael's choice of where to place the periods in this piece showed a higher level of sophistication. This piece only contained two places where Michael's choice of period placement resulted in dependent phrases being designated as sentence. Both of these were on the second page of his writing. The first, "And when I am gone." would have conventionally been left as part of the next sentence, "My brother plays with J ___ and he haves fun and he plays football."

The second sentence fragment is the final sentence of the piece, “Super fun.” Even though this last sentence is technically a fragment, it was written in the same manner as is often used by professional writers when emphasis on a particular fact or emotion is desired.

At this time, Michael was encountering texts at a level six in his guided reading group. The text in the books he was encountering was consistently comprised of complete sentences. It would not be until March that Michael would encounter a text in his guided reading group that utilized the same technique. That guided reading book was a level 12 text, *Candlelight* (Randell, 1996). The final two sentences of one page of this text reads, “No one had a light on. No one” (p. 5).

Michael used the technique of a strategically placed sentence fragment to add emphasis to the point being made in the writing five months prior to the encountering the same technique in his guided reading. Michael’s use of this technique can be explained as one that Michael transferred from his oral language into his writing.

Michael continued his personal negotiation of the use of a period throughout the rest of the month of October. His first writing that exhibited conventional usage of the period occurred on November 2, 2007. That sample of writing is shown in Figure 20 and reads, “I like to play with my friends. And we play cars. Then we play with our bikes. Then we go in my backyard. And we do the monkey bars. Then we play football. And we had fun. And it is fantastic outside.”

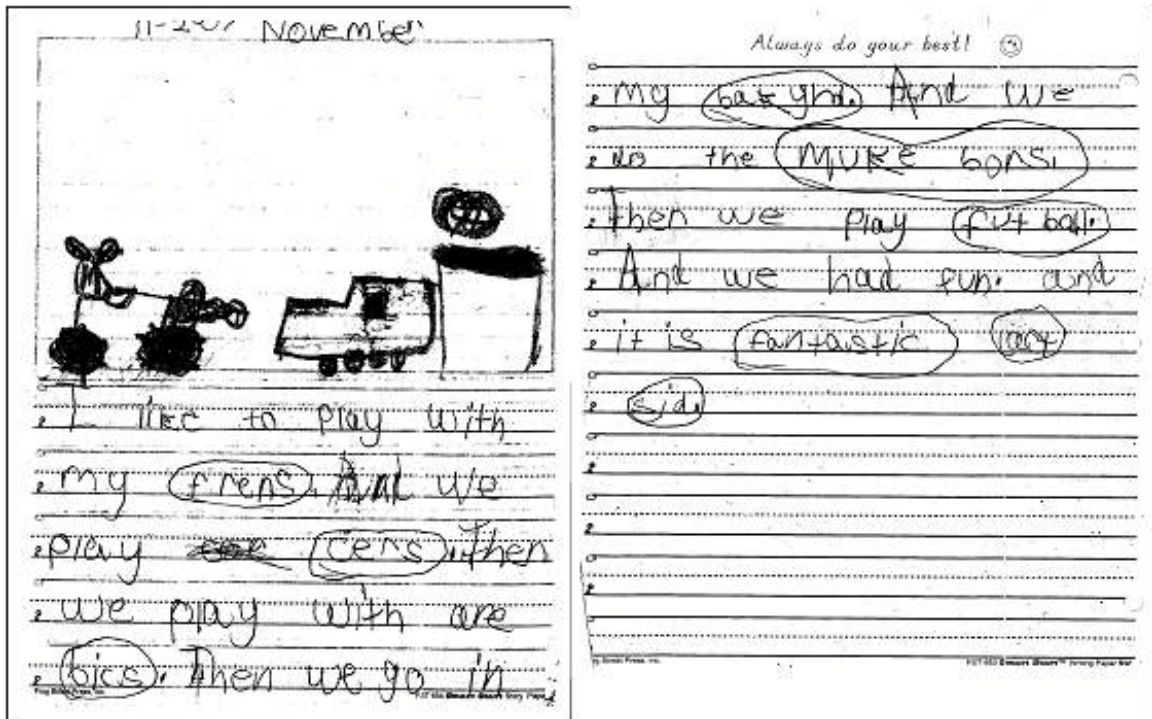


Figure 20 Michael's writing dated November 2, 2007

As was the case when Michael began the shift of writing a single run-on sentence to the use of multiple sentences that were not always conventionally punctuated into multiple sentences, Michael's shift to consistent grammatically conventional use of periods also occurred gradually over time. During the two weeks that followed the previous sample of writing, Michael often reverted back to placing periods prior to dependent phrases. By the end of November, his placement of periods was consistently grammatically conventional. This consistent conventional placement of periods continued through the end of data collection in March.

A quick survey of Michael's writing might leave the impression that he understood from the beginning of the year that sentences needed to begin with a capital letter. Michael consistently utilized capital letters at the beginning of all his writing beginning with his first writing sample dated August 25, 2007. However, a closer

inspection could cause that observation to become more tentative. Of Michael's first 22 pieces of writing, 21 began with the word "I". 17 of these began with the phrase, "I like", three began with "I love," and one began with "I am". It is difficult to determine whether Michael understood that sentences needed to begin with a capital letter, or if he just understood that the word "I" was always capitalized.

The lone piece of writing that did not begin with the word "I" began with the phrase, "My mom". This single exception to Michael's pattern of beginning his writing with the word "I" occurred at the beginning of October. In all of Michael's writing up until this point, all "m"s were capitalized regardless of their placement in his writing. This made it difficult to determine if the upper case "M" was utilized because of its location at the beginning of the sentence or if it was merely capitalized because Michael always utilized upper case "M"s in his writing regardless of where the letter was placed in the text. In fact, Michael's use of all capital "M"s is an example of his use of capital letters in all of his early writing. Letters with similar upper and lower case formations were written in the upper case formations throughout Michael's early writing. This included the letters "P", "S", "W", and "K". Some other letters were at times written in both upper and lower case intermittently. The use of upper case letters in these instances appeared in places other than the beginning of the sentence or on proper nouns. These letters included the letters "B", "I", "R" and "T". Figure 21 is a writing sample dated October 5, 2007 and illustrates Michael's use of capital letters throughout his writing. The sample reads, "I like to go at this restaurant because we eat ice cream and we eat burritos and we eat bread and we eat fruit and I like wet tomatoes."

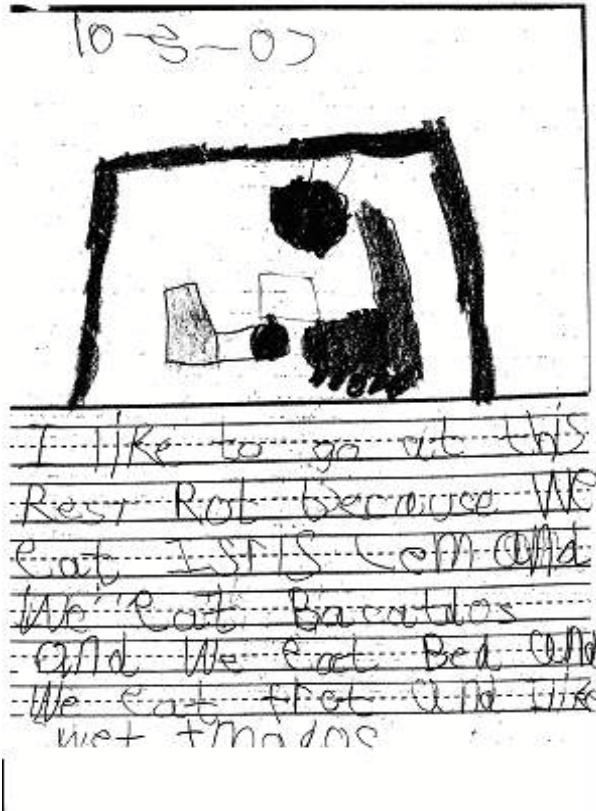


Figure 21 Michael's writing dated October 5, 2007

Over the first part of the school year, Michael gradually used fewer upper case letters within the text of his writing. By the end of October, Michael better understood the appropriate use of upper and lower case letters when writing. Figure 17 (see page 121) shows Michael's writing dated October 24, 2007 and reads, "I like to go at my hockey games first we played the M___ and they were the away post then we played the opposite team then we played the away post again and we won the three games and we got the first trophy ever."

While the only capital letter used in the piece was the word "I" at the beginning of the sentence, there was also a change in his formation of lower case letters. The only letters showing an elevated height is the capitalized letter "I" and the "d" on "played". Other letters that should have had increased height and had been conventionally formed

in the past, were now the same height of all lower case letters. Examples include “l”, “h”, “f”, “t”. At this point, Michael had over-generalized a concept. His understanding now seemed to be that only upper case letters were tall and lower case letters were all short (with the exception of the “d”).

The practice of shortening tall lower case letters appears to have been short-lived. One week later, Michael returned to using both tall and short lower case letters appropriately as shown in Figure 19 (see page 123). There are still some tall letters that are formed as short letters. These include “b”, “l”, and “k”. The letter “b” is written as a short letter only once. It is formed conventionally as a tall letter five times. The “l” is written as a tall letter once and as a short letter six times. The “k” is formed as a short letter both times that it is used in this piece.

At this same time in Michael’s writing, an interesting phenomenon developed in his use of capital letters and the word “I”. Beginning with his first piece of writing, Michael capitalized the word “I” consistently whether it occurred at the beginning of a sentence or within a sentence. Figure 22 is dated September 26 and shows that Michael conventionally capitalized the word “I” as it occurred in multiple places in his early writing. Figure 22 reads, “I like to go at the swimming pool because they have those rings I like to play with them because we get to throw them I like them.”

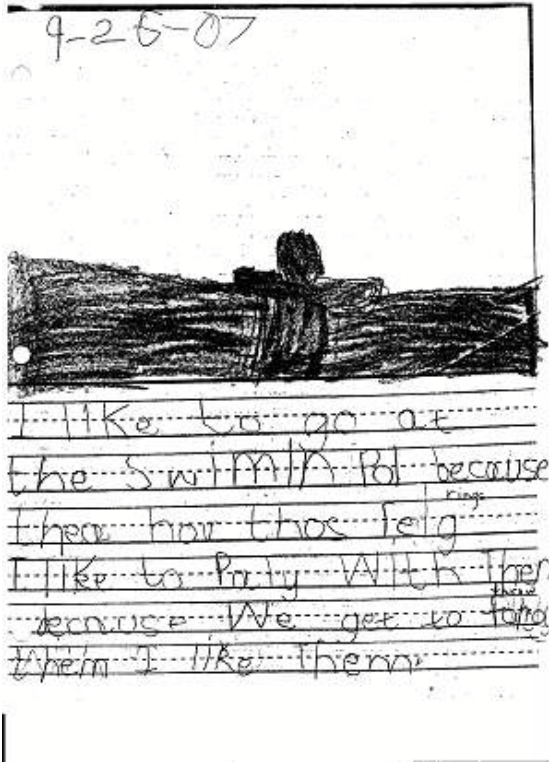


Figure 22 Michael's writing dated September 26, 2007

However, as the year progressed and Michael learned more about the conventional use of upper and lower case letters, he began writing the word "I" with a lower case letter when the word occurred within a sentence. This is illustrated in Michael's piece written on October 23 and shown previously in Figure 16 (see page 118). The use of a capitalized "I" at the beginning of a sentence was consistent throughout the observations in this study. Michael again used the capital "I" within his sentences in two subsequent pieces written on October 29, 2007 and again on October 31, 2007. However, in his November 1st piece, he again reverted to using the lower case when writing the word "I" in the middle of his sentences.

Throughout the month of November and into early December, Michael vacillated back and forth between using an upper or lower case letter to write the word "I" when it

occurred within a sentence. Interestingly, he remained consistent throughout each individual piece. In each piece, Michael either used all upper case “I”s or all lower case “i”s to write the word “I”. He never mixed the two cases within an individual piece of writing. Michael was negotiating and integrating his understanding of two conventions—the convention of always capitalizing the word “I” with the convention of only using an upper case letter at the beginning of the sentence and at the beginning of names. By mid-December, Michael had clarified his understanding of how to conventionally write the word “I” and returned to consistently using an upper case “I” regardless of where the word fell in a sentence.

Change Over Time in Michael’s Use of Orthography

During writing workshop in her classroom, Mrs. Cook strictly enforced the rule that students were not to ask how to spell unknown words when writing. When encountering a word whose spelling was unfamiliar, students were to articulate the word slowly and record what they could hear. During my eight months of observations, the only time that I ever observed Michael asking an adult for the conventional spelling of a word was when Mrs. Cook was absent and the class was being run by a substitute teacher. Mrs. Cook’s insistence on this protocol allowed for the study of how Michael recorded words when their orthography was unfamiliar to him.

Over the course of this study, Michael conventionally spelled 125 different words utilized in the writing that he accomplished during the writing workshop time of his school day. A month-by-month breakdown of words that Michael conventionally recorded is included as Appendix H at the back of this study. Words are recorded in Appendix H under the month that they first appeared as conventionally spelled words in

his writing. Virtually all of these words were utilized conventionally multiple times by Michael over the course of this study. Each word is recorded in the appendix only once, under the month that it first appeared conventionally spelled in Michael's writing.

An analysis of Michael's known writing vocabulary (Appendix H) shows that Michael conventionally recorded 20 words in September, 43 words in October, 36 words in November, 9 words in December, 17 words in January, 20 words in February, and 5 words in March. Not surprisingly, the months when Michael conventionally wrote the most words directly related to the amount of writing that he completed during each month. Michael completed 3 pieces of writing in September, 14 pieces in October, 12 pieces in November, 4 pieces in December, 3 pieces in January, 7 pieces in February, and 1 in March. Table 6 shows the relationship between the number of pieces Michael completed each month compared to the number of conventionally spelled words that appeared in Michael's writing for the first time.

Month	Number of Pieces Completed	Number of Words Spelled Conventionally for the First Time
September	3	20
November	12	36
December	4	9
January	3	17
February	7	20
March	1	5

Table 6 Michael's number of completed pieces compared to the number of conventionally spelled words that appeared for the first time.

Most of the words that Michael could spell conventionally appeared first during the months of October and November. The low number of pieces produced in September can be attributed to the fact that writing workshop was not fully implemented in Michael's classroom until the last week of September. Mrs. Cook spent class time prior to this time (starting at the beginning of the school year in mid-August) establishing the classroom norms and procedures that needed to be in place in order for the writing workshop time to run smoothly. Writing time during the month of December was limited by both the school's winter holiday which commenced during the last full week of the month, and interruptions to the daily classroom schedule for items such as holiday performance assemblies and district mandated end of grading period assessments for both reading and writing. It is unclear why the amount of Michael's writing decreased in both January and February.

Beginning with his first piece of writing that was composed during writing workshop, Michael revealed that he possessed a large personal corpus of high frequency words that he could spell conventionally. This first piece of writing is dated September 26, 2007. It is shown in Figure 23 and reads, “I like to play at the park because I like to play on the swing set.”

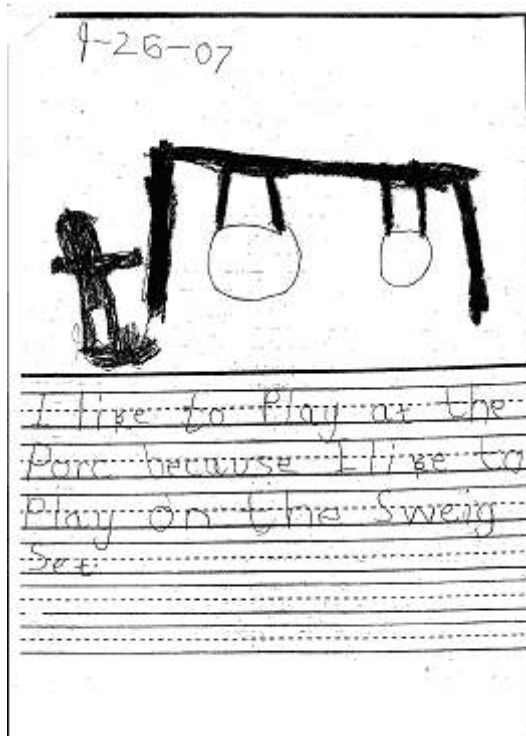


Figure 23 Michael's writing dated September 26, 2007

This simple piece of writing shows that Michael already had developed a complex understanding of orthography. All words in this piece are conventionally spelled with the exception of “park” and “swing”. The conventional spellings Michael utilized show that he had an understanding that not all letters in words are audible. This is illustrated in his conventional spelling of the word “like” with its silent “e” at the end of the word. He understood that at times two letters may be utilized to represent one sound. This is

evidenced by his use of the “ay” in “play” as well as the “au” in “because” and the “th” in “the”.

Often a child’s understanding of orthography can be better understood by viewing their unconventional spelling of unknown words. An examination of Michael’s work shows that he understood from the time of his first piece of writing in Mrs. Cook’s class that all words must contain a vowel. An examination of all 45 pieces that Michael wrote from September until March reveals that every word Michael wrote unconventionally included the use of a vowel. His use of the letter “k” to represent the /k/ sound in “like” and choice to use “c” in “park” to represent the same sound is evidence that Michael realized early on that a sound may be represented by multiple different letters. Michael’s spelling of the word “park” as “porc” instead of “prk” or “prc” shows that he has a beginning understanding of “r” controlled vowels.

His recording of the word “swing” as “sweig” in his first piece of writing on September 25th and his spelling of the word “swimming” as “swimin” in his next piece of writing the following day (see Figure 22 on page 129) show a developing understanding of the recording of “ing” as a cluster of letters needed to represent the sound /ing/. Michael had encountered the “ing” ending in his previous encounters with written text. The “eig” and “in” spelling was Michael’s attempt at spelling the syllable based on a combination of what he was able to hear when speaking the syllable and what he was able to recall from having previously seen it in writing. Michael was experimenting with the spelling based on the phonemes he could hear and combining that information with what he had previously observed in written text.

Michael next used a word that should have contained the “ing” ending on October 8, 2007. This piece is shown in Figure 24 and reads, “I like Z___ because we are best friends and we are going to play at the park.”



Figure 24 Michael’s writing dated October 8, 2007

In his recording of the word “going” in this piece of writing, Michael seems to have had difficulty in hearing and recording two consecutive vowel sounds—the long “o” in “go” followed immediately with the long “e” sound in the “ing” ending. Recording two consecutive vowel sounds was a task that had not previously been encountered by Michael in his writing workshop writing. Michael solved this dilemma in recording by the long “o” and “e” sounds with the single letter “u”. In some way, Michael viewed this recording of two vowel phonemes with a single letter, “u” as a valid compromise that solved the puzzle and the word “going” was recorded as “gun”.

The first time that Michael conventionally utilized the “ing” spelling in a word was on October 31, 2007. That writing is shown in Figure 25 and reads, “I am going to be a power ranger for Halloween. I am going to say when I get to the house I will say give me something give me candy.”

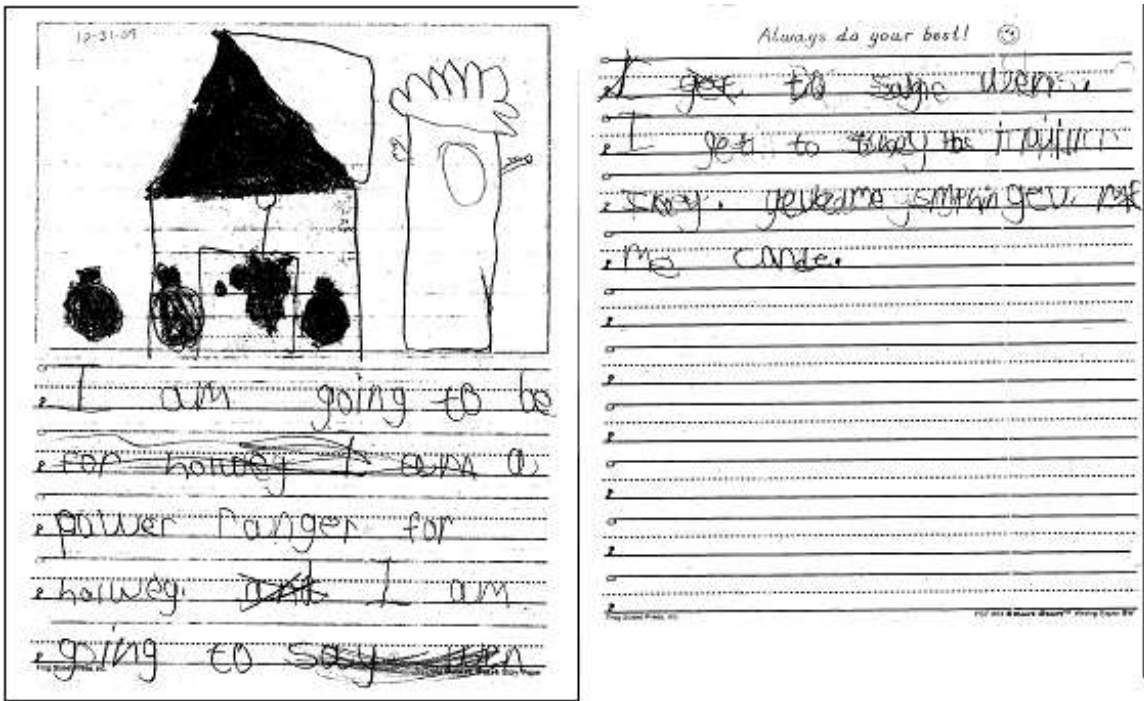


Figure 25 Michael’s writing dated October 31, 2007

The “ing” is conventionally used as part of the word “going”. However, on the next to last line of this piece of writing, Michael writes the word “something” as “smthin”. He heard and recognized the “ing” ending to the word “going” but did not hear and recognize the same word ending when he was writing “something”.

As was previously discussed in Michael’s understanding and use of upper and lower case letters, Michael’s understanding and spelling of the “ing” ending was one that he negotiated over time. Throughout the month of November, Michael wrote the word “going” 14 times. He was consistent in his spelling of the word as “gun”. During this

same period of time, Michael also encountered that same “ing” ending in other words. He wrote “swimming” as “soimig” and “morning” as “mornin” one time each. During this same period of time he also wrote “putting” as “pouting”, “stockings” was written as “stocings” and “bring” was spelled conventionally. Then in a piece written on November 28, 2007, Michael began to solidify his understanding of the use of “ing”. This piece is shown in Figure 26 and reads, “It’s a good day said mom. I can go to the pool today. We can go to the store first because we are going to buy some balls. And we are going to the store first. And we are going to the dress store. We are going to the great pool. And we are going to the grocery store.”

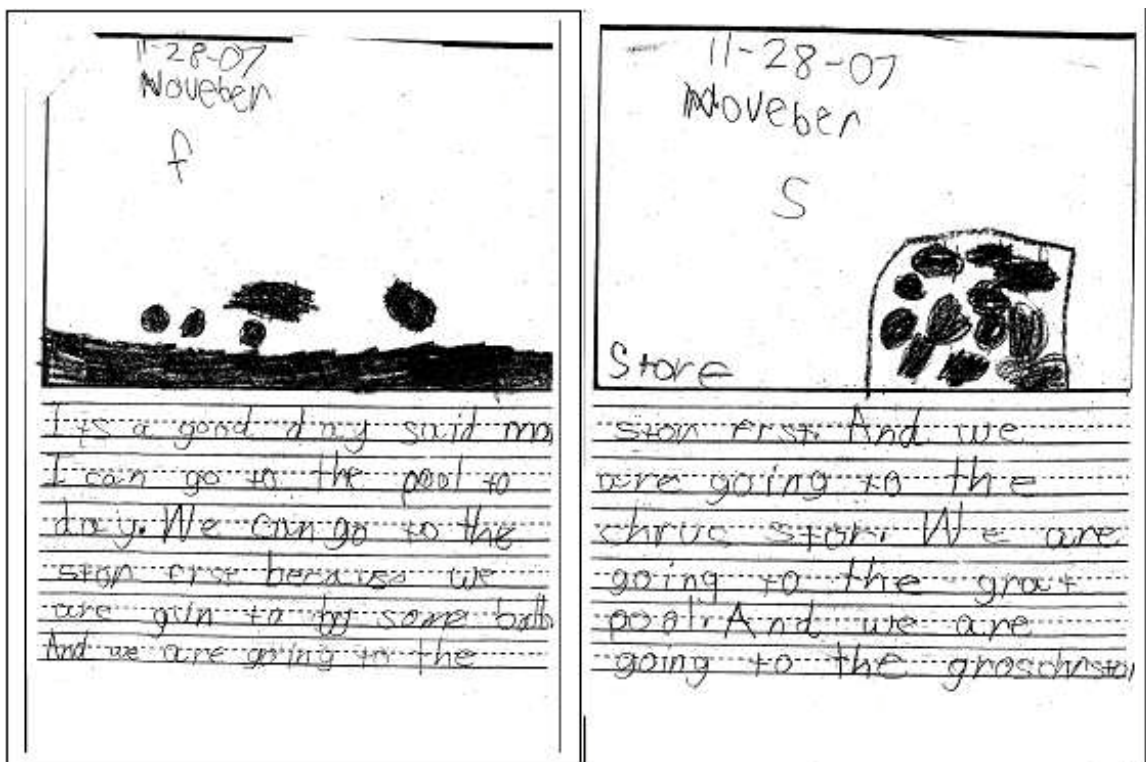


Figure 26 Michael’s writing dated November 28, 2007

The first time that Michael wrote the word “going” in this piece, it was written as “gun” and is the same as his spelling of the word had been for the last 14 times that he

had written the word. However, the second time “going” appeared in this piece it was spelled conventionally. Of the five times that “going” appeared in this piece, it was spelled conventionally four times. Although Michael at times reverted to the spelling of “going” as “gun” in future pieces, this sample of writing seemed to be a turning point in Michael’s understanding. Prior to this piece, Michael spelled the word “going” phonetically more often than he spelled it conventionally. In samples of work written after this date, “going” was occasionally written phonetically, but it was most often written conventionally.

Summary

Michael entered his first grade year of school already understanding many of the basic concepts in reading and writing. Michael knew that the primary purpose of both the reading and writing processes was the communication of messages. This was exhibited in reading as Michael read text with the primary purpose of understanding the meaning of the text.

At the beginning of the school year, Michael understood many basic concepts of written text. He understood the concepts of letters and words. He understood that words were comprised of phonemes and that there was a relationship between the phonemes heard when articulating a word and the visual information that appeared in text. In writing, he understood that each word contained a vowel and that the white space left between words was an important boundary between the individual words.

In addition, Michael understood that, in English, reading and writing both occurred with a left to right directional movement. At the end of each line of text, a return sweep back to the left side of the written text was necessary.

In his first grade classroom, these understandings were reinforced as Michael engaged in guided reading lessons with his teacher and as he wrote during the writing workshop block of classroom time. He also received additional support in these understandings as he engaged in literacy activities in his home.

In reading, Michael orchestrated the use of multiple sources of information. First and foremost, he searched for meaning. When miscues in the reading did not maintain the meaning of the text, Michael paused in his reading in order to search for more information, then he usually made additional attempts at unknown words in order to maintain that meaning.

In writing, Michael daily communicated messages to anyone who might read his written text. Michael entered first grade with the ability to formulate thoughts into oral language, which could in turn be transposed into writing on his paper. Throughout the time that data was collected for this study, Michael maintained his personal understanding that getting more writing onto his paper signified that he was becoming a better writer.

At the beginning of the school year, the complexity of text Michael wrote exceeded the complexity of text he encountered in his guided reading lessons. While text encountered during guided reading was comprised of a simple patterned repetitive text supported by highly supportive illustrations, Michael's writing followed his more complex oral language structure. Michael's individual writings were longer initially than the guided reading texts. While both Michael's writings and the texts he was encountering in guided reading both increased in length, the guided reading texts eventually exceeded the length of stories that Michael wrote. The fictional texts that

Michael encountered in guided reading often involved familial relationships and events that were familiar to Michael's daily life. Similarly, Michael's writing always referred to relationships and activities regarding his immediate family, friends, personal hobbies, and interests.

As Michael received classroom instruction regarding the procedures and conventions utilized in writing, his understandings required a period of personal negotiation as he learned to apply and incorporate this learning into his work. After learning about the use of periods at the end of sentences, Michael gradually implemented the use of multiple periods in his writing. Multiple periods were first placed after meaningful units of written text. However, that placement was often prior to dependent phrases that should have been included in a sentence. When first utilized, multiple periods were not incorporated into his writing consistently on a daily basis, but over time Michael began to use them both conventionally and on a daily basis.

The same pattern of implementation also applied to Michael's conventional use of capital letters at the beginning and within his sentences. Michael demonstrated a personal understanding of the conventional use of upper and lower case letters that was tentative and underwent a delicate individual negotiation throughout the course of the study. Michael's needed negotiation did not involve all letters, but was consistent with the involvement of upper and lower case letters that were visually similar as well as the letters "B", "P", "R", and "T". In addition, Michael underwent a short-term negotiation of the size of lower case letters that contained a tall stick. By the end of the study, Michael's negotiation of the conventional use and formation of letters appeared to be complete.

Beginning with his first samples of writing, Michael exhibited a complex understanding of orthography that exceeded a simple knowledge of letter/sound associations. Michael exhibited an understanding of silent letters in words, multiple letters being used to represent a single phoneme, as well as an understanding that some sounds could be represented by more than one letter.

All of the above mentioned negotiations that Michael underwent regarding his reading and writing processes occurred as Michael refined his ability to communicate messages to his reader and to better understand the messages he encountered when reading written text.

Chapter VII

Meet Gracie

The first time that I spoke with Wendy, Gracie’s grandmother, on the phone, the excitement in her voice was evident. “You want to do what? That’s wonderful. Why did you pick Gracie?”

I explained again about my desire to study proficient first grade literacy learners, how I spent time observing the students in Mrs. Cook’s classroom, and how on Mrs. Cook’s recommendation, I selected Gracie as a proficient literacy learner whose development I wanted to study in depth as she progressed through her first grade year of learning.

“Proficient? Did you say proficient?”

“Yes,” I replied.

“Are you familiar with Gracie’s history and background?”

I replied that I knew Wendy was Gracie’s grandmother and that she was Gracie’s legal guardian.

“Gracie was born addicted to meth.”

“Oh, really!” I exclaimed. Mrs. Cook had explained to me that Gracie was being raised by her grandmother, but had not elaborated further.

“Yes. Her mother was a drug addict and when Gracie was born, she was addicted to meth. That meant that as a newborn, Gracie went through detox. It was quite a time. Meth babies often have lingering difficulties—behavioral, academic, and social. Gracie has had some behavioral difficulties in the past, including last year—but I think that was

the teacher. That teacher said she had never had any previous experience with meth babies, but I think she had—she just didn't know it. Anyway, this year has been better with Mrs. Cook.”

Wendy's revelation about Gracie's past caught me by surprise. I had been made aware by Mrs. Cook that Gracie and her siblings were being raised by their grandmother, but Mrs. Cook had not shared any additional details regarding Gracie's background.

Wendy's voice again broke into my thoughts. “Did you say proficient? Meth babies often have academic difficulties. I thought that Gracie seemed to be doing all right, but I didn't really know. That's wonderful! Of course you can study her!”

The next day I went to Wendy's place of employment to have her sign the consent form for Gracie to participate in the research. Again, Wendy asked why I had selected Gracie for the study. Again, I explained my desire to look at proficient literacy learners. Wendy beamed. “I can't tell you how wonderful it was when you called yesterday—to have you tell me that you wanted to study Gracie because she was proficient.”

Wendy read the consent form I handed her. She commented briefly on a couple of statements. “I do think it will benefit Gracie to know that someone is paying particular attention to how she is learning.” and “I don't think it will bother Gracie at all to have you tape her when you interview her. She will have no trouble at all talking to you during the interview.”

After Wendy handed me the signed consent form, we talked a bit more about the grandchildren she was raising. Multiple pictures of the three children adorned her desk, windowsill, and wall. There was Gracie with a brother who Wendy said was then in kindergarten at the same school that Gracie attended.

Then Wendy showed me a snapshot of young, six month old baby girl. “This is the baby she said. Last April I got a phone call at 4:00 in the morning from the hospital in (a town approximately 40 miles away). They said that I needed to come right away. I asked them if it was my daughter. They said that it was. I asked if she was all right. All they would say was that I needed to come right away. I drove up there and when I got there they herded me into the newborn nursery and there was this beautiful brand new baby girl. There I was in the middle of the night and I was out buying Pampers.”

I was in awe. “You had no idea?” I asked.

“None,” she replied. “I called Gracie and her brother and told them I was bringing them home the nicest surprise—a brand new beautiful baby sister.” Wendy looked at me and said, “Raising these children has been...”

“Challenging?” I finished her sentence for her.

Wendy looked at me, her eyes were filled with pride. “Well, that too, but it has been... well, wonderful.”

“I’ll bet it has!”

With that, I left the proud grandmother beaming in her office and surrounded by the multitude of pictures of those three grandchildren that she adored.

As the school year progressed, I learned much more about Gracie from my observations in the classroom and through interviews with both Gracie and her grandmother. Gracie was a first grade Caucasian female. She was the oldest of three children that included a younger brother and sister. Wendy assumed the role of primary caregiver for all three children beginning when each child was an infant.

When asked what she did for fun, Gracie responded without hesitation that she liked to play with her friends and cousins at the park. She enjoyed going to restaurants and parties with friends and relatives. Asked what she enjoyed doing the most with her cousins, Gracie expounded by telling about going trick-or-treating with her cousins and uncle. She and her brother and uncle all dressed up as M & M's. One cousin dressed as a football player, while another cousin was Minnie Mouse. She also enjoyed wrestling with her uncle and cousins.

Gracie's grandmother described Gracie as vivacious, chatty, and curious. She further stated that Gracie liked cooking and that her favorite days at school were the days that she had book club. Wendy explained that Gracie's teacher, Mrs. Cook, had received a grant allowing her to sponsor a book club on Mondays and Wednesdays after school. Mrs. Cook selected five children to participate. Wendy was unsure of why Gracie had been selected as one of those to participate in the after school program, but was quick to add that she was absolutely thrilled that Gracie had been selected. Wendy described the book club as an activity that provided students with a bit of extra attention, adding that this was something Gracie needed at this point in her life.

Wendy also explained that Gracie recently had become involved in the community's Big Brother/Big Sister program. The Big Sister program provided Gracie with an additional outlet for social activity. Gracie and her Big Sister spent time together doing something every other weekend. Whenever something exciting happened, such as receiving an exceptional grade at school, Gracie called her Big Sister to share the good news.

Literacy Learning at Home

Gracie's grandmother stated that she began reading to Gracie while Gracie was still an infant of approximately two months old. She explained that Gracie was fascinated by books even as an infant. Wendy stated, "She used to love the pictures—all the bright colors. She used to love the cardboard books that she could, you know, hold in her hands. She loved the books that you could feel things on." Wendy further explained that, even though Gracie was learning to read to herself, she continued to love to be read to. In their house, reading aloud to the children was a family ritual beginning each evening at 7:30 p.m. Each of the three children chose a book for Wendy to read. The grandmother sat in a large recliner and the children snuggled together on her lap as she read the minimum of three books aloud. Because the older two children were now attending school, Wendy occasionally selected a sentence for each of them to read aloud. Gracie previously told me, and Wendy confirmed, that the family had a large selection of children's books in their home. Most of the books were picked up at garage sales at prices ranging from twenty five to fifty cents each.

Wendy also said that she subscribed to four or five magazines such as *People*.

While Gracie and her younger brother could not yet read entire articles in the magazines, they both enjoyed perusing the magazine pictures and became very excited when they recognized individual known words in the print. Wendy explained that Gracie was beginning to recognize and read print in the environment outside of school and books. She read street signs and saw words in advertisements that she recognized. Yet another opportunity for reading outside of the school day occurred when the family dined

out in restaurants. Wendy stated that the family dined out in a “sit-down” restaurant at least once a week. Gracie read the menu in order to select what she ate for dinner.

When asked to describe Gracie’s early interest in writing, Wendy stated that Gracie did not exhibit the same early excitement for writing as she had for reading. Wendy’s personal theory was that Gracie’s active nature as a young child interfered with her ability to settle down and focus on writing activities. Wendy felt that Gracie’s drug addiction at birth had left her with “little compulsive habits that we’re trying really hard to break...” Wendy elaborated on the statement, stating that “This is minor compared to what it could have been, but she still does have some of the characteristics of, you know, a drug addicted baby. But she’s doing so much better. I read something that she wrote last night—very, very good. So, she is, uh, she’s getting there and she’s learning. She seems very proud of herself that she is getting there.”

Wendy relayed to me her personal observation that when Gracie did write, the topic was usually either her family or her surroundings. She stated that Gracie had only recently begun including more details in her writing. Wendy noted that in a piece recently written by Gracie after she had gone ice skating, Gracie included details regarding how cold she was during the activity. Wendy compared this to the simple statement of “I went ice skating” that she felt Gracie would have previously written about the event.

Wendy explained that every other weekend, she took the children to visit their other grandmother. In preparation for the trip to the other grandparent’s house, Wendy packed the children a treat along with a small writing notebook in each child’s lunchbox. Wendy said that Gracie’s brother always ignored the notebook and played games by himself while traveling in the car. Gracie, however, recently began using the travel time

to write extensively in her notebook. When I asked what Gracie wrote about in her notebook, Wendy responded that she did not ask Gracie what she was writing about. Neither did she read the notebook at a later time. Wendy stated that she had told Gracie that the notebook was a place for her to record her private thoughts and feelings. Wendy explained that, at times, Gracie voluntarily shared pieces of her writing. Wendy described the writing Gracie shared as sometimes making complete sense and at other times not “being quite there”. Wendy then laughed as she stated that she felt this was quite all right. Gracie was, after all, a first grader.

Wendy also described to me another role that writing played in Gracie’s life. During a recent extended break in the school schedule, Gracie became extremely agitated at her younger brother. In order to help validate Gracie’s feelings of anger without becoming too personally involved in the conflicts that occurred, Wendy asked Gracie to begin writing about her feelings of frustration towards her younger brother in Gracie’s notebook. Wendy stated that the writing served as a catharsis for Gracie’s feelings regarding the disputes that occurred between herself and her younger sibling.

Literacy Learning at School

The first time that I entered Mrs. Cook’s classroom, I noticed Gracie. Her energy, combined with her broad, friendly smile made her stand out among her classmates. In the classroom, Gracie was always involved in conversation—either with other students, the teacher, or any stranger that might find their way into Mrs. Cook’s classroom. If Gracie read or wrote something interesting (and to Gracie everything she read or wrote was interesting) she was compelled to share it with a classmate. If Mrs. Cook read a story aloud, Gracie needed to add a comment. If a stranger entered the classroom, Gracie

promptly found herself at their side, filling them in on the details of what was currently occurring in the classroom. For Gracie, literacy learning in the classroom was a very social process (Bloome, 1985). Gracie viewed sharing her work during both the reading and writing processes as an element essential to her personal process of learning. Gracie was always involved in conversation. She viewed reading as an opportunity to interact with the teacher and/or other students in conversation regarding events in the story. While writing, she would turn to a classmate sitting near her to share her stories after each small phrase or sentence had been added.

Gracie's grandmother later expressed concern to me that Gracie's overwhelming desire to interact verbally during learning might in some way be related to the drugs Gracie was exposed to prior to her birth. Whether or not that was the case, it is important to note that Gracie's conversation in the classroom during my observations, while frequent, was also always on topic. Gracie enjoyed interacting with classmates, especially as she wrote. Frequently after writing what she considered to be an especially interesting word, phrase, or sentence, Gracie picked her paper up from her table, placed it in front of a classmate, and showed them the writing as she read it. Always when doing so, her facial expressions were animated and excited about what she had to share. During sharing time at the end of writing workshop, Gracie's hand was always in the air, eagerly volunteering to share what she had written with the entire class and the teacher. When selected as one to share her writing, Gracie practically bounced to the front of the class. The large grin that she wore on her face remained there as she read her writing to the class. Her eyes twinkled as she glanced from her paper to her classmates, checking to see if they were enjoying her writing as much as she did. According to Bloome (1985),

Gracie was utilizing her conversation and sharing regarding literacy to establish her ways of thinking and problem solving in reading and writing. Engaging in conversations with others was her way of sharing the value that she placed on learning to read and write (p. 134).

During the time of my classroom observations, Gracie completed fourteen stories during writing workshop. This was fewer stories than either of the two other participants. Michael completed forty-four pieces and Eden produced nineteen pieces during the same amount of time. The time that Gracie spent sharing her writing with her classmates as she wrote was definitely a contributing factor to her limited number of completed stories. However, her enthusiasm for the work she completed was unequalled. Topics for her writing almost always related to events currently occurring in her life. She wrote about having fun with her Big Sister through the Bit Brothers/Big Sisters program, trick-or-treating with her cousins, her dogs, her best friends at school, and going to a hockey game with her family. For Gracie, literacy learning was merely an extension of her socialization with friends and family.

An Overview of Gracie's Reading as Assessed in the Classroom

On Gracie's baseline reading assessment in August of her first grade year at school, Gracie read a *DRA* (Beaver, 1997) level four text at an instructional level. This placed Gracie at a proficient level for a first grade student based on the school district's expectations of where first grade students should test during the fall of the year. Peterson (1991) describes readers at this level as follows:

While reading these books, the child can easily learn that while there is a precise message conveyed in the printed text, many other sources of information

assist the reader in using the reading process. When encountering an unknown word, the child learns to search for information in the illustrations, in the overall meaning of the book, and in the language patterns of the sentences, as well as in the cues within the word itself (p.129).

Mrs. Cook described Gracie's reading at the beginning of the school year as word by word with little intonation and a rather monotone voice. Based on the running record that Mrs. Cook took of Gracie's reading, she stated that at points of difficulty Gracie would look at the picture for support, used some letter/sound support, and reread once following a miscue that did not utilize the same initial visual information in order to self correct. Twice Gracie stopped at the beginning of a sentence when the word was unknown, made no attempt at problem solving the word and waited for the teacher to tell her the unknown word. Miscues that utilized the same initial visual information and did not interfere with the meaning of the text were not detected or self corrected by Gracie.

At the end of the first nine-week grading period, Mrs. Cook again assessed Gracie using the *Developmental Reading Assessment* (Beaver 1997). At this time, Gracie was reading a *DRA* (Beaver, 1997) level six at an instructional level. Mrs. Cook described Gracie's reading at this time as occurring in some short phrases as opposed to the word-by-word reading she had observed Gracie doing in the fall. She also stated that Gracie was incorporating more intonation into her oral reading. At points of difficulty, Gracie still used the picture and individual letters in her problem solving. However, Mrs. Cook also noticed that Gracie was beginning to problem solve with letter sound clusters. For example, Mrs. Cook's running record of Gracie's reading showed that when Gracie came to the word "behind" in her reading, Gracie problem solved by reading "be—behind".

Gracie also monitored substitutions that utilized the same initial visual information and maintained the meaning of the text by searching the final visual information in the word. This occurred twice when Gracie encountered the word “mother” in the text. Both times Gracie first stated “mama”, then “mom” and finally self-corrected by saying “mother”. In her first two attempts at “mother” Gracie utilized her personal oral language by using the words she personally used to refer to her mother. Both miscues maintained meaning and matched the initial visual information in the unknown word. However, it was her final attempt at the word that allowed her to orchestrate multiple sources of information when reading unknown text and resulted in the accurate reading of the word “mother”.

By the end of the second nine-week grading period, Gracie was reading instructionally at a *DRA* (Beaver, 1997) level 14. This was higher than the school district’s expectations for a proficient first grade reader at the end of the first semester. The school district’s expectation for a proficient first grade student was to be reading at a *DRA* (Beaver, 1997) level 10 by the end of the first semester.

Mrs. Cook’s running record of Gracie’s reading of the level 14 text showed that at points of difficulty, Gracie made an initial attempt based on the meaning of the story and the initial letter of the unknown word. For example, when the text said, “Robert wasn’t sure he liked Maria.” Gracie read, “Robert wasn’t so” and stopped. Her miscue of “so” for “sure” made sense up to the point of the miscue and used the same initial consonant. Gracie was not satisfied with her response because of the mismatch of final visual information. At that point, she sounded the letter “s” and made a second attempt “see”. This attempt also shared the same initial letter as the unknown word, but did not make sense with what Gracie had previously read. At this point, Gracie sounded each

individual letter in the word “sure”, then self corrected by stating the word “sure”.

Gracie’s ability to continue thinking about the story helped her to come up with the accurate response. She accomplished this by integrating her knowledge of what would make sense in the story, and her understanding of how the English language worked, with the visual information presented in the unknown word.

Gracie repeated this same pattern of responding at a point of difficulty five other times during the reading of this same text when she initially read “car” for “care”, “flew” for “felt”, “favorite” for “finger”, “smiled” for “stopped”, and “his” for “he”. However, at these remaining points of difficulty in her reading, Gracie made the self-corrections immediately after the miscue, without sounding each letter of the unknown word individually. Gracie also encountered a point of difficulty in her reading when she came to the unknown word “could”. At this point, she paused in her reading, made no initial attempt based on either meaning or visual information, and began sounding each individual letter in the word. Without waiting further or appealing to the teacher for help, she inserted the words “tried to” and continued reading. In this particular instance, Gracie was unable to produce a word from her personal schema that would both fit the meaning of the text and match the initial visual information presented in the unknown word.

Gracie chose to insert words that would maintain the meaning of the text and allow her to continue reading. Her knowledge that what she said orally in reading had to look like the word on the printed page were in conflict. Gracie’s understanding that text had to make sense overrode her understanding of the necessity to have what she read look like the unknown word in the text. Perhaps because the sounding of each individual letter in the word “sure” and “could” did not prove beneficial in solving the unknown word, Gracie

did not return to that inefficient approach to word solving. Instead, Gracie made an initial attempt at the unknown word based on meaning and the initial consonant. She quickly checked the final part of the unknown word with what she had said, then immediately self-corrected her response with something that continued to make sense, but also matched the visual information contained in the final part of the unknown word.

The running record of Gracie's *DRA* (Beaver, 1997) assessment at a level 14 also showed that she was rereading text, both to confirm when her reading was accurate and to maintain the meaning of the text while searching for additional visual information to solve unknown words. Mrs. Cook also noted that Gracie was reading in short phrases most of the time. Gracie read with some intonation with attention to punctuation. However, Mrs. Cook commented that Gracie's oral reading was at times in a monotone. Mrs. Cook also stated that at difficulty, Gracie was searching multiple sources of information, which included the picture, the meaning of the story, and the visual information in the text. Gracie utilized clusters of letters and syllables in her visual analysis of unknown text.

As part of the *DRA* (Beaver, 1997) administration protocol, Mrs. Cook engaged Gracie in conversation following the story. During this dialogue, Gracie revealed that she related this story to her personal experience as it reminded her of herself helping to care for her baby sister at home. Also, in this post-reading dialogue, Gracie revealed more about her personal social dynamics in literacy learning. Mrs. Cook asked Gracie whether she preferred to read alone, with a buddy, or with a group. Gracie responded that she preferred to read in a group. She qualified this statement by explaining that if you are reading in a group, you will not be lonely. At this time, Gracie also explained to her

teacher that she very much enjoyed reading and elaborated by stating that she read at home and at school because it was fun reading with your family, classmates, and school teacher.

At the end of the third nine-week grading period, Mrs. Cook again assessed Gracie using the *DRA* (Beaver, 1997). During this assessment, Gracie read instructionally at a *DRA* (Beaver, 1997) level 16. The school district's expectation for proficient first grade readers at this point in the school year was for them to be reading in the range of *DRA* (Beaver, 1997) levels 12-14. Gracie continued to progress ahead of the school district's expectations.

Mrs. Cook's notes taken during the reading of this assessment stated that Gracie read the text slowly, often word by word with some phrasing. However, when Gracie was asked to retell the story to her teacher, Gracie retold many of the events that occurred in the story in sequence. She included many important details from the text and was able to refer to most of the characters in the story by name. Gracie's retelling of the story assured Mrs. Cook that Gracie comprehended what she read, even though her oral reading fluency was choppy.

Mrs. Cook's running record of Gracie's reading showed that Gracie only reread once during her oral reading of the story. This occurred on the first sentence of the story. Perhaps Gracie was rereading to confirm what she read and to further establish meaning at the beginning of the story. During her reading of this text, Gracie miscued twenty two times while reading the text of 266 words. Of these miscues, all but six were self-corrected and all self-corrections occurred immediately without the need to reread the text. Gracie held the meaning of the text in her head while reading without the need of

rereading phrases and/or sentences to regain the meaning of the story when slight difficulties were encountered. The six miscues that were not self-corrected by Gracie as she read did not interfere with the overall meaning of the text. They included “little” for “mean,” “make sure” for “mark,” “the” for “a,” “make” for “take,” “keeped” for “kept,” and “stamped” for “stamp”. Again, in the dialogue between Mrs. Cook and Gracie that followed the reading of the text, Mrs. Cook asked Gracie if she would rather read alone, with a buddy, or with a group. Gracie responded that she would rather read with a buddy because it was more fun to read with someone.

An Analysis of Gracie’s Writing

As a precursor to implementing writing workshop in the classroom, Mrs. Cook spent the month of August modeling the writing process to the class through interactive writing projects where she and the class worked together with a shared pen to compose and record stories. Mrs. Cook combined this activity with recognizing a student as “person of the day”. For this activity, Mrs. Cook gathered the students to the rug on the floor at the front of the class. Each day, Mrs. Cook would pull the name of a student from a stack of cards. The selected student then went to the front of the class and sat in a rocking chair where Mrs. Cook normally sat when speaking or reading to the class that gathered on the floor in front of her. Students from the class were then encouraged to ask questions of the student being highlighted in order to get to know their classmates better. As the student being interrogated answered questions from the class, Mrs. Cook guided the class in forming sentences to be written and, with the students’ help, recorded statements on a blank piece of paper hanging from an easel located next to the rocking chair. The day that Gracie was selected as the “person of the day” was the fourteenth day

that this activity had occurred in the classroom. The routines for the procedure had been established during the first thirteen times this event had occurred in the class.

On the day that Gracie was selected to be highlighted, her face beamed as her teacher called her name. She stood, walked to the front of the class and took her place in the rocking chair. She sat with her back straight and her hands holding the arms of the chair. As she gazed at the faces of her classmates, her face continued beaming with the honor of, first, being able to call on classmates to ask her questions about herself, and then being able to answer those questions. The questions began. “What is your favorite toy?” “What is your favorite sport?” “What is your favorite color?” Following Gracie’s answer to each question, Mrs. Cook would repeat Gracie’s answer in the context of a complete sentence such as “Gracie likes to play soccer.” After articulating each sentence, Mrs. Cook had the entire class repeat the sentence after her. She then turned to the blank piece of paper on the easel with a marker in her hand and prepared to write the sentence. However, before writing, Mrs. Cook asked questions of the class such as “Where do I need to start writing on the paper?” The students would respond in both words and gestures that she needed to begin the writing on the left side of the paper. Moving her hand with the marker to the left side of the paper, Mrs. Cook then asked the class, “What kind of letter do I need to begin the sentence?” The class replied in a chorus of “capital letter.” After completing the writing of the first sentence, Mrs. Cook asked the class, “What needs to go at the end of a sentence?” Again, the class responded in unison, “A period.” Mrs. Cook asked where exactly the period needed to be placed and again the chorus of students responded by directing her to place the period immediately after the last word near the bottom of the last letter. This interactive writing process between the

teacher and students continued until a short paragraph telling of Gracie's family and interests was completed. Following the completion of the paragraph, the class read the information aloud several times as different students used a pointer to point to each word as the class read aloud. Following the multiple read alouds of the paragraph about Gracie, Mrs. Cook instructed Gracie to distribute paper to the students for them to draw on. Gracie stood as she picked up the paper. Her face became very serious. The broad grin changed to lips that were in a straight line. Her eyes became serious. She stared at her classmates, slowly moving her head from right to left as she scanned their faces. She solemnly explained to the students that she would not give paper to any of them unless they were quiet. Gracie passed out the paper to each student. The students returned to the tables and wrote Gracie's name at the top of their paper prior to drawing a picture of Gracie on their paper. Gracie returned to her seat, the smile and gleaming eyes returning to her face. Obviously, Gracie enjoyed her time at the center of the class's attention.

Gracie produced fourteen pieces of writing during the time span covered by this research. Much of the reason Gracie produced fewer writing artifacts than either of the other participants in this research related to her social nature in the classroom during the writing workshop time. Gracie always began the writing portion of the writing workshop time by removing her writing from the previous day from her writing folder and immediately leaning toward a student sitting next to her with her paper in hand and eyes bright as she whispered aloud what she had written the previous day to that student. Gracie often then asked the other students about their writing and encouraged them to read their writing aloud to her. She spent time commenting both about what she had written and what her classmates had produced.

Change Over Time in Gracie's Demonstration of Understanding of Written Composition While Encountering Guided Reading Leveled Text of Increasing Difficulty

In contrast to Michael, who felt the need to begin and complete at least one piece of written material daily, Gracie worked on each of her pieces of writing over the course of several days. The first piece that Gracie produced was dated September 28, 2007 and reads, "My big sister is named A____. Her dog is named C____. He is black. He knows tricks. He knows how to shake. He knows how to lay down when we tell him to. He knows how to jump up and high five."

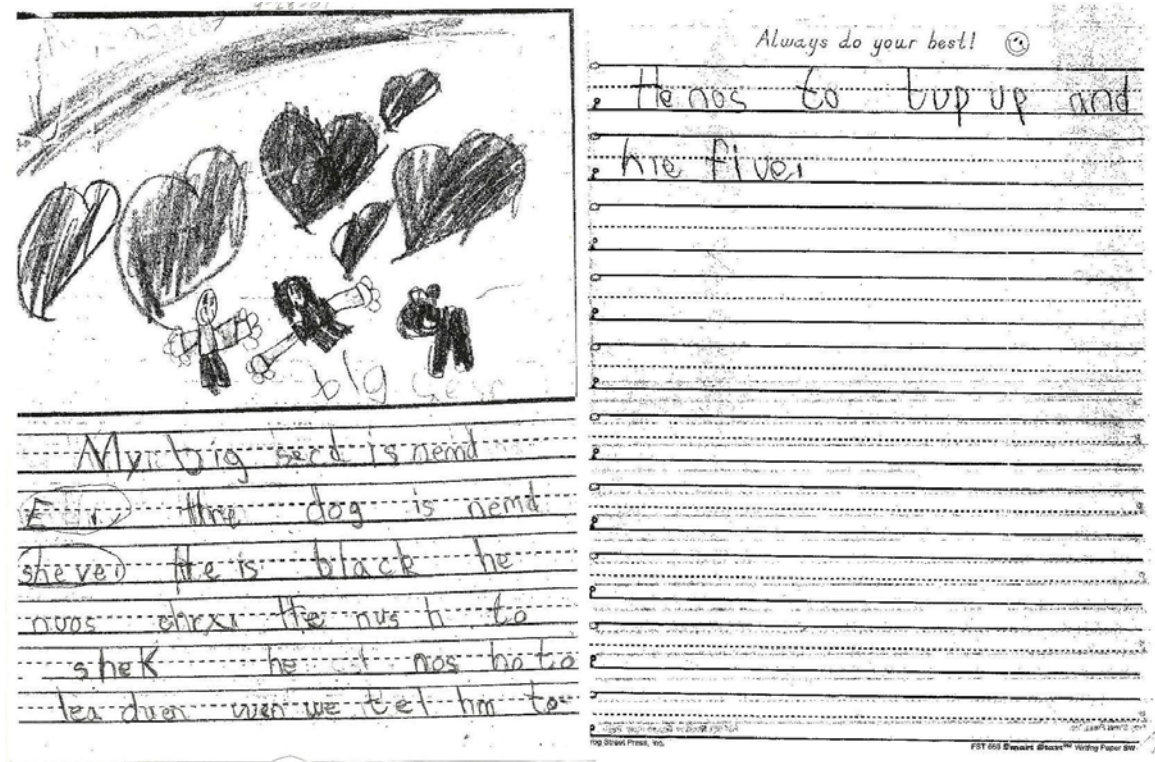


Figure 27 Gracie's writing dated September 28, 2007

The majority of Gracie's writing throughout the year was written on topics that centered round her daily life and included family, friends and personal events. The single

exception to personal topics occurred on November 12, 2007. On that particular day, Mrs. Cook had shown the students five colored stones and asked the students to describe what they saw. Gracie selected one of the stones to describe. Normally, the students were allowed to select the topic they wanted to write about. This particular assignment was the only time that Mrs. Cook asked them to write on a particular topic. Gracie's writing on that date is included in Figure 28 and reads, "My teacher has 5 stones. I am describing a stone. It is pink. It has two cracks."



Figure 28 Gracie's writing dated November 12, 2007

Unlike Gracie's other writings, working on this piece did not hold Gracie's attention over multiple days. Gracie wrote on this piece for only a single day, the day that it was assigned. Gracie's attention was held by tasks that were relevant to her understanding. This writing lacked the voice that evidenced itself in Gracie's other

writings. The first two sentences stated the purpose of her writing. The last two sentences each include one descriptive element of the topic. This writing lacks Gracie's normal enthusiasm and excitement that were so evident in her other writings. It is interesting to note that Gracie's other writings, which would not be classified in the genre of descriptive writing, always included elements of descriptive writing. However, when asked to compose a piece of specifically descriptive writing, Gracie's ability to write became stifled.

Shortly following the assignment given by Gracie's teacher to describe the stones, Gracie produced the writing in Figure 29. This piece was written on December 3, 2007 and reads, "On Fridays my family goes to the Scorpion's game. This week it is Scorpions against Amarillos. The Scorpions always win. They make goals. They give out t-shirts. They play music while they're playing. There was a woman who played the national anthem. But I don't know about halftime. They wear white jerseys. They play all kinds of different music. Last time I went there I won all kinds of different stuff".

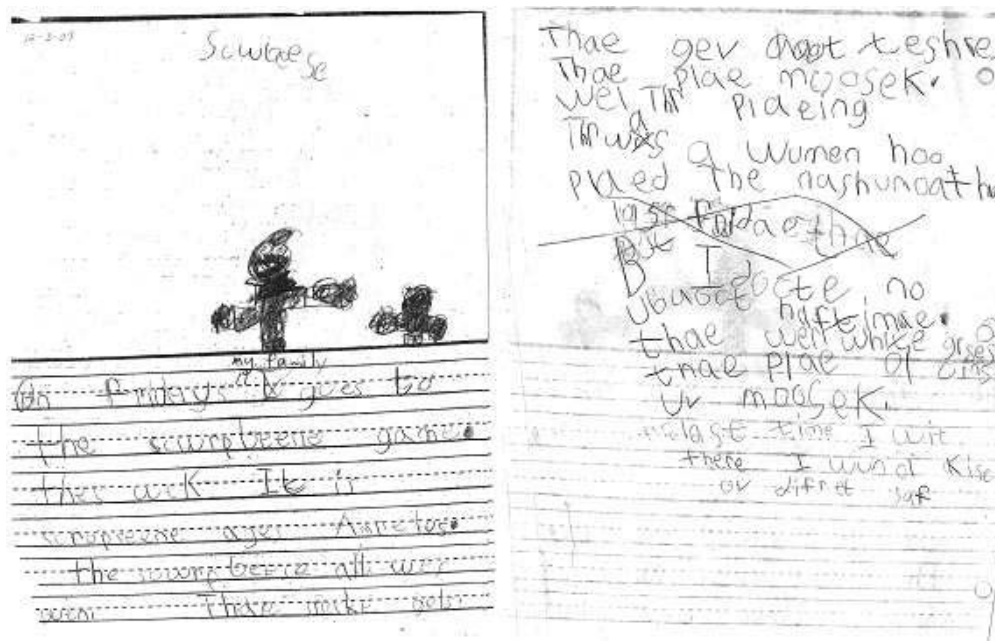


Figure 29 Gracie’s writing dated December 3, 2007

This piece could be described as a vignette from a personal memoir. It is full of descriptive language that includes the music that she heard, the colors that she saw, and the excitement that she felt from being at the game with her family. Describing the events in this piece held Gracie’s attention for several days, because the descriptions were tied to memories that Gracie valued. Gracie enjoyed and worked multiple days at a time on pieces of writing on self-selected topics that held her interest such as happenings with family and friends. Describing an inanimate object that held no personal connection to her was not viewed by Gracie as an authentic, relevant, or worthwhile task. She readily moved on to a topic she deemed as more important the next day.

Gracie undertook each piece as a story to tell. Some stories required more writing to tell the story. Some required less. Stories were not always viewed as completed when the time for writing was ended. In fact, for Gracie, they rarely were. Even Gracie’s shortest stories took days for her to complete. Gracie’s main goal in writing stories

seemed not to be the completion of a written story. Rather, it seemed to be the need for others to know her story as it was being written. Daily, Gracie read her story in progress to any classmate who was willing to listen. Gracie would listen to any classmates willing to share their writing in progress for her. At the end of writing time, when Mrs. Cook gathered the students in the classroom library area for sharing, Gracie's hand always waved frantically for Mrs. Cook to call on her. When Mrs. Cook called on her to share her writing, Gracie beamed as she read what had been written and then waited for comments from classmates. When Mrs. Cook did not call on Gracie, Gracie would sit with her shoulders slumped, her head hanging, and a dejected look upon her face. For Gracie, writing was about the sharing.

Early in the school year, it was evident that Gracie had already developed a sense of story. Her writing remained on topic and ideas were elaborated on through the use of detail. Gracie's original intent for the first piece she produced (see Figure 27, page 159) may have been to tell about her big sister from the community's Big Brother/Big Sister program. However, it quickly went to Gracie's main interest, her big sister's dog. Even with this change in topic, the story worked because the first sentence explained how the dog fit into Gracie's life. Gracie used specific details to enlarge the visual picture the reader obtains of the dog. He is black, he has a name, he does tricks. Gracie then elaborated even further by detailing the specific tricks that the dog did. The story contains an orderly flow of information regarding her topic. Gracie described the dog itself first and then moved into a detailed description of the tricks the dog performed.

During this time, Gracie was reading text such as *The Pond* (Boland, 1997) in her guided reading group. This text, like most level three text, contained from three to eight

words on each page and followed a simple sentence format. The sentence pattern was repetitive on the first four pages of the text, following the pattern of, “The pond is...” followed by a descriptive word. The text pattern then changed to a different text pattern for the following four pages. Again the pattern of the text stayed the same with only the final word on the page changing. The final page of the text repeated the text of the first two pages of the book.

At this time in Gracie’s literacy learning, she produced sentences in writing that were more complex than those she was reading. Her writing was not repetitive text. She expressed details in her work without the need to repeat a specific pattern and included compound sentences as well as sentences with dependent clauses.

The following sample of writing in Figure 30 was produced by Gracie during the middle of the school year. It is dated November 30, 2007 and reads, “Santa has a red cherry nose. He says, “Ho, Ho, Ho!” One day it was Christmas. Santa was at my door. I answered it and I screamed.”

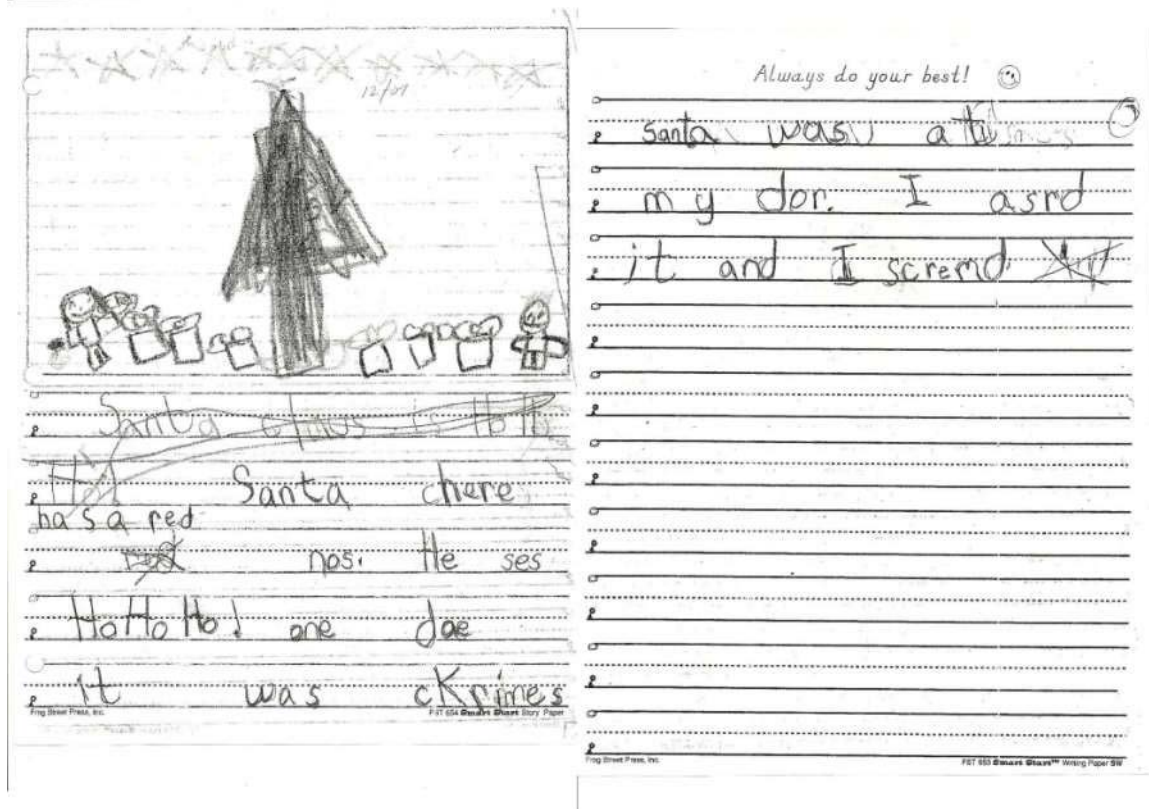


Figure 30 Gracie's writing dated November 30, 2007

This piece contained twenty-seven words and was shorter than the piece Gracie wrote at the beginning of the school year. However, it conveyed the story that Gracie wished to tell. In addition, descriptive words (red cherry nose) were included along with dialogue, even though the conventions of quotation marks were not included. Also present is Gracie's voice and the excitement of seeing Santa at her door. This is also the first piece in which Gracie showed signs of revising her work. She originally began her story, "Santa Claus is Ho Ho Ho!" For some reason, Gracie wrote this much and then changed her mind regarding how she wanted to lead into the piece. It is interesting to note that, like Michael, Gracie implemented revisions as she was writing her story. Mrs. Cook had modeled in a mini-lesson how to return to a completed piece and make desired revisions. However, that is not how either Gracie or Michael incorporated revision into

their work. Instead, once both students began revising their work, the revisions occurred as the writing took place.

At this point in the school year, Gracie was beginning to project her voice into her writing. The reader feels her excitement at opening the door to see Santa standing there and hears her squeals of joy that Santa is visiting her home.

Unlike Michael, Gracie did not view longer writing as better writing. Gracie viewed the purpose of writing as sharing exciting events from her personal life with the reader. Quality writing was not length dependent, but rather meaning dependent. Stories needed to be only as long as necessary to adequately relate the event and the emotion to the reader.

At this time in Gracie's guided reading instruction, she was being instructed with text at a *DRA* (Beaver, 1997) level seven. At this time, Gracie was encountering text such as the level seven text, *Sam Goes to School* (Giles, 2000). This story was a realistic fictional account of a girl's first day of school. This story is representative of the text Gracie was encountering in guided reading at this time. Even though the story was fictional, its realistic nature was similar to the stories that Gracie was producing in writing workshop. The guided reading text utilized a problem/solution story format that was not yet fully evident in the stories Gracie produced. The style of story that Gracie produced at this time was more a telling of events that actually occurred. However, there were also some similarities. Gracie was reading stories that incorporated dialogue. Gracie included dialogue in her story. Some of the story line in the stories Gracie was reading was implied, but not explicitly stated. For example, in *Sam Goes to School* (Giles, 2000), Sam feels hesitant to stay at school without her mother. However, this information is not

directly stated in the text. In Gracie's story, she is excited to see Santa at her door and the screams were screams of excitement, not of fear. However, Gracie did not include that information directly in her text. Instead, it is left for the reader to infer.

At the beginning of February, Mrs. Cook started beginning the writing workshop time of day with mini-lessons on using interesting leads that capture the audiences' attention. Excited to implement interesting leads in her writing, Gracie began that day's writing and produced the piece dated February 11, 2008 and shown in Figure 31. The piece reads, "When Angel got sick, it was a disaster. Do you know what happened? She died. She was an angel fish. She was gray. She was a girl. She lived in my room. I called her Angel because she was an angel fish. Her fish food was red. I fed her at 8:00 p.m. I loved her! The end.

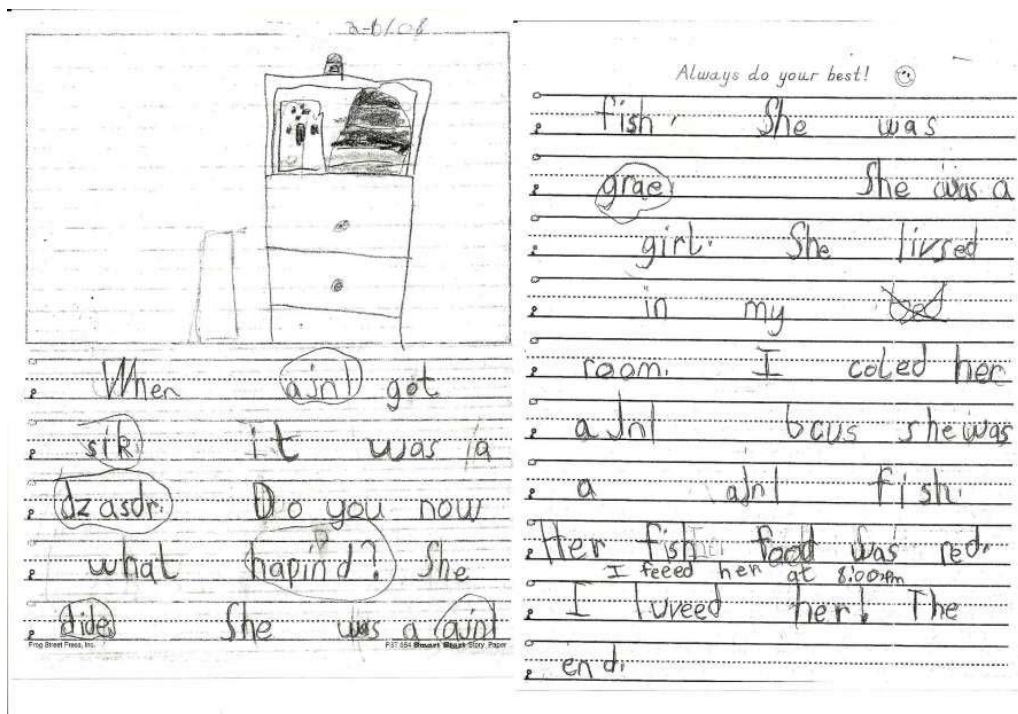


Figure 31 Gracie's writing dated February 11, 2008

When Gracie finished her writing that day, she eagerly showed her work to Mrs. Cook. Mrs. Cook listened as Gracie read, then told Gracie that she was confused as to who Angel was and counseled Gracie to rewrite the beginning in a way that let the reader know who Angel was as they began the story. Gracie's smile faded as she realized that Mrs. Cook was not satisfied with the lead that Gracie had crafted. Mrs. Cook asked questions of Gracie. "Who is Angel? I don't understand." Gracie replied that Angel was a fish. Mrs. Cook responded that Gracie needed to include that information at the beginning of the story. Gracie and Mrs. Cook worked together to revise the beginning. Figure 32 shows the same story with the revised beginning as suggested by Mrs. Cook and in Mrs. Cook's handwriting. It reads, "My uncle brought a fish home and I named her Angel. When Angel got sick it was a disaster. Do you know what happened? She died. She was a angel fish. She was gray. She was a girl. She lived in my room. I called her Angel because she was a angel fish. Her fish food was red. I fed her at 8:00 p.m. I loved her! The end."

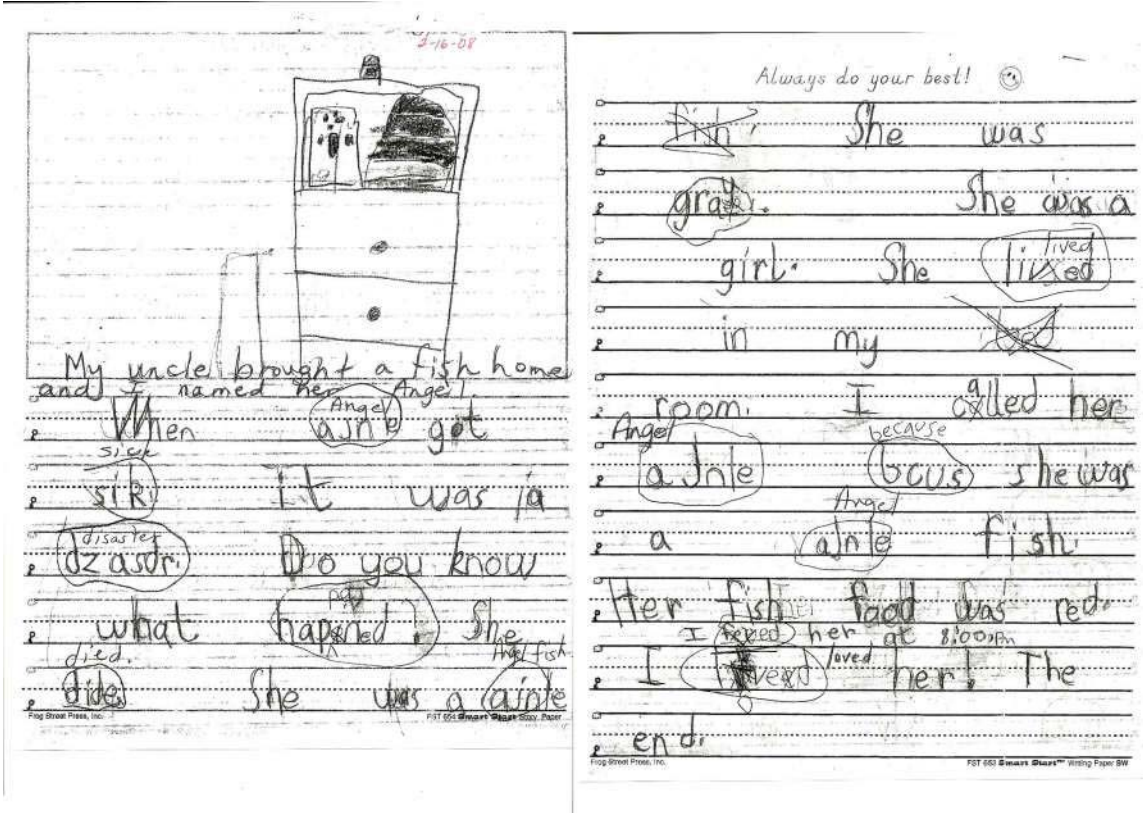


Figure 32 Gracie’s writing dated February 11, 2008, revised

In studying both the lead that Gracie originally wrote and the lead that Mrs. Cook helped her craft, Gracie’s lead is arguably the better lead. Gracie left the conference with Mrs. Cook obviously confused. In writing her lead, Gracie had followed the intention of Mrs. Cook’s mini-lesson for the day. However, her attempt at creating the lead that her teacher originally encouraged was not valued by the teacher. In addition to writing her own lead at the beginning of the story, Mrs. Cook corrected Gracie’s spelling throughout the piece, then encouraged Gracie to recopy the story. Gracie did not recopy the story. She placed it in her writing folder and did not return to work on it for the remainder of the school year. In rewriting the lead for Gracie, Mrs. Cook broke one of her own rules. In keeping with the philosophy of writing workshop, Mrs. Cook often told students that when a peer offered them advice on their writing, it was ultimately, the writer’s decision

as to whether or not to make recommended changes. However, in the course of the conference conversation, Mrs. Cook had not made changing the lead as Gracie wrote it as an option. Instead, she wrote her own lead at the beginning of the piece. In not valuing Gracie's attempt at an interesting lead, Mrs. Cook thwarted Gracie's interest in further working on that particular story. When Mrs. Cook added her own beginning to the story, she had in essence taken the story from Gracie. It was no longer Gracie's story.

At this time in guided reading, Gracie continued encountering stories that were also about realistic personal events happening to fictional characters, but was also encountering fictional stories that portrayed personified animals as the main characters. An example was the level 14 text *The Fat Cat Sat on the Mat* (Karlin, 1996). The story line was of a cat who sat on the rat's mat. The rat tried many unsuccessful ploys to get the cat off the mat until finally the witch who lived with them came home and the cat decided on his own to leave the mat. This particular text utilized some textual patterns of rhyming words embedded in the text of the prose. A sample page reads, "The rat hates the cat. The cat does not care. The cat, who is fat, just lies in the vat and stares at the rat. The rat hates that" (Karlin, 1996, p. 8). It is interesting to note that Gracie did not attempt to incorporate rhyming words or fictional characters into her personal writing. The language of Gracie's writing followed her personal oral language patterns. The characters Gracie chose to write about were people who played an integral part in her life.

Figure 33 is a sample of Gracie's writing collected near the end of the study. It is dated February 27, 2008 and reads, "Do you know what is going on? My cousins are coming to my house. My cousins are coming at a different time. Two are coming on Saturday and two are coming on Sunday. We don't know what we are going to do. How

about you? They are fun! Why they are fun is because we play hide and seek. Me and one of my cousins hide in two different places. We hid in my mom's shower and my mom's closet. It was dark in my mom's closet. We were sneaky. We switched when they were not looking and we stuck together."

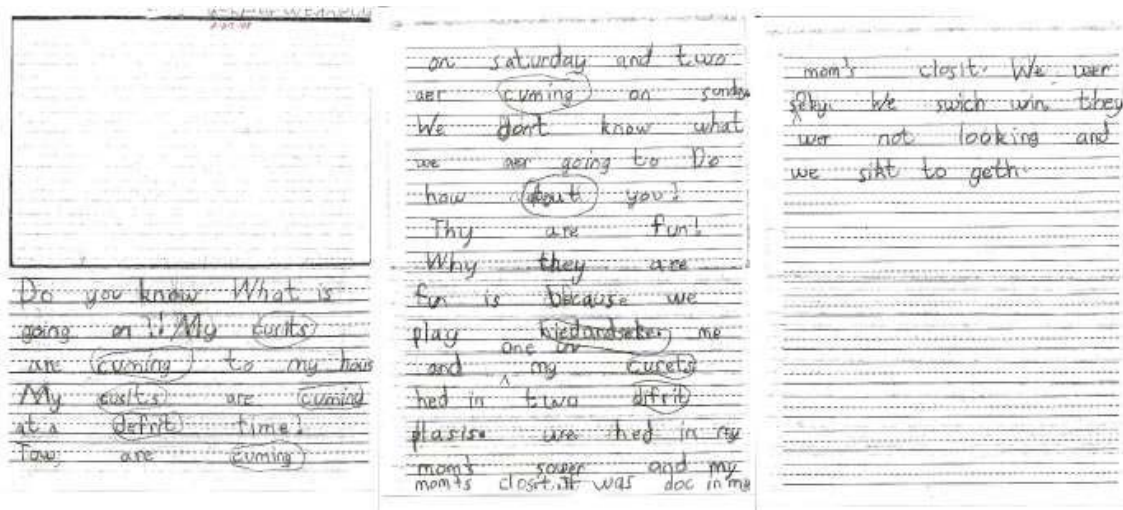


Figure 33 Gracie's writing dated February 27, 2008.

This was the longest piece that Gracie produced and contained ninety-nine words. By this time of the school year, Gracie had continued to build on the strengths she possessed at the beginning of the school year. Her talent of telling a story through the use of expanding on details developed throughout the school year allowing her to produce a more complex story while still maintaining the reader's interest and staying on topic. Gracie began the story by grabbing the reader's attention by asking a question of the reader as though the reader were present when the story was being told. Gracie introduced the story with a complex story line of two sets of cousins coming, but not on the same day. She then drew the reader further into the story by asking a second question of the reader. Use of this technique exemplified Gracie's sense of audience. Her purpose in writing was to engage and enthrall her reader with a sense of excitement at the coming

cousin's visit, suspense at using the dark closet as a hiding place, and relief at knowing that no harm came to the participants.

Gracie's voice in relating the story was maintained throughout. She wrote as though she spoke directly to the reader and was able to draw the reader into the story. The flow of the story is chronological beginning with the announcement of the cousins' visit, what they would be playing, and then where they would be playing. She understood how to weave inferences into the context of the story by not directly stating that something bad could happen to them in a dark closet. Gracie continued to show her awareness of the audience when she assured the reader that nothing bad happened to them while they were hiding in the dark closet.

Change Over Time in Gracie's Use of Conventions

Gracie began the school year with a rudimentary understanding of the sentence unit and the conventional use of the period. She used the period conventionally beginning with the first piece of writing that she composed during writing workshop. The first piece that Gracie composed on September 28, 2007 (see Figure 27, page 159) was comprised of seven sentences. Four of the seven sentences are conventionally punctuated with a period at the end of the sentence. In contrast to Michael, Gracie understood that sentences at times included the use of a dependent phrase. For example, in this first piece produced, Gracie placed the period at the end of "he knows how to lie down when we want him to" instead of at the end of the first independent phrase, "he knows how to lie down". This occurred again at the end of the last sentence in the piece. A period was placed at the end of the compound sentence, "He knows to jump up and high five" rather than at the conclusion of the initial independent phrase, "He knows how to jump up".

Gracie punctuated her work with multiple periods placed conventionally at the end of some sentences in every piece that she wrote. Initially, some periods were omitted, creating some run-on sentences. The first time that Gracie conventionally placed periods at the end of each sentence was in her piece written on November 12, 2007 and shown in Figure 26 on page 160. This was the piece that Gracie wrote in response to her teacher's assignment to describe five stones. This piece lacked the voice and excitement normally ringing from Gracie's writing. Perhaps, Gracie's lack of enthusiasm at the assigned writing caused her to write more slowly and deliberately, allowing her to attend more to the conventional placement of periods.

The next time that Gracie utilized periods placed correctly throughout an entire piece of writing was on February 11, 2008. This was the piece discussed previously (see Figure 31, page 167) where Gracie was so proud of the lead she wrote telling of when her fish, Angel, had died.

By November, Gracie was incorporating dialogue into her stories. When Gracie produced the piece written on November 30, 2007 (see Figure 30, page 165) she stated that (referring to Santa Claus) "He says Ho Ho Ho!" This sentence was notable on two counts. First, even though Gracie did not place quotation marks around the words that Santa stated, she did have Santa speaking. Also, Gracie used the exclamation mark to place emphasis on the enthusiasm with which Santa spoke.

On December 18, 2007, Gracie wrote a letter to Santa Claus. This writing is found in Figure 34 and reads, "Dear Santa, My brother talked to you on the cell phone. How is Mrs. Claus? Have you gotten sick yet? How are your reindeer? See ya, Gracie".

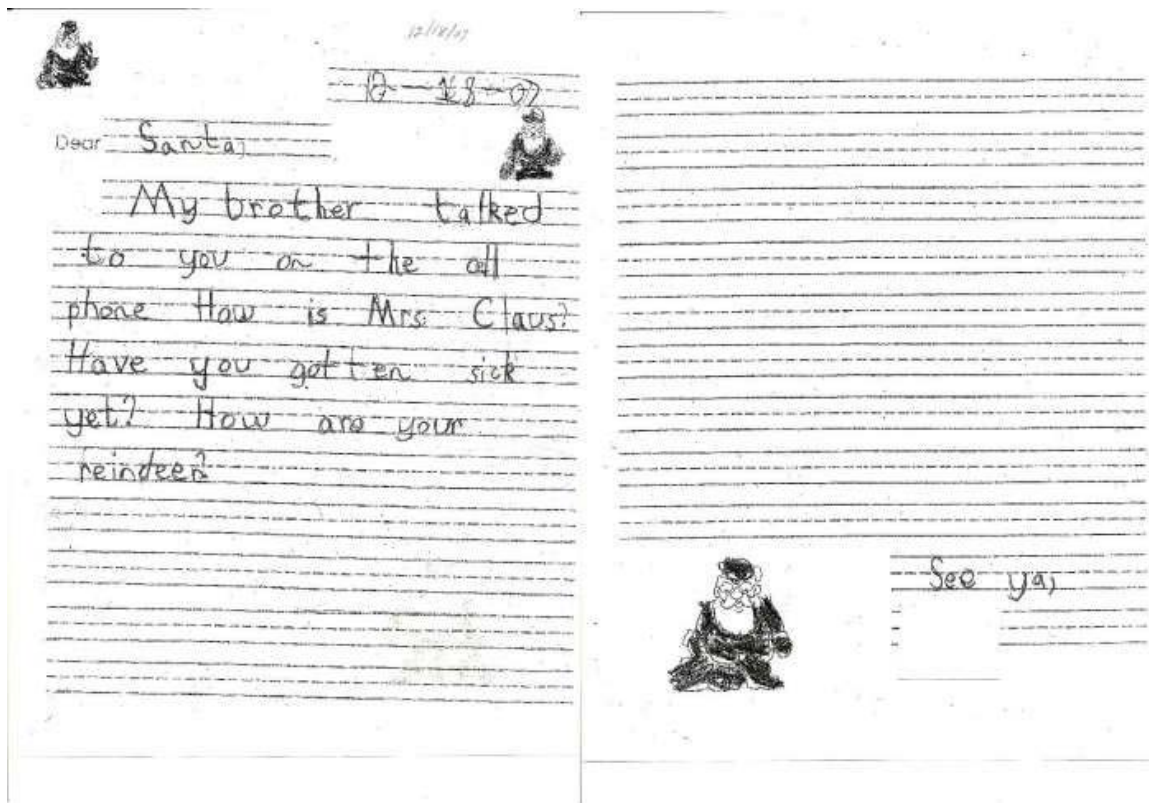


Figure 34 Gracie's writing dated December 18, 2007

In this piece of writing, Gracie asked three questions of Santa and conventionally used a question mark at the end of each question. This was the first time that Gracie used the question mark in her writing during the time covered by this study. This piece of writing followed a mini-lesson by Mrs. Cook on how to write a friendly letter. During her mini-lesson, Mrs. Cook modeled asking questions in the letter format, stating that it was polite to ask questions of the person you were writing to in order to show interest in that person.

The next time that Gracie used a question mark in her writing was in her story about her angel fish written on February 11, 2008 (see Figure 31, page 167). In this story, the question was used for an entirely different purpose. In that piece, Gracie asked, "Do you know what happened?" The question was placed within the text of the story as an

author's craft to engage the reader. When writing this question, Gracie showed an awareness that her writing was to be read by an audience. Gracie wished to draw that audience into the suspense of the story she told.

Gracie again used this same technique in her writing dated February 27, 2008 (see Figure 33, page 171). Gracie began writing this piece by asking a question. "Do you know what is going on?" The question served as a hook to grab the reader and persuade them to read on to find the answer. Five sentences later in the same piece, Gracie asked another question, "How about you?" Again, Gracie was showing a sense of her audience and wanting to keep that audience engaged with the story.

Gracie exhibited a complex understanding of the conventional use of upper and lower case letters early in the time of this study. Her first piece of writing was produced on September 28, 2007 and is shown in Figure 35. It reads, "My big sister is named E___. Her dog is named Chevy. He is black. He knows tricks. He knows how to shake. He also knows how to lay down when we tell him to. He knows how to jump up and high five."

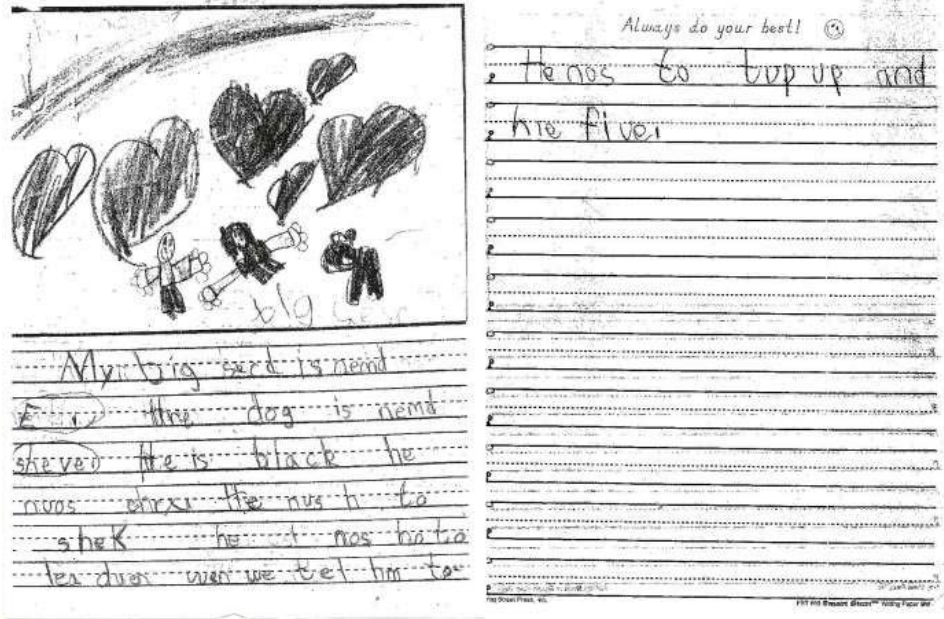


Figure 35 Gracie’s writing dated September 28, 2007

Gracie used upper case letters conventionally both at the beginning of the first sentence and at the beginning of each sentence that followed a sentence that she ended with a period. The only place in this initial piece of her writing that she omitted using an upper case letter as conventionally dictated was at the beginning of the last sentence on the first page. However, Gracie wrote the last two sentences on the first page as one run-on sentence reading, “He knows show to shake he also knows how to lay down when we tell him to.” Gracie did not end the first sentence in this unit of writing with a period, and consequently did not begin the next sentence with an upper case letter. At this early time in the school year, Gracie already understood the sentence as a meaningful unit of words. She punctuated and capitalized each sentence unit as it was meaningful to her. The sentence previous to this run-on sentence stated that her big sister’s dog could do tricks. This sentence told of two tricks the dog could do. Logically and conventionally the two

sentences could belong in the same compound sentence had Gracie connected them with the word “and”.

In this same piece, Gracie also used an upper case letter conventionally at the beginning of her big sister’s name. However, she did not utilize an upper case letter at the beginning of the dog’s name. Perhaps at this time Gracie understood that people’s names were capitalized, but did not yet understand that names of pets and animals would also be capitalized. Gracie rarely used capital letters in unconventional places. The only time that an uppercase letter appeared in an unconventional place in this piece was the capital letter was the “K” in “shake”. Interestingly, the letter “k” was not one that appeared often in Gracie’s writing. Gracie once again recorded an uppercase “k” in the middle of a word on October 31, 2007. This piece is shown in Figure 36 and reads, “Today is Halloween. My cousins are coming over today! I am going trick or treating. My cousins names are A_____ and B_____. A_____ spells her name different than A_____ in Ms. Cook’s class. And I went to a house that I was too scared to trick or treat at. Because it had two statues and it one statue was alive.”

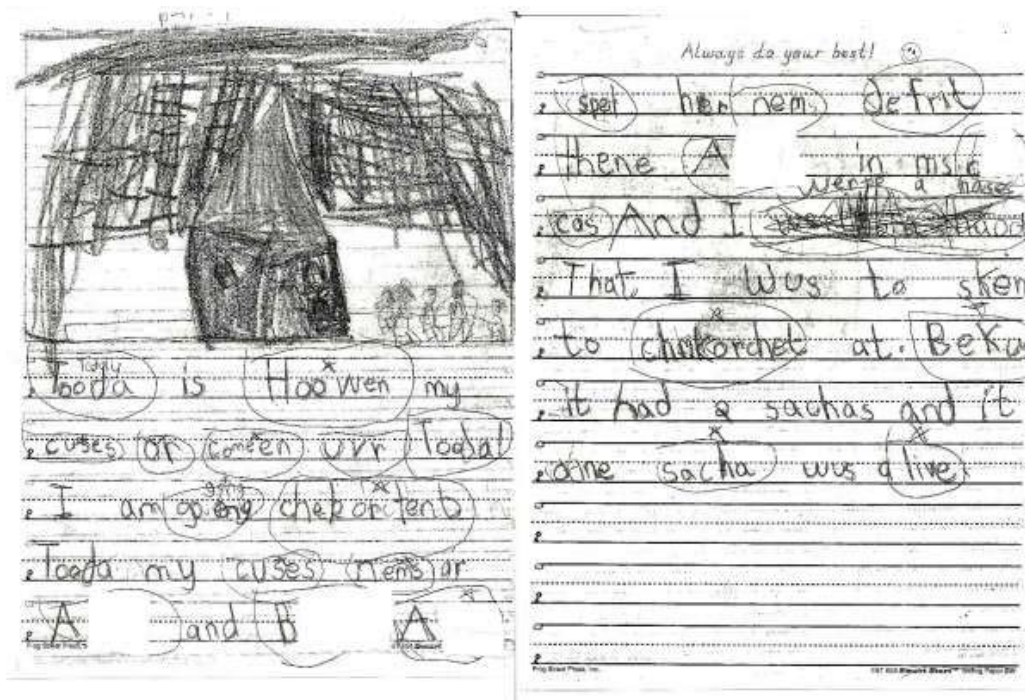


Figure 36 Gracie's writing dated October 31, 2007

In this piece, Gracie used an uppercase “k” to record the /k/ sound in both “scared” and “because”. However, in her recording of the phrase “trick or treat” she records the /k/ at the end of “trick” with a lowercase “k”. Gracie may have used the lower case “k” in “trick or treat” because she had previously seen the phrase written conventionally in her classroom. For some reason, the conventional formation of the lower case “k” had been recalled by her to use when in the context of “trick or treat”, but she had not yet made the transfer of using a lowercase formation of the letter “k” in other contexts.

The next time that Gracie used a letter “k” in her writing was on November 12, 2007 in her piece of writing that described her teacher’s five stones (see Figure 28, page 160). In that piece which reads, “My teacher has 5 stones. I am describing a stone. It is pink. It has two cracks.” Gracie used an upper case “K” to record the /k/ sound in

“describing”, the last letter in “pink”, and in the middle of the word “thaKing” that she has crossed out in the last line. It seems that Gracie had still not yet distinguished between the upper and lower case forms of the letter “k”. This is very understandable considering the similarity in the formation of the two letters. Gracie once again used the letter “k” in her writing on November 30, 2007 (see Figure 30, page 165). That piece reads, “Santa has a red cherry nose. He says Ho Ho Ho! One day it was Christmas. Santa was at my door. I answered it and I screamed.” In this piece, Gracie placed an upper case “k” following the lower case “c” in “Christmas”. She thus recorded the /k/ sound in “Christmas” with both a letter “c” and a letter “k”.

This was the last time that Gracie wrote the letter “k” in either the upper or lowercase form in her writing. This is not to imply that Gracie incorrectly recorded words containing the letter “k”. She simply did not use them. Her infrequent encounters of the letter “k” in either its upper or lower case form contributed to her not understanding how to conventionally record a lowercase “k” differently than an uppercase “k”.

Gracie’s piece of writing that was dated October 23, 2007 is shown in Figure 37 and reads, “I have 9 best friends. We play together at recess. And we have lots of fun. We play mom and dad. S____, E____, E____, c____, T____, M____, m____, A____, M____.”

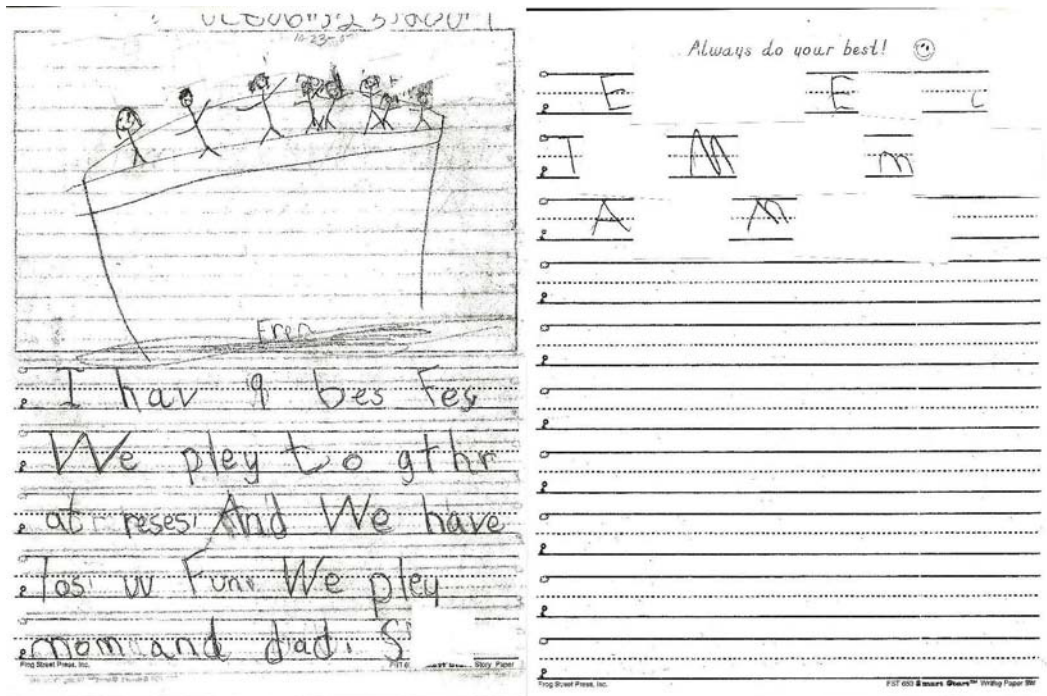


Figure 37 Gracie’s writing dated October 23, 2007

In this piece, Gracie capitalized the “f” in “friends” and “fun” as well as the “w” on “we” the second time that she wrote it. This was the only time during the course of the study that Gracie used a capital “f” or a capital “w” in the middle of a sentence. In the list of friends that Gracie included at the end of her writing, she began two of her friends’ names with lowercase letters. This was the only time that Gracie wrote the name of any friends beginning with lower case letters.

Gracie was accustomed to seeing the names of her classmates written around the room. On the first day of school, each student’s name was written conventionally and taped at a spot on the student tables in the room as a designation of where each student was assigned to sit. These name tags remained on the student tables throughout the school year. At the beginning of the school year, Mrs. Cook had highlighted each individual as a “student of the day”. Part of the “student of the day” activities included

writing about the student in the interactive writing activity described earlier in this case study. The completed paragraphs about each student's likes and dislikes hung on the classroom walls for the first part of the school year. There were charts for attendance and classroom jobs hanging on the classroom walls throughout the school year. These charts included lists of names of the classroom members with each name spelled using upper and lowercase letters conventionally. Gracie encountered her classmates' names with upper and lowercase letters used conventionally on a daily basis. Through these multiple encounters, she internalized the understanding that their names began with a capital letter.

Gracie was not as secure in her understanding regarding beginning the names of fictional characters and pets with an upper case letter. In the piece produced on November 30, 2007, Gracie wrote about Santa (see Figure 30, page 165). The piece reads, "Santa has a red cherry nose. He says Ho Ho Ho! One day it was Christmas. Santa was at my door. I answered it and I screamed." Gracie, who always wrote the names of close friends and people she knew with the conventional use of upper and lower case letters, wrote the word "Santa" three times in this piece. Two of the three times she began the word utilizing an uppercase letter. The third time, the name is written with a lower case letter. A closer analysis of the writing reveals that the first two times, Santa was also the first word in the sentence. This includes once in Gracie's original beginning of the story, which she later crossed out. The single time that Gracie did not capitalize "Santa", was the third time that Gracie wrote the name. Although, this third time was technically also at the beginning of a sentence, Gracie did not place a period at the end of the sentence that preceded it. Gracie probably did not recognize that her use of "Santa" this third time also began a new sentence. Without that understanding, Gracie did not

capitalize the name. It can be theorized, then, that Gracie capitalized “Santa” the first two times not because it was a proper name, but rather because it occurred at the beginning of a sentence.

Also, in this same piece, Gracie did not capitalize the word “Christmas”. (Notice that the lowercase “c” is followed by an uppercase “K” following the pattern described in the previous paragraph.) However, in the piece dated October 31, 2007 (see Figure 36, page 178), Gracie did capitalize the word “Halloween”. In noting the date on this latter piece, it was written on Halloween day. Halloween had been discussed in the classroom for the majority of the month of October. Gracie had seen the word “Halloween” written multiple times in Mrs. Cook’s mini-lessons. By the time Gracie used this word in her own writing, she had internalized the understanding that conventional writing required her to begin it with an upper case letter.

It is evident that while Gracie understood the conventional use of uppercase letters in some circumstances, such as at the beginning of friends’ names and the beginning of sentences, she did not yet fully understand that other proper nouns such as “Santa” (a fictional character) and “Christmas” (a holiday) should also be capitalized.

As discussed at the beginning of this section, Gracie did not capitalize the name of her big sister’s dog in the first piece that she produced on September 28, 2007 (see Figure 27, page 176). There were other writings that Gracie produced that showed she was personally negotiating her understanding of the need to capitalize the names of pets. One was produced November 6, 2007. It is shown in Figure 38 and reads, “I have 2 dogs. Their names are Dana and Missy. They don’t know tricks. They are black.”

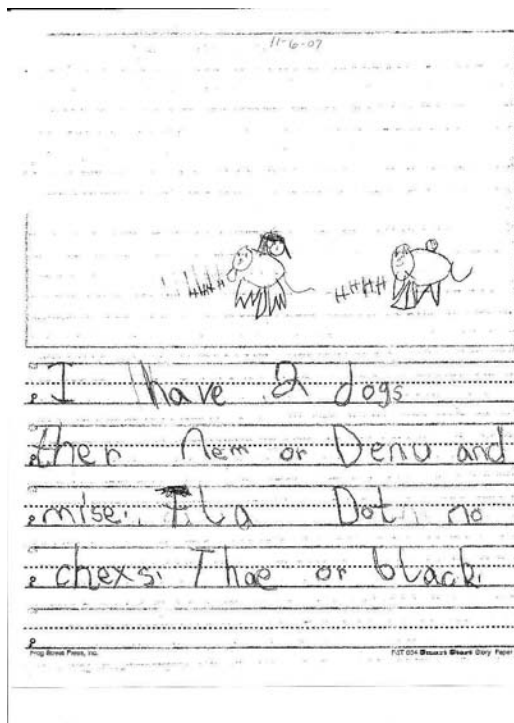


Figure 38 Gracie’s writing dated November 6, 2007

In this piece of writing, “Dana” began with an uppercase letter. “Missy”, the name of the second dog, was not capitalized.

Gracie wrote about one more pet over the course of time that this data was collected. That pet was “Angel”, the fish who died (see Figure 31, page 167). Twice in this piece, Gracie referred to her fish by the fish’s name, “Angel”. She also wrote the word “angel” two times in reference to the fact that she was an angel fish, using the word as a common noun that conventionally did not need to be capitalized. Gracie did not use an uppercase letter at the beginning of “angel” in either context.

A final instance where Gracie did not recognize names as proper nouns needing to be capitalized included the piece produced on December 3, 2007 (see Figure 29, page 162). The piece reads “On Friday’s my family goes to the Scorpions game. This week it is Scorpions against Amarillos. The Scorpions always win. They make goals. They give

out t-shirts. They play music. While they're playing there's a woman who played the national anthem. I don't know about the halftime. They wear white jerseys. They play all kinds of music. Last time I went there I won all kinds of different stuff." In this piece Gracie did not recognize "Friday" as a proper noun that needed to be capitalized. She did realize that "Amarillos" was a proper noun and capitalized it. However, she did not realize that the name of her hometown team, "Scorpions" was also a proper noun that needed to be capitalized. Gracie's personal understanding of proper nouns was in a place of negotiation when she wrote these pieces. She did realize that names of people she knew were always capitalized. She did not yet understand that names of fictional characters, pets, sports teams, and days of the week also needed to begin with capital letters.

Gracie's writing does show evidence that she understands multiple purposes for utilizing upper case letters. The second piece that Gracie produced is shown in Figure 39 and reads, "Today is Tuesday. My reading buddy is coming. Her name is Hanna Montana. Her real name is H_____. But I call her Hannah Montana. She is lovely. It is funny to call her Hannah Montana."

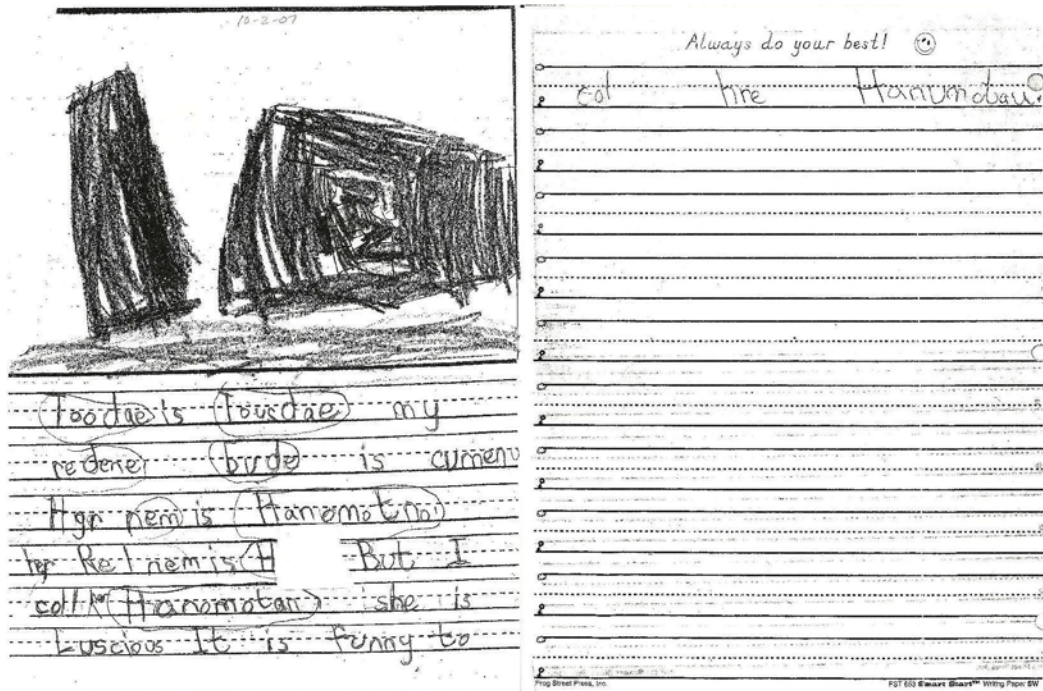


Figure 39 Gracie's writing dated January 15, 2008

In this piece, Gracie used a capital letter at the beginning of “Tuesday”, evidencing the beginning of an understanding that days of the week are conventionally written beginning with an upper case letter. However, in the sentence, “Her real name is H_____.” Gracie did not capitalize the first letter of the first word in the sentence, “her” even though she did place a period at the end of the sentence that preceded this one. Gracie did capitalize the “R” that began the second word, “real”. One can only hypothesize why Gracie used an uppercase letter for the word “real”, especially considering that she used the lowercase “r” in other words in this same piece such as at the beginning of “reading” and the end of “her”. Perhaps Gracie realized that she was writing a different sentence and thought she was capitalizing the first letter of the sentence. This, however, is unlikely since all other sentences that began following where she had placed a period used a capital letter at the beginning of the first word of the

sentence. Gracie also used an uppercase “L” at the beginning of “lovely” in the last line. (Note: Gracie’s spelling of this word looked more like “luscious”. However, when questioned regarding this following her completion of the piece, Gracie insisted that the word was “lovely”.) Once again, Gracie used the conventional form of the lowercase letter elsewhere in the piece. She wrote “call” with a lowercase “l”. Most likely, Gracie’s use of these two upper case letters was a temporary lapse in Gracie’s understanding of the conventional use of upper and lowercase letters.

Change Over Time in Gracie’s Use of Orthography

As previously mentioned in Michael’s case study, Mrs. Cook strictly enforced the rule that students were not to ask how to spell unknown words when writing. When encountering a word whose spelling was unfamiliar, students articulated the word slowly and recorded what they could hear. During the time of my observations in the classroom, I did not ever observe Gracie asking either another student or an adult how to spell a specific word. This protocol that encouraged students to record unknown words based on what they could hear and record and what they understood about spelling allowed for a study of the evolution of Gracie’s personal understanding of orthography.

Eventually, Mrs. Cook included mini-lessons during the writing workshop time where she explained to students that if they felt they had written a word unconventionally, they could circle the word whose spelling was in question in order to get help with the spelling at a later date during a writing conference.

Over the course of this study, Gracie conventionally wrote 80 different words utilized in the writing that she accomplished during the writing workshop time of her school day. A month by month breakdown of words that Gracie wrote conventionally is

included as Appendix I at the back of this study. Words are recorded in Appendix I under the month that they first appeared as conventionally spelled words in her writing.

An analysis of Gracie’s known writing vocabulary (Appendix I) shows that Gracie conventionally recorded 10 words in September, 14 words in October, 9 words in November, 12 words in December, 7 words in January, 28 words in February, and no new words were added in March. Remember that Gracie’s last piece composed during the course of this study was dated February 27, 2008. Gracie did continue to work on this piece into the month of March. However, no new pieces were started during the month of March. Table 7 shows the relationship between the number of pieces Gracie completed each month compared to the number of conventionally spelled words that appeared in her writing each month.

Month	Number of Pieces Completed	Total Number of Words Written	Number of Words Spelled Conventionally for the First Time
September	1	42	10
October	3	125	14
November	2	51	9
December	3	98	12
January	1	39	7
February	3	242	8
March	0	0	0

Table 7 Gracie’s number of completed pieces compared to the total number of words written and the number of conventionally spelled words that appeared for the first time

The total number of words written during a month’s time (excluding March) ranged from a low of 39 in January to a high of 242 in February. The number of words

spelled conventionally for the first time (excluding March) ranged from a low of seven in January to a high of 28 in February. Not surprisingly, a relationship existed between the total number of words written and the number of words written conventionally for the first time. Gracie wrote the fewest number of total words in January. January was also the month when Gracie produced the fewest number of words spelled conventionally for the first time. She wrote the greatest number of total words in February. That was also the month that she produced the greatest amount of words spelled conventionally for the first time. There is some variance in the total number of words produced and the number of words spelled conventionally for the first time during the other months. However, the trend is the same. Writing more total words during a month provided the opportunity for more words to appear conventionally spelled for the first time.

Beginning with her first piece of writing composed during the writing workshop part of the school day, Gracie showed that she possessed a large personal corpus of high frequency words that she spelled conventionally. Her first piece of writing dated September 28, 2007 is shown in Figure 27, page 159 and reads, “My big sister’s name is E _____. Her dog is named Chevy. He is black. He knows tricks. He knows how to shake. He knows how to lay down when we tell him to. He knows to jump up and high five.”

This simple paragraph reveals that Gracie had already developed a complex understanding of conventional English orthography. She conventionally spelled, “my”, “big”, “is”, “dog”, “black”, “he”, “to”, “we”, “up”, “and”, and “five”. Gracie understood how simple two and three letter words could be recorded by slowly articulating the word, listening for phonemes, and recording what can be heard. This is evidenced in the recording of “big”, “dog”, “he”, “we”, “up” and “and”. Gracie also showed evidence of

understanding that some words are not recorded exactly as they are heard. Rather, she understood that she also needed to attend to and recall details of how the word looked in written text in addition to being able to write a letter for articulated phonemes on her paper. This was shown in her conventional recording of “my” “to”, and “is” which otherwise would have been recorded as “mi” “tu” and “iz”. Gracie also understood that at times two letters combined to form a single sound such as the “ck” in “black”. She further demonstrated that early in the school year, she understood that some words contain silent letters such as the “e” in “five”. An analysis of words not conventionally spelled offer an even deeper insight into Gracie’s personal understanding of orthography. Gracie conventionally wrote all beginning consonants of words and most ending sounds. Beginning sounds recorded unconventionally included the beginning vowel of her big sister’s name and the /ch/ at the beginning of the dog’s name, Chevy. In “Chevy” the beginning sounds is recorded /sh/ as it sounds when the word is articulated.

The beginning of “tricks” is recorded as “ch”. This recording is explained by Read’s (1971) research stating that both /tr/ and /chr/ are articulated in the same place in the mouth. Read (1986) states that young children have difficulty hearing the slight differences in sounds that are articulated in the same part of the mouth. Such is the case with /tr/ and /chr/. In fact, often the ability to hear these slight differences follows the acquisition of the orthography of a specific word using those sounds rather than preceding it. In other words, children learn to differentiate aurally between these closely articulated sounds after they learn to conventionally spell words utilizing that sound, not before.

There was only one word containing multiple phonemes that Gracie recorded with a single phoneme. That was the word “how”. Gracie recorded this word with a single letter, “h”. At this time, Gracie did not understand her alternatives for recording the phoneme /ou/. That being the case, she selected to record the beginning sound and not record anything for the second phoneme. This was the only time in all of Gracie’s writing that a multiphonemic word was recorded with a single phoneme. It was also the first of only two times that Gracie recorded any word without the use of a vowel. It is probable that, had it been possible to record /ou/ with a single vowel, Gracie would have done that. However, none of the vowels have either a short or long sound that resemble is sound of /ou/. The second and last time that Gracie recorded a word without the inclusion of a vowel also occurred in this same piece. Gracie recorded “him” as “hm” utilizing the initial and final consonants and omitting the medial vowel. All work completed following this piece included a vowel in each word.

In this same piece, Gracie recorded “her” as “hre”, showing both an understanding that the word needed to contain a vowel as well as a near understanding of the “er” combination used to record the sound at the end of “her”. At the beginning of the school year, Gracie’s recording of sounds in words was definitely not random. She had already developed an understanding of the orthography of the English language and was well into internalizing the complex nature regarding some of the ways that English words are recorded.

Gracie’s second piece of writing dated October 2, 2007 and shown in Figure 39, page 185 shows how Gracie’s personal negotiation of her understanding of the “er” combination in words continued to evolve. This piece reads, “Today is Tuesday. My

reading buddy is coming. Her name is Hannah Montana. Her real name is H____. But I call her Hannah Montana. She is lovely. It is funny to call her Hannah Montana.” The first time that Gracie wrote “her” in this piece, she recorded it as “hre”. At some point she returned to the word and, dissatisfied with the way the word looked, wrote over the top of it changing the “re” to “gr”. (The letter “g” does look like a reversed letter “e”, however, at no time in her writing did Gracie reverse the letter “e” when she wrote it.) Her next attempt at writing “her” in this piece was recorded as “hgr”. The third time that Gracie wrote the same word in this piece, she first recorded “her” with just the initial letter “h”, but on rereading this piece utilized a carat to insert the word as “har”. When recording “her” for the fourth and final time in this piece, Gracie returned to her original spelling of the word as “hre”. In all of these attempts, Gracie may have tried to recall the look of the word as she had seen it previously in text. This word was not one that she could record conventionally simply by slowly articulating the word and recording what was heard. This word required Gracie to integrate information both from what she heard when saying the word slowly with what she had encountered when previously seeing the word in written text. Gracie could hear the “h” at the beginning and the “r” at the end. She recalled from seeing the word and, in addition to her knowledge of vowels, possibly knew that another letter needed to be incorporated. This piece allows us to see the negotiation occurring inside Gracie’s head, first placing an “e” at the end, then trying a “g” in the middle. She then tried the “a” in the middle of the word and, not satisfied with any of her intermittent attempts at recording “her”, returned to her to the original attempt of “hre” the final time that she wrote the word in this piece. This also suggests that

spelling development is not a linear and progressive affair. Learners try different spellings (Bear et al., 2008)

This same piece written October 2, 2007, reveals other understandings about orthography of which Gracie was aware. She recorded “Today” as “toodae” and “Tuesday” as “Tousdae” Both unconventional spellings show the complexity of Gracie’s knowledge of orthography. Gracie recorded the long “a” sound in the final syllable of both of these words as “ae”. In fact, the “ae” combination is one that occurs in the English language and the long “a” sound can be recorded as such in words. In addition, the slow articulation of a word with a long “a” sound can result with a brief but definite short “e” sound following the long “a” sound. Whether Gracie recorded the long “a” sounds as “ae” because she understood that “ae” is an appropriate recording of the long “a” sound in the English language, or because she was over-articulating the long “a” sound and heard an “e” following the “a” is unknown. However, either explanation is evidence of the complexity of Gracie’s understanding of orthography at this early time in the school year.

Gracie’s spelling of the first syllable in “Today” as “Too” also utilized an understandable recording. She recognized the first syllable as a high frequency word that had multiple spellings (to, too, two) and opted to use the second spelling. In looking at Gracie’s recording of the first syllable of “Tuesday” as “Tous”, Gracie’s spelling choice was again understandable. The vowel sound in the first syllable has many alternate spellings in the English language. These include a single “o” as in “to”, “oo” as in “moon”, “ou” as in “mousse” or “ue” as in “blue”. Gracie realized from her previous encounters of seeing the word in printed text that the more common single or double “o”

was not what was utilized in this particular word. She selected a combination of letters that did not occur as often, but that did occur in the English language and also recorded the needed phoneme. She also knew that there needed to be a greater vowel presence in this word.

Gracie's writing shows that she continued to negotiate English orthography throughout the school year. A piece of her writing from the middle of the school year dated November 12, 2007 and shown in Figure 28, page 160 shows that she continued striving to understand the "er" combination. This piece reads, "My teacher has 5 stones. I am describing a stone. It is pink. It has 2 cracks." In this piece Gracie recorded "teacher" as "teachr", this time having the "r" stand alone. This is understandable, as the "r" does record the /r/ sound. The "ea" earlier in the word satisfied Gracie's understanding that each word was required to contain a vowel.

There are other aspects of orthography in this piece that are also important to include in the discussion of Gracie's understanding of orthography. "Describing" is recorded as "deskrivene". The "ing" syllable is recorded as "ene", showing evidence that Gracie did not yet understand how to write the nasal final sound in the word. However, later on the same page, Gracie wrote the word "thaking" (it is not known what the word was actually recording) showing evidence that she was beginning to notice the "ing" ending on words.

A very interesting piece regarding orthography that Gracie wrote was produced on December 3, 2007 and is shown in Figure 29, page 162. It reads, "On Fridays my family goes to the Scorpions game. This week it is Scorpions against Amarillos. The Scorpions always win. They make goals. They give out t-shirts. They play music. While

they're playing there was a woman who played the national anthem. I don't know about halftime. They wear white jerseys. They play all kinds of music. Last time I went there I won all kinds of different stuff.”

In the first line, Gracie wrote the word “Fridays” conventionally with the exception of beginning it with a lower case “f”. Her use of the “ay” to record the long “a” sound is a change from when she previously wrote “today” as “toodae” and “Tuesday” as “Tousdae” earlier in the school year. (See Figure 39, page 185 dated January 15, 2008.) “Friday” was a word that appeared on the class calendar and was encountered on a regular basis in the classroom during the daily time that the class spent together discussing the calendar and days of the week. However, Gracie apparently had not yet transferred that understanding of the “ay” combination to other words. In this same piece both “play” (used twice) and “played” are consistently recorded with a final “ae” combination. A look back at Gracie’s previous recording of “play” shows that at the beginning of the school year, she recorded the word as “pley” both times that she used it in Figure 37, page 180 dated October 23, 2007. This may be explained by the vowel sounds of long “e” and long “a” being formed in the same part of the mouth, making it difficult for Gracie to differentiate between the recording of the two sounds (Bear et al., 2008). At this time, Gracie may have been integrating what she knew the word looked like in text. This explains why the letter “y” was included at the end of the word. In her later writing, she dropped the “y” and went with a two letter combination, “ae” that may have been more logical to her. Part of this adoption may also have been the sound of an “e” that can be heard when the long “a” sound is stretched and over-articulated. What is noteworthy is that Gracie’s spelling of “play” remained consistent within each piece that

she wrote. On October 23, 2007, Gracie consistently recorded the long “a” sound in “play” as “ey”. On December 12, 2007, she consistently recorded the same sound in “play” as “ae”. Gracie did not use the specific word “play” in her writing after this date.

Referring again to the piece Gracie wrote in the middle of the school year dated December 3, 2007 (Figure 29, page 162), Gracie is able to hear and record more of the phonemes in longer and more complex words. An example is her recording of “Scorpion” as “scurpbeene”. Gracie heard and recorded the first five phonemes in the word. She did record the “o” as a “u”. This is understandable due to the nature of “r” controlled vowels. The “r” following a vowel makes the sound of the vowel even more difficult to hear. In addition, the “o” and “u” sounds are created in the same part of the mouth. Their same place of origin in the mouth makes it difficult for students to differentiate between the two sounds when they are working to write them. For the /p/ sound, Gracie recorded both a “p” and a “b”. Again this may be easily explained in that both sounds are formed with the lips and tongue in the same place. The only difference in the sounds comes from the “b” being voiced and incorporating the use of the vocal cords. The /p/ sound is a softer, unvoiced sound (Wilde, 1997). Gracie, not sure perhaps of which sound she heard solved the problem by recording both. The second time that Gracie wrote the word “Scorpions”, she recorded it as “scropseene”. Again, Gracie heard and recorded the first five phonemes in the word. She did transpose the order in which the “o” and the “r” are heard. Gracie included the word “Scorpions” two more times in this story. The third time Gracie recorded the word, she recorded it as “scurpbeese”. In this attempt, she returned to the use of the “u” for the first vowel. All three spellings exhibit evidence that Gracie could not yet hear the slight difference in sounds between the “i” and “o” that occur side by

side in the last half of the word. However, her use of the double “e” is certainly understandable as that is the sound made by the letter “i” in this word and many others that she may have known. In her final recording of the word, she also included the “s” heard at the end of the word in its plural form.

A close look at this same piece of writing shows that all single syllable words were either written conventionally or had all phonemes recorded. The phonemes for some vowels were not conventional, but if they were not, the vowel recorded is one formed in the mouth near where the conventional vowel would be formed. Multi-syllabic words recorded unconventionally show that Gracie’s ability to hear and record multiple phonemes was becoming more complex and precise. For example, Gracie recorded “national anthem” as “nashunoathum”. In Gracie’s mind, the two words formed a single concept, which is why she recorded it as a single word. An analysis of Gracie’s recording reveals that the only phonemes omitted in this recording are /l/ and /n/. Both of these consonants become nondominant when the two words are run together in their pronunciation. Gracie also omitted a nondominant consonant “t” when she recorded “t-shirts” as “teshres” and nondominant “n’s” when she recorded “don’t” as “doote”, “went” as “wit”, and “different” as “difret”. In her two recordings of “kinds”, Gracie wrote “cins” the first time and “kise” the second time. The first spelling omitted the non-dominant “d” and the second omitted both the nondominant “n” and “d”. Her use of a “c” at the beginning of “kinds” the first time that she wrote it and the use of a “k” at the beginning the second time that she wrote it show evidence that Gracie understood that two different letters could be used to represent the same phoneme.

Gracie's recording of the /ou/ phoneme in this piece is also interesting because it shows growth since the first piece that she wrote on September 28, 2007 (see Figure 27, page 159). In the initial piece of writing produced in September, Gracie wrote "how" by simply recording the letter "h". At that time she was unable to record anything to represent the phoneme /ou/. In the piece produced December 3, 2007, Gracie began recording "out" by writing a letter "a". She then crossed out the "a" and wrote "aut", showing that she was unsure of the letter "a" but also understood that she needed two vowels to record the phoneme. Later in the piece, she wrote the word "about" as "ubuout". Beginning the word by recording the schwa sound with a "u" is understandable as that is what is heard at the beginning of the word. Gracie's recording of /ou/ in the middle of the word shows her continuing personal negotiation of attempting to record the sound in a way that will allow her reader to understand the message she is relaying. It is possible that the first "u" in the "uou" combination could have been placed there to represent the schwa sound that can be heard when the letter "b" is over-articulated, leaving the "ou" in this combination to represent the /ou/ phoneme.

There is also evidence in this same piece that Gracie understood that a silent letter "e" could be used at the end of a word to make the word look right in print. This is evidenced by her conventional recording of "game" and "make".

Samples of writing that Gracie produced at the end of the study show that she continued to gain an understanding of conventional English orthography throughout the time of this study. Her last piece of writing produced during the writing workshop time of this study was dated February 11, 2008 and is shown in Figure 32, page 169. That piece reads, "Do you know what is going on? My cousins are coming to my house. My cousins

are coming at a different time. Two are coming on Saturday and two are coming on Sunday. We don't know what we are going to do. How about you? They are fun! Why they are fun is because we play hide and seek. Me and my cousins hide in two different places. We hide in my mom's shower and my mom's closet. It was dark in my mom's closet. We were OK. We switch when they were not looking and we stuck together." In this piece, Gracie recorded the long "a" sound in both "Saturday" and "Sunday" with the "ay" combination of letters. Her use of "ay" in both of these words denoting days of the week supports the idea that Gracie had learned that days of the week end with "ay" due to her daily encounter with them during the class calendar time. It is interesting to note that Gracie was consistent in recording days of the week with the "ay" ending. However, other words whose conventional spelling ended in "ay" were consistently recorded by Gracie as ending in "ae", such as the word "gray" in this piece. Gracie also used the "ae" combination in her recording of the long "a" sound in "they". This spelling was consistent all four times that she wrote the word "they" in this piece.

By the time Gracie completed this last piece of her study, she had solidified many personal understandings regarding orthography. First, she understood the connection between hearing phonemes and recording those phonemes with letters or letter combinations. However, Gracie also understood that letter/phoneme relationships were not all that was needed in writing. She realized that some words could not be sounded and recorded simply phoneme by phoneme. Their orthography included a combination of articulated and recorded phonemes along with selecting and recording letters or letter combinations that required her to select from among various possibilities in order to conventionally record words. Such words included "do", "house", and "how". Gracie

further understood that other words must simply be known and recorded by the way that the word looks with less attention to recording actual phonemes articulated. Examples of these types of words included “what”, “why”, “know”, and “was”. While Gracie was still personally negotiating her understanding regarding the spelling of some words such as “are” and “two” which she at times recorded conventionally while also using the alternative spellings of “aer” and “tow”, she also understood the need for consistency or near consistency in spelling words. In this last piece, Gracie recorded “cousins” as “cusits” twice and “cusetts” the third time that she used the word. The word “different” was recorded as “difrit” both times that it was written.

Summary

Gracie entered her first grade year of school already understanding many of the basic concepts for utilizing print in both reading and writing. First and foremost, Gracie understood that the primary purpose of both reading and writing was to either receive a message (in reading) or to express her message to another (in writing). In order to accomplish this most important task of receiving an intended communication when reading, Gracie understood that she needed to search the printed text for meaning. Her understanding was impacted by personal background experiences and schema. In expressing herself through text, Gracie came to first grade with the ability to formulate her thoughts into oral language and then transpose those spoken thoughts to written text.

Gracie understood and used the concepts of both letters and words while reading and writing. In reading, she understood that letters combined to form words and that the white space between words was necessary for her to discern between words while reading to gain the meaning of the text. In writing, Gracie left white space between her words beginning with the first pieces that she produced during writing workshop. These same white spaces that made it possible for her to make meaning while reading printed text were also necessarily included in her personal writing so that readers could more easily understand the message she was communicating to them. In addition, Gracie entered first grade understanding that reading and writing English text occurred in a left to right sequence with a return sweep to the left and that reading and writing in English also occurred beginning at the top of the page and then moved to the bottom of the page.

Gracie learned many of these basic concepts about print during her experiences with text in her home prior to the beginning of her formal schooling. Her grandmother

exposed Gracie to print early and often in her young life. Gracie observed her grandmother reading books and magazines for pleasure on a regular basis. Gracie's grandmother exposed Gracie and her siblings to this same pleasure while reading them multiple children's stories on a daily basis. Later, Gracie was given notebooks of paper to write on while the family was traveling. As Gracie developed her ability to communicate messages and feelings through writing, her grandmother encouraged her to write, respecting her right to privacy when the message was not one Gracie wished to share. Her grandmother also taught Gracie that writing could be used as a catharsis for venting emotional reactions to the actions of siblings.

In Gracie's first grade classroom, Mrs. Cook's teaching during guided reading and writing workshop had reinforced Gracie's understanding of these concepts. In addition to Mrs. Cook's teaching, Gracie also solidified her understanding of using writing as communication as she daily read parts of what she was writing to her peers. This included informal reading and sharing that occurred with classmates as the writing was taking place and the formal sharing of written material during the sharing time that daily marked the completion of the writing workshop portion of the school day.

From the beginning of the school year, Mrs. Cook noted that Gracie searched for meaning when reading printed text. Gracie's use of meaningful substitutions at points of difficulty during her reading is evidence that finding meaning within text was important to Gracie. Gracie gradually integrated visual information with meaning when searching at points of difficulty in written text. However, it is important to note that while visual information was being integrated into her reading work, her desire to understand what was written (in other words, this search for meaning) was in existence first. Initially,

Gracie incorporated the visual information located at the beginning of a printed word with the meaning of the text that she was reading. Gracie would substitute a word with the same initial letter as what she saw in the text and would also make sense at the point in the reading where the substitution occurred. Over time, and with increased exposure to novel text, Gracie noticed additional parts of words in text. This was evidenced in the running records taken by Mrs. Cook during the guided reading portion of the school day. In February, Gracie's miscues showed that she was not only searching for visual information within words, but that as she searched visual information, she was not merely searching unknown words letter by letter, but rather she was searching for meaningful parts or chunks within those unknown words all while continuing to think about the meaning of the text and searching her neural networks for a word that would both make sense in the story and look like the word printed on the page.

Just as she searched for meaning when reading printed text, Gracie also came to first grade knowing that the purpose of writing was to express meaning to her intended audience. Beginning with the first piece of writing that Gracie generated during the writing workshop portion of the day, Gracie had a message that she intended to relay to her readers. Over the course of the school year, those messages became more complex as did Gracie's ability to record them for her readers. Gracie was able to hold the message that she wanted to express over multiple days as she worked on her individual pieces of writing. The single piece that did not hold her attention over multiple days was the assignment given by her teacher to describe five stones. This assigned piece held no meaning for Gracie. She had no personal connections with the stones and no story to relay concerning them. As soon as possible, Gracie returned to the writing that allowed

her to convey her messages to the reader. These stories became more complex over the course of the school year as Gracie added more details and incorporated crafting techniques such as the inclusion of dialogue and engaging the reader through use of incorporating questions to draw the reader into the writing. Throughout all of Gracie's writings, her voice was prevalent. This is especially interesting as many teachers feel voice is difficult to identify and teach, leaving it to be taught in the later years of formal schooling.

Gracie's attempts at refining and understanding the conventions and orthography of the English language can be viewed as additional attempts to more clearly communicate her message to her reader.

Chapter VIII

Meet Eden

Eden was a first grade Hispanic student from a monolingual English speaking home. She lived with her mother and ten year old sister. Her mother, Gloria, was a speech language pathologist at the mid-high school (eighth and ninth grades) in the same school district where Eden attended school. Although her father resided in another state, Eden communicated with him regularly and spent time with him during holiday and summer vacations.

When first meeting Eden, it quickly became apparent that she was an artist. Her stories always contained elaborate detailed drawings regarding the topic on which she was writing. When asked what she liked to do for fun, Eden's immediate response was that she liked art. She elaborated by stating that she liked to draw horses, unicorns, and even humans. The *even humans* detail was added with a confidence implying that it was difficult for most people to draw the human figure as well as she did. Eden detailed that she had created a three dimensional zoo at home with animals and people created out of paper. She had also created a zoo box to keep them in so that they would be safe. The zoo box was decorated as a zoo and provided a place for her artful creations to be stored as well as a background for playing with her self-created animals.

Gloria was also proud of Eden's artistic creativity and stated that she noticed its emergence at the age of three. Gloria stated that Eden's language development was slightly delayed in emerging. Before Eden developed the capability to verbally articulate that she was frustrated or that something she was drawing was not turning out the way

she wished, she would hand her mother the paper she was drawing on and cry because something in her picture was not the way she wished it to be. Gloria stated that at that time in Eden's young life, Eden was never without a pencil or crayon in her hand. Eden began producing elaborate pictures of characters she had seen on television. Those pictures contained intricate details of the character's dress. These same details were incorporated into the accessories worn by the character such as the belt, earrings, and hairpiece.

Gloria stated it was her opinion that Eden saw things differently than others. Asked to expound, she exemplified by telling that once when Eden was four years old, she and her then eight-year-old sister were sitting at the breakfast table eating cereal. Her sister had recently received a *Highlights* magazine and was looking for hidden pictures on one of the activity pages. Eden's sister struggled to locate the hidden items. Eden glanced at the page and began quickly pointing out the items her sister struggled to see. Gloria ended the anecdote by stating that intricate detail was always somehow very vivid to Eden and that, in her opinion, this was why Eden was capable of producing pictures that included intricate detail beginning at a very young age.

Literacy Learning at Home

Gloria stated that she began reading aloud to Eden at a very young age. Eden particularly enjoyed stories about horses, dragons, and unicorns. Gloria described the books that Eden liked as fiction oriented (dragons and unicorns) and containing illustrations that were vivid and colorful. If it was a story that Eden particularly enjoyed, Eden would want it to be read again, and again, and again.

Gloria recalled one book in particular that Eden especially enjoyed. She could not recall the specific title of the book, but stated that they originally found it in the public library. It was a book about dragons that was not a story, but rather a book containing illustrations of dragons with captions telling something about the illustration. The book also contained short write-ups about different types of dragons. Eden was fascinated by the book. Over the course of a summer, Eden requested that this same book be checked out three or four times. Eventually, Gloria purchased the book for Eden.

Gloria stated that reading this book together was the beginning of Eden's interest in reading. As she would read this book to Eden, Eden understood that the print told information about the illustrations. She asked her mother questions such as, "What does it say about it?" or "What does it say here?" or "Does it talk about the wings or what color that dragon is or what that dragon does?" Eden's questioning about the print in the book always related to getting more information about the pictures. Gloria stated that it was these questions and discussions that allowed her to engage Eden in reading. Her mother also stated that it was only occasionally that Eden would point to print that was not related to an illustration that intrigued her and ask what the print said. Eden's early interest in print was about learning more about an illustration that had captured her attention.

Gloria noticed that Eden began reading environmental print at the age of four. This practice first emerged as they were grocery shopping together. Eden would notice and read aloud some of the brand names of products she observed on the shelves. At about the same time, Eden began finishing some of the sentences in stories that Gloria was rereading aloud. Eden's mother stated that Eden's desire to learn to read was evident

as the two would peruse and read storybooks together. Gloria stated that she never pushed Eden to learn to read during her preschool years. It was something that Eden expressed an interest in doing.

Gloria also first noticed Eden writing words at the age of four. Eden's writing began as single words that labeled pictures that she had drawn. Gloria stated that she did not encourage Eden to write stories to go with her pictures. It was not until Eden entered kindergarten that she began putting more words together to begin telling a story about a picture she had drawn. Gloria stated that during her preschool years, Eden was very much into the creation of the picture and not so much interested in creating a story, either verbally or in writing, to go with the picture. Eden would at times talk to Gloria about her pictures. However, she did not write about what she told her mother, nor did Gloria request that she write anything about her pictures. When Eden eventually did begin writing stories, it was always the picture that was created first. The story was created later and emanated from the picture. The pictures never emanated from a previously written story.

Gloria felt that adding a story to go with her picture began while Eden was in kindergarten and began then because she was encouraged by her kindergarten teacher to do so. Eden's kindergarten teacher placed more emphasis on the story written to go with the picture than on the picture itself. Gloria described Eden's process at this time as first drawing the picture, writing a few words, then returning to add more details to the picture, and then adding a few more written words to the story. Gloria stated that initially Eden was very much into the drawing aspect of her story and not so much into the writing aspect of story creation. At this point in Eden's learning, her mother began

specifically supporting Eden in the writing process by asking her questions such as, “What can you tell me about the picture?”, “Can you write that down?” Gloria also explained to Eden that “I know you have a lot to say about it, but we need to read it.” In this way, Gloria helped Eden to understand that thoughts can be written down in order to convey those thoughts to others (Clay, 1991; Dyson, 1982).

Gloria stated that Eden possessed a large vocabulary and was overtly curious about new words she encountered. Eden noticed new and interesting words, both when she saw them in a book she was reading and when she heard others speak them orally. She often asked her mother not only the meanings of unfamiliar words that she would hear, but also how the word was used. Gloria found it difficult to define some commonly used words, such as *exactly* when Eden requested the definition. Eden was never satisfied until she felt that she truly understood the word. Gloria stated that Eden would not merely listen to the definition and then forget what she had been told. Eden would follow-up by incorporating the newly acquired word into her personal vocabulary. Eden’s personal oral vocabulary often fascinated her extended family that included grandparents, aunts, and uncles.

Eden also questioned the use of words by others, once expressing dissatisfaction when she found a book on dragons located in the nonfiction section of the library. She asked her mother, “If dragons are not real, why is this book in the nonfiction section?” Gloria had been unable to answer and Eden remained unsatisfied that the book was catalogued by the library as a nonfiction book.

An Overview of Eden's Reading as Assessed in the Classroom

On Eden's baseline reading assessment in August of her first grade year at school Eden read a *DRA* (Beaver, 1997) level four text at an instructional level. This placed Eden at a proficient level for a first grade student based on the school district's expectation of where first grade students should test during the fall of the year.

Mrs. Cook described Eden's reading at the beginning of the school year as word by word with little intonation and a monotone voice. Based on running records taken of Eden's reading, Mrs. Cook observed that at points of difficulty Eden paused and looked at the picture. Eden also used letter/sound associations to help herself discover unknown words. Eden's use of letter/sound associations included breaking unknown words apart into letter clusters and syllables. Eden also reread at some points of difficulty to help herself search for additional information, either meaning or visual, to help in her problem solving process. Eden once made no attempt at a point of difficulty, waiting for the teacher to tell her the word. This word was the name of the main character in the story and happened the first time the character's name was mentioned in the story. An examination of Eden's other miscues in the reading of this text included a total of five miscues in addition to the character name mentioned previously. These included one meaningful substitution that was not noticed by the reader. Two miscues were meaningful at the point of the miscue and were visually similar at the beginning of the word. These included reading "come" for "Kim" and "her" for "here". Both of these miscues were self-corrected by Eden immediately at the point of the miscue. In another miscue, Eden read "time" for "Kim". This miscue was not meaningful at the point of the miscue. The argument could be made that this miscue was visually similar because both

words, contained the letter series of “i” and “m”. This miscue was also self-corrected at the point of the miscue. The final miscue was the substitution of “not” for “out”. If orientation of the letters is taken into account, the argument could be made that the words are visually similar. This miscue was meaningful at the point of the miscue. However, meaning was not maintained past the point of the miscue. Eden failed to notice this loss of meaning and she continued to read the remainder of the text.

At the end of the first nine-week grading period, Mrs. Cook again assessed Eden’s reading development using the *Developmental Reading Assessment* (Beaver, 1997). At this time, Eden was able to read a *DRA* (Beaver, 1997) level eight at an instructional level. A level eight text at the end of the first nine-week grading period was considered by the school district to be proficient. Mrs. Cook noted that at this time Eden was still reading in a word by word monotone that included little to no intonation. At points of difficulty, Eden still looked at the picture for help. She also used letter/sound associations of both letter clusters and syllables to help her figure out unknown words.

Eden’s reading of this text included ten miscues. Six of these miscues were the reading of “called” for “could”. While these miscues were not meaningful in the text as it was written, each of these substitutions could be viewed as meaningful if the punctuation of the text had been different. This text was a short story about a boy and his dog. Each sentence where these miscues occurred was a statement describing something the dog could do. For example, “He could sit up and shake hands.” If Eden read the story thinking that the boy was giving commands to the dog such as the following: He called, “Sit up and shake hands.” then Eden’s substitution was not only visually similar but also meaningful. That substitution also maintained meaning past the point of the miscue.

Three of Eden's other miscues in the reading of this text were also visually similar and meaningful at the point of the substitution. All three of these miscues were self-corrected at the point of the miscue. Eden's one other miscue was the substitution of a visually similar nonsense word, "clane" for "clean". Eden paused following this miscue and waited for Mrs. Cook to tell her the unknown word.

As part of the *DRA* (Beaver, 1997) administration protocol, Mrs. Cook engaged Eden in a short conversation following Eden's reading of the story. During this conversation, Eden connected the story that she had just read to a personal experience that her mother had with their dog. When Eden was asked whether she would rather read a book herself or listen to a book read aloud by someone else, Eden responded that she would rather listen to someone else reading a book. Eden's explanation for this preference was that she wanted to listen in order to know what the words were.

By the end of the second nine-week grading period, Eden was reading instructionally at a *DRA* (Beaver, 1997) level 12. This was slightly higher than the school district's expectation that first grade students be able to read at a *DRA* (Beaver, 1997) level 10 at this time.

Mrs. Cook's anecdotal notes at the time of this assessment stated that Eden was now reading in short phrases most of the time. Mrs. Cook also noted that Eden was reading with some intonation and usually attending to the punctuation of the text. At points of difficulty, Eden was looking at the picture and using clusters and syllables of unknown words to help her read unknown words. On the running record taken of Eden's oral reading of this text, the majority of Eden's substitutions in reading were meaningful and maintained their meaning past the point of the substitution. Eden did pause at one

word, “sure”, making no attempt at the word prior to her teacher telling her the unknown word. On this running record, there was also evidence that Eden was beginning to make multiple different attempts at points of difficulty. This is significant because Eden was demonstrating flexibility in her problem solving (Clay, 2005). Eden was showing evidence of her understanding that when she was not satisfied with her first attempt at problem solving, it was helpful to try something else that met the criteria of being visually similar and meaningful at the point of the difficulty.

Following Eden’s reading of the text, Mrs. Cook engaged her in a short dialogue regarding reading. During this conversation Eden was able to make a personal connection between the story, which had been about a small boy who helped his mother care for his baby sister, and stories that she had heard had transpired between herself and her older sister when she was a baby. Mrs. Cook asked Eden whether she preferred to read alone, with a buddy, or with a group. Eden responded that she preferred to read with a group because, in a group, the other students were able to hear a story. This marked a remarkable change from her comment at the end of the second nine-week period when she had commented that she liked to listen to a story in order to know what the words were. This marked a definite shift in Eden’s view of written text from “knowing the words” to “hearing a story”.

At the end of the third nine-week grading period, Mrs. Cook again assessed Eden using the *DRA* (Beaver, 1997). During this assessment, Eden read instructionally at a *DRA* (Beaver, 1997) level 28. This was well above the school district’s expectation for proficient first grade readers at this time of the school year. The school district’s expectation for proficient first grade readers at this point of the school year was for them

to be reading in the range of *DRA* (Beaver, 1997) levels 12-14. Eden's assessment level of a *DRA* (Beaver, 1997) level 28 placed her approximately one full academic year ahead of the district's expectations.

Mrs. Cook noted that Eden's oral reading during the assessment was in long phrases, although with an inconsistent rate. Mrs. Cook also noted that Eden adjusted her intonation while reading in order to convey meaning, and also that Eden was beginning to explore subtle intonation that reflected mood, pace, and tension. Eden miscued seven times while reading the 181 words of the text. At two points of difficulty in reading, Eden substituted nonsense words that were visually similar to the word in the text. The other five substitutions were visually similar to the word in the text and made sense at the point of the substitution. One of those five substitutions was self-corrected at the point of the miscue. A second miscue maintained the meaning of the text past the point of the miscue. Three miscues did not maintain the meaning of the text and/or the syntax of the English language past the point of the miscue. Eden made no attempt to reread or self-correct the miscues where meaning and/or syntax were not maintained.

In the dialogue following the reading of the text, Mrs. Cook asked Eden what the story made her think of. Eden made a personal connection with the story by referring to a time when someone had said something that had hurt her feelings.

Change Over Time In Eden's Demonstration of Understanding of Written Composition While Encountering Guided Reading Leveled Text of Increasing Difficulty

During her reading instruction, Eden read 21 leveled texts with her classroom teacher during her guided reading lessons over the course of time that data was collected

for this study. These were the same texts read by the other two participants in this research study. Eden began the school year reading at an instructional *DRA* (Beaver, 1997) level four. This was considered by the school district to be a proficient level by the school district. By March, Eden was reading at a text level 28. According to school district expectations, Eden was reading at a full grade level above where a proficient first-grade student was reading at the same time.

Eden produced nineteen pieces of writing during the time span covered by this research. The writing paper that Mrs. Cook furnished for the class to use during writing workshop included a space on the top half of the front page for the student to draw an illustration. Mrs. Cook allowed the picture to be drawn either before or after the writing was completed. Whether the illustration was drawn before or after the writing occurred was the students' choice. An important part of the writing process for Eden was the drawing of this picture. At the beginning of the school year, Eden would spend approximately fifteen minutes at the beginning of each writing workshop adding intricate details to the image she was drawing. Eden generally worked on the text of her story during approximately the last five minutes of the writing portion of writing workshop. Eden's style of spending the majority of her allocated time working on the drawing and short amount of time spent writing supported her mother's observation that the story always emanated from the picture. To Eden, drawing the picture was the most important part of the process. Eden's stories stemmed from and supported the drawings. The artwork did not originate from the written text.

Eden worked on each of her written pieces over the course of several days. As long as Eden continued to draw a picture prior to working on the written text of the story,

each day she spent the majority of her time adding details to her illustration. Eleven of the nineteen pieces Eden completed during the time of this study were about her family. They described family members, family pets, or activities her family had completed together. Seven of the other completed pieces included expository writings about horses, penguins, Santa Claus, and spring. One piece was a description of a picture she had seen that showed an elephant painting with a paintbrush.

Change Over Time in Eden's View of Writing

The first piece that Eden produced was dated September 25, 2007 and reads, "My dog's name is Lucky. He is a poodle. He is white as the clouds. He is happy all the time. He is fast as cheetahs. He follows me everywhere in the house."

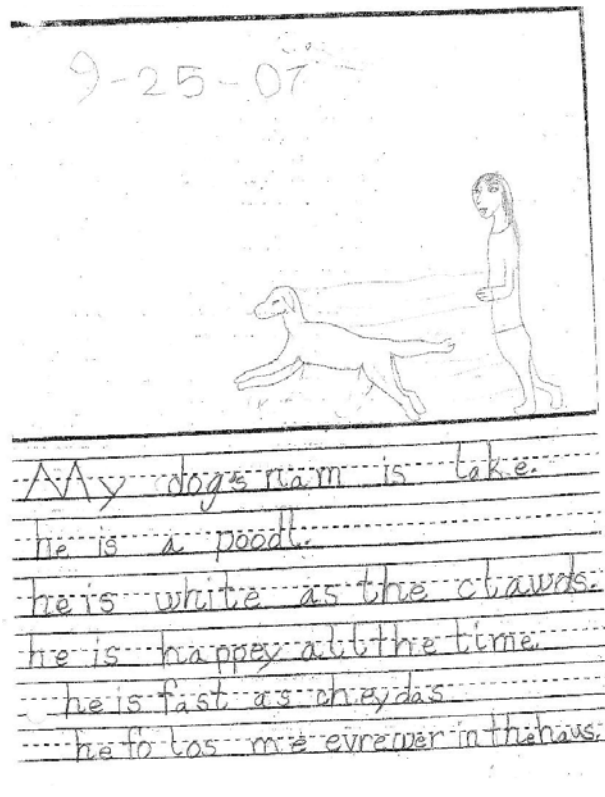


Figure 40 Eden's writing dated September 25, 2007

This piece was the first of seven consecutive pieces written about family members, pets, and activities. Although it was written early in the school year, Eden incorporated the use of two similes (white as the clouds and fast as cheetahs) in describing her dog. At this time in the school year, Mrs. Cook had not addressed the use of similes during her mini-lessons that began the writing workshop portion of the school day. Mrs. Cook pointed out similes as they occurred in books that she had read aloud to the children. Eden's incorporation of similes into her written work was a result of transferring a craft she had heard used by other authors into the writing that she had created. Her use of similes in her writing was an extension of her adeptness at noticing and incorporating details into her artwork. In this instance, Eden had heard similes used as written details in stories she listened to and incorporated that same style of incorporating details into her own writing. At the same time, Eden incorporated what she had learned from her talent regarding visual acuity and skills of observation into her writing. In her writing she compared her dog to things that she saw in nature and/or on television.

Eden's first three written pieces began and stayed on a single topic throughout the entire piece. Each of these pieces described a family member or pet. However, in her fourth piece, Eden began by writing about her grandfather. After completing the first sentence, Eden changed topics and wrote the remainder of her story about her grandfather's horse. After a single sentence in which Eden described her grandfather's horse, she wrote a short story about an event that happened to the horse. This piece of writing is dated October 22, 2007 and is shown in Figure 41. It reads, "My grandpa is a famous racer in Mexico. His horse's name is My Rocket. He is a very fast horse and a

very smart horse. Once he was too afraid to get in the gate. He stepped on a hard rock and My Rocket got a loosened horse shoe. And all horses with loosened horse shoes could get scrapped. When he said go, he ran and ran and ran. He won 100 races. And he won and now he won 101 races. The end.”

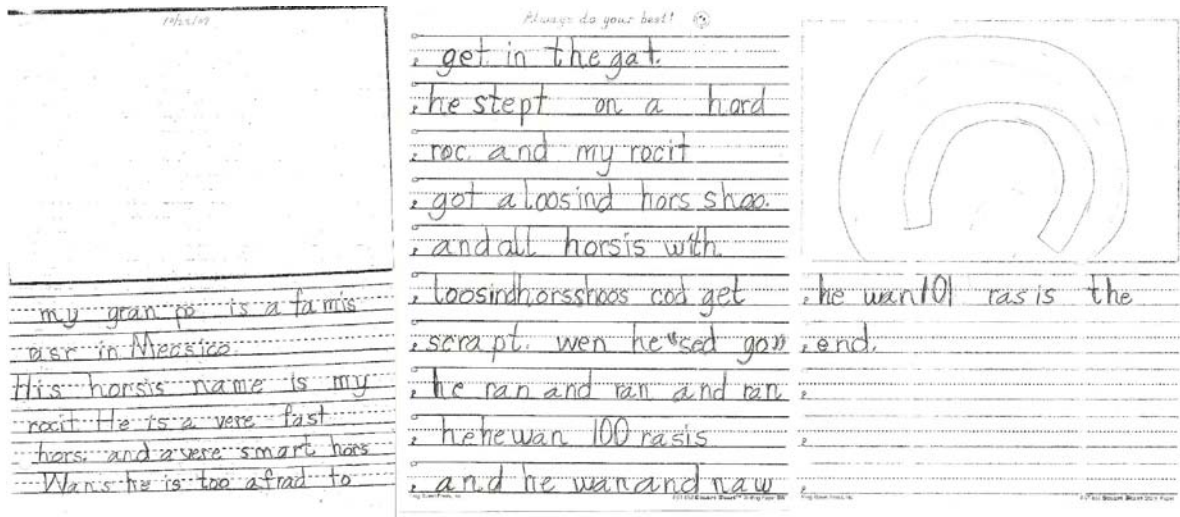


Figure 41 Eden’s writing dated October 22, 2007

Eden’s early understanding of the importance of detail is also demonstrated here. Her inclusion of the sentence, “And all horses with loosened horse shoes could get scrapped.” showed her well-developed sense of the importance of detail in written work. That sentence was a key in helping her reader understand why the loosened horseshoe could have resulted with a terrible consequence. Many six year old writers would have omitted that explanation which was necessary for a reader who lacked that necessary background knowledge, assuming that the reader would intrinsically know the possible consequences of the horse’s loose shoe.

Just as interesting as Eden’s story is the fact that Eden did not illustrate this particular story. When asked why, Eden was reluctant to answer. When prodded, Eden responded that she did not want to get in trouble by the teacher. Mrs. Cook had told Eden

that she needed to spend more time writing during writing workshop and less time drawing. Eden understood the directive to spend less time drawing as an instruction not to draw at all when she was supposed to be writing. She added no illustration after the writing was completed.

When Eden wrote her next piece dated November 1, 2007, she again began by writing the body of the story. At the end of her first day of working on this story, Eden had not added any illustration to the story. Over the course of the next few days, as Eden continued to work on this story, she added the illustration that accompanied the story. This piece of writing is shown in Figure 42 and reads, “Last night was Halloween. I was Lava Girl. P_____ was an M & M with makeup and red cheeks and J_____ was a cat that is pink. V_____ was a cat that had stripes. M_____ was Tinkerbelle. M_____ was a transformer. He is Optimus Prime. A_____ was a witch. My favorite place to trick or treat is at V_____’s house just because I get to see my friend V_____. And they hang up a talking skeleton when it’s October.”

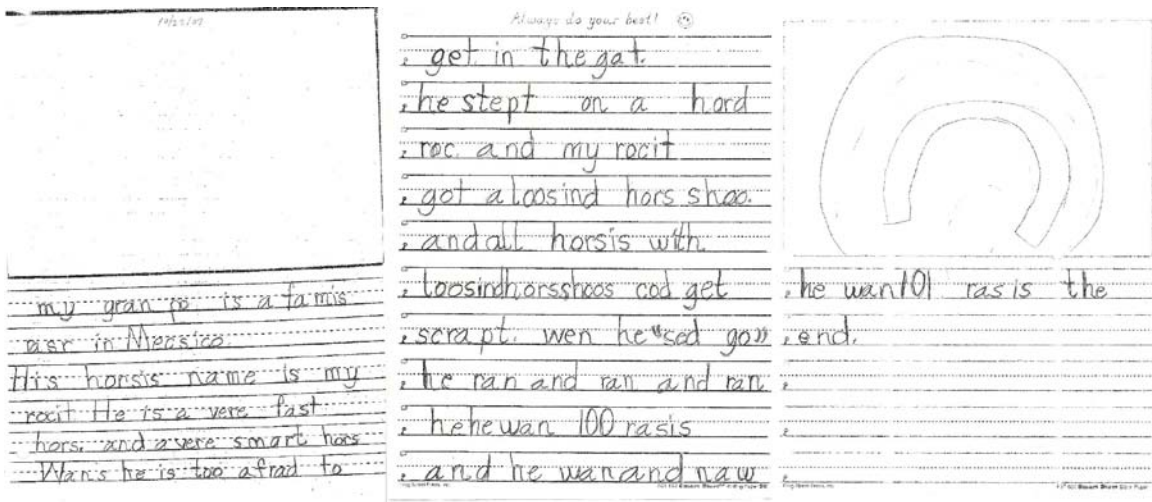


Figure 42 Eden’s writing dated November 1, 2007

This was the first piece of writing where Eden revised her original writing. When originally writing this story, Eden described her friend wearing the M & M costume as having makeup and lipstick. On a later rereading, Eden erased the word “lipstick” and inserted “red cheeks”. It is of interest to note that while Mrs. Cook often demonstrated revision during her mini-lessons, Mrs. Cook’s demonstrations always showed revision as occurring after the written story was completed. Eden made this revision prior to her completion of the story. Eden’s revision occurred shortly after she shared the part that she had written regarding the friend who had dressed up as an M & M with that particular classmate. That classmate reminded Eden that the lipstick had been used not on her lips, but as round red circles on her cheeks. Following the conversation, Eden returned to her desk, made the revision, and then continued writing the rest of her story.

Mrs. Cook did not require that students complete every story they started. Children were allowed to begin working on a different story if the topic on which they were writing did not continue hold their interest or if a topic the student deemed more interesting came to mind. Eden left only one story that she worked on incomplete. It was a story dated November 19, 2007 and is shown in Figure 43. It reads, “My dad’s name is B____. My dad lives in San Antonio. My dad’s hair looks like a horseshoe. And”

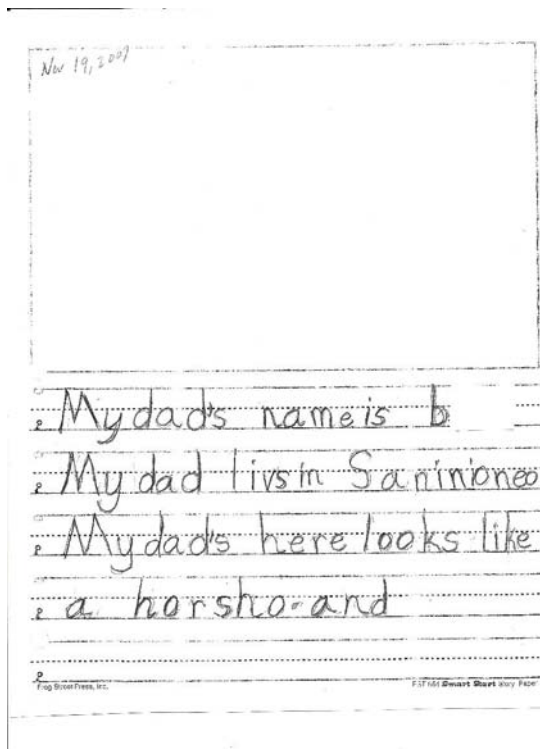


Figure 43 Eden's writing dated November 19, 2007

Though incomplete, the comparison of her dad's bald head to a horseshoe shows Eden's ability to relate details and information regarding two things that she loved in a very sophisticated way. She compared a horseshoe to her father's hairline. Many adults would not independently connect the two items. However, Eden's ability to vividly see and recreate shapes and outlines of objects helped her to see the similarity between the two items that are not normally compared.

This single piece of writing that Eden did not complete also contains no illustration. On this particular day, Mrs. Cook scolded Eden for spending so much of her writing time working on her illustration prior to beginning any actual written story. She directed Eden to write her story first and then illustrate the story when she was finished. It appeared that forcing Eden to interrupt and reverse her normal personal writing process procedure negatively impacted her ability to write her story. Because Eden did not begin

her writing process by creating an illustration and because Eden’s stories came from her illustrations, she did not have the necessary interest or ability to complete the written story. This supports the hypothesis that Eden’s stories emanated from her illustrations. The time Eden spent drawing and adding detail to her pictures allowed her to mentally ponder and develop the story that she was about to write.

On the next piece that Eden wrote, she again began by drawing an illustration. This piece is an informational piece of writing about Santa Claus. It is shown in Figure 44 and is dated December 2, 2007. It reads, “I know a lot about Christmas and Santa. And I like Christmas because Santa gets to give presents. Only if we do not be naughty. I know what Santa looks like! He has a long white beard. And big black boots. And a white and red hat. And a white and red coat. And a red piece of jeans. The reindeer’s called . . . names Dancer and Prancer and Vixen, Comet and Cupid and Donner and Blitzen. And Rudolph pulls his sleigh. The toys go into the presents. The presents go in the sack. The sack goes on Santa’s back.”

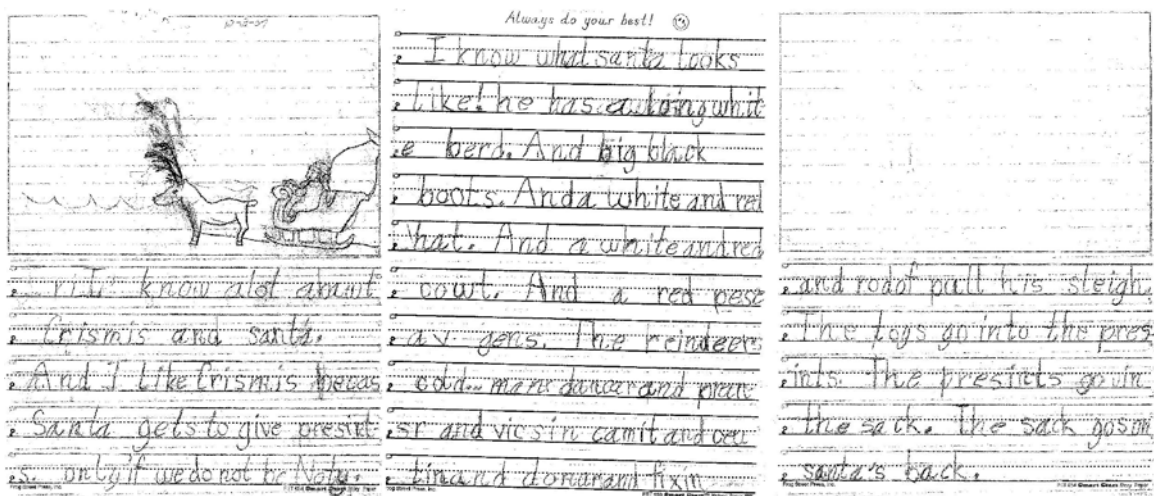


Figure 44 Eden’s writing dated December 2, 2007

The information that Eden wrote about Santa in this piece flowed from her ability to put into words what she visualized and organized artistically in her illustration prior to her beginning to write. Eden's ability to list and describe in writing the visual characteristics of Santa's physical features and his clothing stemmed from the drawing that she had just created. The movement in her writing away from Santa and to the listing of his reindeer followed the same organization she followed in her drawing. The description of the toys in Santa's pack again followed the order in which she organized and created her illustration. For Eden, the illustration she created prior to beginning her written story served the same purpose as an outline or other graphic organizer would serve for another author during a prewriting planning exercise. Drawing an illustration, for Eden, was not an avoidance technique used to postpone an unwanted and inevitable writing activity. It was her organizational tool. It allowed her mind to focus, imagine, and illustrate the details that needed to be included in the story.

Eden continued to begin her writing process with the creation of a detailed illustration prior to placing any written words into a story. Her illustrations became more and more elaborate and the detail of her written work incorporated the increased detail of the illustrations. In February, Eden suddenly stopped drawing any illustrations for her writing. When asked why, Eden stated that Mrs. Cook had again scolded her for spending too much time drawing and not enough time actually writing during the writing workshop portion of the school day.

Eden wanted to please Mrs. Cook and complied with her wishes. The illustrations were gone. Eden made no attempt to illustrate her stories after her writing was completed. The reason for this was two-fold. First, Eden had a strong desire to please her teacher. If

Mrs. Cook was unhappy about the time Eden spent creating illustrations and wanted Eden to spend more time writing, Eden would no longer begin writing by creating an illustration. This was done in order to keep Mrs. Cook happy. Second, when Eden was forced to write her story first, one of the primary purposes of creating the illustration disappeared. There was no reason to use the illustration as a pre-planning tool after the story had been written. The five pieces of writing that Eden completed from February 12, 2008 through March 4, 2008 during writing workshop contained no illustrations. However, unlike the uncompleted piece that Eden wrote on November 19, 2007 (see Figure 43, page 220), Eden had by this time become a sophisticated enough writer that she was able to complete a piece of writing without first completing an illustration in order to help organize her thoughts. Eden continued to develop in her ability as a writer in spite of losing her primary tool for developing her thought process and planning for organization.

In the writing that Eden produced and dated February 22, 2008, she utilized yet another element of author's craft. This piece of writing is shown in Figure 45 and reads, "I know something that will make me move. It's my body that makes me move. My heart is a muscle. My heart pumps blood. Pump, pump, pump, pump."

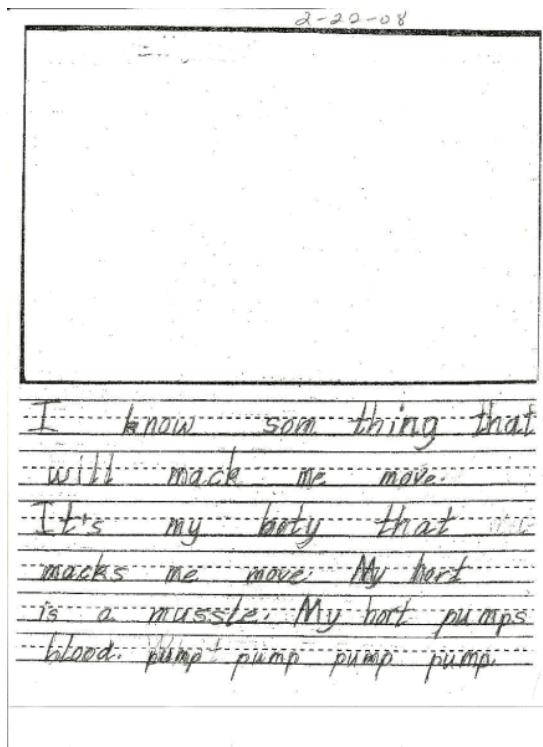


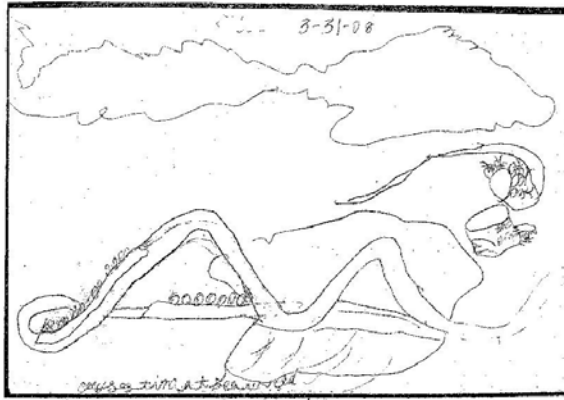
Figure 45 Eden's writing dated February 22, 2008

Eden did not consciously realize that she utilized the sophisticated techniques of onomatopoeia and word repetition when she wrote the last sentence in this piece. Mrs. Cook had not specifically taught or modeled onomatopoeia or the use of a single word repeated multiple times in one of her writing mini-lessons. In fact, the deliberate teaching of writing crafts such as onomatopoeia usually does not occur until the late elementary or even middle school years of education. In some classrooms teachers might refer to this creative ending as a sentence fragment rather than recognize a young author exercising her literacy license to make her writing more interesting. Eden saw and heard both techniques used in books encountered either in her independent reading or in books that she had heard read aloud. She had not yet encountered text using either of these literacy techniques in texts during her guided reading instruction. Once again, her artistic ability of noticing and recreating intricate detail in her artwork had carried over into her writing.

Eden created this last sentence in her writing by imitating and recreating something she had observed other authors use in their writing.

Overall, Eden's individual pieces of writing tended to become longer as the school year progressed. However, these longer stories were a natural result of Eden realizing throughout the course of the school year that she had more information that she wanted to tell her reader. At the same time, the total amount of time that she devoted to actually writing the text of her stories increased, and the natural increased fluency rate at which she was able to produce written text increased. The longer stories were not a result of Eden developing a personal view of writing that writing a longer story was equated with writing a better story.

Eden's longest story produced was also the last that was produced during the time span that data for this research was collected. This longest piece is dated March 31, 2008 and is shown in Figure 46. It reads, "When I went to San Antonio I went to Sea World! It's so fun at Sea World! When I went to Sea World I went to the Shamu Theater. It was so fun over there. And then I went on the Journey to Atlantis! It was so fun. First you get on a boat and it would just go up the hill. And we go turning and then we go down the hill backwards. And then we turn again. And then we go down the hill. Only the back of the boat gets wet. And then we go to the Steel Eel. The first time I looked at it, it kind of looked scary. But it wasn't scary. It was fun. When we go down we go floating. But when we go up the wind pushes our hands down. It was pretty much fun. More funner than the Journey to Atlantis. But guess what. My sister gets to ride the Great White. It's the scariest roller coaster ever. It's the roller coaster when you go upside down. I wish that you would come with me. It's too fun at Sea World. The end."



When I want to see water
 I want to see water!
 It's so fun at sea world!
 When I want to see water
 I want to see water!
 It was so fun over there

and then I went on the genny
 to atlantes! It was so fun,
 first you get on a boat
 and it whod just go up the hill,
 And we go turning and then we go down
 the hill backwards. And then we turn
 again. And then we go down the hill.
 Only the back of the boat gets wet.
 And then we go to the steel cart.
 the first time I went on it it did not look scary
 But it was so scary it was fun!
 When we go down we go sliding
 But when we go up the wind pushes our hands down
 It was pritty much fun more funer than
 the genny to atlantes
 But gas what my sister gets to ride the grit
 in the elevator escapecter over
 It's the roller coaster when you go up side down
 I wish that you whod come with me.
 It's too fun and so much fun
 The end

Figure 46 Eden's writing dated March 31, 2008

Eden wrote this piece after spending her spring break with her father in San Antonio. The excitement she felt and wanted to communicate to her audience, her fellow classmates, was evident as her voice was heard throughout her writing. Interestingly, not only was this her longest piece with the most story to tell, her process of illustrating her story prior to writing it returned. This piece contained one of the most unique drawings that she produced throughout the time of this data collection to accompany her writing. Her picture was an aerial view of the track of the Great White. The people who were shown riding in the roller coaster cars and those waiting in line for their turn on the roller coaster were depicted as they would appear to someone looking down at the amusement park from a distance high among the clouds in the sky.

In this piece, Eden's skill as both a writer and an illustrator combined to tell her complete story. The text detailed the events that occurred and conveyed her excitement

regarding her adventures through her voice. While the text did detail the many rides that Eden's family was able to participate in, the text did not specifically state or describe the immense nature of the amusement park. The illustration provided Eden's sense of the vastness of the amusement park, showing that it was so immense that only a single portion could be shown at a time and that part was still so large that it could only accurately be portrayed as it was seen from a bird's eye view.

Eden's view of writing at this time was that a story required details to be communicated both through the information provided in the written text and the information portrayed in the illustration. Neither source could adequately convey all the needed information independently. The two had to be meshed and work in tandem to fully provide all necessary information to the reader. Eden combined the two processes in order to tell her complete story. More importantly, she completed the task without worrying that Mrs. Cook would be upset with the process of her completing her illustration first. Her desire to communicate what she needed to say to her reader overrode her fear of any possible retribution that might befall her for not specifically obeying all of the directives that had been given by Mrs. Cook.

Change Over Time in Eden's Use of Conventions

Eden began her first grade year of school understanding the concept of the importance of spacing between words to make her writing easier to read. She also understood that the sentence was a unit of words expressing a complete thought, and that punctuation (specifically a period) need to be placed at the end of each sentence.

The first piece that she wrote dated September 25, 2007 (see Figure 40, page 215) contained six sentences. Each of Eden's sentences contained a complete thought with a

subject, verb, and appropriate modifiers. Each sentence was written on a separate line of the writing paper provided to the students by Mrs. Cook. Only the first sentence of the story began with an upper case letter. However, each sentence was punctuated with a period at the end of the sentence. Regardless of the amount of space remaining on the line after the completion of each sentence, the following sentence began anew on the following line of paper. None of the sentences that Eden wrote were run-on sentences connected with the word “and”. This characteristic of Eden’s writing remained true for all pieces of writing that were collected during the data collection period of this study.

Individual words within each sentence were appropriately separated with enough blank white space for the reader to easily tell when one word ended and another began. Eden’s artistic sense of space had already transferred from her creative endeavors and was evidenced in her last line of writing in this piece. The last sentence is somewhat longer than the previous sentences. Eden’s spacing between words on the last line of writing is somewhat closer than her spacing between the words on the lines above it. This closer spacing allowed Eden to complete the sentence on a single line rather than needing to extend the sentence either into the empty space below the last line or onto the back of her paper.

Eden also understood at the beginning of the school year that dependent phrases remained in the sentence with the words that they were describing. For example, Eden’s last four sentences in this piece included dependent phrases that modified information in the main part of the sentence. The last four sentences of this piece read,

“He is white as the clouds.

He is happy all the time.

He is fast as cheetahs.

He follows me everywhere in the house.”

The phrases “as the clouds”, “all the time”, “as cheetahs”, and “in the house” describe in detail something mentioned in the main part of their respective sentences. The beginning part of each sentence could stand alone as an independent sentence. For example, Eden could have placed her periods after, “He is white.”, “He is happy.”, “He is fast.”, and “He follows me.” Each of these units of words still contained a subject and verb as well as expressed a complete thought. Eden already understood that the dependent phrase needed to be included with the main part of the sentence.

In Eden’s second piece of writing produced on September 28, 2007, Eden faced the problem of what to do when a single sentence was just too long to fit on a single line. In this piece, Eden described her sister to her reader. This piece is shown in Figure 47 and reads, “My sister is big. Her favorite thing to do is go shopping. She wishes to be rich. She likes fabulous stuff. She bosses me around. But sometimes she is nice.

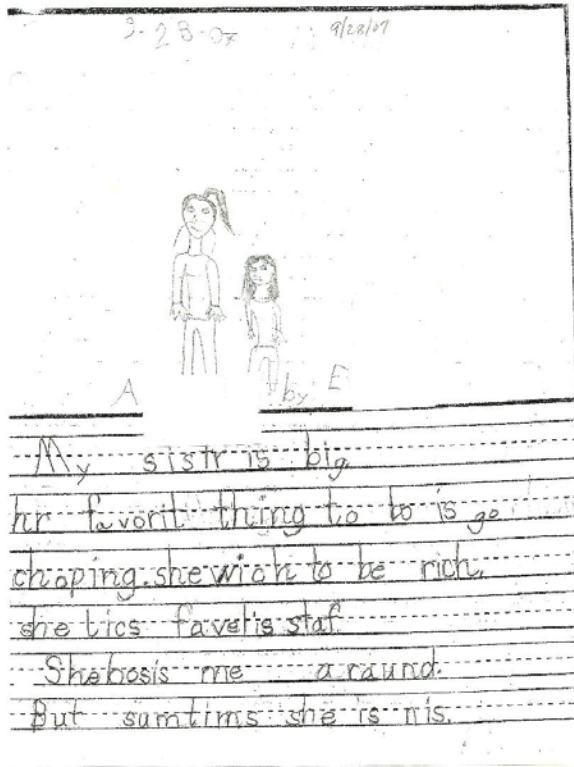


Figure 47 Eden's writing dated September 28, 2007

Eden's second sentence in this piece stated, "Her favorite thing to do is go shopping." Eden began writing this sentence at the beginning of a new line on her writing paper even though there was space left at the end of the previous sentence on the previous line. Eden initially tried to fit the entire sentence on a single line as she did in all of her writing previous to this. However, there was no room for her to complete her last word, "shopping". Eden completed the first half of the word. Realizing that she lacked the necessary room on the line to complete the word, Eden erased the portion of the word she had completed and moved the entire word to the next line. After placing a period after the word "shopping", Eden began and completed her next sentence on the same line that she placed "shopping". In writing the remainder of the sentences in this piece, Eden returned

to her former pattern of placing each individual sentence on a separate line, regardless of the amount of empty space left at the end of each line.

Daily, during the time that Eden produced these pieces, Mrs. Cook modeled some form of writing during her writing mini-lesson at the beginning of the writing workshop block of time. Regardless of the specific focus of the mini-lesson, the writing produced by Mrs. Cook modeled placing multiple sentences on the same line of writing as long as sufficient space allowed. At this same time Eden's guided reading text, as well as text encountered in other places, contained lines of text where a longer sentence wrapped to the next line of print.

In Eden's third piece of writing, a shift in her placement of sentences on the line began to emerge. Eden began starting new sentences in the middle of a line of writing if there was room enough to do so. Eden's third piece of writing is shown in Figure 48 and reads, "My frog stretches his long tongue. He jumps. His favorite food is crickets. We get the crickets from the pet store. He was a new pet for us to keep. He is green and brown. He lives in a cage with holes so he can breathe. He is a toad. He pees when he is afraid. He is afraid of humans. He has brown spots. Toads are afraid of humans. One time he jumped on my cupcake."

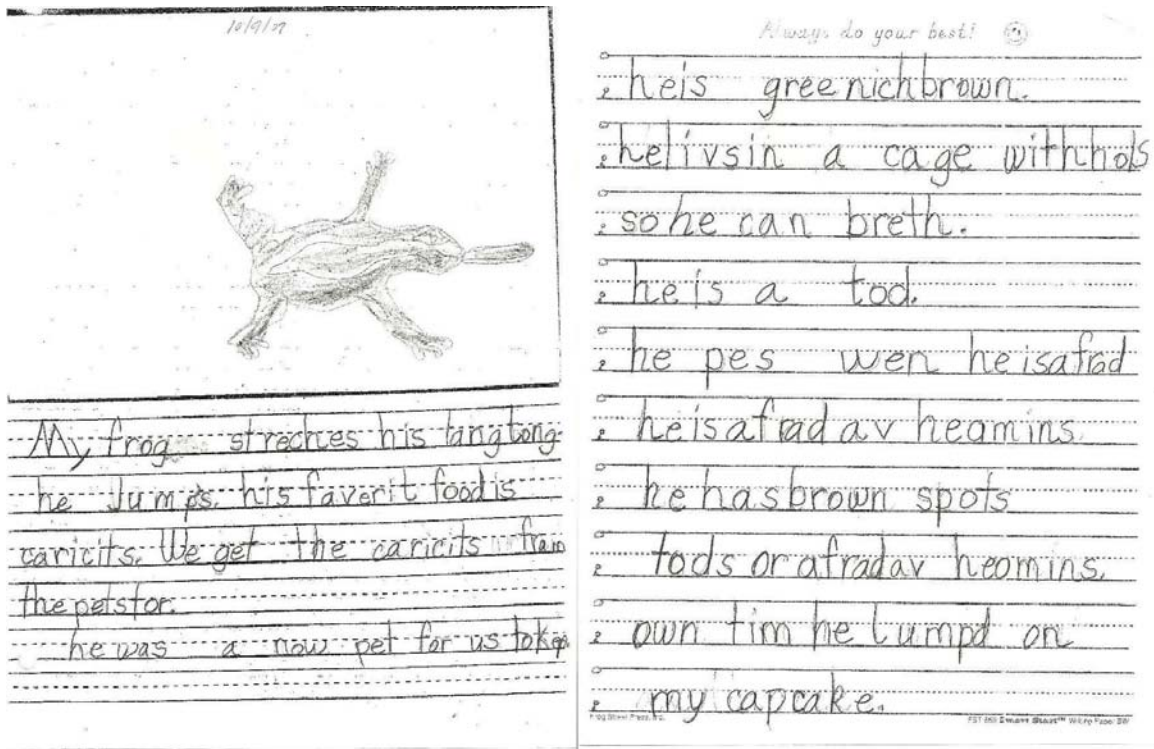


Figure 48 Eden's writing dated October 9, 2007

In this piece, Eden completed her first sentence on the first line of her writing paper. On the second line, she wrote her second sentence. However, this second sentence contained only two words, "He jumps." This left plenty of blank space on this line. Perhaps because of the large amount of space and perhaps because she had been noticing in text elsewhere that it was acceptable to do so, Eden began her third sentence on this line. She wrote, "His favorite food is". At this point, Eden was out of space on the second line of her writing paper and so she placed the last word of the sentence, "crickets" on the third line of her writing paper. She then began her fourth sentence in the space that remained on the third line of her paper. After writing "We get the crickets from" Eden again was out of space. This caused her to complete this sentence on the fourth line of her writing paper. After writing "the pet store" on the fourth line of her writing paper, Eden left a large amount of empty space on the fourth line and continued to write her fifth

sentence on the fifth line of her writing paper. This return to leaving a large amount of blank space on the line showed that Eden was still negotiating her personal understanding of appropriate use of that space. Eden completed her writing of this story by again placing each sentence on a separate line of the writing paper. A single sentence, “He lives in a cage with holes so he can breath.”, was too long for a single line on the paper. After writing the word, “holes”, Eden placed the remainder of this sentence on the next line of her writing paper. She then left nearly three inches of blank space on this line of her paper and began the next sentence on a new line of her writing paper. Eden continued to write a single sentence on a single line of her writing paper for the remainder of this piece of the story, again showing that her negotiation of the use of blank space at the end of lines was still under construction.

Eden continued this same pattern of sentence placement on her fourth piece of writing. That piece is dated October 16, 2007 and is shown in Figure 49. It reads, “My fish’s name is Elvis. He jumps when I start putting my finger in the fish bowl. He is red and blue. He eats delicious fish food. He tries to bite my finger. I just know that because fish think that people’s fingers are fish food. That’s why. We got him from WalMart. We got him a long time ago. He was our very first pet.”

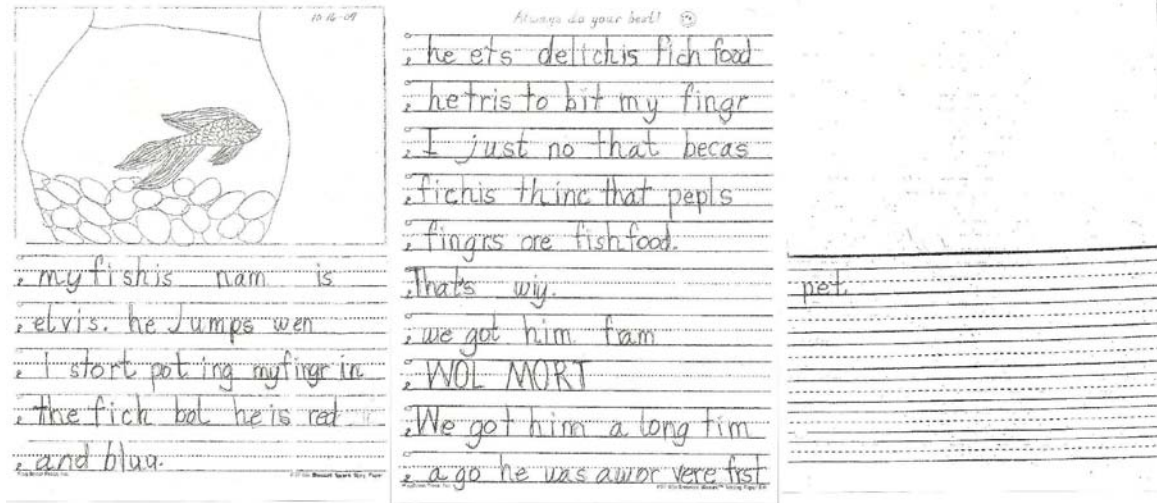


Figure 49 Eden's writing dated October 16, 2007

Again, Eden began her writing by placing multiple sentences on the same line of writing if sufficient blank space followed the completion of a sentence for her to do so. This pattern continued through the first three sentences that filled the first five lines on her writing paper. Once Eden filled the front of her writing paper with these three sentences, she continued to write her story on the backside of her writing paper. However, when Eden made the switch from writing on the front of her paper to the back of her paper, she began again placing a single sentence on a single line of paper. This evidenced her ongoing negotiation of how to utilize that blank space. This continued until she wrote her last two sentences. The length of her writing of "We got him a long time ago." required the word "ago" to be placed on the line following the beginning of the sentence. Eden started writing "He was our very first pet." on the same line as she had placed the word "ago". Eden was unable to complete the last sentence of this story on a single line. Completing the last word of the story, "pet", required Eden to get a second piece of paper. On this second piece of paper, Eden concluded her story with the single word, "pet".

Eden followed the same pattern regarding sentence placement on her fifth piece of writing. That piece was produced on October 18, 2007. It is shown in Figure 50 and reads, “My mom’s name is T____. Her favorite color are all of the colors. She is nice to me. She looks like me. When she takes off my shirt she says skinny rabbit. She is pretty. Her birthday is August 26.”

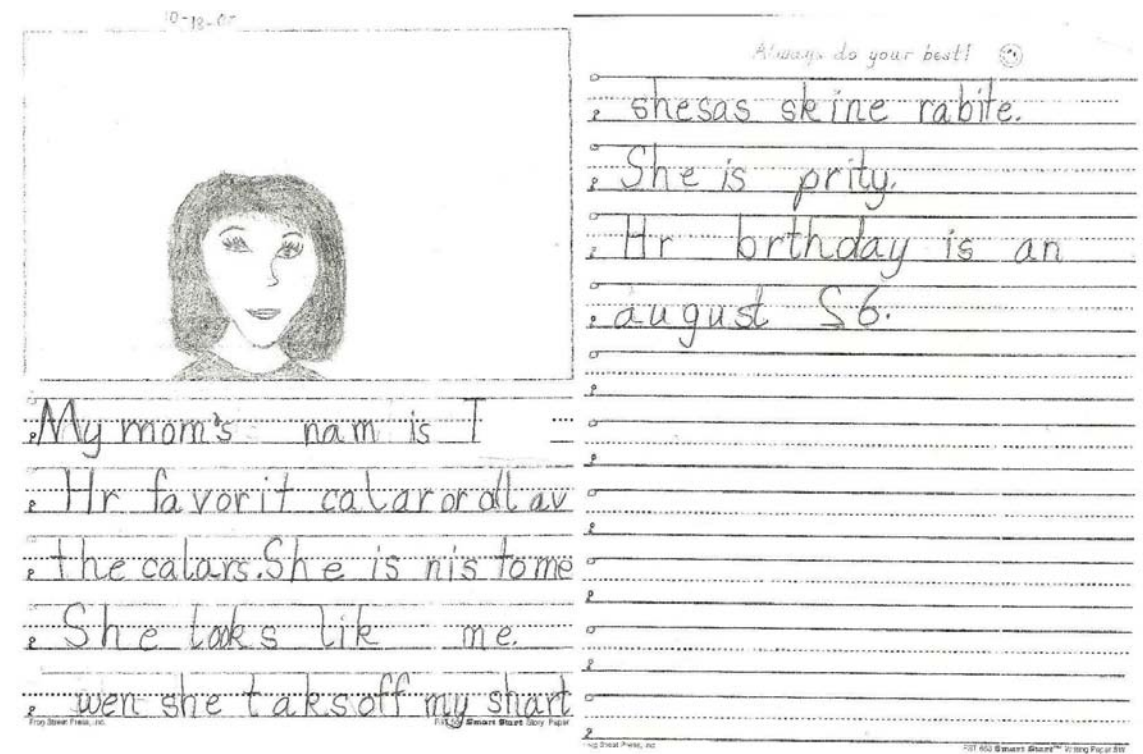


Figure 50 Eden’s writing dated October 18, 2007

Once again, as Eden wrote on the front side of her writing paper, she placed multiple sentences on a single writing line if space permitted. However, when she continued her story onto the backside of her writing paper she once again began placing a single sentence on a single writing line. Eden’s first line on the backside of her writing paper is the completion of a sentence that began on the front side of the writing paper. The next sentence, “She is pretty.” left plenty of space for Eden to begin another sentence

on the same writing line. However, Eden opted to leave the remainder of this line blank and begin her next, and final, sentence for this piece on the next line. Eden's last sentence in this piece was longer and required two lines of paper to complete. This caused Eden to utilize a return sweep in writing and carry the end of this sentence onto the next line.

On these last three pieces of writing, Eden began by writing multiple sentences on a single writing line if the space at the end of a sentence allowed her to do so. However, something in the physical act of turning her paper over to begin writing on the back caused Eden to revert to her former pattern of placing a single sentence on a single line of paper. During her writing of these three pieces, Eden showed evidence that she was negotiating her personal understanding of beginning a second sentence on a particular line if space allowed. This was a new concept for Eden. However, she was not ready to accept this new idea and implement her understanding of this concept all at once. Eden accepted and implemented this new information on a partial basis at first. This is evidenced by her placing multiple sentences on a single line on the front of her writing page. However, as Eden turned her paper over and began writing on the back of the paper, she reverted to her old understanding of writing a single sentence on a single line of writing.

Over time, Eden accepted this new understanding more fully. All pieces of writing that Eden produced following the piece dated October 18, 2007 incorporated the writing of multiple sentences on a single line if the space available permitted her to do this. The single exception that occurred following the October 18, 2007 date was on the final piece of writing produced by Eden during the time of this study. That piece is shown in Figure 46, page 226. This was also the longest piece that Eden produced. Eden wrote

this piece following an extended vacation visiting her father in San Antonio during her spring break. On this particular piece, Eden wanted to include a lot of individual events that occurred during her trip to Sea World. On this particular piece, when Eden turned her paper over to continue writing the story on the back of the paper, there were no lines drawn on the back side of her paper. This did not deter Eden. In her excitement to get her message down on paper, Eden continued to write her story on the plain backside of her paper. Interestingly, the lack of writing lines did not hamper Eden's ability to maintain straight lines of writing across the page. Throughout the writing that occurred on the top half of the backside of the unlined paper, Eden's lines of writing remained extremely straight and evenly spaced across the page. Again, the artistic ability that Eden developed at a very young age helped her in this accomplishment. On the bottom side of the backside of Eden's writing paper, something very interesting occurred with the way that Eden chose to place her writing. Two things happened simultaneously. First, Eden's writing became much smaller and much closer together than it appeared on the topside of this same page. Eden realized that she had much more information to tell. She knew that in order to fit the entire story on this page, she needed to write much smaller and place the lines of print closer together. At the same time that Eden began writing with the smaller print, Eden also reverted to placing a single sentence on a single line. Regardless of how much white space existed following the completion of the sentence, Eden returned to the beginning of a new line to write a new sentence. This practice lasted until the completion of the story at the bottom of the page.

These examples show how this specific new learning was negotiated by Eden. Eden came to school with a specific understanding of writing that involved placing a

single sentence on a single line. Over time, as Eden watched Mrs. Cook model writing at the beginning of each writing workshop block of time, she noticed that Mrs. Cook placed her sentences differently. Mrs. Cook began a second sentence on the same line as the one that had just ended providing there was enough white space at the end of the first sentence. Eden was also encountering text in her guided reading books and elsewhere that had sentences that wrapped to a second line of print.

At first, Eden merely observed Mrs. Cook write daily. She also saw how single sentences operated over multiple lines of print in other text she encountered. She was not yet ready to incorporate this observation into her personal writing immediately. Over time, Eden watched how Mrs. Cook utilized her page when writing, but continued to write the way she had previously written. As time passed, Eden began slowly incorporating some of what she observed Mrs. Cook doing and what she observed in books into her own writing. In Eden's second piece produced September 28, 2007 (see Figure 47, page 230). Eden tried only once in her writing what she had observed from Mrs. Cook and other text. In Eden's next piece dated October 9, 2007 (see Figure 48, page 232). Eden again tried to emulate what she observed Mrs. Cook do during her modeling and what she had seen in books. This time Eden copied Mrs. Cook's style of placing multiple sentences on a single line for her first four sentences of the piece. Following those first four sentences, Eden returned to what might have been her level of personal comfort. This meant placing a single sentence on a single line for the remainder of the story. In the pieces dated October 16, 2007 (see Figure 49, page 234) and October 18 (see Figure 50, 235), Eden's stretches of emulating this new style of sentence placement went just a bit longer than it previously had. However, in both of these

instances, Eden again reverted to her original understanding and level of comfort, which included placing a single sentence on a single line.

This example showed Eden negotiating what she observed and slowly incorporating that observation into her personal writing. The incorporation of what was, for Eden, a new style of writing did not happen quickly. Eden first observed Mrs. Cook's style of writing for several days and also noticed how sentences wrapped in books. Mrs. Cook modeled some writing in front of the class daily since the beginning of the school year in mid-August. When Eden began writing her own personal stories approximately five weeks later, she did not immediately incorporate Mrs. Cook's style of writing into her own. Incorporation of Mrs. Cook's modeled placement of sentences appeared not at all in Eden's first piece of writing. It appeared only once in Eden's second piece of writing. During the third, fourth, and fifth pieces of writing, it appeared on Eden's first page of writing but disappeared once Eden turned her paper over and began writing on the back of her paper. Beginning with her sixth piece of writing, and after having watched Mrs. Cook's modeling for ten weeks, Eden consistently placed multiple sentences on a single line of her paper from the beginning to the end of her work. However, in March, after Eden appeared to have fully incorporated what she saw Mrs. Cook model consistently, Eden reverted to her style of writing a single sentence on a single line at the end of the final piece of writing collected for this study.

Eden's negotiated understanding of this new learning occurred over time. She was not ready to incorporate this into her writing immediately after instruction or immediately after noticing it in text. Rather, adjusting her personal understanding to coincide with

instruction and what she observed in books was a bumpy ride. It took time and it took multiple opportunities for experimentation for Eden to adjust to a new understanding.

The example of how Eden incorporated new understandings into her personal work shows that not all students incorporate and take ownership of new learning all at once. Eden watched. Eden tried the new understanding in small parts of her work. She then incorporated the new understanding into larger parts of her work as time progressed and opportunity allowed. Eventually, Eden did incorporate the different style of sentence placement on the line of the paper into her personal writing. However, even when it appeared that Eden had fully incorporated what she had learned into her personal writing evidenced by continued placement of multiple sentences on a single line of writing for several months, a lapse occurred. This lapse, however, was an adjustment of Eden's learning barometer. It would not be fair to refer to what Eden did in that final piece of writing as a "relapse", or that "she forgot what she learned and needed to be retaught". What might be viewed by some as a lapse in learning could better be described as part of the student's personal negotiation of understanding.

In Eden's case, she merely needed a time for continued negotiation in the use of placing multiple sentences on a single line when writing. Eden proved multiple times in her writing over the course of time of this study that she understood and used what she had learned about sentence placement in writing.

Change Over Time in Eden's Use of Punctuation

While Eden understood and used the period conventionally beginning with her first piece of writing collected for this research, she experimented with and incorporated other punctuation marks into her writing as time progressed. These other punctuation

marks included apostrophes, question marks, exclamation marks, and ellipses. Eden used the comma in only one piece of writing. While there were times that Eden incorporated conversation into her writing, she did not utilize quotation marks to distinguish the dialogue.

In Eden's first piece of writing dated September 25, 2007 (see Figure 40, page 215), Eden used an apostrophe when referring to her dog. She wrote, "My dog's name is Lucky." and recorded it as "My dog's nam is lake." In this instance, Eden used the apostrophe conventionally. The next piece of Eden's writing that provided an opportunity for her to use another apostrophe was her fourth piece of writing. This piece was dated October 16, 2007 (see Figure 49, page 234). In this piece, Eden was telling her reader about her pet fish. She wrote, "My fish's name is Elvis." and recorded it as "my fishis nam is elvis." Eden did not use an apostrophe to indicate that the name belonged to the fish. It is interesting to hypothesize as to why Eden neglected to use an apostrophe with the word "fish". Several possibilities exist. First, Eden may not have fully understood that an apostrophe was needed to show that the name "Elvis" belonged to the fish. However, in her first piece of writing, Eden used the apostrophe to designate that a name belonged to her dog. In her next piece, written just two days later on October 18, 2007 and shown in Figure 50, page 235, Eden again used an apostrophe when telling her mother's name. The "sh" at the end of the word "fish" was more likely what caused Eden's lack of usage of the apostrophe in this circumstance. The "sh" at the end of a word often causes confusion in emerging literacy learners regarding the formation of plurals and the placement of apostrophes to designate possession (Read, 1986).

In the next piece that Eden produced, dated October 18, 2007 (see Figure 50, page 235), Eden again used the conventional placement of an apostrophe when she wrote about her mother. Eden wrote, “My mom’s name is T_____.” and recorded it as “My mom’s nam is T_____.” Referring to her mother’s name, Eden again used a conventional placement of the apostrophe. Eden also used an apostrophe conventionally in her ninth piece written about her father and dated November 19, 2007 (see Figure 41, page 220). This piece contained two possessive nouns. Both times, Eden again conventionally used the apostrophe. Eden wrote “My dad’s name is B_____.” and “My dad’s hair looks like a horseshoe.” Both the name and the hair belonged to her father and Eden conventionally inserted an apostrophe to record it as such. Eden had not received formal instruction in the classroom regarding the conventional use of apostrophes. It is difficult to ascertain for certain how she came to this understanding. It can be hypothesized that she encountered their use in text. Her guided reading text had utilized apostrophes over the course of the school year. She had probably also encountered their use in other texts.

Eden’s writing did not provide the opportunity for Eden to again use an apostrophe until the twelfth piece that she produced on January 23, 2008. This piece is shown in Figure 51 and reads, “I went to my dad’s house. Me and my sister had a great time. I went horseback riding lessons. The horse was named Rummy. She is a girl. She is brown and had black socks. And a black tail. She felt soft. She smelled clean. She is a bucking horse. When I decided to ride by myself Tio R_____ is pulling the rope and shows the horse where to go. We went around the corral. Cousin M_____ takes pictures.”

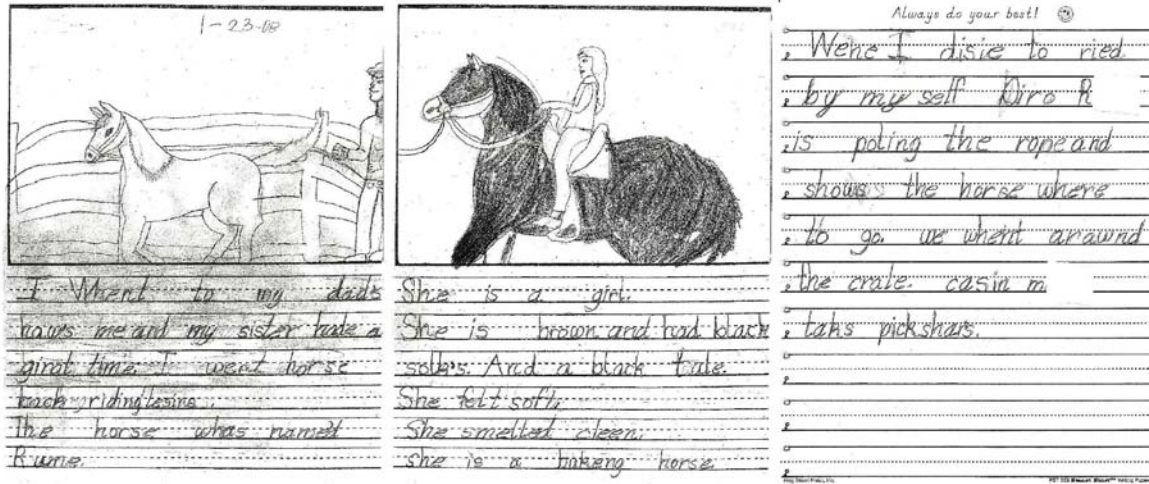


Figure 51 Eden's writing dated January 23, 2008

In this piece, Eden used an apostrophe five times. This piece contained more apostrophes than any other piece of Eden's writing. Her first use of the apostrophe was conventional as she made reference to the house that belonged to her father. The other four apostrophes in this piece were placed in nonconventional locations. Her second use of the apostrophe was on the word "house". It was located prior to the letter "s" and the final "e" on the word was omitted. The third time Eden used an apostrophe, it was placed between the letter "e" and "d" in "named". Later in the piece, Eden placed an apostrophe between the "k" and "s" in "socks". Her final apostrophe was placed between the "r" and "s" in "pictures".

Several things are noteworthy regarding Eden's use of apostrophes in this piece. First, with the exception of "fishes" in her previously discussed fourth piece of writing, Eden had used the apostrophe conventionally in previous pieces of writing. Each time Eden used the apostrophe previous to this piece, the apostrophe was used in reference to someone's name. In this piece, Eden over-generalized what she understood regarding the use and placement of apostrophes. With the exception of the word "named" each other

time that Eden used an apostrophe throughout all the pieces of writing collected for this research was prior to the letter “s” at the end of a word.

Also interesting to note is that, with the exception of the word “named”, Eden only placed her apostrophes on nouns. Eden did not place an apostrophe prior to the letter “s” that occurred on other words in this piece such as “shows” and “takes”. While Eden was definitely experimenting with the way an apostrophe was used as she wrote this piece, she showed an understanding that possessive apostrophes were used prior to the final “s” on a noun. However, at this time in her young life, Eden could not yet cognitively define what a noun was. She was relying on her internalization of oral language structures used in the spoken English language and her intuitive sense of how that is represented in written language. It was this internalized understanding of the English language that supported Eden’s understanding that apostrophes showing possession were only utilized on nouns. This understanding existed even though she did not yet formally understand that nouns were academically defined as a person, place, or thing.

Eden used an apostrophe in four more pieces during the time that data was collected for this research. Her next use of the apostrophe was a single apostrophe in her writing that was produced on February 12, 2008. This piece is shown in Figure 52 and reads,

Guess what!? I went to the movies! I saw the pirates that don’t do anything! My favorite part was when the princess and the garbage boys were talking. The part that I was attracted to was the cheese circles part. One of the

garbage boys like cheese circles and he said, 'What about you my little friend.'

And then the cheese circles (came) to life!

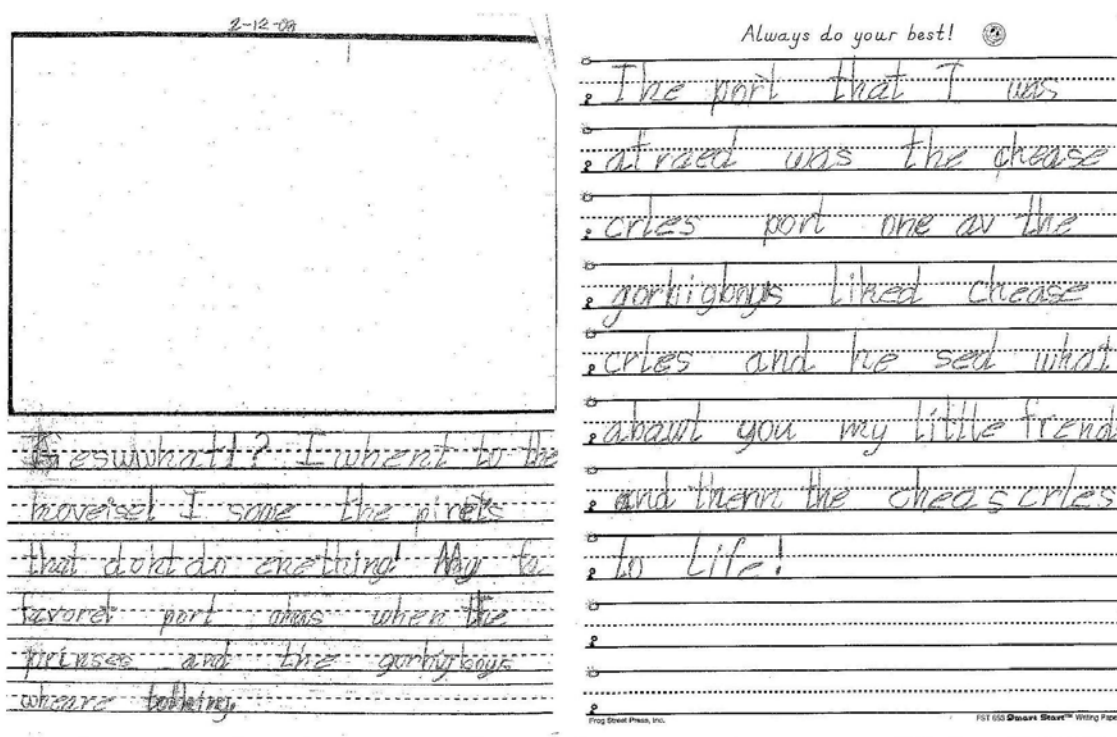


Figure 52 Eden's writing dated February 12, 2008

Eden placed an apostrophe prior to the "s" in the word "pirates". Again this piece of writing contained many other words, both nouns and non-nouns, ending with the letter "s". "Pirates" was the only word in which Eden chose to insert an apostrophe prior to the "s" at the end of the word. This piece was also the first time that Eden used a contraction in her writing. Eden did not place an apostrophe in her recording of the contraction "don't".

On February 19, 2008, Eden produced her fourteenth piece of writing as school during writing workshop. This piece is shown in Figure 53 and reads, "I know a bird that is tall as a first grader. It's a penguin. Penguins have webbed feet because they are great

swimmers. Penguin chicks molt. They are black and white. Penguins are fast swimmers. Penguins eat fish.”

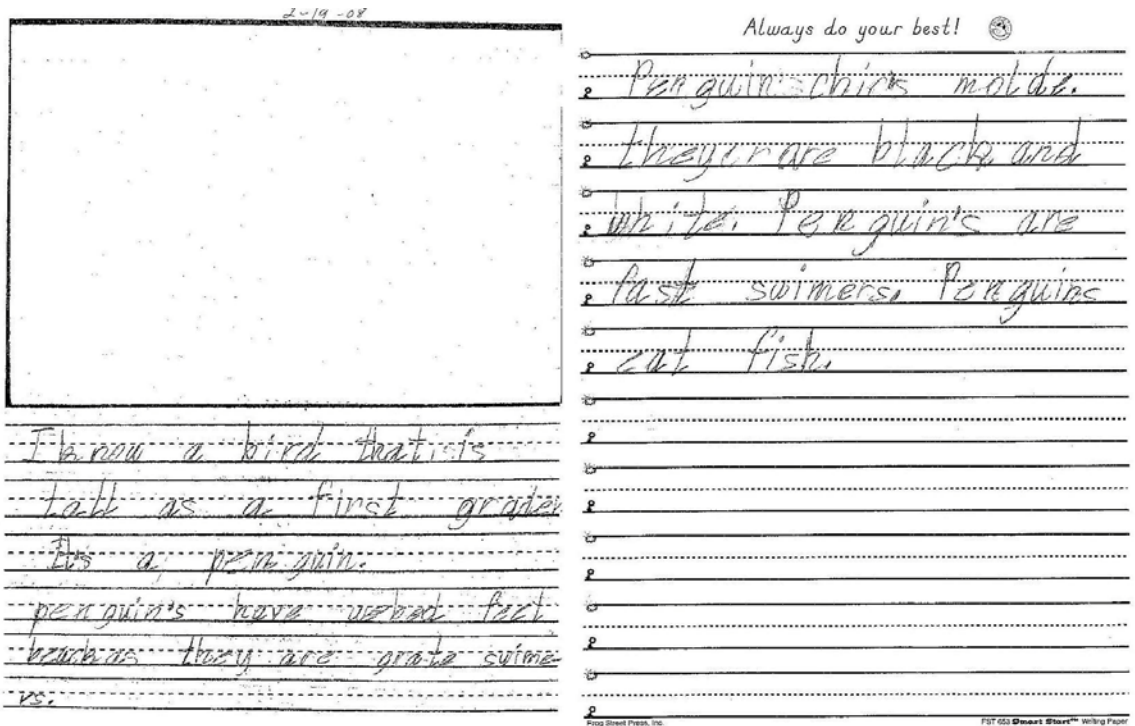


Figure 53 Eden’s writing dated February 19, 2008

This piece contained the second contraction that Eden used in her writing. Eden recorded “It’s” with the conventional use of an apostrophe. It is interesting to note that this particular contraction also ends in the letter “s”. It is not clear if Eden understood the two different ways she was using the apostrophe. Eden also used an apostrophe prior to the final “s” in “penguins” the first two times that she recorded this word in this piece of writing. However, her final recording of “penguins” in her last sentence did not contain an apostrophe. Eden also used an apostrophe in her recording of the word “chicks”.

Eden continued to exhibit evidence of her understanding that possessive apostrophes were only used when writing nouns and were always placed prior to the final “s” of that noun.

This piece of writing was the last time that Eden used an apostrophe to show possession during the time that data was collected for this research. However, she did use an apostrophe conventionally in the contraction “it’s” in her writing produced on February 19, 2008 (see Figure 53, page 246), and again in the writing produced on March 4, 2008. This piece of writing containing Eden’s final use of an apostrophe to show possession is shown in Figure 54 and reads, “It’s spring. I can see wonderful things outside. I can see a butterfly flying with ease. She is ready to lay it’s eggs.”

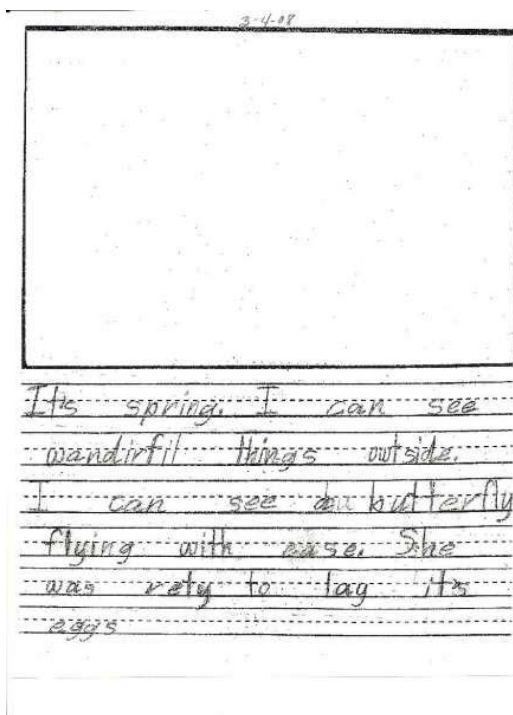


Figure 54 Eden’s writing dated March 4, 2008

In this piece of writing Eden used the word “it’s” twice. The first time the word is used, it is a contraction for “it is”. The second time Eden used the same spelling of this word, it was to show possession referring to the butterfly’s eggs. While this second use of “it’s” was not technically conventional as taught in grammar books, Eden’s use was very much correct. She was using it to show that the eggs to be laid did belong to the butterfly.

The opportunity for Eden to use an apostrophe did not arise in Eden's writing again until the last piece of writing that she produced during the time data was collected for this research until her last piece dated March 31, 2008 (see Figure 46, page 226). In the final four lines of this piece, Eden wrote, "It's the scariest roller coaster ever. It's the roller coaster when you go upside down. I wish that you would come with me. It's too fun at sea world."

In this section of her writing, Eden used the contraction "it's" three times. The first time that Eden intended to write "it's" she omitted the final "s" at the end of the word. The writing of this word also contained no apostrophe. When asked to read her writing aloud, Eden inserted the final "s" on this word during her oral reading. Eden wrote the contraction "it's" one time in each of her next two sentences and again in her final sentence. None of these renderings of the word contained an apostrophe.

The specific reason that Eden omitted the apostrophe in these contractions is not clear. However, again we see through the window of Eden's writing that she was still negotiating the purpose for using apostrophes in her writing. She had encountered them often in both her guided and independent reading. She had noticed their existence in other authors' writings. However, her personal understanding of their use was still being navigated.

The first time that a question mark appeared and the only piece in which Eden used commas in her writing was in the piece she produced on December 18, 2007. This piece, a letter written to Santa Claus, is shown in Figure 55 and reads:

Dear Saint Nicholas,

Does one of your reindeer have a cold? I want one nice female robot, a robot horse, and a brand new water gun. I hope that your reindeer are OK. If they are I'll make something for them. Am I on the good list? Don't leave without your milk and cookies! Is chocolate your favorite flavor? Is red your favorite color? I hope you love the cookies.

From you friend

Eden

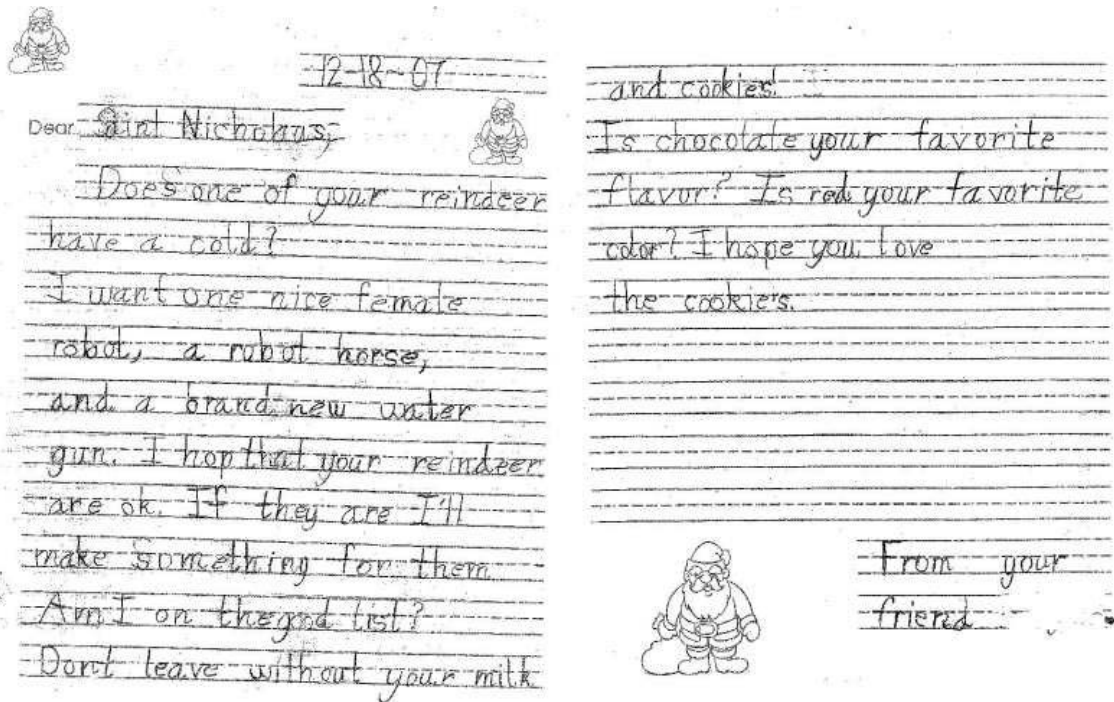


Figure 55 Eden's writing dated December 18, 2007

This piece was written following a mini-lesson on letters presented to the class by Mrs. Cook. Following the mini-lesson, Mrs. Cook made the assignment for her students to compose a letter to Santa Claus and provided the students with writing paper that differed from the writing paper normally used in writing workshop. The format of this writing sample supported the letter writing process by providing a place for the date,

salutation, body of the letter, closing, and signature so that the student completed text within a provided framework.

This piece of writing was also the only time that students were required to submit the first copy of their writing to an adult, the teacher or a parent volunteer, to have their spelling corrected. Students then recopied their letters incorporating the corrected spellings into their rewritten work. This was done because the letters were to be displayed in the school hallway. School policy strongly encouraged conventional spelling on work displayed for the public.

In writing this piece, Eden did follow Mrs. Cook's modeled example of placing a comma after the salutation of the letter and between each item in a list of gifts she requested for a total of three commas. Eden did not place a comma following the closing of this letter, even though Mrs. Cook had also modeled that during her mini-lesson.

Question marks and exclamation marks.

As Mrs. Cook modeled the writing of a friendly letter to Santa Claus, she told the students that one way to display an interest in their reader was to ask questions of the reader. Eden incorporated four questions into the body of her letter. She began by expressing interest and concern for Santa's reindeer by inquiring as to their health. Later in the letter she inquired as to whether she was on his "good" list. Eden ended her letter by again asking questions that showed an interest in her reader. Eden inquired regarding his favorite flavor of milk and cookies as well as his favorite color.

Eden had not previously incorporated the technique of engaging the reader by embedding questions within her writing. Her placement of questions within this piece of writing occurred only after Mrs. Cook had modeled this technique within her own writing

and had strongly encouraged the students to incorporate questions into their writing as well.

Eden did not again ask questions of her reader until her writing produced on February 12, 2008 (see Figure 52, page 245). In the piece produced on this date, Eden engaged the reader with a question. Eden wrote, “Guess what!?” Eden was excited about what she was going to share with her reader that day. This explains the use of an exclamation mark as well as Eden’s sense of audience. However, Eden also recognized that she was beginning this piece with a question that required a question mark. Consequently, Eden placed a question mark following the exclamation mark. With this beginning sentence, Eden encountered a dilemma that faces authors of all ages. It is a dilemma that does not have a suitable solution within the confines of standard English grammar. She needed both an exclamation mark and a question mark in order to convey the emotion and meaning of her message. An author following the rules of written style would be forced to select one or the other or to invent something new. Eden felt no confinement to written conventions of writing and opted to place both types of punctuation marks to more effectively communicate her message and emotions to her reader.

Later that same month, in her writing dated February 27, 2008, Eden began her writing with a very similar lead. This piece of writing is shown in Figure 56 and reads, “Guess what I saw on the computer. I saw an elephant painting with a paint brush. It was painting an elephant and a flower. I didn’t know that elephants paint. My mother has some news! What (is) the news! I yelled. I dashed to see. And what a sight to see. It was an elephant painting with joy.”

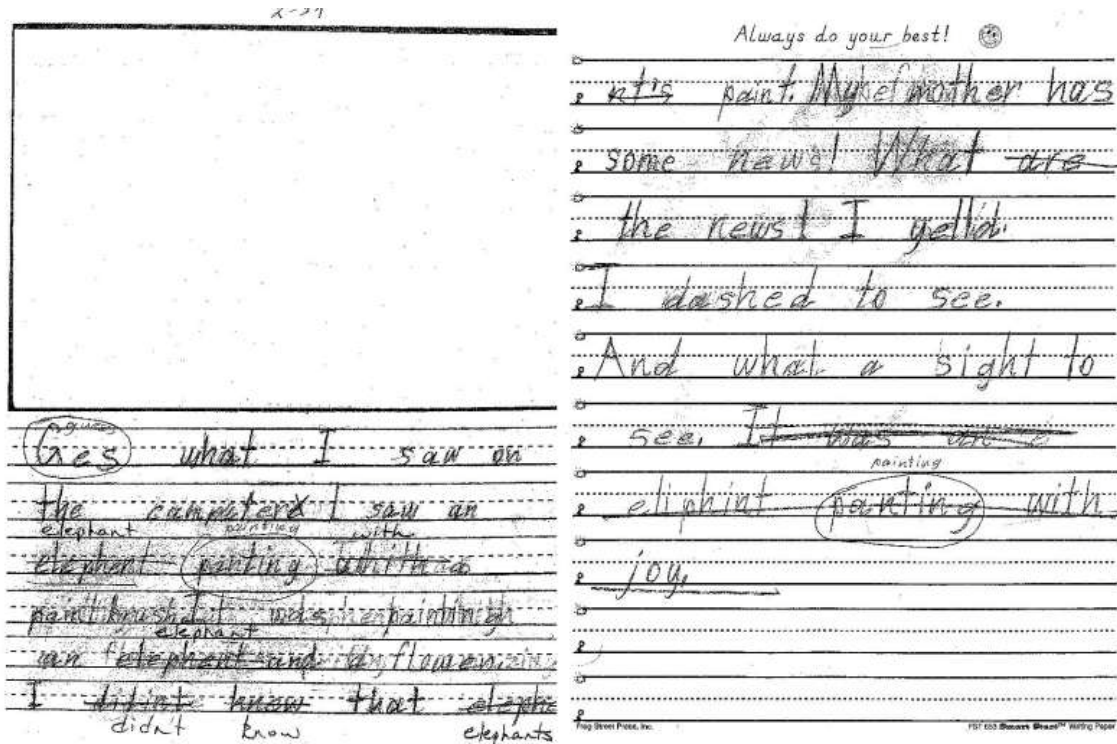


Figure 56 Eden’s writing dated February 27, 2008

Although Eden began this piece by engaging her reader with a question, Eden did not place a question mark at the end of the question. Many erasures and revisions on this piece of writing make it difficult to be certain, but it does appear that Eden placed no punctuation at the end of this question. This was highly unusual for Eden, as every sentence that she previously wrote beginning with her first piece of writing in the fall included periods at the end of each sentence. Later in this same piece, Eden includes a question that she asked her mother. She wrote, “What is the news! I yelled.” Eden again was faced with the same dilemma that faced her in her writing completed two days previously. She was excited about the question she was asking. This time Eden opted to place the exclamation mark to communicate her excitement to her reader. This decision showed that Eden was constantly making decisions about the conventions she used as she wrote.

Eden first used an exclamation mark when writing her letter to Santa dated December 18, 2007 (see Figure 55, page 249). In this piece she admonished Santa, “Don’t leave without your cookies!”

This particular piece contained the most diversity in Eden’s use of punctuation. It included her single use of a comma over the time covered by this research. These commas were placed at the end of the salutation, and in separating the list of items she requested as gifts from Santa. This piece also contained the first question marks utilized by Eden as she asked three questions of Santa. Eden also included periods at the end of each sentence as well as a period placed after her signature at the end of the letter.

Eden received help from an adult in editing this particular piece of writing. It is not known to what extent that adult help impacted her use of punctuation within this piece of writing. However, her placement of a period following her name on the signature line offered a window into her current understanding that periods were always placed following meaningful units of words in writing. The period following her signature indicated that her message in this piece of writing was complete.

Eden next used the exclamation mark in the recently discussed piece composed on February 12, 2008 (see Figure 52, page 245) when she placed both an exclamation mark and a question mark following her opening statement of “Guess what!?” Eden placed three additional exclamation marks within the content of this piece. Two of these next three exclamation marks immediately followed her opening question of “Guess what!?” Her next two sentences were “I went to the movies!” and “I saw the pirates that don’t do anything!” In these first three sentences, Eden was engaging her audience and sharing her excitement regarding the movie she had recently viewed. Eden accomplished this task

through her use of punctuation. Eden again utilized an exclamation mark at the end of her final statement in this writing, “And then the cheese circles (came) to life!” Eden’s use of the exclamation mark following this statement shared the excitement she had experienced at the end of the movie with her audience. Through her choice of ending this piece of writing with the surprise ending to the movie followed by an exclamation point, Eden left her reader with the same sense of excitement she had felt as the movie ended.

Eden next used an exclamation mark in her writing that was produced on February 27, 2008 (see Figure 56, page 252). The excitement Eden felt when writing this piece is evident from the beginning. She began this piece by asking the reader to guess what she had seen and then described a comical picture she had viewed of an elephant painting a picture of an elephant and a flower. Eden placed an exclamation mark at the end of two statements in the middle of her writing. “My mother has some news! What are the news! I yelled.” Eden’s second exclamation mark was placed at what was technically the end of the question. However, as she had done previously, Eden chose to place an exclamation mark at the end of this question because use of the exclamation mark more fully supported the message that Eden wanted to send. In her message, Eden conveyed great excitement about her mother’s news. For Eden, the exclamation mark helped to convey that message. The use of a question mark would not have suited her purpose as well as the question mark did.

Eden’s final piece of writing (see Figure 46, page 226) included in this research contained four exclamation marks. This was the largest amount of exclamation marks used by Eden in any single piece of writing. In this piece, Eden related her recent experience of visiting Sea World with her father and sister. Eden’s enthusiasm for the

topic provided her with the momentum to describe much that had transpired during her visit in great detail. The combination of Eden's excitement to tell the reader about her visit to Sea World and the detail with which she recorded the events of her visit was the driving force for this piece of writing, at 191 words, to become the longest that Eden produced as well as the piece that contained the most exclamation marks.

Ellipsis.

Eden utilized an ellipsis twice in her writing over the period of time for which data was collected for this research. Her first use of the ellipsis was in the piece that she produced on December 2, 2007 (see Figure 44, page 221). In this piece, Eden relayed information to the reader regarding what she knew about Santa Claus. At the point where she began writing about Santa's reindeer, Eden recorded, "The reindeers called . . . names Dancer and Prancer and Vixen, Comet and Cupid and Donner and Blitzen." In this sentence Eden used the ellipsis to cause the reader to both pause in the reading and to create a sense of tension as the reader read, waiting for the names of the reindeer to be revealed.

Eden's incorporation of the ellipsis into her writing was interesting because Mrs. Cook had not modeled or discussed the use of the ellipsis during any writing workshop mini-lessons. Eden had not yet encountered the ellipsis in any of the books that were read during her guided reading group. She had probably encountered ellipses in books that she read independently. The ellipsis is a form of punctuation that is not usually noticed and experimented with by first grade students. However, Eden's ability to notice and incorporate intricate details in her artwork also served her well in noticing and utilizing detail such as the ellipsis in her writing. This same artistic eye that served Eden well

when creating detailed artwork also served her well in noticing and recreating the ways authors used the ellipsis in writing. Eden intuited how an ellipsis would be used in writing and, for the most part, she was correct.

Eden again used an ellipsis in the last piece of writing produced during the time data was collected for this research (see Figure 46, page 226). Eden produced this piece on March 31, 2008 after returning from a visit to Sea World with her father. In reference to their ride on the Steel Eel, Eden wrote, “But it wasn’t scary . . . it was fun!” Again, Eden used the ellipsis to cause the reader to pause in the reading, creating slight tension as the reader waited to learn the outcome of the roller coaster ride.

Quotation marks.

Eden used quotation marks in her writing only once during the time of data collection for this research. In the piece that she produced on October 22, 2007 (see Figure 41, page 217), Eden told her reader about her grandfather, a famous horse racer in Mexico. In reference to her grandfather’s horse, Eden wrote “When he “said go” he ran and ran and ran.” While Eden’s placement of the first quotation mark was not conventional, she successfully managed to send the message that she intended to convey. In this example of writing, Eden’s same general message could also have been conveyed if the quotation marks had been omitted. However, the addition of the quotation marks placed additional emphasis on the fact that the race began with the race starter’s statement of the single word.

At this time in the school year, Mrs. Cook had not yet modeled writing that contained the use of quotation marks during the writing workshop portion of the school day. Eden had observed their use in books she read independently and in books she

encountered during the guided reading portion of the school day. Mrs. Cook had explained the purpose of quotation marks during guided reading sessions. Eden extended Mrs. Cook's explanation given during guided reading and incorporated their use in a very appropriate, though not entirely conventional, place in her own writing.

Eden again used dialogue in her writing on October 18, 2007 (see Figure 50, page 235). In this piece, Eden described her mother to her readers. Eden wrote, "When she takes off my shirt, she says skinny rabbit". Eden did not place quotation marks around the words that her mother stated. However, her use of dialogue enhanced the message in her writing. The term "skinny rabbit" was an endearment that her mother used to describe Eden. The inclusion of this information helped the reader to feel the closeness of the relationship enjoyed by Eden and her mother.

Eden next included dialogue in her writing on February 27, 2008 (see Figure 56, page 252) when she produced the piece about the elephant she saw painting a picture on the computer. In this piece Eden wrote, "What are the news! I yelled." Again, Eden did not enclose the spoken words in quotation marks. The last two times that Eden incorporated dialogue into her writing, the fact that she was utilizing dialogue was evident in the text that she wrote, even without the formal use of quotation marks. It was clear in both pieces of writing that Eden was telling her reader what someone had said. Eden communicated that message without the use of any added quotation marks.

These three instances of Eden's use of dialogue show a definite change in Eden's writing over time. In the first instance, if Eden had not included the quotation marks, the reader would not have been aware that dialogue was being incorporated. The same sentence without the quotation marks would have carried nearly the same message that

Eden intended without the reader realizing that Eden intended to incorporate dialogue into the story. In the last two instances, it was apparent even without the use of quotation marks that Eden was definitely incorporating the use of dialogue to convey her message.

Conventional use of upper and lower case letters.

From the beginning of the school year, Eden demonstrated a very complex personal negotiation of how both upper and lower case letters enhanced the meaning of her written messages. While these personal inventions evolved within Eden, Mrs. Cook modeled writing daily at the beginning of the writing workshop portion of the school day. Mrs. Cook emphasized the conventional use of upper and lower case letters during her writing mini-lessons.

In her first piece of writing for this study dated September 25, 2007 (see Figure 40, page 215), Eden told her reader about her dog, Lucky. Eden began the first word of her first sentence with an upper case letter. While this piece of writing consisted of six sentences completed with final punctuation placed appropriately, the first letter of the first sentence is the only upper case letter used in the entire piece of writing. Eden did not capitalize the beginning of any sentences after the first one. She also did not capitalize the name of her dog. The only other proper noun utilized on this piece of writing was Eden's name written at the top of her paper. Eden wrote her name in cursive and used an upper case "E" at its beginning.

This is especially fascinating because, as previously discussed in this chapter, Eden included many other sophisticated elements of writing in this first piece. All of her sentences expressed complete thoughts punctuated with a period at the end of the sentence. Eden included a conventionally placed apostrophe when referring to her dog's

name and two similes describing her dog's appearance and ability to run fast. The apostrophe showing possession and use of similes are considered to be sophisticated elements of writing for a beginning first grade students. Teachers of this age group focus instruction primarily on beginning sentences with upper case letters and placement of punctuation at the end of a sentence. This was the specific focus of Mrs. Cook's daily writing mini-lessons.

Eden began the school year understanding the need for final punctuation at the end of each sentence. She did not yet demonstrate an understanding of the purposes for using upper case letters at the beginning of all sentences or for use at the beginning of all proper nouns. Eden did understand that names, such as those of her family and classmates, were capitalized. She saw the written form of classmates' names daily in her classroom and they always began with an upper case letter. Eden had incorporated this understanding into her writing. She did not see names of pets in their written form on a daily basis and had not yet discovered that these names are also capitalized when written conventionally.

In Eden's writing dated September 28, 2007 (see Figure 47, page 230), she again capitalized the beginning of the first word in her story. She then wrote three more sentences with the first letter of the word beginning the sentences as a lower case letter. On the fifth and sixth sentences in her story, Eden started the sentences with an upper case letter. In Eden's illustration of this story, she drew a picture of herself and her sister. Under the illustration, Eden labeled the story with her sister's name, "A ____ by Eden". Both names in this label were capitalized.

At this point in time, Eden had continued to observe Mrs. Cook daily model and discuss the conventional procedure of placing an upper case letter at the beginning of each sentence with an upper case letter. Eden was starting to use an upper case letter at the beginning of sentences more frequently. However, Eden's primary purpose in writing was to communicate her story. While Eden utilized an upper case letter at the beginning of sentences more frequently, her primary purpose in writing remained to communicate her story. She was a meaning maker.

At the end of each writing workshop portion of the day, some students were selected to read their stories aloud to the class. When students stood to read their stories aloud, the use of writing conventions such as upper case letters were not apparent to those who listened to the story. This culminating experience of the writing workshop block of time was looked forward to by all students in the classroom. They wanted to share what they had written. Throughout the writing portion of the day, the focus in this classroom was on the sharing of a story.

Eden's third story dated October 9, 2007 (see Figure 48, page 232), about her pet frog contained thirteen sentences. Her first and fourth sentences began with a capitalized letter. Eden's only other use of an upper case letter was the letter "J" on "Jumps" located at the beginning of the second word of the second sentence of the story.

Her next story dated October 16, 2007 (see Figure 49, page 234), told of her pet fish named Elvis. This story contained no capitalized letters at the beginning of any sentences. As when she wrote about her dog, Lucky, in her first piece of writing, Eden did not capitalize the name of her fish. This supported the hypothesis that Eden had not regularly seen the names of her pets in writing and did not yet understand that names of

pets would begin with an upper case letter. Eden again capitalized the letter “J” located at the beginning of the word “Jumps” in the middle of a sentence. A specific discussion of Eden’s use of lower and upper case “j”s. will follow in this chapter. In addition to the upper case “J”, Eden capitalized each letter of the name of the store where they purchased her fish. She wrote, “we got him at WOL MORT”. In writing the name of the store, Eden used the detail she noticed each time that she and her family entered this store. Wal-Mart shopping centers display the name of the store in all upper case letters above the entrance to the store.

A shift in Eden’s use of upper case letters began to reveal itself in her fifth piece of writing produced on October 18, 2007 (see Figure 50, page 235). This piece, written about her mother, contained seven sentences. Eden used a capital letter at the beginning of the first four and last two sentences. The six sentences that began with capital letters were statements of fact about her mother. They included her mother’s name, favorite color, appearance, and birthday. The single sentence in the middle of the piece that did not begin with a capital letter was a description of an emotionally pleasant interaction between herself and her mother. That statement read, “When she takes off my shirt she says skinny rabbit”. It appeared that as Eden concentrated on stating facts in her writing, she attended more closely to the detail of conventionally using upper case letters at the beginning of her sentences. However, when emotion took over and Eden wrote about a pleasant and loving exchange that occurred between the two of them, Eden lost herself in the emotion of writing about the event. Conveying the delight of the interaction that occurred between herself and her mother became more important to Eden than the convention of capitalizing sentences. In this same piece of writing, Eden also capitalized

her mother's name. However, she wrote her mother's birth month in all lower case letters.

This hypothesis that when Eden became emotionally involved about her writing topic, her focus went primarily to conveying the excitement of her message to her reader and less attention was paid to the conventions of her writing is supported in her next piece of writing dated October, 22, 2007 (see Figure 41, page 217). In this story Eden is very proud of her grandfather, who lived in Mexico, and his racehorse. This story contained eleven sentences. Eden capitalized the second, third, and fifth sentences. In addition, she capitalized the name of the country where her grandfather lived, Mexico, in the first sentence. Once again, the name of the animal, her grandfather's racehorse, is not capitalized.

Eden's love of horses was a common thread that was woven throughout much of her writing. In this piece, Eden funneled her energy and emotion into telling the story of her grandfather's racehorse experiencing a near disaster by having a rock loosen its shoe. The horse overcame the adversity and went on to win many races. When Eden became emotionally involved in writing, whether it was just for a sentence or for the entire piece, her energy went into the excitement of the story and focused less on the convention of using upper case letters at the beginning of sentences during the emotional part of the story.

When Eden wrote about her experience of trick-or-treating with her friends in the piece she produced on November 1, 2007 (see Figure 42, page 218), she capitalized the beginning letter on eight of the nine sentences contained in this story. This story detailed what each of her friends was dressed as. Five sentences began with the name of a friend.

Since Eden had previously been consistent regarding beginning the names of classmates with an upper case letter, it was difficult to ascertain whether the words beginning these five sentences began with capital letters because they were the beginning letter of the sentence, the beginning letter of a name, or both.

There was a definite shift regarding the use of upper case letters in this piece of writing however. The word “Halloween” appeared twice in this piece of writing. It was capitalized both times that it was used. Eden saw this word written in the classroom throughout the month of October. Each time that she encountered it in the classroom, it began with an upper case letter. Therefore, when she used this same word in her writing, Eden also capitalized the word. She was beginning to distinguish the subtleties of upper and lower case letters, rather than over-generalizing that they were interchangeable or that upper case letters just weren’t that important to monitor.

In this piece Eden also mentioned the names of several characters that she and her friends dressed as. The name of one of these characters, Tinkerbelle, was capitalized. The others were not. Eden did not capitalize the names of Lava Girl and Optimus Prime. Tinkerbelle is a character in a popular children’s story. Eden had seen the name, Tinkerbelle, in writing multiple times as she listened to her mother read her the story. Consequently, when she wrote the name, she capitalized it. Lava Girl was a character that Eden had invented. She and her mother had worked together to create the costume. Eden had never seen the name of the character in writing and so when she recorded it in her story, it was not capitalized. Optimus Prime was a popular cartoon character. Eden primarily encountered this name when viewing the television cartoon. Again, she was unfamiliar with how the name looked in print. She recorded it using all lower case letters.

While the name of one of Eden's friends, V____, was capitalized when Eden told what V____ was dressed as for Halloween, later in the story when this same friend was mentioned again, her name was not capitalized. Again, as had happened before in Eden's writing, Eden became very excited when telling about her favorite part of the evening. As Eden's excitement about telling what had happened increased, her attention to capitalization of specific words decreased. At the end of her story, Eden wrote, "My favorite place to trick-or-treat is at V____'s house just because I get to see my friend V____ and they hang up a talking skeleton when its October".

In this last sentence of her story, Eden did not capitalize the word "October". This was not surprising as Eden had not previously capitalized names of the months when she wrote them. This was not a word that Eden had encountered often in print and did not, therefore, realize that it was normally recorded beginning with an upper case letter.

Eden also did not capitalize the word "I". She had only included this word once before in her writing. This occurred in the piece that she produced about her pet fish on October 16, 2007 (see Figure 49, page 234). In that story Eden wrote the word "I" with an upper case letter. Since the story about trick-or-treating was only the second piece where the word "I" was utilized, it is unclear what Eden's understanding regarding the recording of "I" was.

What was interesting, however, about the last sentence in the story about trick-or-treating was that Eden did not capitalize the name of her friend, V____ either time that she wrote the name in this sentence. This was the first time in all of Eden's writing to date that the name of a classmate or family member was not capitalized. Again, it appeared that when Eden became excited and emotionally involved in a part of a story

that was particularly important to her, Eden concentrated primarily on getting her message down. The conventions of the print that she was beginning to understand, specifically capitalization at this time, became secondary in importance to her.

By January of the school year Eden had gradually incorporated the conventional use of upper case letters at the beginning of sentences, at the beginning of proper nouns (including the names of animals), and when writing the pronoun, “I”. In the writing she produced on January 23, 2008 (see Figure 51, page 243), Eden wrote the following:

I went to my dad’s house and me and my sister had a great time. I went horse back riding lessons. The horse was named Rummy. She is a girl. She is brown and had black socks. And a black tail. She felt soft. She smelled clean. She is a bucking horse. When I decided to ride by myself Tio R_____ is pulling the rope and shows the horse where to go. We went around the corral. Cousin M_____ takes pictures.

In this piece, Eden began most of the sentences with an upper case letter. Three sentences—one located at the bottom of her second page of writing and the two final sentences of the piece—are not capitalized. Her cousin’s name located in the final sentence is also not capitalized. The names of the horse and her uncle are both conventionally capitalized even though they are not located at the beginning of sentences. Also, the pronoun, “I”, is written with an upper case letter when it is not located at the beginning of a sentence.

Eden also used an upper case letter at the beginning of the word, “went” located as the second word of the first sentence. The use of an upper case “W” at the beginning of this word was not a matter of Eden not understanding the difference in formation

between the upper and lower case forms of “w”. In this same piece, Eden recorded “went” in two other locations in the piece of writing in addition to the words “was”, “shows”, and “where”. All were written with conventionally formed lower case “w”s. It is unclear why Eden chose to use a capital letter at the beginning of the single word “went” the first time she used it in this story.

This piece of writing showed that, at this time in the school year, Eden understood and often incorporated the conventional use of upper and lower case letters for multiple purposes in her writing. However, again, when she became excited and emotionally involved in the written communication of her story, the conveying of information to the reader became more important to Eden than the conventional usage of upper and lower case formations in writing each letter in her story. This occurred at the end of this piece as Eden told of the experience of sitting on the horse’s back as her uncle led her around the corral while her cousin took pictures of her riding the horse.

By the beginning of March, Eden seemed to have the mechanics of upper and lower case letter usage at the beginning of sentences under control. On March 4, 2008, she produced a short piece of expository writing (see Figure 54, page 247) about springtime and butterflies. This piece read, “It’s spring. I can see wonderful things outside. I can see a butterfly flying with ease. She was ready to lay its eggs.”

This was the first piece Eden produced in which she used all upper and lower case letters conventionally. This piece contained upper case letters at the beginning of each sentence. Also, the word “I” was capitalized throughout the writing. However, each usage of the word “I” occurred at the beginning of a sentence. This piece was written with little emotion as Eden described the butterfly she observed. This piece of writing was produced

with statements of facts and observations. Throughout the writing of this piece, Eden managed to maintain her emotions regarding the topic. Because she did not become personally and emotionally involved in this specific piece of writing, she attended consistently to the conventional use of upper and lower case letters throughout the entire piece.

However, her next and final piece of writing collected for this research was dated just three weeks later. This piece, dated March 31 2008 (see Figure 46, page 226) was produced following her visit to see her father in San Antonio. Her father had taken Eden and her sister to visit Sea World. In this piece, Eden relayed the excitement she felt as she experienced the many rides of the amusement park located on the Sea World grounds. While Eden maintained the conventional placement of upper case letters at the beginning of most sentences throughout the writing, there were three sentences that Eden began with a lower case letter. On her second page of the story, Eden wrote, “first you get on a boat. and it would just go up the hill.” Eden was excited about conveying her message and telling her reader about the amusement park rides she had experienced. In that excitement, her strong desire to convey her message again overtook her need to attend to the detail of the mechanics of usage of upper case letters.

Following her recording of these two sentences, Eden again returned to placing upper case letters at the beginning of each sentence. However, later in this same story Eden wrote, “the first time I looked at it it kind of looked scary.” Once again, the need to convey the emotion she experienced as she rode on these roller coasters became the focus of her recorded message and her need to conventionally use upper and lower case letters became secondary.

In this same story, Eden included many proper nouns that included the names of places (San Antonio, Sea World, and Shamu Theater) and the names of many of the rides that she encountered (Journey to Atlantis, Steel Eel, and The Great White). Eden capitalized none of these proper nouns. It is important to note that while Eden had developed a more sophisticated understanding regarding the conventional use of capital letters at the beginning of pet names, the beginning of sentences, and when writing the word, “I”, this understanding had not yet transferred to capitalizing the names of places or other proper nouns.

At the same time that Eden developed her understanding of the use of upper and lower case letters at the beginning of sentences and the beginning of names of people and pets, Eden simultaneously underwent a different type of metamorphosis regarding the use of the upper and lower case letter “j”.

Eden’s third story dated October 9, 2007 (see Figure 48, page 232), began with an upper case letter at the beginning of the first word. In Eden’s second sentence, “He jumps.”, the “h” on “he” was written in the lower case. The “j” on “jumps” was written in the upper case. However, the reason for her usage of the upper case “j” on “jumps” stemmed from a different source than her usage of upper and lower case letters in other places of her writing. An upper and lower case “j” have the same formation, the only difference being that the upper case “j” spans between the upper and lower boundaries of the writing line. The lower case “j” sits lower on the line of writing with a tail that hangs below the lower writing boundary line. Eden had not written the letter “j” previously in her writing. In the last sentence of this same piece of writing, Eden wrote, “One time he jumped on my cupcake.” The word “jumped” in this sentence also began with an upper

case letter “j”. Given her recording of two out of two letter “j”s as upper case letters, it appears that Eden did not realize when recording the letter “j” that she was utilizing the upper case form of the letter.

This hypothesis is supported by evidence from Eden’s third piece of writing dated October 16, 2007 (see Figure 49, page 234). Eden’s second sentence in this story states, “He jumps when I start pointing my finger in the fish bowl.” Once again, Eden recorded the “j” on “jumps” as an upper case “j”.

Eden did not again use the letter “j” in her writing until her eighth piece of writing composed on November 1, 2007 (see Figure 42, page 218). In this piece, Eden described her Halloween trick-or-treating outing with her friends. Near the end of her story Eden wrote, “My favorite place to trick or treat is at V____’s house just because I get to see my friend V____.” When Eden recorded the letter “j” in “just”, she recorded it as a lower case “j” with its tail hanging below the bottom writing boundary line.

Recording the letter “j” in the lower case form, however, did not become a consistent way of recording that letter without further personal negotiation by Eden. Her ninth piece of writing was produced on November 14, 2007 and is shown in Figure 57.

This piece reads, “I know a lot about horses. I know three names of three horses. They are called a morgan quarter horse and the pinto and the appaloosa. And I like the horses so much. A lots because I get to ride on them. And I know one horse. It is called the morgan. My favorite ones are the running kind and the jumping kind.”

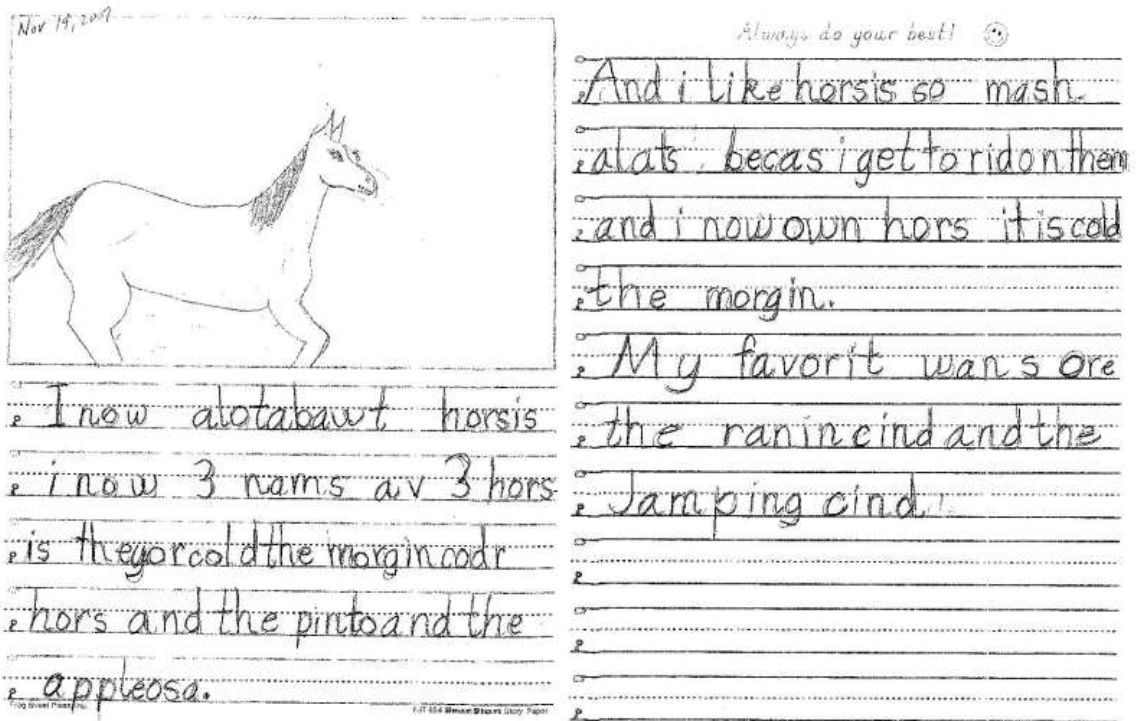


Figure 57 Eden's writing dated November 14, 2007

Eden's last sentence of the piece of writing stated, "My favorite ones are the running and the jumping kind." When writing the word "jumping", Eden again recorded the letter "j" in an upper case form.

The letter "j" did not appear in Eden's writing again until the piece that she produced on February 27, 2008 (see Figure 56, page 252). In this piece, Eden wrote about seeing an elephant painting a picture on the computer. The final sentence of this piece reads "It was an elephant painting with joy." Eden recorded this "j" as a lower case letter.

The final time that Eden used the letter "j" in her writing was in her final piece produced on March 31, 2008. Referring to the visit she had recently made with her father and sister to Sea World, Eden stated, "And it would just go up the hill." Once again she recorded the letter "j" on "just" in its lower case form.

Eden's personal negotiation in changing the way she recorded the letter "j" from its upper case to its lower case form in her writing was a gradual process. She did not simply realize one day that she had been utilizing the upper case form of the letter in the middle of sentences and then immediately change the way she recorded it. The change took place over the entire span of time that data was gathered for this research.

The letter "j" is not a frequently used letter. Thus, her opportunities for recording it over the seven months that data was collected for this research were limited to seven words. The infrequent opportunities to write the letter allowed the change in the way she chose to record the letter to be closely observed over a prolonged period of time.

Eden began the school year using an upper case form of the letter "j" each time that she needed to use the letter in her writing. By November her writing showed evidence that she then was aware of a slightly different orientation used in writing the lower case form of the letter. Later that same month she reverted back to her original way of recording the letter "j". By the end of the third quarter of the school year, Eden appeared to have assimilated the slightly different orientation of the lower case "j" into her writing. However, it is not known if her understanding of the location of the lower case "j" was secure from that point on. It is probable that her placement of the letter "j" with its tail hanging below the lower boundary of the writing line occurred more often and her use of the upper case "j" in the middle of sentences decreased as she continued to write throughout the school year. Eden's understanding and adaptation of her new understanding did not occur all at once. She had to familiarize herself with and adjust to the new information and its use gradually over time.

Change Over Time in Eden's Use of Orthography

Because Mrs. Cook strictly enforced the classroom rule that students were not allowed to ask how to spell words when writing, Eden slowly articulated words whose spelling was unfamiliar to her and made her best effort to record what she heard. During the time of my classroom observations, I did not ever observe Eden asking either another student or an adult how to spell words that were unfamiliar to her. This practice that encouraged students to record unknown words based on what they could hear and record along with their personal understandings about English spelling patterns allowed for a study of the development of Eden's personal understanding of orthography.

In her writing workshop mini-lessons, Mrs. Cook explained to students that they could circle any words that they were unsure of how to spell. Mrs. Cook stated that she was willing to help students with the conventional spelling of those words during their individual student/teacher writing conferences. Eden chose to circle words whose spelling she was unsure of only in the piece that she produced on February 27, 2008 (see Figure 56, page 252). In this piece Eden circled the two words "guess" and "painting". Eden circled these two words just prior to a writing conference with Mrs. Cook. During the writing conference that occurred between Mrs. Cook and Eden regarding this piece of writing, Mrs. Cook wrote conventional spellings near some of the words that Eden had misspelled. These words were "guess", "elephant", "painting", "with", "didn't", and "know". Mrs. Cook crossed out the final "e" on the word "computer", which Eden recorded as "camputere". Mrs. Cook made no notation near the word "yelled" which Eden had recorded as "yellld". Even though Mrs. Cook edited this piece of writing for Eden, Eden did not feel the need to recopy this piece of writing for final publication.

Eden did not circle words on other pieces as she produced them because she knew that she was recording words well enough to be communicated to her reader without the need for conventional spelling. When Eden shared any of her writing with classmates by showing them what she had written, her classmates were always able to understand her message by reading what Eden had recorded. Because her classmates could successfully read what she had written, Eden felt that the way she recorded words was conventional enough to suffice for the task of telling her story.

Over the course of this study, Eden conventionally wrote 167 different words utilized in the writing that she accomplished during the writing workshop time of her school day. A month by month breakdown of words that Eden wrote conventionally is included as Appendix J at the end of this study. Words are recorded in Appendix J under the month that they first appeared as conventionally spelled words in the writing that she produced during the writing workshop time of her school day.

An analysis of Eden's known writing vocabulary (Appendix J) shows that Eden conventionally recorded 21 words in September, 34 words in October, 18 words in November, 21 words in December, 12 words in January, 36 words in February, and 26 words in March. Table 8 shows the relationship between the number of pieces Eden completed each month compared to the number of conventionally spelled words that appeared in her writing each month.

Month	Number of Pieces Completed	Total Number of Words Written	Number of Words Spelled Conventionally for the First Time
September	2	63	21
October	4	219	34
November	3	152	18
December	2	171	21
January	1	52	12
February	4	187	36
March	2	214	26

Table 8 Eden’s number of completed pieces compared to the total number of words written and the number of conventionally spelled words that appeared for the first time.

The total numbers of words written during a month’s time ranged from a low of 52 in January to a high of 219 in October. The number of words spelled conventionally for the first time ranged from a low of 12 in January to a high of 36 in February. Generally speaking, a relationship seems to have existed between the total number of words written during a month and the number of words spelled conventionally for the first time during a particular month. The increased number of total words written during a month provided the opportunity for more words to be written conventionally for the first time.

Beginning with her first piece of writing composed during the writing workshop portion of the day, Eden showed that she possessed a large personal corpus of high

frequency words that she knew how to spell conventionally. Her first piece of writing dated September 25, 2007 (see Figure 40, page 215) reads, “My dog’s name is Lucky. He is a poodle. He is white as the clouds. He is happy all the time. He is fast as cheetahs. He follows me everywhere in the house.”

In these six sentences, Eden revealed that her understanding of English orthography was already complex. She conventionally spelled “my”, “dog’s”, “is”, “he”, “a”, “as”, “the”, “all”, “time”, “fast”, “me”, and “in”. Eden understood how simple two and three letter words could be recorded by slowly articulating the word, listening for the phonemes, and recording what she was able to hear. This was evidenced in her recording of “he”, “fast”, and “me”. Eden also exhibited evidence that her understanding was much more complex than recording a single letter for a single phoneme heard. Eden knew that some words were not recorded exactly as they are heard. She was aware that some words required that she recall and attend to how the word looked in recorded text in addition to recording the phonemes heard when the word was slowly articulated. This was evidenced in her conventional recording of the words “my”, “is”, “as”, “the”, and “all” which might have otherwise been recorded as “mi”, “iz”, “az”, “thu”, and “ol”. Eden also understood that some letters in conventional spellings are not heard, such as the “e” in “time”.

An analysis of words not conventionally spelled offers an even deeper insight into Eden’s personal understanding of orthography. Eden conventionally recorded all beginning consonants of words and most ending sounds. Eden also understood that some sounds in words required multiple letters to be recorded. For example, Eden wrote “poodle” as “poodl”. She understood and used the double “o” to record the needed vowel sound in the middle of the word. Eden also recorded “clouds” as “clawds” and “house” as

“haws”. Eden sensed that the /ou/ sound in the middle of the words required two letters. She combined the letters “a” and “w” to record the same sound in both words. Eden also recorded “happy” as “happey” and “cheetahs” as “cheydas”. Again, Eden understood that two letters could be used to record the long “e” sound in both words. Eden chose to utilize the “ey” combination as it is conventionally used in words such as “key” and “alley”. Once again, Eden was consistent in her use of the same two letters combining to represent the same sound in each word.

In using the letter “d” to represent the conventionally used “t” in the middle of “cheetah”, Eden recorded the voiced rather than unvoiced sound that is heard in the middle of the word. This recording is explained by Wilde (1997). Both the /t/ and /d/ sounds are formed in the same part of the mouth with the tongue and lips in to same position to create each sound. The sound of /d/ includes the involvement of the vocal chords while the /t/ does not.

In this first piece recorded by Eden, all phonemes in each word were recorded with letters. At no time in this piece of writing did Eden omit a phoneme when recording the words that she wished to write. This included both the recording of vowels and consonants. At no time did Eden’s recording of any phoneme or word that she wrote appear to be a random recording of letters. Rather, each recording of a word was a plausible recording for that word. Eden’s understanding of the orthography of the English language at the beginning of the school year was highly complex. Her comprehension of the nature of that orthographic information became internalized in an increasingly highly complex manner as the school year progressed.

The second piece of writing that Eden produced on September 28, 2007 (see Figure 47, page 230) provided additional insight regarding Eden's personal understanding of English orthography at the beginning of the school year. This piece reads, "My sister is big. Her favorite thing to do is go shopping. She wishes to be rich. She likes fabulous stuff. She bosses me around. But sometimes she is nice."

In this piece, Eden recorded the word "sister" as "sistr" and the word "her" as "hr". It is important to note that Eden heard and recorded all phonemes heard in the word as she slowly articulated and recorded it. Eden did understand that, at times, English orthography required two letters to record a single sound. She had shown evidence of that understanding in her first piece previously discussed when she recorded "clouds" as "clawds" and "house" as "haws". However, the /ou/ sound heard in those words did not correspond to any long or short sound commonly produced by a single vowel. In the words "sister" and "her", the single letter "r" satisfied Eden's need to record the final /r/ sound. However, in recording the word "favorite" as "favorit", Eden did use two letters, "o" and "r" to record the /r/ sound. This recording was a result of her elongation of the long "o" sound as she slowly articulated the word, suggesting her sense of the syllables in the word.

Another interesting recording of sounds occurred in this piece of writing. Eden recorded "shopping" as "choping" and "wish" as "wich". It is unknown why Eden chose to record the /sh/ sound in each word with the letters "c" and "h". She was consistent in that recording of /sh/ throughout this piece of writing. However, in this piece Eden also used the letters "c" and "h" to combine for the /ch/ sound recorded at the end of "rich".

In writing the word “around” in this piece, Eden varied from the use of the “a” and “w” combination she consistently used in her previous piece to record the /ou/ sound. Eden recorded “around” as “araund”. This change showed that Eden was negotiating her personal understanding of how the /ou/ sound could be recorded. The sound, /ou/, can conventionally be recorded with either an “o” and “w” as in “brown”, or with an “o” and “u” and in “about”. In all of her recordings of the /ou/ sound, Eden was thinking of how she had previously seen the sound recorded in text. Instead of using the letter “o” in the sound, Eden consistently recorded the sound beginning with the letter “a”. The letters “o” and “a” are visually similar. Eden had seen the sound recorded with both a “w” and a “u” at the end of the sound. She attempted both combinations in her writing.

Eden’s spellings of other words contained in this piece of writing were phonetic, but showed the extent of her understandings regarding multiple possibilities for recording phonemes. Some substitutions of different letters that at times represent the same sound in the English language did occur. Examples of this were “lics” for “likes” and “sumtims” for “sometimes”.

In Eden’s third piece of writing produced on October 9, 2007 (see Figure 48, page 232), further insight is gained regarding Eden’s understanding of orthography and its relationship to sounds heard while slowly articulating words. In this piece of writing, Eden told of her pet frog. Eden wrote:

My frog stretches his long tongue. He jumps. His favorite food is crickets.
We get the crickets from the pet store. He was a new pet for us to keep. He is greenish brown. He lives in a cage with holes so he can breathe. He is a toad. He

pees when he is afraid. He is afraid of humans. He has brown spots. Toads are afraid of humans. One time he jumped on my cupcake.

Eden recorded “crickets” as “caricits” and “humans” as “heomins”. Because the /k/ sound cannot be elongated, slow articulation of the word “crickets” caused Eden to hear a schwa following the beginning /k/ sound. Eden accounted for the schwa sound that she heard by recording it with the letter “a”. A similar event happened when Eden elongated the word “humans”. Her slow articulation caused a long “e” sound to be inserted into the word following the initial letter “h”. The long “e” that Eden inserted into the word slid into the sound of /oo/ as in “soon”. Eden recorded this sound as a single letter “o”.

As the school year progressed, Eden continued to negotiate her understanding of the conventional English spelling of words that contained double vowels. Her writing in the month of December showed evidence of her ongoing personal navigation of how these words work. On December 2, 2007 (see Figure 44, page 221), Eden’s writing exhibited her understanding at the time. This writing said:

I know a lot about Christmas and Santa. And I like Christmas because Santa gets to give presents. Only if we do not be naughty. I know what Santa looks like! He has a long white beard. And big black boots. And a white and red hat. And a white and red coat. And a red piece of jeans. The reindeer’s called... names Dancer and Prancer and Vixen, Comet and Cupid and Donner and Blitzen. And Rudolph pulls his sleigh. The toys go into the presents. The presents go in the sack. The sack goes on Santa’s back.

Consistent with her recording at the beginning of the school year, Eden recorded “about” as “abawt”. She continued to record the /ou/ sound by combining the letters “a” and “w”. At other times in this piece, she recorded words that conventionally are spelled with two vowel letters with a single vowel. This occurred when she recorded “because” as “becas”, “naughty” as “noty”, “beard” as “berd”, “piece” as “pece”, and “jeans” as “gens”. However, the vowel phoneme heard when articulating each of these words can be represented by a single vowel in the English language. A strictly phonetic recording of the word “because” would have been represented as “becuz”. However, Eden had encountered the word multiple times in written text and sensed something about how the word looked. This probably accounts for her representation of the word as “becas”.

In this same piece, Eden also recorded “coat” as “cowt”. The vowel in this word could have been recorded with the single letter “o”. However, Eden’s choice to record the word as “cowt” again suggested that, having seen the word previously in print, Eden realized that the conventional recording of the long “o” sound in this word required two letters. The letters “o” and “w” do at times combine to form the long “o” sound. An example is the word, “snow”. Eden’s experimenting with the two-letter combination in the word was evidence of the personal negotiation she was undergoing in her understanding of English orthography. However, another possibility is that if Eden elongated the word in her mind while spelling it, she may have said, “coooooowwwwt” using the actual sound of /w/ as in “with”. This may be another accounting of her spelling. Either way, Eden was developing and constantly testing theories about the relationships between written and oral language.

In addition the afore mentioned invented spellings, Eden also conventionally spelled some words that also evidenced her developing complex understanding of orthography. These included words such as “know” with its silent “k” at the beginning and the “ow” combination to represent the long “o” sound at the end. Eden also conventionally spelled both “looks” and “boots”, showing and understanding that the double “o” can represent two different sounds. The conventional spelling of “black” and “sack” evidenced her understanding of the “ck” combination that can represent the /k/ sound.

A close examination of Eden’s final piece of writing produced on March 31, 2008 (see Figure 46, page 226) revealed that Eden continued to evolve in her understanding of conventional English orthography. This piece read:

When I went to San Antonio I went to Sea World! It’s so fun at Sea World! When I went to Sea World I went to the Shamu Theater. It was so fun over there. And then I went on the Journey to Atlantis! It was so fun. First you get on a boat and it would just go up the hill. And we go turning and then we go down the hill backwards. And then we turn again. And then we go down the hill. Only the back of the boat gets wet. And then we go to the Steel Eel. The first time I looked at it it kind of looked scary. But it wasn’t scary it was fun. When we go down we go floating. But when we go up the wind pushes our hands down. It was pretty much fun. More funner than the Journey to Atlantis. But guess what. My sister gets to ride the Great White. It’s the scariest roller coaster ever. It’s the roller coaster when you go upside down. I wish that you would come with me. It’s too fun at Sea World.

In the first three sentences of this piece, Eden recorded “world” as “werld”, “wrld”, and “world”. In the space of a very short amount of time, Eden experimented with three different possible recordings for the same word. All were recordings that represented each phoneme articulated when the word was spoken. It is interesting to note that Eden settled on her last version written during this experimentation at the beginning of her piece of writing when she wrote “world” in the last sentence of this piece.

In this same piece, Eden recorded “went” as both “whent” and “went”. Eden used the word five times in this piece of writing. The first two times that she wrote the word, she recorded it conventionally as “went”. The last three times the word is written, it is recorded as “whent”. Again both recordings are possible in the English language, demonstrating the tentative nature of spelling development.

By this time of the school year, Eden had firmed up her understanding that two letters, the “e” and “r”, could be combined to record the /r/ sound. Her conventional recordings of “theater”, “over”, “sister”, and “ever” as well as her nonconventional recordings of “gerny” and “gernye” for “journey” as well as “skery” for “scary” evidenced this understanding. However, Eden had developed an even deeper understanding of flexibility in the use of two letters to record the single phoneme /r/ in her writing. This was evidenced not only by her earlier discussed experimentation with “world”, but also by her conventional recording of “first”, and “turning” and her invented spelling of “backwards” as “backwurds”.

At this time in the school year, Eden was continuing her negotiation of two vowels combining to record a single sound. This was seen in her recording of the word “boat”. Eden used this word twice in this piece of writing. The first time she recorded it

as “bout”. The second time Eden wrote it, she recorded it as “boat”. Eden also used the word “down” multiple times in this story. The first two times that she wrote the word, she recorded it as “daon”. Her choice of the letters “a” and “o” to record the /ou/ sound was a result of elongating of the center phoneme and splitting the sound into two vowels as she slowly articulated the word. Her third recording was written as “bown”, a conventional spelling but with a b/d reversal. The final two times that Eden wrote “down” in this piece of writing, it was spelled conventionally. Again, her multiple use of the same word in this single piece of writing and her multiple experimentations of its spelling provided an insight into how Eden was negotiating her personal understanding of how the word might be recorded.

By the time Eden completed this last piece of writing that was collected for this study, she had solidified many of her personal understandings regarding orthography of the English language. She understood that often there was a relationship between phonemes heard when articulating words to the letters and letter combinations used in recording those phonemes. She also understood that there were multiple possibilities that were possible in recording some phonemes. She knew that English orthography required flexibility by the writer because the same sound is at times recorded differently in different words. Eden further understood that the orthography for other words must simply be known and recorded as the word looks, not merely written as the word was sounded.

Eden also understood the need for consistency in how words were recorded. Even as Eden experimented with the ways that various words were recorded, her recording those words displayed certain consistencies and reasonable regularities within her

individual pieces of writing. At times, nearing the end of the time that data was collected for this study, Eden would experiment with the orthography of a specific word multiple times during a single piece of writing. However, the changes that occurred with a single word within a single piece of writing showed consistency as her spelling of the word evolved within that single piece of writing.

For example, in this final piece, Eden's recordings of "world" varied slightly at the beginning of the piece as she flexibly negotiated the recording of the word. Once that evolution resulted in recording the word as "world", she retained that same spelling the next time that she recorded the word. It was the same with the word "down". Eden experimented with the recording of the word. Her spelling of the word the first two times that it was used remained consistent. Not satisfied with what she had written, she then negotiated and changed the way she recorded that same word within the same piece of writing and stayed with her changed way of recording the word throughout the remainder of her piece of writing.

Summary

Eden entered her first grade year of school already understanding many of the basic concepts of reading and writing. Eden understood that the primary purpose of text, in both reading and writing, was for the author to convey meaning to the reader. In addition, Eden began her first grade year of schooling already understanding many basic concepts about the printed language. She understood the concepts of both letters and words in reading and writing. In both reading and writing, Eden understood that letters combined to form words. She knew that the space left between words served an important purpose in aiding the conveyance of the written message to the reader. Eden

further realized that, in English, reading and writing occurred in a left to right sequence with a return sweep to the left. She also understood that reading and writing occurred beginning at the top of the page and then moved progressively to the bottom of the page.

In reading, Eden understood that it was her task to search for meaning as she read. In order to accomplish this, she utilized multiple sources of information. First and foremost, Eden searched to make meaning from what the author had written in the text. In addition, Eden also searched her understanding of the syntax of the English language and her knowledge of the visual information used to record the print.

In recording a message in writing, Eden used these same sources of information. First and foremost, Eden had a message that she wished to convey to her reader. In order to convey this message, Eden used what she knew about the syntax of the English language and the visual information needed to record that message. Included within these sources of information, Eden experimented with and incorporated the use of dialogue, punctuation, use of upper and lower case letters, and English orthography. These were tools that Eden played with in order to use them to more fully convey her message to her reader.

In her first pieces of writing composed at the beginning of the school year, Eden utilized sophisticated stylistic techniques, such as similes, that were not explicitly taught in her classroom. Rather, Eden learned these techniques through hearing them and seeing them in books either read to her or by her. She then experimented with their use in her writing. She did not need to be explicitly taught about them in order to incorporate them into her writing.

Eden also learned other important items regarding writing from reading. These included focusing on a specific topic and including details to make the writing interesting to the reader. While Mrs. Cook's daily modeling of writing did exemplify these two important items, they were not the specific focus of her teaching at the beginning of the school year. At the beginning of the school year, Mrs. Cook focused primarily on basic mechanics of writing such as leaving adequate space between words, writing left to right across the page with a return sweep to the right, beginning sentences with upper case letters and ending them with punctuation.

Without receiving explicit instruction regarding remaining on the specific topic of her writing and adding details to make her writing interesting to her reader, Eden understood that these two items were critical in writing. Eden understood this because she had learned this from reading books and being read to. She knew that an author's primary purpose in writing was to convey a message to the reader. She knew that conveying a message required that she focus on that message while writing and also support that message with details about her topic.

Over the course of the school year, Eden realized that she had much to tell her reader. As a result, Eden's written stories became longer as the school year progressed. She included more details by elaborating and telling more about the event she was describing. Eden never focused on specifically making her stories longer. She did not specifically perceive that writing a longer story made it a better story. Instead, the longer stories were a natural result of realizing that she had more that she wanted to tell her reader. Her natural excitement of what she needed to convey to her reader, combined

with the greater fluency with which she wrote, became the driving force of including more information in her writing.

Eden began the school year already understanding some of the conventions that Mrs. Cook focused on in her modeling for the class at the beginning of the school year. Eden understood the concept of a sentence as a group of words that conveyed a complete thought. Her sentences contained a subject and verb along with the necessary modifiers. She also understood that the first word of the story began with an upper case letter and that punctuation needed to be placed at the end of each sentence.

As the school year progressed, Eden's writing showed evidence that she gained additional understanding regarding the sentence unit. She learned that a sentence could wrap to the next line of her writing if she needed more space. She learned that a new sentence could begin on the same line as the sentence that preceded it, if space permitted.

Eden's incorporation of new understandings of specific concepts into her writing did not occur all at once. Rather, Eden observed what was being modeled by Mrs. Cook and how authors implemented these same concepts into the written works she read. Over time, Eden would negotiate her own personal understanding of what she was noticing and how that new understanding would be incorporated into her personal writing. This negotiation evidenced itself as a "back and forth" process within Eden.

For example, when Eden first began negotiating the idea that a new sentence could be started on the same line as the sentence that immediately preceded it in her writing, she was not consistent in applying this new information to her writing. At first, she incorporated this into her writing of a single sentence in a piece. Later, she would incorporate this understanding into the writing that occurred on the front of her writing

paper, but revert to beginning each new sentence on a new line once her writing continued onto the backside of her writing paper.

It was noticeable that when Eden's excitement and emotions became heightened as she wrote, Eden again reverted back to her previous style of beginning each new sentence on a new line of writing. Her need to record and convey her message during these times of high emotion overrode her personal need to attend to conventional details about which she was learning.

Even after a long period of time of beginning to record a new sentence on the same line as the previously written sentence, Eden returned to beginning a new sentence on a new line for a short time. Her rate of incorporating this new understanding into her writing was not a simple question of whether she learned the information or not. It was a more complex matter in which Eden showed the circumstances under which she could implement the new learning and that the new learning could be dropped from immediate use under circumstances when something else, such as conveying her emotion to her audience, became more important to Eden.

Such was also the case in Eden's use of both the apostrophe and upper case letters. Eden showed evidence that she developed an understanding of the use of an apostrophe to show possession, often placing it prior to a final "s" added to a word to show possession. However, she at times over-generalized that understanding and placed apostrophes prior to the final "s" on some words that had a final "s" added to denote plurality.

Eden entered first grade showing that she understood that names of people were to be written with upper case letters. She had been shown this at home with the writing of

her own and other family member's names. At school, each child's name, neatly written my Mrs. Cook, was taped to the top of that child's desk. Children's names also appeared on various charts and other locations on the walls of the school environment.

Eden did not yet understand that other proper nouns such as the names of pets were capitalized. However, she had not yet had the opportunity to see the names of her pets in writing. Eden did observe the names of pets written with a beginning capital letter in the guided reading text that she encountered in small group guided reading instruction with Mrs. Cook. However, she had not yet noticed this particular detail of print enough to incorporate it into her personal writing. At the beginning of the school year, Eden successfully conveyed her written message about her pets without a need to have the pet's name capitalized.

Eden experimented with the use of forms of punctuation that had not yet been formally and explicitly introduced to her in an instructional setting. Instead, she noticed on her own that authors used punctuation as a support to the conveyance of their message. She experimented with the use of some forms of punctuation, such as the ellipsis, that Mrs. Cook never discussed over the course of the year's writing instruction. Eden noticed how authors used punctuation and played with that use in her own writing. Although Eden was never specifically told how an ellipsis is used conventionally, her intuited understanding of how to use the ellipsis based on her observations proved to be accurate.

Through the course of the school year, Eden continued to develop a complex understanding some of the conventions of writing. However, not all of these understandings were through the use of direct and systematic instruction. In addition,

Eden's incorporation of new understandings of the conventions involved in the recording of a written message were incorporated as their use strengthened her ability to convey a message to her audience. Such was the case with the use of dialogue in her writing.

Chapter IX

Cross-Case Analyses

In the previous three chapters, three case studies of emerging literacy learners were presented. Each case study discussed the child's view of what constituted a written composition and how that view changed over time as the child encountered leveled text of increasing difficulty during guided reading instruction. The discussion included how each emerging literacy learner's use of orthography in recording written language changed over time as that child encountered text of increasing difficulty and containing more complex orthography during guided reading instruction. The relationships between literary language encountered by the proficient emerging literacy learner in reading and the corresponding literary language used in writing were also addressed. In this section, I briefly review the individual case studies and address commonalities between the three research participants, as well as the characteristics unique to each student.

Common Understandings

The students involved in this research were three students who, on the surface, had very much in common. They were three students in the same classroom. Each was considered to be an average first grade student. Each read the same books during their guided reading instruction. Each heard the same words as their teacher read books aloud and as the teacher instructed the classroom daily. Additionally, the home lives of the three participants shared similarities. Each was raised in a home with parent(s) or a guardian who was college educated. Each lived in a home where education was valued and where the student received needed educational support and encouragement. Each

child received support each evening in completing the daily reading and writing homework assignments. Each student experienced additional opportunities to read and write outside of the classroom.

In addition, observation of these students as they engaged in literacy activities revealed some understandings these students held in common at the beginning of the school year. Each student understood that the purpose of written text in both reading and writing was to communicate an intended message to the reader. In reading, each student understood that their individual task as a reader was to receive and interpret the message of the author. In writing, each student produced text with the intention of conveying information to their reader. Each student, as a writer, used the written text as a tool to convey information about topics important to themselves. All three students wrote about topics to which they held close, emotional attachments. All three students began the school year by introducing their readers to members of their family and continued throughout the school year to share memorable experiences from their family and personal life with their readers.

Another characteristic common to all three participants in the research was that each of the three students began the school year by producing texts that exceeded the complexity of the texts that they were capable of reading in their guided reading groups. The participants began the school year reading at a DRA text range of level 3-4. The DRA level 3-4 texts encountered in the fall by these students were characterized by repetitive language on each page and highly supportive illustrations that showed a picture of the specific noun mentioned on the corresponding page. As described by Peterson (1991), text at this level:

presents a complete message or story that is likely to reflect the experiences of knowledge common to many beginning readers. The language of books at [this level] reflects primarily the syntax and organization of young children's speech. Sentences and books themselves are comparatively short. The print of the text is carefully laid out so that it consistently appears on the same place on the page throughout each book. (p. 129)

The stories that all three students produced in the fall of the school year did reflect their personal experiences and were often about family members who were important to them. Their stories also followed the oral language patterns of the students' speech. However, at no time did the stories these students composed contain sentences of repetitive language. While Eden did begin the school year by composing sentences in her writing that had each individual sentence written on a separate line of her writing paper, Michael and Gracie did not. Beginning with the first story written, the language used by the young writers was more complex than the language they encountered in their guided reading sessions. Most written stories were illustrated by the student, but no illustration carried the complete main idea of message of the story being conveyed.

All three students demonstrated through their writing that they were capable of expressing themselves through text that was more complex in structure than what they were being exposed to during their guided reading block of time. The question then must be asked regarding whether these students were, in fact, being held back in their learning to read by the texts they were being asked to read during the guided reading block of time. Each of the three students studied in this research possessed extensive understanding of the alphabetic relationships used in hearing and recording sounds as

they wrote. They also demonstrated understanding that the purpose of printed text is to convey a message to the reader. Their oral language used to develop their thoughts into ideas to place on paper was not repetitious in nature. Perhaps, these students would have been better served in the guided reading portion of their literacy acquisition instruction by allowing them to interact with reading texts from the beginning of the school year that aligned with their specific interests and utilized text structures that more closely aligned with the oral language structures that these students demonstrated as they each produced written text.

Differences in Style and Approach to Literacy Learning

Close examination of the three participants as readers and writers, however, revealed significant differences in each literacy learner's fundamental view of the purpose of reading and writing.

Michael.

For Michael, the processes of learning to read and write were exemplified by compliance. In reading, Michael approached text with the philosophy that each word should be read correctly. Oral reading was, for Michael, a performance in accuracy. Enjoyment, personal interest, or interaction with the written text was not exhibited through soft giggles or smiles at things he found interesting. His goal and personal satisfaction came from showing his teacher and fellow classmates that he understood how to accurately read each word.

In writing, Michael worked diligently on each piece that he produced. During the time that Michael spent in literacy centers during the guided reading block of the school day, he was observed completing the literacy activity assigned by his teacher with an

attitude of repeated drills. In the listening center, Michael quickly put on his earphones, listened to a story, and rapidly made the required entry into his literacy log. In the “making words” center, Michael rapidly manipulated letter cards to form three to four letter words and immediately recorded the words into his log. The practice of his spelling words was characterized by routinely going through the motions of quickly writing each spelling word on a small, lap-sized chalkboard. Little attention was paid to each word as it was written. In fact, at times the words were produced by his hand as his eyes gazed elsewhere around the classroom. After one word was written five times, it was quickly erased so that the next word could be recorded. Michael aimed to see how many words could be recorded within the allotted time. He attacked each activity with a militaristic routine drill. He believed that his speed at any task as well as the number of repetitions completed exemplified his increasing mastery of the task at hand.

Each designated writing time in the classroom was the beginning of a new exercise of writing for Michael. Just as Michael believed that consistent and diligent practice made him a better hockey player, he also believed that daily compliance in the writing act would make him a better writer. Michael obediently followed his teacher’s instructions regarding writing. He daily interacted with the writing process, not with excitement of a story to tell, but rather with the same diligence that he performed drills in the hockey rink. He believed that dedicated repetition of the drill of writing would make him a better writer. In some aspects and by some standards, that philosophy reaped rewards. In Michael’s mind, the production of more sentences and longer written pieces represented his becoming a better writer. As the school year progressed, Michael succeeded at this goal.

Over time, Michael developed fluency in the writing process. Through daily practice and writing activity, he developed a sense of a story that could be mentally planned and recorded within the time constraints of the daily block of writing time allotted by his teacher during the writing part of the writing workshop portion of the school day. Not only was he able to incorporate more material into his stories, he was also able to record those stories more quickly because the amount of time he needed to devote to the formation of individual letters and words decreased. He had more story to tell and he was able to record that story faster as the school year progressed. Michael viewed his longer stories or the completion of multiple stories in a single writing workshop allotment of time as evidence of his becoming a better writer over the course of the school year.

Michael would have greatly benefited from the inclusion of guided reading texts on topics that were of high interest to him. This would have helped him to discover that literacy can be exciting and interesting, not merely an exercise to be practice repetitively until the skill is mastered. Michael needed to encounter texts on topics that would excite him and leave him wanting to interact with texts more often and more deeply. Michael needed texts that would stimulate him and create an enthusiasm for text in his mind as he read them, leaving him with a desire to either learn more on an interesting topic or cause him to think more deeply about characters or events in the story. He needed to interact with others, either peers or his teacher, in conversations that would deepen his personal understandings and wonderings about what he had read. Michael needed to interact with text in a way that would help construct his understanding that interacting with text, both

in what he read and in what he produced, held much more information and excitement than what was merely at the surface level of the writing.

Gracie.

In contrast to Michael, for Gracie, reading and writing were both social activities. Gracie's most important purpose in reading and writing was in the amount of time these activities allowed her to interact with her teacher and classmates. In discussions that Gracie had with her teacher throughout the school year regarding reading, Gracie continually emphasized the social role that reading played in her life. Gracie told her teacher that she preferred to read in groups because reading in a group prevented her from being lonely. Gracie further explained to her teacher that she enjoyed reading with her family, her classmates, and her teacher.

During guided reading instruction, Gracie openly marveled at information learned in non-fiction texts and giggled at amusing story lines. These giggles were accompanied by audible gasps of surprise and elbow prods to classmates aimed at eliciting a response from those around her. Gracie's primary purpose in reading was to share information and pleasant interactions regarding the text with those around her.

Throughout the course of the school year, Gracie continually exhibited a desire to interact with classmates as she engaged in literacy activities. While rotating through literacy centers while Mrs. Cook met with other students in guided reading groups, Gracie always looked for opportunities to interact with others. In the listening center, she often stopped in the middle of a story to share either the storyline or an exciting event from the story with a classmate. In the spelling center, each recording of a word was followed by a nudge to a classmate in order to share what she had completed. In the

“making words” center, her list of words created was shared with classmates. At times, this sharing included an “amazing” word she created. At other times, the “incredible” length of the list of words she created was shared.

In writing, Gracie enjoyed sharing her stories with classmates. This occurred on a daily basis as Gracie began the time allotted for writing by sharing writing from a previous day with classmates. She delighted in making other students smile and/or comment on the story she was telling. She was also eager to share her writing during the class sharing time that concluded each writing workshop block of time. When selected to share what she had composed during that day’s writing time, Gracie grinned constantly as she read. Between each sentence, she scanned the classmates’ faces for looks of pleasure and enjoyment of what she had produced. On days when Gracie was not selected to share her writing with the class, she sat with shoulders hunched forward and a frown upon her face as other classmates shared their work.

Because Gracie viewed writing as a social activity whose main purpose was to elicit a response from classmates, she included more emotional statements in her writing as the school year progressed. Gracie learned to portray emotion through the use of dialogue and the inclusion of multiple events surrounding her story. The inclusion of this emotion resulted in her writing emanating with more sense of her personal writer’s voice than what Michael’s writing contained. Unlike Michael, Gracie did not view a longer story as necessarily a better story. Some of Gracie’s stories required more writing to tell the story. Some required less. She did not view her stories as completed just because the daily allotted time for writing ended. In fact, Gracie’s writing was rarely completed at the end of the allotted writing time. The length of Gracie’s stories depended on the amount of

space needed to complete her personal narrative. Gracie's main goal seemed not to be the completion of a written story. Instead, she primarily wanted to share exciting news and events with her reader and/or with classmates as the story was being written. Unlike Michael, Gracie's writing of a single story continued over the course of several days and during those several days, she shared multiple tidbits of the story to anyone with an ear willing to listen.

Gracie understood that text, whether in reading or in writing, served a greater purpose than the surface level of information contained in the print. Gracie wanted to arrive at deeper levels of understanding that she innately understood, even without explicit instruction, could come from conversations with others regarding information she encountered in books. She made an emotional connection when she interacted with print. Like Michael, the repetitive texts used by Mrs. Cook in guided reading at the beginning of the school year did not support Gracie's emerging need for text to serve a greater purpose than what existed at the surface level of the print. Gracie demonstrated through her early writing that, like Michael, she was capable of producing text that was more complex in nature than that she was being asked to read during her guided reading instruction. Rather than discourage her need for social interaction regarding text, this need should be supported by the teacher through selection of texts beginning at the start of the school year that would provide Gracie with the opportunity to explore deeper levels of comprehension of texts read. Through conversations with her peers and with guidance from her classroom teacher, Gracie could learn effective ways to share personal thoughts regarding text read in guided reading and texts produced in writing. Gracie could be guided to respect and allow comments from her classmates regarding their

personal understandings of text. She also could come to understand that as an author she could choose to either incorporate the opinions of others (either in part or as a whole) or to reject (with respect) others' opinions and maintain her own.

Eden.

Eden was, first and foremost, an artist. For Eden, reading and writing were extensions of her artwork. Even as a preschooler, Eden's enjoyment of books centered on studying the artwork they contained. Illustrations in books continued to fascinate Eden throughout her time in first grade. When she began producing written text during writing workshop, Eden primarily focused on the illustration, including minute details in her pictures. At times, Eden worked on her illustration for multiple days prior to her beginning the written part of the story. For Eden, the illustrations she completed prior to beginning writing served as a type of graphic organizer or pre-planner for her writing. Her writing then emanated from and further supported her drawings. When Eden's classroom teacher felt that her illustrations were taking up too much of her writing time, Eden abandoned the illustrations. Even without the illustrations being drawn first, Eden continued to develop in her ability to write stories. By the time she was forced to abandon the use of her complex illustrations, Eden had become sophisticated enough in her writing ability to not rely on the drawing of the illustration as her primary planning tool.

From her earliest pieces written in the fall of the school year, Eden's writing was much more complex than what she encountered during the same time in her guided reading lessons. Her first writings included descriptive similes as she described her dog being "white as the clouds" and "fast as cheetahs". Eden included these similes in her writing even though she had received no formal instruction in her classroom regarding

their use. Eden's oral language at this time did not incorporate the use of similes. The same attention to detail that Eden gave to her drawings served her well as she noticed the craft authors utilized in books she read independently as well as those she listened to aurally. Like Michael and Gracie, Eden's early writing included more details about her topic than what was included in her guided reading materials in the fall of the school year. She understood when background information would help her reader better understand her story and she included that necessary background information. Such was the case when Eden explained to her reader why it was important that her grandfather's horse not be scrapped from the race for having a loosened horseshoe (see Figure 41, page 217).

Throughout the school year, Eden continued to incorporate author's craft that she discovered in books she either read independently or that someone read aloud to her. This included the use of additional similes, onomatopoeia, and word repetition.

Generally speaking, Eden's written pieces did become longer as the school year progressed. However, these longer stories did not result from a personal understanding that a longer story was a better story. Rather, the longer stories were a result of Eden's realization over the course of the school year that she had more information that she wished to convey to her reader. Like Gracie, Eden knew she had a story to tell. Eden viewed her stories as ended when she had told the reader all that needed to be said. Sometimes that writing required several days of work. However, some stories could be completed in a smaller amount of time.

Like both of the other two research participants, Eden produced text in writing at the beginning of the school year that was more complex than the text she was asked to

read at the same time during guided reading instruction. From her first written piece produced in Mrs. Cook's classroom, Eden incorporated sophisticated author's craft that she discovered elsewhere in written text. Asking Eden to read simple repetitive text during guided reading failed to capitalize on her attention to detail that served her well in both her artistic illustrations and her production of written text. Requiring Eden to read simple repetitive texts when she was capable of producing and reading more complex texts failed to capitalize on Eden's strengths as a literacy learner. Had Eden been encouraged to engage in deeper level conversations with her teacher and peers surrounding more complex text in guided reading, her contribution to that conversation could have been discussion surrounding the details and examples of author's craft that she apparently discovered more readily than her peers.

Orthography

All three participants in this research study came into their first grade year of school with highly complex understandings of the orthography of the English language. Each of the three students entered the first grade with a personal corpus of words they already knew how to spell conventionally and other understandings of how meaning is put to paper (use of white space, etc.). Their personal corpus of words included some high frequency words such as "is", "my", and "to" as well as words that were of personal interest to each student such as names of family members and pets. While each student had a personal bank of known words, the specific words that were known to each student was unique to that student.

Each of the three students understood that some two and three letter words in the English language could be recorded by slowly articulating the word and recording what

they heard. Examples of these words included “big”, “dog”, and “he”. Each student also understood at the beginning of the school year that some words could not be recorded conventionally by this same method. The spelling of some words such as “is”, “my”, and “to” simply had to be known. They could not be recorded with direct sound to letter correlations as they were slowly articulated. All three students could hear and record dominant consonant sounds at the beginning and ending of words. Vowels, however, were a bit trickier for all three students. The three students each entered first grade understanding that there were multiple ways of recording a single sound. For example, each knew that the sound /k/ could be recorded with either a letter “k” or “c”. Each student also did not consistently hear the difference between voiced and unvoiced sounds. For example, the sound /t/ located in the middle of a word was often recorded as /d/.

There were also some characteristics that were common to two, but not to all three participants. Michael and Eden both exhibited an understanding that all words needed to contain at least one vowel. At the beginning of the school year, Gracie occasionally recorded some words without the use of any vowels. Gracie showed an understanding at the beginning of the school year that two letters could combine to record a single phoneme, such as the “c” and “k” in “black”. Neither Michael nor Eden exhibited that understanding early in the school year.

Throughout the course of time that the data for this research study was collected, all three students experimented with patterns of orthography utilized in the written English language. This was particularly true of “r” controlled vowels and digraphs. The three students did not necessarily negotiate the spellings of the same particular words or even the same particular spelling patterns throughout the course of the school year.

Rather, the specific words and spelling patterns experimented with over the time that data was collected for this study varied according to the specific message each student wished to convey to his/her reader.

Relationships between literary language encountered in guided reading and literary language utilized in writing

Earlier, I defined literary language as written language utilized in text in a way that differs from speech patterns encountered in oral language. Each of the three students in this research study incorporated literary language into their written texts in different ways. Michael utilized a sentence fragment in order to emphasize the point that he wished to make. Michael wrote about playing with his younger brother. He stated that his brother had fun, and then for emphasis wrote his last sentence as a fragment, "Super fun". Michael utilized this writing technique five months prior to encountering the same technique in one of his guided reading texts. It was not until March of 2008 that Michael encountered this same author's craft utilized in one of his guided reading texts, *Candlelight*, (Randell, 1996, p. 5). *Candlelight* (Randell, 1996) utilized the same technique when it stated, "No one had a light on. No one." It is not certain where Michael first encountered this specific type of author's craft or if, in fact, it was a specific craft that Michael was aware that he was implementing. Michael may have been recording a phrase used in his personal oral language. He may have also encountered the craft during his independent reading or from books that he heard read aloud by others.

Gracie's first incorporation of literary language into her writing occurred in December. Gracie stated that Santa Claus said, "Ho, Ho, Ho!" Gracie did not include quotation marks in writing her dialogue. However, dialogue was something Gracie had

encountered multiple times in reading prior to her use of it in her writing. She had encountered dialogue in her guided reading text, as well as in books she read independently and books that were read to her. In this same piece, Gracie's sentence following the use of dialogue was, "One day it was Christmas." Beginning this sentence with the words "One day" was also an incorporation of literary language.

An analysis of the text Gracie encountered during guided reading showed that none of the texts read during that time began a sentence with "One day". Gracie had, however, encountered this particular literacy language in books that were read aloud to the classroom.

In the piece that Gracie wrote on February 11, 2008 (see Figure 32, page 169), Gracie began the written piece by making a statement and then asking a question. Gracie wrote, "When Angel got sick, it was a disaster. Do you know what happened?" This beginning of the piece that she wrote about her fish was a deliberate act of craft on Gracie's part. Just prior to Gracie's writing this piece, Mrs. Cook had provided a mini-lesson on writing leads that enticed the reader to want to read more of the story. In this particular mini-lesson, Mrs. Cook shared just the beginning one or two sentences from several picture books showing the students different ways that authors used to introduce stories and make their reader want to read on. One of these examples was the use of a question placed at the beginning of the story. This was the specific technique that Gracie opted to use at the beginning of the story she was currently working on at the time. Because Gracie began this particular piece of writing by incorporating a question immediately after Mrs. Cook utilized that specific example in her daily mini-lesson, it is easier to assume that Gracie incorporated this technique as a direct result of Mrs. Cook's

modeling. While an examination of the text Gracie encountered in guided reading showed that none of those stories began by asking a question of the reader, it is not possible to state that the mini-lesson was the sole reason Gracie opted to incorporate the use of a question as a lead into her story. Gracie might have also previously encountered this specific craft in books she read independently as well as in books that she heard read aloud.

Later that same month, Gracie again incorporated questions into her written work. In the piece that Gracie produced on February 27, 2008, (see Figure 33, page 171), Gracie again utilized a question as a lead into her story. This time she asked the reader, “Do you know what is going on?” Later in the same story, Gracie again spoke directly to her audience by asking, “How about you?” Perhaps because of the social role that played such a large part in Gracie’s writing, she felt the need to keep the attention of her audience by speaking directly to them and at times to pose a question to ensure that the audience was still actively engaged with the story as she related it.

Of the three research participants, Eden was the one who incorporated literary language into her writing the most. In the first piece of writing that Eden produced in the first-grade classroom, she incorporated the use of similes to describe her dog (see Figure 40, page 215), stating that he was “white as the clouds” and “fast as cheetahs”. The use of similes appear again in her writing in November (see Figure 43, page 220) when she described her father’s balding hair style as looking like a horseshoe, and yet again in February when she described a penguin as being as tall as a first-grader.

Eden also incorporated dialogue into her writing early in the school year. In her piece produced on October 18 (see Figure 50, page 235), Eden states that her mother

called her “skinny rabbit”. Like Gracie, Eden did not use quotation marks to designate the spoken words when dialogue first appeared in her writing. However, Eden did experiment with quotation marks in a piece produced later that same month (see Figure 41, page 217). In that piece she placed the quotation marks around the words “said go”. While their use was not conventional, their placement was an excellent approximation. Eden continued to experiment with the use of dialogue throughout the school year. Of the three research participants, only Gracie and Eden experimented with the use of dialogue and Eden was the only student to experiment with quotation marks.

In February, Eden played with onomatopoeia and word repetition to drive home the point she was making with her reader. In the piece dated February 22, 2008 (see Figure 45, page 224), she ended her informational piece on the human heart by stating, “My heart pumps blood. Pump, pump, pump, pump.” Again this was not something Eden encountered in her guided reading text. It was a technique she encountered in books read aloud by the teacher and books she read independently. Eden was the only research participant that incorporated the use of similes, onomatopoeia, and word repetition in her writing.

Important to note at this point is that, while literary language was the focal point of this specific research question, important curriculum issues came to the researcher’s attention while observing the way guided reading occurred in the classroom. These issues were most obvious regarding the text used and the way that guided reading was delivered to proficient students at the beginning of the school year. The students in this research study all produced text at the beginning of the school year that exceeded in complexity the text they were being asked to read during their guided reading instruction. If these

students were producing text of a more complex nature, then it follows that they were capable of the anticipation and prediction necessary to read text of a comparable complexity to that which they were able to produce. In essence, the guided reading texts selected by the teacher for these students to read may have been actually hindering the reading progression of these students.

Alternatives need to be explored regarding the selection of text for proficient literacy learners at the beginning of their first-grade year of school. Such alternatives might include student selection of text based on topics of interest to the student. Mrs. Cook's same style of presenting a mini-lesson at the beginning of the guided reading group and then listening in to individual students as they read portions of their guided reading text would still be appropriate and doable. If the teacher is listening to individual students read passages of their text while other students are reading their different texts, the same important instructional information can still be gleaned by the teacher.

Other alternatives for student grouping during their guided reading instruction also might be implemented. Such alternatives could be grouping students together based on an interest in a common topic, rather than specific reading ability grouping. Students might be able to read above their tested ability level of reading when reading a text that they are greatly motivated to read. Yet another form of grouping might include placing students together who, though at various reading levels, might share the same need for a specific topic during the mini-lesson. Again, these individual students might not all be reading the same text. The specific topic addressed during the mini-lesson could be practiced by each individual student as they read different books at different levels of reading ability.

Insights Gleaned

Analysis of these three case studies of average first grade literacy learners provided insight that they are three very different types of writers motivated by different intrinsic reasons for writing. In these specific cases, those reasons included militaristic compliance, social networking, and an extension of artistic endeavors. None of these three purposes in writing came from their literacy instruction in guided reading. None of these three purposes mimicked the classroom teacher's style of instruction. Rather, each style of writing came from within the individual student. Each of these three writers utilized their individual writing as a time for self-expression. During these moments of self-expression, those things that defined each student as an individual manifested themselves. These individual personalities were identities that had been constructed by each child and within each child prior to their entry into the first-grade classroom. They were, at the same time, expressing and developing their literacy identities, not just within the confines of the classroom, but simultaneously intertwining them with identities that had been years in the making.

In this particular classroom, the teacher did not specifically instruct in a manner geared to promoting these individualities to emerge. In meeting the demands of a classroom of students, she was only superficially aware of the emergence of these individual purposes of writing. Mrs. Cook did know that Michael played hockey, but she did not realize how his literacy performance in the classroom mimicked the same behaviors that reaped benefits for him in hockey practices and competitions. Mrs. Cook described Gracie as a social butterfly. However, she did not realize how much of Gracie's personal identity relied on sharing information and receiving positive social feedback in

return from her peers. Mrs. Cook was also amazed at Eden's artistic talents, but she did not realize how much importance Eden placed on her artwork and how she relied on that very artwork for the plan of what she would later write. In fact, while Mrs. Cook never reprimanded Michael for his compliant behavior in the classroom, she did regularly scold Gracie for talking and eventually forbade Eden from drawing illustrations prior to beginning her writing sessions. Mrs. Cook viewed both the talking and the artwork as detractors that kept Gracie and Eden from accomplishing more writing during the writing part of writing workshop.

Interestingly, while Mrs. Cook did not scold Michael for his compliance, neither did she view the writing he produced as stellar. While Michael was self-monitoring his writing behavior and time on task in a way that suited Mrs. Cook, those same behaviors did not result in stories that captured his teacher's attention. Gracie, on the other hand, was often reminded that she was talking a bit too much. However, Gracie's stories often brought a smile to her teacher's lips. It seems a bit ironic that the social behaviors that supported Gracie during her personal writing time and helped her to produce stories that her teacher enjoyed, were the same social behaviors that her teacher at times attempted to stifle.

The same was true of Eden. Mrs. Cook enjoyed the stories that Eden produced and marveled at the illustrations that accompanied them. However, at the same time Mrs. Cook came to feel that the time Eden spent creating elaborate illustrations interfered with the quality use of time Eden spent actually writing the story. While Mrs. Cook was impressed with Eden's artistic ability, she failed to understand how much Eden relied on her artistic creations as the basis for the story that she later wrote. Mrs. Cook viewed

Eden's drawing and her writing as two separate entities. However, for Eden those two processes were not just connected, but were intertwined. Eden's stories emanated from her drawings. In some way, the process of creating the illustration and the minute details incorporated into those drawings became Eden's plan from which her later story emanated. Even though Mrs. Cook explained to Eden that she was welcome to draw the illustrations after having completed a story, Eden never did. For Eden, there was no reason to create an illustration once the story had been completed. That would have been tantamount to filling in a graphic organizer or creating an outline after the story had been written. At that point in time, there was no need for the Eden to create an illustration.

Perhaps the largest irony of all, however, was that it was the way that Mrs. Cook structured her writing workshop time of day that not only allowed the individuality of each student to emerge, but also created the atmosphere in which each of these writing styles flourished. Remember that Mrs. Cook strictly enforced the rule that students were not allowed to ask either classmates or the teacher how to spell any unknown word. Instead, students were taught to slowly articulate any unknown word and record the sounds they heard. This freed the student to write whatever they wished to say to their reader. They were not constrained or limited to words they knew how to spell. If they could think it, they could write it.

Mrs. Cook did not impose deadlines regarding when stories must be completed. Students were not compelled to only write what they knew could be completed in a short amount of time. Students always had options that included working on the same story for multiple days at a time, abandoning a story they were no longer excited about, and returning to an old story to either complete it, add more to it, or rewrite it completely.

Most students did spend multiple days on an individual story, adding small amounts each day. Many abandoned uncompleted stories for newer and more exciting material. Mrs. Cook began each writing workshop time with a mini-lesson that involved either some form of author's craft or a skill she desired the students to learn. However, students were not required to incorporate the craft or particular skill modeled by Mrs. Cook into that day's writing. They could use the information the day that Mrs. Cook modeled it or save that information for another piece of writing.

This format for Mrs. Cook's writing workshop opened doors for her students. It encouraged students to incorporate a larger vocabulary into their writing. It helped them understand that any topic that interested the student could be addressed. This open-ended structure in which the students wrote daily allowed the three students in this research study to construct their own understanding of and personal identity within the writing process. It also allowed these three students to begin the school year creating more complex texts during their writing time than those texts they were reading in their guided reading lessons at the beginning of the school year.

In sharp contrast, Mrs. Cook's instruction in guided reading was structured quite differently than that of writing workshop. Guided reading instruction was controlled and linear. Mrs. Cook began each guided reading session with a mini-lesson just as she did in writing workshop. However, in guided reading each student was expected to incorporate the information presented in the mini-lesson into that day's assigned reading. In writing workshop, the way in which students chose to generate written material was not controlled. In reading, however, students were expected to read the specific material that Mrs. Cook had selected for them. Mrs. Cook carefully selected the material to be read

each day based on what she observed the students doing in their reading performance daily. She selected tasks at the appropriate instructional level and with textual challenges she felt the students were ready to attempt. Mrs. Cook selected the reading selections from the school's leveled library. She guided her students through each level of text, moving on to the next higher level of text when she deemed the students were reading for an increased challenge. In guided reading sessions, Mrs. Cook listened for and expected accuracy as the individual students read aloud to her. This was very different from the expectations in writing workshop where students selected their own topics, created their own level of complexity in the text they generated, and where approximations in spelling were not only accepted, but strongly encouraged.

One must wonder what differences might have been observed in these same research participants had Mrs. Cook's guided reading instruction followed some of the same guidelines that her writing instruction followed. Just as the students' writing abilities were enhanced by their being able to select their own topics, perhaps their reading abilities might also have been augmented had they been allowed to select books on topics of interest specific to themselves. Mrs. Cook's practice of listening briefly to each student read a short amount of their reading material during guided reading instructional time does not specifically require that each student be reading the same text as their fellow reading group-mates. Just as Mrs. Cook allowed approximations by students as they attempted to record unknown words in writing, allowing some meaningful substitutions during guided reading might also support these same students as they attempted to read more difficult texts on topics specific to their own interests.

Data collection for this research ended at the end of the school district's third nine-week grading period. At that time both Michael and Gracie were reading instructionally at a DRA level 16. Eden's instructional reading level at this same time was a DRA level 28. The school district's expectation for students at the end of the third nine-week grading period was to be reading in the range of DRA levels 12-14. School district guidelines further stated that students should be reading instructionally at levels ranging from 16-18 at the end of the first-grade year of instruction. By the end of the third nine-week grading period, all three participants in this study were reading at levels that were higher than district level expectations. By the end of the third nine-week grading period, Michael and Gracie were both reading at DRA levels that they were not expected to attain until the end of the school year. The DRA instructional level 28 that Eden was successfully reading was what district expectations stated she should be able to read at the end of her second grade instruction. She was successfully reading at a full grade level higher than her school district's expectations. It is interesting to consider how or even whether the daily writing experiences of these three students impacted their ability to read in their guided reading lessons.

Extending the Analyses

This study was limited in number to only three participants. Therefore, it is difficult to extrapolate information from this limited number of participants in order to make generalizations for large populations of students. However, it is possible to consider each of the routes these three students traveled as signifiers of broader theoretical perspectives of the different ways in which students self-construct a personal understanding of the writing process.

In many ways, the environment in which these three students worked during their writing workshop time was liberating. These students experienced choice of writing topic and whether or not to stay with that particular topic until it was completed. These students were allowed to complete their self-selected topic in one day or over the course of multiple days. Students chose whether or not to share their writing with classmates. Always, their teacher valued the individuality of each student and the individuality that was expressed in each student's writing. Because of this freedom in the way writing workshop was structured in this particular classroom, each of the individual children studied in this research was able to travel a different journey traveled on their course to becoming a writer.

Michael self-imposed a structure into his writing style that was based on his perceived expectations from himself, the classroom teacher, and his out of school experiences. For Michael, the completion of a single piece of writing during the daily allotted writing time was fulfilling what he perceived to be the expectations of those who served as authority figures in his life. He perceived his teacher to be pleased with the amount of writing he produced. This perception was a carry-over from his home life where his parents expected him to work hard and excel. It was also a carry-over from his experience on the hockey team where his coach taught that dedication, repetition of practiced skills, and the hard work of completing what the coach expected reaped rewards. On the surface, it appeared to work for Michael in the classroom. He completed more stories than either of the other research participants. Had his teacher overtly placed value on the number of writing pieces completed, he would have received many accolades regarding his writing accomplishments. However, he did not receive the same

feedback as was received by both Gracie and Eden in the form of obvious pleasure from the teacher and/or classmates when he shared his work at the end of the allotted writing time. The issue for the teacher of students like Michael becomes one of recognizing and valuing his work ethic, but also helping him to discover his inner voice and learn to share that voice in his writing.

Gracie fed on the interaction of others as she created her writing. She spent much of her time discussing what she wanted to write and sharing what she had written with classmates. Her reward for a story well-written was the laughter and/or comments on the story that she received from the teacher and her classmates. However, the social interaction that was such a catalyst to her individual expression was at times viewed by the classroom teacher as interfering with both her work and the work of her classmates. The instructional tension of classroom instruction faces classroom teachers when they encounter a writer who relies on social interaction with others for inspiration. The dilemma for the teacher becomes when and how limitations should be placed on those social interactions. If such limitations are put into place, that social writer's ability to produce quality stories will be impacted. If those limitations are not put into place, the social writer's ability to compose a story might excel, but at the expense of the classmates who do not need that same social interaction to stimulate their writing. The classroom teacher must honor the social writer's need for interaction while, at the same time, valuing the quiet that might be needed by other students.

Without specific instruction on the matter, Eden discovered for herself that the writing process is multimodal. For her, illustrating and writing were part of the same process. The amount of time dedicated to her artwork worried her teacher, as perhaps it

should. As for all classroom teachers, time was a concern to Mrs. Cook. The teacher viewed the time Eden spent creating the illustrations for the story as detracting from the time she would have remaining to develop the story that accompanied the drawing. In Eden's case, Mrs. Cook met the limitations of time by eliminating the artwork from Eden's writing. What she didn't realize was that she was eliminating what, for Eden and other writers like her, was a valuable part of the writing process.

Mrs. Cook had an obligation to both school and district administrators to see that all students reach district expectations on the first-grade writing rubric. She also had a limited amount of time in which to complete that requirement. An analysis of the data collected on these three participants indicates that, while many factors of the writing workshop format in this classroom permitted the students to explore and experiment with the writing experience, some very limiting factors in the form of individual styles of writing and the time needed to nurture those individual writing styles still remained.

These same individualities of each of the research participants were also limited by the guided reading instruction that these students received. A guided reading program that eliminated personal choice of topics to be explored by the students and emphasized accuracy in word reading supported Michael's understanding that his personal goal in learning to read was to accurately call out the words on the page. Had Michael been able to select text on topics interesting to him and had he been encouraged to engage in conversation with peers that emphasized enjoyment and deeper level of understanding of the text, he might have begun to view the purpose of text as something to be enjoyed and perused rather than something to be completed with accuracy. Gracie's enjoyment of text could have been shared with her peers. Her enthusiasm for the story could have further

helped her peers to also understand stories at a deeper level of comprehension. Eden's insight into minute details and author's craft could have been shared with peers, helping her classmates to also discover those parts of literacy that seemed to appear more vividly to her artist's eye.

Chapter X

Conclusions and Implications

The purpose of this chapter is to answer the specific research questions posed in chapter one of this work and then to discuss the implications of those findings as they impact classroom practice and areas of future research needed. Those questions included:

1. How does the child's view of what constitutes a written composition change over time as that child encounters leveled text of increasing difficulty during guided reading instruction?
2. How does the emergent literacy learner's use of orthography in recording written language change over time as the child encounters text of increasing difficulty and containing more complex orthography during guided reading instruction?
3. What relationships exist between literary language encountered by the proficient emerging literacy learner in reading and the corresponding literary language used in that student's writing?

First, clarification needs to be made that my determination of the "child's view" was intended to be determined from an examination of artifacts produced by the students and collected for examination, not from the child's articulation of what constituted his/her view of a written composition. For that reason, formal interviewing of the research participants was extremely limited. Very young children often experience difficulty stating their perceptions regarding metacognition. This was, in fact, the case when the students were formally interviewed about their personal views regarding the

reading and writing processes. In each individual interview, the child stated that reading was accurate reading of individual words and writing was accurate spelling of words composed. Close examination of texts read during guided reading along with running records of those texts and artifacts produced during writing workshop provided much more insight regarding the child's personal view of both processes than the individual children were capable of articulating at that particular time of their young lives.

Change Over Time in the View of What Constituted a Written Composition

In chapter one, three research questions were presented. The first question asked how the child's view of what constituted a written composition changed over time as that child encountered leveled text of increasing difficulty during guided reading instruction. All three students entered first grade with many understandings regarding text that supported them in their production of written products. All three students understood that the purpose of producing a written text was to convey a message to a reader. All three were able to formulate personal thoughts into oral language and then to record those ideas in a written message for their reader. They understood that leaving white space between individual words was important. Those spaces made it easier for their readers to understand their written messages. While all three students began the school year producing text in writing that listed individual facts regarding their specific topic, each over the course of the school year gradually shifted to using their writing to tell of specific events in a sequential order that detailed a personal narrative in the order that the events occurred. This was a personal shift for each writer. Their personal view of what constituted writing shifted from a list of facts about something that was important to them to a sequential relating of information telling about an event that occurred or that they

experienced in the order that the event was experienced. Over the course of the time data was collected for this study, each child came to that same understanding at a different time, in a different way, and utilizing different material. It is significant that each student eventually came to this same essential understanding. It is also critical to understand that the three students came to the same understanding at different times and in different ways.

Michael began the school year often writing about someone or something he either liked or loved and then listing reasons why. In Michael's compliant world, this was safe material. It helped him to safely meet his teacher's requirements. It was safe for him to write about liking or loving things for which he was supposed to feel those emotions. His writing began showing changes in October as stronger emotional connections to his topics began to appear in his writing. At this time, he wrote about winning a hockey competition and his team being awarded a trophy. When this stronger emotion came into play, he began writing specifically to relate the events leading up to receiving the trophy in chronological order. After writing this particular piece, Michael returned to writing facts relating to his topics of choice. The majority of pieces he produced continued to be listing facts regarding topics that were important to him, with some occasions of storytelling regarding an event. Michael understood that writing could be used to relate personal events that were important to him. However, he preferred writing as a listing of facts on a topic. It was this writing style that enabled him to continue beginning and completing a piece of writing within a single block of writing time during each writing workshop session. He primarily stayed with his mass production method of writing because of his self-perception that good writing involved many completions of the task.

This became his function (Halliday, 1975) of writing, a form of interactional writing that was rooted in satisfying another's demands.

Gracie also made this same change in her writing. However, her change occurred a bit later in the school year. In December, Gracie's writing changed from a list of singular facts regarding a specific topic to a narration of events she experienced in personal stories that were conveyed in chronological order. For Gracie, this change coincided with a discovery that writing could be used for telling stories that evoked a reaction from her classmates. Encouraged by the reactions of her classmates to the stories she told, Gracie continued writing stories about personal events that not only entertained, but also evoked a reaction from her classmates. Gracie discovered that her personal appetite for attention from others could be fed by creating and sharing stories from personal experiences. This provided incentive for Gracie to continue producing narratives that occurred over time and chronologically sequencing those narratives by telling what happened first, next, and last. Once Gracie began writing personal narratives, she continued to write personal narratives for the remainder of the time data was collected for this study. Personal narrative was the mode of writing that allowed Gracie to fulfill her personal need to entertain her classmates. Thus, she too used writing for interactions. However, for her there was a social thread that held the fabric of writing together.

Eden also moved from merely stating facts to actually relating stories in her writing. From the beginning of the school year, Eden's list of facts incorporated more colorful language and author's craft than either Michael or Gracie. However, her first written pieces were not yet stories, but rather a listing of facts regarding her chosen topic. Like Michael, Eden's writing changed from a listing of facts regarding a specific topic to

a narration of a personal story during the month of October. Also like Michael, Eden returned to writing descriptive pieces regarding a topic of her personal interest.

Throughout the remainder of the time that data was collected for this research, Eden at times wrote personal narratives and at times wrote informational pieces on a particular topic. However, Eden's style of writing varied according to the specific message she wished to relate. Her primary purpose in writing was to experiment with various types of author craft she encountered outside of the writing workshop. This included the use of similes, onomatopoeia, dialogue, and punctuation. In essence, Eden wrote to please herself by exploring and extending her personal artistic talents. In her writing, Eden accomplished this by playing with multiple types of authors' craft. Eden was able to experiment with authors' craft in both informative and personal narrative functions (Halliday, 1975) of writing. While her teacher's ban on illustrating her stories saddened Eden for a time, Eden overcame that obstacle and continued her artistic pursuits in writing through experimentation with various types of craft in her writing.

All three students created writings that were, generally speaking, of greater length at the end of this research period than they did at the beginning. However, they did not all necessarily view this longer writing as better writing. They were able to accomplish this because they were more experienced writers. Their ability to focus on a single piece of writing increased over time. In addition, their ability to slowly articulate words with unfamiliar spellings and to record those phonemes they heard became easier, requiring less deliberate attention on their part. Only Michael, however, viewed the longer story as a better story. Neither Gracie nor Eden developed the personal theory that production of a longer story indicated that the author was a better author. Gracie and Eden developed

different ideas of what constituted a good story based on their specific personal needs. For Gracie, that need was to attract attention of her classmates. For Eden, that need was to create a textual work of art.

The texts that each of these three students encountered during guided reading over this same period of time did become longer as the school year progressed. Their guided reading texts included a variation of fiction and non-fiction. They also changed rapidly from a repetitive text at the beginning of the school year to non-repetitive text. Fictional stories contained a simple plot of a main character or characters encountering a problem and then resolving that problem by the end of the story. Non-fiction texts gave simple information regarding their topic at the beginning of the school year and moved to the inclusion of more information on the topic and at times including some content-specific word choice that related specifically to the topic.

At no time over the course of this study did any of the three participants incorporate repetitive language into their personal writing. The three students studied also did not at any time incorporate fiction into their choice of writing topics. Writing topics of these three students remained with informational writing regarding topics of personal importance to them and the relating of personal narrative events. Initially, the writing produced by the research participants was more complex than text encountered in guided reading. Over the course of time, the texts encountered in guided reading surpassed the complexity of texts the students produced in writing. However, when emotion was attached to the personal writing of the students, the students' voices were carried through their personal writings to a greater degree than the author of any guided reading text was able to project.

In summary, each child's view of what constituted a written composition did change over time as they encountered leveled text of increasing difficulty. However, the way that each child's view changed was unique to that individual child and not necessarily dependent on the text encountered during guided reading. The change over time in the students' writing was dependent on the personal priorities and needs of each individual student. In essence, the change was not necessarily in how they viewed their written product, but rather that they came to understand how to utilize the written product to fill their personal needs. This understanding of how the written product filled their personal needs, was not one that the individual child could specifically articulate to the researcher. It was noticeable to the researcher only after much observation of the research participants and the artifacts that they produced.

Change Over Time in Orthography

The second question addressed in chapter one of this work asked how the emergent literacy learner's use of orthography in recording written language changed over time as the child encountered text of increasing difficulty and containing more complex orthography during guided reading instruction. This question was important to me because in my work as literacy coordinator, I am often addressed with questions regarding spelling instruction. Teachers in the school district often refer questions to me regarding which spelling lists and programs I consider appropriate for use in the classroom. I wanted to use this opportunity to study how children who were making adequate progress in the classroom regarding acquiring conventional spelling in the English language and how that spelling emerged within the writing produced by students.

During personal interviews conducted with each of the three students, all three students stated that their parents helped them in writing by telling them how to spell words. This statement by all three students indicated that conventional spelling was important to each of them. However, it was obvious during the classroom observations that Mrs. Cook's rule of not asking anyone how to conventionally spell words, but rather to articulate the word slowly and record what was heard, freed each of them from limiting the expression of ideas and information from the boundaries that would have been in place had they been required to conventionally spell each word.

This freedom to record words as they heard them and not as each word was conventionally spelled allowed the students to write about topics they found interesting and not be restrained by conventions. Notably, while conventional spelling was important to each student, once given the autonomy to record words as they heard them, each student latched onto and embraced this independence. All three of the research participants wrote freely without requesting help in conventionally recording words.

Of the three students studied, only Michael was observed deviating from the rule when a substitute teacher was in charge of the classroom. Once Michael realized that the substitute teacher was willing to provide him with the conventional spelling of any word requested, he abandoned the concept of slow articulation and recording of phonemes and began asking the substitute teacher for the conventional spelling for any word of which he was unsure. The other two research participants continued to slowly articulate and record what they could hear in an individual word even when Mrs. Cook was not in the classroom.

As they did regarding their view of what constituted a written composition in question one, each of the three participants followed individual paths on their road to negotiating conventional spellings of words. Because each student composed different written pieces, each student negotiated the conventional spellings of different words and different spelling patterns in the English language over the course of the data collection.

It became obvious while observing the students write that while each stated that conventional spelling was an important part of writing, each student readily accepted the liberty of writing without the restrictions imposed by conventional spelling. With the exception of Michael asking the substitute teacher for conventional spellings of words, the students studied did not make any additional attempts while writing to ensure conventional spelling. For example, many of the words the students were utilizing in their writing appeared in the text they were reading during their guided reading instruction. At no time were any of the three students observed looking through their guided reading text or any other texts in the classroom for needed words during writing. This was true even though many words the students were recording through slow articulation were located within text in the classroom. However, taking the time to search through text for conventional spellings of words would have detracted from the fast recording of the message each student wished to convey to their readers.

Over the course of time data was collected for this study, each student negotiated with different words and different spelling patterns. While Michael and Eden entered first grade with the understanding that each word needed to contain a vowel, Gracie did not yet have that understanding. Gracie and Eden had a more difficult time hearing and

recording different sounds that were articulated in the same part of the mouth than Michael (Read, 1986).

While each student negotiated different spelling patterns over the course of time the data was collected, there were some commonalities among the three students in the way those negotiations occurred over time. Each student began by recording an approximation of a spelling pattern by either recording what they could hear or perhaps by recording an approximation of the way they had observed the word in text. If a particular approximated spelling was used multiple times for a single word in the same piece of writing, the writer was usually consistent with the same approximated spelling each time that it was used in that individual piece of writing. A future use of the same word in another piece of writing might result in a different approximated recording of that word.

At times, different approximations of the recording of the same word did appear within a single piece of writing. When that occurred, one approximation was favored and consistently approximated the majority of the times that it appeared. A second approximation at times appeared within the same piece. Often the student returned to the first approximated spelling by the end of the written piece.

At no time was a conventional spelling “discovered” and utilized conventionally for the remaining time that data was collected. Rather, a conventional spelling of a word previously experimented with was followed by further approximations in future pieces of writing before the student seemed to settle on the conventional spelling.

All three research participants began their first-grade year of school understanding that writing occurred in a left to right sequence and that the white space between words

written on a page was important. This was evidenced by the directional movement utilized in their early writing and the white space they left between words in their own writing. The white spaces between words appeared in all artifacts produced by the students, beginning with the first pieces produced early in the school year and continued throughout the time that data was collected for this research. The only exceptions to this occurred occasionally when a student recorded two words that either represented a single concept such as “national anthem” or two words that were a single word in the child’s mind such “each other”.

Change Over Time in Literary Language

The third question posed in chapter one asked what relationships exist between literary language encountered by the proficient emerging literacy learner in reading and the corresponding literary language used in that student’s writing. The definition of literary language I used in chapter one described literary language as language utilized by text in a way that differs from speech patterns encountered in oral language. I further stated that what is considered literary language may vary from child to child and is specific to the emerging reader’s dialect and personal background experiences. Examples of literary language given in chapter one included, but were not limited to, the incorporation of textual beginnings, use of dialogue and placement of dialogue carriers, as well as complex sentence structures that included independent and dependent clauses and descriptive modifiers.

As I began my research into this question, I anticipated that features of texts read in the guided reading portion of the school day would appear at some later point in time in the writing produced by those same students. Specifically, I anticipated this to include

literary language or phrases used in text that were not regularly incorporated into the students' oral language. An example of such phrases contained in texts as early as *DRA* level four included sentences beginning with a preposition such as is found in Giles' (2000) text, *Little Chimp and Big Chimp*, "Down comes Little Chimp" (p. 13). Another example of literary language I anticipated was the repetition of a phrase for emphasis such as is included in the level four text of *My Tower*, (Randell, 2000), "My tower is going up and up and up" (p. 10). A third example of literary language included in leveled text encountered during guided reading is found in the text *Sam and the Waves* (Smith, 2000) when Sam and her mother are forced to abandon an outing at the beach due to excessively high waves. Sam's mother tells her, "Home we go" (p. 9). The emerging literacy learners are expected to understand that Sam's mother is informing Sam that the two of them must return home, even though the wording used to communicate this in the text differs from the language most six year old children utilize to state the same message.

I entered the data collection phase of this research project fully anticipating that similar phrases and unusual uses of language would find their way into the writings of the research participants at a time after the students began encountering such usage in their guided reading text. My anticipations did not come to fruition in the form or along the timeline I anticipated. Instead of the use of literary language that I had anticipated, I found other items being gradually incorporated into the writings produced by the students throughout the time of this research study.

One student, Eden, did incorporate the use literary language into her writing as I had anticipated. However, Eden used that language beginning with the first piece of

writing that she produced. Her use of similes that she incorporated into the first piece of writing she generated occurred months prior to her encountering any similes in her guided reading lessons. Instead of the literary language in writing following her encounters with that language in guided reading, her production of that language preceded her encounters with that type of language during the guided reading instruction that she received. Additionally, Eden later used the repetition of a single word for emphasis when she wrote an informational piece about the human heart (see Figure 45, page 224). This repetition of a single word for emphasis was not the type of repetition she encountered in guided reading. In guided reading, Eden had encountered the use of words repeated for emphasis such as “going up and up and up” (Randell, 2000, p. 10). However, this was not the type of word repetition Eden incorporated into her writing. In her writing, Eden used a single word “pump” multiple times in succession to emulate the sound of the heart beating. She had not encountered the repetition of a single word that served the purpose of emphasis of meaning along with the craft of onomatopoeia in her guided reading text.

Eden’s talent of observation that served her so well as she created illustrations that incorporated minute details into her creations also carried over into her ability listen closely for authors’ craft that was incorporated into both the books that she read independently and texts that were read aloud to her. At the beginning of her first grade year of school, Eden was already incorporating complex elements of authors’ craft into her personal writing as she utilized similes to describe the family pet dog. Not only was Eden incorporating similes into her early writing, she was using them appropriately. She compared the family dog’s speed to that of another fast animal, using a comparison that

was, for her, believable and realistic. She did not compare her dog's speed to something unattainable such as an airplane or other mechanical invention. Her comparison of the dog's color as being the same as the clouds was also appropriate and believable.

As I examined artifacts produced by the three participants, my understanding of literary language expanded. I came to realize that literary language incorporated more than my limited definition of literary language allowed. I came to view literary language to also include incorporation of punctuation as it served to support the young authors' messages, dialogue as it supported the authors' stories by aiding in the communication of their ideas, and the authors' ability to convey strong emotion through their written work. I also came to view the young authors' asking questions of their audience to maintain the attention of the reader or adding necessary explanation to the reader in a type of soliloquy to inform the reader of any additional explanation types of literary language. While I did not observe the type of literary language included in the writing that I first anticipated, I did observe what I came to understand as these alternate and, in some ways, more elaborate views of literary language.

I found that each research participant came to develop personal understandings of the uses of these types of literary language only after a journey of personally negotiating their private understanding of how these things worked in text that they produced. While all three participants did encounter various types of punctuation including periods, commas, and quotation marks in their guided reading text, the three research participants incorporated these items into their personal writing after traveling their personal pathway to that understanding in various ways.

All three participants included periods to mark the end of their sentences. Michael changed his individual concept of what a sentence entailed over the course of time during which data was collected. He began the school year understanding that a period was placed at the end of a sentence. However, he also began the school year by writing long, run-on sentences that actually included many sentences as one. His personal negotiation over the course of time covered by this research included developing an understanding of how to punctuate those run-on sentences into sentences of more conventional size and content. As Michael began to understand the concept of a sentence being a complete thought or place to stop before continuing, he often placed a period after a complete thought but prior to dependent phrases at the end of sentences. At times, the result was a dependent phrase located at the end of a sentence being punctuated as an additional sentence. Over time Michael negotiated and expanded his understanding to include dependent phrases located at the end of a sentence to be punctuated so that they were included with the sentence those phrases modified.

Gracie began the school year by placing some periods conventionally as they belonged at the end of some sentences in every piece that she wrote. Even at the beginning of the school year, these sentences at times included dependent phrases at the end of sentences. However, she did at times include some long, run-on sentences. Gracie negotiated her personal understanding of where to conventionally place periods until slightly past the first half of the school year. At that time she came to have a more conventional sense of when and where to place end punctuation for a sentence.

Of the three participants, Eden was the only student who began the school year with a strong individual concept of what a sentence entailed. Her writing did not

incorporate the use of long, run-on sentences. However, she was the only student who placed a single sentence on a single line at the beginning of the school year. Her personal negotiation over the course of the school was the understanding that a new sentence did not always have to begin on a new line of the writing paper.

Over the course of time that data was collected for this study, all three students began at least one piece of writing with a question. This technique to capture their reader's attention at the beginning of their writing appeared in artifacts produced by all three writers during the month of December. Michael utilized this type of lead into his writing only once. Both Gracie and Eden, however, continued to utilize questions within the text of their writing at various times throughout the third nine-week grading period when data collection ceased.

While Michael did not incorporate dialogue into his writing, both Gracie and Eden did. The dialogue written by Gracie did include the use of quotation marks. However, it was evident from the content of the writing that the use of dialogue was incorporated into the story. In addition, Gracie utilized a technique of speaking directly to her reader in the midst of a story, questioning her audience to ensure that she maintained the reader's attention. Eden did play with the use of quotation marks in her writing. Her first use of dialogue utilized no quotation marks. The second time Eden used quotation marks, they were not conventionally placed. Instead they were placed around the words, "said go" (see Figure 41, page 217).

Of the three participants, Eden played the most with the use of punctuation as literary language. In addition to the above mentioned items, Eden also utilized an ellipsis when naming Santa's reindeer. Eden was also the only participant who utilized they type

of literary language that I first set out to observe when I began this study. Eden repeated a single word, pump (see Figure 45, page 224), multiple times for emphasis and dramatic effect in her writing. In her final piece of writing collected for this study, she also used a phrase of literary language not noted in her oral language when she described a “butterfly flying with ease” (see Figure 54, page 247).

Again, these three authors utilized these various forms of literary language in their written text prior to encountering them in their guided reading text in the classroom. Each of the three participants began the school year by producing written text that was more complex than the text encountered during guided reading. The three participants incorporated literary language and other forms of authors’ craft at varying times and in ways that were unique to themselves.

Implications for Classroom Practice and Future Research

The conclusions reached in this research study offer information that could serve to improve the practice of classroom teachers, school and district administrators, and university instructors of pre-service teachers. In addition, this research brings to light additional questions to be studied and answered in future research.

Implications for classroom practice.

Educators need to examine the framework in which students receive literacy instruction. The structure of instruction in the classroom where the observations occurred supported these three young readers and writers in many ways. First and foremost, this was a classroom where literacy was valued. Students were surrounded and inundated with various forms of print. A multitude of books in the classroom were placed into baskets and categorized for student use. Students were encouraged to read many various

authors and genres. Writing occurred in the classroom daily. Students were expected to participate in literacy activities. The three research participants in this study each made tremendous progress in their reading and writing ability over the course of this study.

The structure of the writing workshop portion of the school day supported these students and they learned to write. Early in the school year, students developed an understanding of the structure of the writing portion of the school day. They knew that writing would occur daily and that the format and expectation of that particular time were standard. Each writing workshop session began with a mini-lesson taught by the teacher. This was followed by an approximately twenty minute block of time for the students to write. Writing workshop consistently ended with a time when some members of the class were invited to share what they had worked on during that day's allotment of writing time.

Within this basic structure of the writing workshop time, there were further understandings made clear to the students. Students were expected to write. What the students wrote was valued by both the teacher and other classmates. Accuracy in spelling was not an expectation. Students were never required to correct any spelling approximations that they had made. Rather, the students were given specific instructions on what to do when they experienced difficulty in spelling words. They were to slowly articulate words and record what they heard. Students also had freedom to select topics that interested them. With rare exceptions, topics, genre, and style of writing were not assigned.

The above mentioned balance between structure of the time and freedom of the content to be written supported the three research participants in their writing. As has

been mentioned, each of the three students followed different paths in their development as young authors. These paths were, for the most part supported by the teacher. However, no single path was valued as being a better path to be traveling. Each student was empowered to construct their own understanding of what constituted a written composition, orthography of the English language, and incorporation of literary language into their written products.

Understanding and valuing the various journeys traveled by literacy learners need to be a focus of pre-service teacher training as well as training provided by district and school administrators. This is especially true in the current political climate in which educators are now working. All stakeholders want students to achieve, and often the view that all students must achieve success at the same time and in the same way is becoming more prevalent. It must be emphasized that students require varying amounts of time to construct personal understanding. Students need the opportunity to allow their personal understandings to consolidate and be exhibited in varying ways.

The way that Mrs. Cook ran her classroom, individual identities were honored, although there were boundaries. Gracie's need for socialization with her peers as part of the writing process was discouraged by the teacher when Mrs. Cook felt that the socialization interfered with time on task by both Gracie and her classmates. By the same token, Eden's artwork was eliminated when Mrs. Cook felt that time spent creating illustrations was interfering with the time Eden spent in actually writing. Michael, the compliant child, had no boundaries set regarding his compliant nature because he did spend all of his writing time completing his stories. The irony of the situation occurred when Mrs. Cook was entertained by both Gracie's and Eden's stories, but not by

Michael's. The very actions that Mrs. Cook sought to limit in Gracie's and Eden's writing were the actions that supported those two students in creating interesting stories. The nagging question becomes when and how to set boundaries in the classroom that both honor the writing identities of individual students while still meeting the needs of the classroom teacher and other students in the classroom.

Another item for consideration is the selection of text to be utilized in guided reading. Each of these participants began the school year producing text in writing that were more complex than the text they encountered in guided reading. If students are capable of producing texts that are more complex than those they are being asked to read, perhaps they could benefit from exposure to guided reading text of a complexity that equates more closely with what the student can produce. Keeping in mind the elements of the writing workshop that supported the literacy learning of these three research participants, perhaps those same elements should be incorporated into guided reading instruction in the classroom. Giving students choices in the selection of their reading topic could encourage and motivate students to read more complex texts at an earlier time of the school year.

Teachers must also consider the ways they teach and evaluate student success in writing. Many commercially available programs tout their ability to work for all students. However, the teacher must reflect on whether writing instruction can best occur and meet the needs of all students if instruction is delivered in lock-step parts and the same writing assignments are made for all students. The students in this study showed that similar understandings were attainable when the freedom of topic choice and transitional forms of orthography were left for the student to explore.

This study also holds special implications for teachers who work with struggling literacy learners and those practitioners who train those individuals. This research offers a description of what relationships exist between guided reading text and the writing produced by proficient literacy learners. In order to help those literacy learners who struggle with the literacy acquisition process, teachers must first understand the relationships that exist between reading and writing for proficient literacy learners.

This leads, then, to the related issue of standards-based education. Standards-based education suggests that all students should reach the same standards and benchmarks as all students in the classroom at a similar time in their education. This research implies that students need the opportunity to construct their own understanding of the writing process. This self-construction of understanding does not look the same or follow the same timeline for all students.

Implications for future research.

This study also has implications for further research. Most notable about the children in this research study was the fact that at the end of third nine-week grading period, each of the three research participants in this study were reading at levels above what had been identified as acceptable by their school district. Further research needs to be conducted to find if there is a relationship between this type of instruction in writing and the elevated reading scores obtained by these three students. Such study could serve to enhance the teaching of reading as well as writing instruction.

Eden's specific case study raised another area for future research. That area is the relationship between art and writing. For Eden, artistic observation and creativity played a large role in her development as a writer. Eden's creations of illustrations prior to her

writing acted as a type of graphic organizer. She relied on her stories emanating from those illustrations. Eden's teacher viewed her detailed illustrations as detracting from the time Eden spent writing. For some students, the creation of an illustration may actually be an avoidance mechanism to delay the beginning of writing. Should students be encouraged to illustrate stories prior to beginning writing? If so, when and how does the teacher know if the illustrations are actually being used as a support to the writing process or as an avoidance mechanism used to procrastinate the actual writing event?

A final implication for future research is to look at the way reading instruction is delivered. In the writing workshop studied in this research, students were in control of the learning process. They controlled the topic of writing, when the written piece was completed, whether to continue on a specific piece or leave it unfinished to begin another. The writing workshop was a place for each student to express himself/herself and to discover one's own identity as a writer. Could reading instruction follow this same type of format to put the learner in control of their learning in reading? If so, how would this look? Students might experience more success with the reading process if they are given choices regarding topic selection. This might also mean that not every student at a specific level of reading ability is required to read the same text as their peers. It leaves open the opportunity for teachers to flexibly group their students for reading instruction based on elements other than homogeneous reading ability. Other types of group formation, such as topic or genre as designated by student interest, could be utilized with membership of reading groups changing regularly in order to meet varying interests and/or needs of the students.

Vygotsky described a child at play “a head above himself [herself]” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 102). The students in this research study were, in essence, at play with themselves, with their classmates, and with different modes of writing, but most of all they were playing with the writing process. As a result of that play, the students followed in this study were “a head above” themselves in both the learning of reading and writing. The findings of this study underscore the complex nature of both reading and writing instruction, as well as the interwoven threads that link reading and writing.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Rio Rancho Public Schools Kindergarten Writing Continuum

Student Name: _____

Teacher: _____

Assessment Dates: _____

School Year: _____ Enrollment Date: _____

Writing Traits *Power Standards	Beginning Step (1)	Nearing Proficiency (2)	Proficient (3)	Advanced (4)
			<i>Because the standard at K is that students write to express meaning, a student's work should not be considered proficient if the bolded descriptor is not present.</i>	<i>Because the standard at K is that students write to express meaning, a student's work should not be considered advanced if the bolded descriptor is not present.</i>
*Ideas (II-C) Write to express meaning	<input type="checkbox"/> Student interpretation needed to understand scribbles and/or picture <input type="checkbox"/> Scribbles for picture, for writing, or for both	<input type="checkbox"/> Student interpretation needed to understand text <input type="checkbox"/> Uses pictures to convey meaning	<input type="checkbox"/> Writes one sentence without a prompt that conveys meaning. (Sentence should have at least 3 words.) Student interpretation not needed to understand text. <input type="checkbox"/> May have picture that supports story or text.	<input type="checkbox"/> Writes 2 or more related sentences. Not all sentences begin the same way. Student interpretation not needed to understand text. <input type="checkbox"/> Illustration, if present, enhances story or text.
*Conventions (II-B) -- Using phonemic awareness and letter recognition to spell independently (II-C) -- Representing spoken language with emergent and/or conventional spelling	<input type="checkbox"/> Uses scribbles to represent writing OR <input type="checkbox"/> Writes random letters	<input type="checkbox"/> Writes random words including environmental print that may or may not convey meaning OR <input type="checkbox"/> Writes initial or ending letter to represent words (dog could be represented with a <i>d</i> or a <i>g</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/> Beginning to spell phonetically using mostly consonants	<input type="checkbox"/> Phonetically spells words using consonants and vowels
			<input type="checkbox"/> Beginning to use spaces between words <input type="checkbox"/> Uses mixed upper and lower case letters <input type="checkbox"/> Beginning to use capital letter at beginning of sentence <input type="checkbox"/> Uses random punctuation <input type="checkbox"/> Writes left to right	<input type="checkbox"/> Consistently uses spaces between words <input type="checkbox"/> Beginning to use upper and lower case letters correctly <input type="checkbox"/> Uses capital letters at the beginnings of sentences <input type="checkbox"/> Beginning to use ending punctuation correctly <input type="checkbox"/> Writes left to right, top to bottom

Revised 2/2/05

Scoring: (1) Scoring should be based on at least 3 unassisted writing samples each grading period. (Student journals, science logs, etc.)

(2) Most children will not fall completely within a single performance level, therefore note where their overall performance appears and score accordingly. (See note under Proficient and Advanced) Utilize professional judgment as needed.

(3) If a student's scores fall equally in 2 levels (with the exception of the Proficient and Advanced requirements) score them at the lower level.

Appendix B

Rio Rancho Public Schools FIRST GRADE Writing Continuum

Student Name: _____ Teacher: _____
 Assignment Dates: _____ School Year: _____ Enrollment Date: _____

Writing Traits Power Standards	Beginning Step (1)	Nearing Proficiency (2)	Proficient (3)	Advanced (4)
Ideas/Organization (Power Standard 3) Write a narrative with at least 3 complete sentences about the same topic (traits of good writing).	<input type="checkbox"/> No topic or main idea. <input type="checkbox"/> Draws pictures with strings of letters or words.	<input type="checkbox"/> Main idea is not clear. <input type="checkbox"/> Writes 1 or 2 sentences about the same topic (may be patterned). <input type="checkbox"/> Writing begins to have parts of a beginning, middle, or end. <input type="checkbox"/> A title is attempted.	<input type="checkbox"/> Main idea is evident. <input type="checkbox"/> Writes 3 or 4 sentences about the same topic. <input type="checkbox"/> Writing has a beginning, middle and end. <input type="checkbox"/> A title is present.	<input type="checkbox"/> Main idea is clear. <input type="checkbox"/> Includes a topic sentence with 3 supporting and descriptive sentences. <input type="checkbox"/> Writing has a beginning, middle and strong ending. <input type="checkbox"/> Title reflects the main idea.
Conventions (Power Standard 3) -- Use phonetic knowledge and basic patterns to spell 3 and 4 letter words correctly. -- Uses emergent and conventional spelling. -- Use basic capitalization (first word in sentences, proper nouns) -- Uses basic punctuation (period, question mark)	<input type="checkbox"/> Words are spelled with beginning and/or ending sounds. <input type="checkbox"/> Uses mixed upper and lower case letters. <input type="checkbox"/> No punctuation is used. <input type="checkbox"/> No spaces are used between words or letters.	<input type="checkbox"/> Phonetically spells simple 2 or 3 letter words. <input type="checkbox"/> Begins to use conventional spelling (high frequency and/or word wall words). <input type="checkbox"/> Uses some capitals at the beginning of sentences. <input type="checkbox"/> Some proper nouns may be capitalized. <input type="checkbox"/> Uses some punctuation (., ?). <input type="checkbox"/> Begins to use spaces between words.	<input type="checkbox"/> Phonetically spells more difficult words (using most letter sounds). <input type="checkbox"/> Generally spells 3 and 4 letter words, high frequency, and/or word wall words correctly. <input type="checkbox"/> Uses capitals at the beginning of sentences. <input type="checkbox"/> Proper nouns are usually capitalized. <input type="checkbox"/> Uses punctuation (., ?) correctly. <input type="checkbox"/> Consistently uses spaces between words.	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely uses phonetic spelling. <input type="checkbox"/> Consistently spells 3 and 4 letter words, high frequency and/or word wall words correctly. <input type="checkbox"/> Consistently uses capital letters correctly. <input type="checkbox"/> All proper nouns are capitalized. <input type="checkbox"/> End punctuation is correct (., ?) and other punctuation is attempted.
Presentation (Power Standard 3) Writes upper and lower case letters of the alphabet.	<input type="checkbox"/> Very few upper and lowercase letters are neat and legible.	<input type="checkbox"/> Some upper and lowercase letters are neat and legible. <input type="checkbox"/> Some upper and lower case letters are formed correctly (tall, short, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/> Most upper and lowercase letters are neat and legible. <input type="checkbox"/> Most upper and lower case letters are formed correctly (tall, short, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/> All upper and lowercase letters are neat and legible. <input type="checkbox"/> All upper and lower case letters are formed correctly (tall, short, etc)

From Page: *Novel Studies: Writing Traits (Ideas/Organization, Conventions, Presentation)*
 Book Page: *Other writing units (Voice, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency)*

Adapted from *Layout and 11 Traits* - 4/00

These Writing Traits should be taught but are not Power Standards.

Writing Trait	Beginning Step (1)	Nearing Proficiency (2)	Proficient (3)	Advanced (4)
Voice	<input type="checkbox"/> May use pictures to communicate feelings.	<input type="checkbox"/> Expresses some predictable feelings.	<input type="checkbox"/> Expresses individual feelings.	<input type="checkbox"/> Expresses a variety of feelings.
Word Choice	<input type="checkbox"/> Writes strings of letters or imitates word patterns.	<input type="checkbox"/> Uses limited descriptive words (i.e., mostly color words – blue car)	<input type="checkbox"/> Uses a variety of descriptive words (i.e., color and size – big, orange pumpkin).	<input type="checkbox"/> Uses a variety of descriptive words and begins to use exact words (i.e. big, brown Irish Setter).
Sentence Fluency	<input type="checkbox"/> No evidence of sentence formation.	<input type="checkbox"/> Sentences may be incomplete thoughts. <input type="checkbox"/> Sentences may be patterned. <input type="checkbox"/> Sentences may be short in length.	<input type="checkbox"/> Sentences are complete thoughts. <input type="checkbox"/> Some sentences begin in different ways. <input type="checkbox"/> Some sentences vary in lengths.	<input type="checkbox"/> Sentences begin in and end in different ways. <input type="checkbox"/> Most sentences vary in length.

Appendix C

Rio Rancho Public Schools FIRST GRADE Reading Continuum				
Student Name: _____	School: _____	School Year: _____		
Assessment Dates: _____	Teacher: _____	Enrollment Date: _____		
Performance Levels	(1) Beginning Step	(2) Emerging Proficiency	(3) Proficient	(4) Advanced
Instructional Level	DRA Level A, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8	DRA Level 10, 12, 14	DRA Level 16, 18, 20	DRA Level 24, 28
Previewing/Predicting				
Power Standard 1 Use critical thinking skills and prior knowledge to predict and explain grade level texts.	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments briefly on each picture. <input type="checkbox"/> Gathers little or no information after doing a picture walk.	<input type="checkbox"/> Connects 1 or 2 events. <input type="checkbox"/> Gathers some information after doing a picture walk.	<input type="checkbox"/> Connects most events. <input type="checkbox"/> Gathers pertinent information after doing a picture walk or reading the introduction to the story. <input type="checkbox"/> Makes appropriate prediction after reading the story introduction (Level 18+).	<input type="checkbox"/> Connects all events. <input type="checkbox"/> Gathers pertinent information after reading the introduction to the story. <input type="checkbox"/> Predicts several possible events/actions after reading the story introduction.
Reading Strategies (Sources of Information)				
Power Standard 2 Apply phonemic awareness, word recognition strategies, self-monitoring, and fluency to comprehend grade level texts.	<input type="checkbox"/> At difficulty, uses 1 or 2 sources of information (meaning, structure, visual) to problem solve unknown words. <input type="checkbox"/> Does not self-correct miscues. <input type="checkbox"/> Substitutions don't make sense.	<input type="checkbox"/> At difficulty uses multiple sources of information (meaning, structure, visual) with many attempts to problem solve unknown words. <input type="checkbox"/> Self-corrects some miscues. <input type="checkbox"/> Some substitutions make sense.	<input type="checkbox"/> At difficulty, uses effective sources of information (meaning, structure, visual) with minimal attempts to problem solve unknown words. <input type="checkbox"/> Self-corrects most miscues. <input type="checkbox"/> All substitutions make sense.	<input type="checkbox"/> At difficulty, quickly uses sources of information (meaning, structure, visual) to problem solve unknown words. <input type="checkbox"/> Self-corrects all miscues. <input type="checkbox"/> No substitutions made.
Fluency				
Power Standard 2 Apply phonemic awareness, word recognition strategies, self-monitoring, and fluency to comprehend grade level texts.	<input type="checkbox"/> Reads word by word or in short phrases most of the time. <input type="checkbox"/> No attention to punctuation. <input type="checkbox"/> Reads monotone.	<input type="checkbox"/> Reads in longer phrases at times; inconsistent rate. <input type="checkbox"/> Reads with some attention to punctuation. <input type="checkbox"/> Reads with some intonation.	<input type="checkbox"/> Reads in longer phrases most of the time; adequate rate. <input type="checkbox"/> Usually attends to punctuation. <input type="checkbox"/> Usually reads with intonation.	<input type="checkbox"/> Reads in longer, meaningful phrases; rate adjusted appropriately. <input type="checkbox"/> Consistently attends to punctuation. <input type="checkbox"/> Consistently adjusts intonation.
Comprehension				
Power Standard 1 Listen to and read grade level text with comprehension. Identify plot, setting, and characters using details and stating events in sequence on grade level texts.	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not identify a setting. <input type="checkbox"/> Includes no important details or events. <input type="checkbox"/> Refers to characters using pronouns (he, she, etc.). <input type="checkbox"/> Gives limited responses to teacher questions. <input type="checkbox"/> Requires many prompts or questions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Identifies one setting. <input type="checkbox"/> Includes some important details or events. <input type="checkbox"/> Refers to characters using generic names (boy, girl, etc.). <input type="checkbox"/> Gives some responses to teacher questions. <input type="checkbox"/> Requires 3 - 4 prompts or questions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Identifies main setting in story. <input type="checkbox"/> Includes many important details or events in sequence. <input type="checkbox"/> Refers to characters using names in text (Ben, Mandy, Robert, etc.). <input type="checkbox"/> Gives detailed responses to teacher questions. <input type="checkbox"/> Requires 1 - 2 prompts or questions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Identifies several settings, including the main setting. <input type="checkbox"/> Includes most important details or events in sequence using vocabulary in text. <input type="checkbox"/> Refers to characters using descriptive names used in the text (big girl, tan fox, etc.). <input type="checkbox"/> Gives insightful responses to teacher questions. <input type="checkbox"/> Requires no prompts or questions.

Appendix D

Interview Questions

(Adapted from Goodman, Watson, and Burke, 1987)

1. What do you do for fun? What else are you interested in?
2. How do you feel about reading?
3. What do you read? What do you like to read?
4. Do your parents read to you?
5. How did you learn to read? What do your parents do to help you learn to read? What do your teachers do to help you learn to read?
6. Why do people read? Why do you read?
7. What do people do when they read? What do you do inside your head when you read?
8. When you are reading and come to a word you don't know, what do you do? Does this help?
9. What else do you do when you come to a word you don't know?
10. What else do you think you could do if you were reading by yourself with no one to help you?
11. Who do you know who is a good reader?
12. What makes him/her a good reader?

13. Do you think s/he ever comes to something s/he doesn't know when reading?

If your answer is yes, what do you think s/he does about it?

14. How do you feel about writing?

15. When/what do you write?

16. Do your parents write? What do you see them writing?

17. How did you learn to write? What do your parents do to help you learn to write? What do your teachers do to help you learn to write?

18. Who usually chooses what you write about in school? What about at home? Do you like to choose what you write about? Why or why not?

19. Why do people write? Why do you write?

20. What do you do inside your head when you write?

21. When you are writing and come to a word you don't know how to write, what do you do? Does this help? What else do you do?

22. What else do you think you could do if you were writing all by yourself with no one to help you?

23. Who do you know who is a good writer?

24. What makes him/her a good writer?

25. Do you think s/he ever comes to something s/he doesn't know when writing?

If your answer is yes, what do you think s/he does about it?

Appendix E

Protocol for Interviews Related to Specific Pieces of Writing

1. Why did you write this piece?
2. Were there any tricky or difficult parts?
3. If so, what did you do when it was tricky or difficult?

If not, what would you have done if there had been a tricky or difficult part?

Appendix F

Glossary of Grammatical Terms

(Adapted from Weaver, 1996)

Absolute: An absolute construction functions as a free modifier within a sentence.

Though technically a phrase, the absolute has a subject of sorts, and most of a verb phrase; therefore, it is sometimes characterized as a near-clause. In the following examples, the absolute could be made into an independent clause by adding a form of the verb BE (am, is, are, was, or were). This reveals its near-clause nature.

My protesting lungs ready to betray me, I worked my way to the edge of the raft.

For the longest time I lay in the raft like an overturned turtle, *my arms and legs useless*.

Adjective: An adjective is a word used to describe or “modify” a noun. More generally, any word or group of words that modifies a noun can be called an adjectival. For writers, what is most important is the adjectival *function*, not the niceties of what is and is not technically an adjective. In the following examples, the adjectivals are italicized and the actual adjectives are underlined. (However, the articles *a*, *an*, and *the* or other determiners like *this* and *these* are not marked when they function adjectivally.)

The raft had been swept over a *modest* waterfall.

The rush *of fear* had left me absolutely *limp*, *my arms and legs useless*. (The prepositional phrase *of fear* describes *rush*. *Limp* describes *me*, and so does the absolute phrase *my arms and legs useless*.)

Adverb: Traditionally, an adverb is said to describe and modify a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. More generally, any word or group of words that functions

like an adverb can be called an adverbial. Adverbs and other adverbials often tell how, when, where, or why, with respect to the action. For writers, what is most important is the adverbial *function*, particularly the function of modifying an entire clause. In the following examples, adverbs and adverbials are italicized.

The *most* frightening part was ... (*Most* modifies the adjective *frightening*.)

I seemed to be ascending *all too slowly* through the murky water. (The adverbial phrase *all too slowly* modifies the verb phrase *seemed to be ascending*. Within the adverbial, *too* is an adverb modifying *slowly*, and *all* is an adverb modifying *too*.)

The words *barely* had time to flit *through my mind*. (*Barely* modifies the verb *had*, and *through my mind* modifies the infinitive *to flit*.)

Appositive: An appositive is a noun or nominal that functions adjectivally, to modify a noun that ordinarily precedes the appositive. The appositive functions to rename or categorize the noun or nominal. Normally, the appositives are set off from the rest of the sentence by commas.

The friendliest guide, *Miti*, was the one who led us to near-disaster.

Rollie, *a water lover since childhood*, had been warned not to “go out too far”.

Auxiliary verb: An auxiliary verb is a helper that comes before the main verb. A main verb may have more than one helper before it.

might leave

must have been leaving

ought to have left

Clause: A clause consists of a subject and a predicate. An independent, or main, clause is one that can stand alone as a sentence, grammatically speaking. A dependent, or

subordinate, clause is one that cannot stand alone grammatically speaking: it depends upon the meaning expressed in the main clause. There are three kinds of subordinate clauses: noun clauses, which function as nominals; adjective clauses, which function as adjectivals; and adverb clauses, which function as adverbials. In the following sentences, the main clause is italicized; the subordinate clause (if there is one) is underlined and labeled as to function.

We had to sign up for the advanced kayak trip, because I couldn't go any other time. (main clause plus adverb clause)

I can see if there's anything we need for the Costa Rica trip. (noun clause functioning as the direct object of *see*.)

She showed me a book on Costa Rican rivers that I bought to take home to Rollie. (main clause with adjective clause modifying *book*)

Conjunctions: A conjunction is a word or phrase that joins words and constructions. There are three kinds of conjunctions; coordinating, correlative, and subordinating. Coordinating conjunctions join constructions that are of equal grammatical weight. Coordinating conjunctions are *and, but, or, yet, so, and nor*. Correlative conjunctions are pairs that link grammatically equal elements in the same way coordinating conjunctions do. The correlative conjunctions are *either ...or, neither ...nor, not only... but also, both ... and, whether ... or*. A subordinating conjunction is a word that introduces an adverbial clause. Subordinating conjunctions can denote contrast, time or sequence, cause, and condition. Examples include:

<u>Contrast</u>	<u>Time or Sequence</u>	<u>Cause</u>	<u>Condition</u>
<i>although</i>	<i>after</i>	<i>as</i>	<i>if</i>
<i>even though</i>	<i>as</i>	<i>because</i>	<i>unless</i>
<i>though</i>	<i>before</i>	<i>in order that</i>	<i>whether</i>
<i>whereas</i>	<i>since</i>	<i>since</i>	
<i>while</i>	<i>till</i>	<i>so that</i>	
<i>rather than</i>	<i>until</i>		
	<i>when</i>		
	<i>while</i>		

Interjection: The interjection is a word or phrase that expresses emotion and that is not grammatically part of a clause. They occur at the beginning of the sentence.

Examples include *Yikes! Darn it! Well,* and *Oh.*

Participle: Two of a verb's forms are participial. The *-ing* form of a verb is the present participle form, while the form that would be used after *has, have,* or *had* is the past participle form. These verbs may be used as adjectivals, to modify nouns. The participles may occur as single-word modifiers (usually before the noun), but they may also occur as the head word in a participle phrase, also called a participial phrase.

There were 500 *exciting* miles of whitewater.

The paddle *floating downstream* was Rollie's. (participial phrase)

We went on a trip *scheduled during the rainy season.* (participial phrase)

Prepositions and Prepositional Phrases: A preposition is a word that comes before a noun or other nominal. The preposition and the nominal, its object, together

constitute a prepositional phrase. A prepositional phrase often modifies a noun that comes before it, and hence functions as an adjectival. Alternatively, a prepositional phrase may function as an adverbial, to modify the verb or the entire clause. The prepositional phrases are italicized in the following sentences.

The wall *of water* momentarily crushed me. (functions adjectivally)

The raft had been swept *over a modest waterfall*. (functions adverbially)

Appendix G

Observation Calendar

August 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22 11:00-12:00 Whole class observation	23 11:00-12:00 Whole class observation	24 1:45-2:30 Whole class observation	25
26	27 10:45-11:45 Whole class observation	28 10:45-11:45 Whole class observation	29 10:45-11:45 Whole class observation	30 1:45-2:30 Whole class observation	31 1:45-2:30 Whole class observation	

September 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3 NO SCHOOL— LABOR DAY	4 NO SCHOOL— STAFF IN-SERVICE	5 9:00-10:00 Whole class observa- tion	6 OUT OF TOWN— PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	7 OUT OF TOWN — PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	8
9	10 1:45-2:30 Whole class observa- tion	11 1:45-2:30 Whole class observa- tion	12 9:00-10:00 Whole class observa- tion	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24 10:45-11:30 Observed Michael	25	26 10:45-11:30 Observed Gracie	27 1:45-2:30 Observed Eden	28	29
30						

October 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 1:45-2:30 Observed Gracie	3 9:00-10:00 Observed Eden		5 1:45-2:30 Observed Michael	6
7	8 NO SCHOOL—FALL BREAK	9 NO SCHOOL— STAFF INSERVICE	10 1:45-2:30 Observed Michael	11 1:45-2:30 Observed Eden	12 1:45-2:30 Observed Gracie	13
14	15 1:45-2:30 Observed Michael	16 1:45-2:30 Observed Eden	17	18 1:45-2:30 Observed Gracie	19	20
21	22	23 OUT OF TOWN—PD	24 OUT OF TOWN—PD	25 OUT OF TOWN—PD	26 OUT OF TOWN—PD	27
28	29 1:45-2:30 Observed Gracie	30 1:45-2:30 Observed Eden	31			

November 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2 1:45-2:30 <i>Observed Michael</i>	3
4	5 1:45-2:30 <i>Observed Michael</i>	6	7 1:45-2:30 <i>Observed Gracie</i>	8	9 1:45-2:30 <i>Observed Eden</i>	10
11	12	13	14 OUT OF TOWN—PD	15 OUT OF TOWN—PD	16 OUT OF TOWN—PD	17
18	19	20	21 THANKSGIVING BREAK	22 THANKSGIVING BREAK	23 THANKSGIVING BREAK	24
25	26	27 1:45-2:30 <i>Observed Michael</i>	28 1:45-2:45 <i>Observed Gracie</i>	29	30 1:45-2:30 <i>Observed Eden</i>	

December 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5 <i>OUT OF TOWN—PD</i>	6 <i>OUT OF TOWN—PD</i>	7 <i>OUT OF TOWN—PD</i>	8
9	10	11 1:45-2:30 <i>Observed Gracie</i>	12 1:45-2:30 <i>Observed Eden</i>	13	14 1:45-2:30 <i>Observed Michael</i>	15
16	17 1:45-2:30 <i>Observed Gracie</i>	18 1:45-2:30 <i>Observed Michael</i>	19	20 1:45-2:30 <i>Observed Eden</i>	21	22
23	24 <i>WINTER BREAK</i>	25 <i>WINTER BREAK</i>	26 <i>WINTER BREAK</i>	27 <i>WINTER BREAK</i>	28 <i>WINTER BREAK</i>	29
30	31 <i>WINTER BREAK</i>					

January 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 <i>WINTER BREAK</i>	3 <i>WINTER BREAK</i>	4 <i>WINTER BREAK</i>	5
6	7 1:30-2:30 <i>Interviewed Gracie</i>	8	9 1:30-2:00 <i>Interviewed Michael</i>	10	11 10:45-11:15 <i>Interviewed Eden</i> 2:00-2:30 <i>Interviewed Gracie's Grandmother</i>	12
13	14	15 9:00-10:00 <i>Observed Gracie</i>	16	17	18 9:00-10:00 <i>Observed Eden</i>	19
20	21 <i>NO SCHOOL— MLK, JR. DAY</i>	22 9:00-10:00 <i>Observed Michael</i>	23	24	25	26
27	28 1:45-2:30 <i>Observed Gracie</i>	29 <i>NO SCHOOL— SNOW DAY</i>	30 <i>Interviewed Michael's Parents</i>	31		

February 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 <i>Interviewed Eden's Mother</i>	2
3	4	5 1:45-2:30 <i>Observed Gracie</i>	6 1:45-2:45 <i>Observed Michael</i>	7 1:45-2:30 <i>Observed Eden</i>	8	9
10	11	12 1:45-2:30 <i>Observed Gracie</i>	13 1:45-2:30 <i>Observed Michael</i>	14 VALENTINE'S DAY— NO OBSERVATION	15 1:45-2:30 <i>Observed Eden</i>	16
17	18 NO SCHOOL— PRESIDENT'S DAY	19 10:45-11:30 <i>Observed Gracie</i>	20 10:45-11:30 <i>Observed Michael</i>	21 10:45-11:30 <i>Observed Eden</i>	22	23
24	25 1:45-2:30 <i>Observed Gracie</i>	26 1:45-2:30 <i>Observed Michael</i>	27	28 1:45-2:30 <i>Observed Eden</i>	29	

March 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4 1:45-2:30 <i>Observed Gracie</i>	5 1:45-2:30 <i>Observed Eden</i>	6	7 1:45-2:30 <i>Observed Michael</i>	8
9	10 1:45-2:30 <i>Observed Eden</i>	11	12 1:45-2:30 <i>Observed Gracie</i>	13 1:45-2:30 <i>Observed Michael</i>	14	15
16	17	18	19	20 NO SCHOOL— PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES	21 NO SCHOOL— PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES	22
23	24 NO SCHOOL— SPRING BREAK	25 NO SCHOOL— SPRING BREAK	26 NO SCHOOL— SPRING BREAK	27 NO SCHOOL— SPRING BREAK	28 NO SCHOOL— SPRING BREAK	29
30	31					

Appendix H

Michael's Known Writing Vocabulary

September 2007

at	like	set
because	make	the
best	me	them
get	mom	to
go	my	we
I	on	with
is	play	

October 2007

a	has	school
all	have	tag
and	he	that
are	in	that's (without the apostrophe)
at	it	then
be	its	this
blue	lot	time
brother	love	time
day	names	two
eat	one	wet
for	plays	wet
frogs	pole	will
fun	power	won
going	ranger	you
got	say	Zachary (with the "Z" reversed)

November 2007

ate	end	pool
back	fantastic	popcorn (written as two words)
balls	good	said
big	had	Santa
but	Halloween	see
by	had	sees
can	hang	she
can't (without the apostrophe)	him	six
Clark	home	so
Claus	if	some
comes	Ms.	they
do	of	tree

December 2007

after	presents	red
did	put	went
nose	puts	when

January, 2007

about	her	swim
away	ice	teacher
ever	lost	ten
food	much	us
four	not	was
game	outside	

February 2007

Dad	green	scorpions
all	hockey	there
book	never	there's (without the apostrophe)
does	net	together
first	pink	up
friend	playing	works
great	purple	

March 2007

bread	house	night
friends	houses	

Appendix I

Gracie's Known Writing Vocabulary

September 2007

and	he	up
big	is	we
black	my	
dog	to	

October 2007

a	dad	it
am	had	mom
Ashly	funny	she
at	I	that
but	in	

November 2007

dogs	ho	red
has	one	Santa
have	pink	was

December 2007

all	goes	the
family	last	there
Fridays	make	time
Game	on	white

January 2008

broken	his	tool
came	room	you
every	some	

February 2008

are	going	not
because	got	play
do	her	Saturday
don't	house	Sunday
end	how	they
feed	know	two
fish	looking	what
fun	me	when
girl	mom's	why

Appendix J

Eden's Known Writing Vocabulary

September 2007

a	fast	rich
all	go	she
as	he	the
be	in	thing
big	is	time
but	me	to
dog's	my	white

October 2007

and	has	ran
August	his	so
brown	I	spots
cage	jumps	that
can	just	that's
Elvis	long	too
end	looks	us
fish	mom's	was
food	name	we
frog	off	with
get	on	
got	pet	

November 2007

at	hang	or
cat	it	red
dad	its	see
dad's	last	them
had	like	they
Halloween	night	up

December 2007

back	if	reindeer
black	into	sack
boots	know	Santa
do	lot	Santa's
gets	not	sleigh
give	only	toys
hat	pull	what

January 2008

by	named	sister
felt	riding	smelled
girl	self	went
horse	shows	where

February 2008

an	it's	penguin
are	joy	penguins
bird	life	pump
blood	liked	pumps
dashed	little	saw
don't (without the apostrophe)	mother	sight
eat	move	some
feet	news	tall
first	one	then
flower	paint	when
grader	paintbrush	will
have	painting	you

March 2008

at	fun	there
boat	hands	things
butterfly	hill	turn
come	lay	turning
down	more	wet
ease	over	wind
eggs	sea	wish
ever	spring	world
flying	steel	