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**A descriptive study and analysis of two first grade teachers' development and implementation of writing-portfolio assessments.**

Shayne J. Lylis  
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A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY AND ANALYSIS OF TWO FIRST GRADE  
TEACHERS' DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF  
WRITING-PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENTS

A Dissertation Presented

by

SHAYNE J. LYLIS

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

February 1993

School of Education

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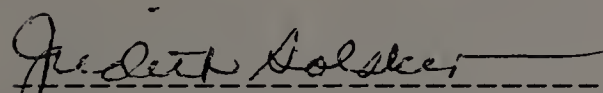
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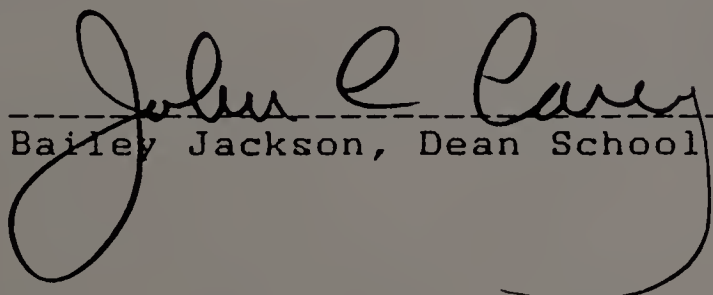
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## ABSTRACT

### A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY AND ANALYSIS OF TWO FIRST GRADE TEACHERS' DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF WRITING-PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENTS

FEBRUARY 1993

SHAYNE J. LYLIS, B.A., MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE

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This study is a descriptive analysis of the development and implementation of selected first grade teachers on the design and implementation of writing-portfolio assessment. The literature supported the need to examine alternative writing assessments that include both product and process-oriented information about developing writers. Writing-portfolio assessments focus on day-to-day interactions in the classroom and provide on-going diagnostic information about students' writing development and involvement with various instructional processes and procedures from one month to the next and from one year to the next.

Two first grade teachers were chosen for an indepth investigation of their portfolio assessments of the early

writer. Data were gathered using indepth interviewing, field observations and the analysis of student portfolios. The data collected were analyzed around categories derived from five main areas of investigation:

- A. Changes in writing instruction.
- B. Instruction and assessment.
- C. Reporting procedures.
- D. The Changing role of the teacher.
- E. Support for teachers.

Data gathered in this study indicated that as changes in writing instruction occurred in teachers' classrooms, a need for alternative assessments developed that would focus on a closer analysis of students' writing strengths and needs and would "capture" writing process opportunities and self-assessment activities in the classroom.

As student portfolios were analyzed, teachers were able to outline patterns of strengths and needs that led to designing specific goals and implementation plans with individual students and the class as a whole. The specificity of the assessment allowed teachers to include students in self-assessment processes that focused on

their development. Reporting portfolio assessment results to parents, future teachers, administrators and students themselves proved to be positive and informative.

Teachers implementing writing-portfolio assessments needed time and opportunities to discuss and define good writing, determine the kinds of information to collect, articulate realistic writing goals and expectations, design appropriate implementation plans and writing strategies and organize necessary record-keeping that would document and report on progress in students' writing portfolios.

Student writing-portfolio assessments documented students' development as writers, informed instruction and provided a "window" into the classroom. They offered teachers a greater potential in understanding and supporting their students' literacy development.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	v
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xi
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Purpose of Study.....	1
Statement of Problem.....	1
Background of the Problem.....	4
Research Questions.....	6
Methodology.....	7
Interviews.....	9
Participant Observation.....	9
Student Writing Portfolios.....	9
Limitations of the Study.....	10
Delimitations of the Study.....	11
Significance of the Study.....	11
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	13
Assessment in Process Writing Classrooms..	13
Purposes for Classroom Writing	
Assessment.....	15
Appropriate Assessments Needed in Process	
Writing Classrooms.....	18
Formative Assessment and Record-Keeping....	26
Summative Assessment and Record-Keeping....	36
Reporting.....	41
Summary.....	42
Teachers' Use of Writing-Portfolio	
Assessments.....	47
III. METHODOLOGY.....	53
Introduction.....	53
Participants and Setting.....	54

Researcher.....	61
Data Collection and Procedures.....	62
Interviews.....	62
Limitations.....	65
Participant Observations.....	67
Limitations.....	70
Student Writing Portfolios.....	71
Limitations.....	73
Analysis of Data.....	73
Interviews and Participant Observations.....	73
Student Portfolios.....	76
IV. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS.....	77
Introduction.....	77
Classroom Descriptions.....	78
Mrs. Mason's Classroom.....	78
Mrs. Bennett's Classroom.....	81
Interview and Observation Data Categories...	84
Changes in Writing Instruction.....	85
Ways Instruction and Assessment Were Related.....	89
Reporting Procedures.....	108
The Changing Role of the Teacher.....	111
Support for Teachers.....	114
Students' Portfolios.....	121
Student Portfolios in Mrs. Mason's Classroom.....	122

	Katherine's Writing Portfolio.....	123
	Students' Portfolios in Mrs. Bennett's Classroom.....	165
	Robin's Writing Portfolio.....	168
	Tony's writing Portfolio.....	182
	Anna's Writing Portfolio.....	192
	Helen's Writing Portfolio.....	209
V.	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	220
	Conclusions.....	220
	Recommendations.....	245
	APPENDICES	
	A. WRITING PROCESS COVER SHEET.....	249
	B. WRITING DEVELOPMENT CHECKLISTS.....	250
	C. INTERVIEW GUIDES .....	257
	D. DEVELOPMENTAL WRITING STAGES.....	260
	E. WRITING SURVEY.....	262
	F. THINKING ABOUT WRITING - A SURVEY.....	263
	G. SCALE OF TEACHERS' INVOLVEMENT WITH PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT USED FOR BLACKBURN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROJECT..	264
	H. FIRST GRADE PORTFOLIO LITERACY RECORD.....	267
	I. GOALS FOR THE EARLY WRITER.....	268
	J. STATUS OF THE CLASS REPORT.....	270
	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	272

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Sunset.....	125
2. Toby in Trouble.....	126
3. House of Fun.....	126
4. Planting a Tree.....	127
5. The Sawmill.....	129
6. Toby's Problem.....	129
7. Seasons.....	130
8. Pumpkins.....	131
9. The Snowman.....	135
10. Butter.....	137
11. Tapping a Tree.....	138
12. Sugar House.....	139
13. Sugar House - Rough Draft.....	140
14. Magic Dream - Rough Draft.....	142
15. Magic Dream - Story Web.....	143
16. Magic Dream - Revisions.....	144
17. Magic Dream - Final Copy.....	145
18. Fish - Story Web.....	146
19. Fish story - Final Copy.....	147
20. Fish Poem.....	148

21.	Observation of Chives.....	150
22.	Results of the Day.....	152
23.	Toby Book.....	155
24.	Toby Adventures.....	156
25.	Toby Continues His Adventures.....	157
26.	Toby the Dog.....	158
27.	Thinking About Writing - First Grade.....	160
28.	Cat.....	170
29.	Halloween.....	170
30.	Easter-Final Copy.....	172
31.	Easter - Rough Draft.....	173
32.	The Playmobile.....	176
33.	Conference.....	177
34.	Playmobile Additions.....	177
35.	Author.....	177
36.	The Adventurous Seal - Rough Draft.....	178
37.	Adventurous Seal - Final Copy.....	179
38.	Print.....	183
39.	Mousetrap.....	183
40.	A Red Design.....	184
41.	Mummies.....	184
42.	Sliding.....	185
43.	Spring, Winter, Fall and Summer.....	187
44.	The Easter Bunny and Conference.....	188



45.	Florida.....	189
46.	Bike.....	190
47.	The Cat and the Mouse.....	193
48.	Pumpkins.....	194
49.	The Ballet and the Recorder.....	195
50.	Kangaroo and Giraffe - Part 1.....	196
51.	Kangaroo and Giraffe - Part 2.....	197
52.	Kangaroo and Giraffe - Final Copy.....	198
53.	The Story of Easter - Part 1-4.....	200
54.	The Story of Easter - Part 5-6.....	201
55.	The Story of Easter - Final Copy.....	202
56.	The Barn Dance.....	204
57.	Interview - Part 1.....	205
58.	Interview - Part 2.....	206
59.	Interview Plan .....	207
60.	Interview Questions.....	207
61.	Interview Notes.....	208
62.	Mousetrap on Tree.....	210
63.	Bug.....	211
64.	Christmas Tree.....	212
65.	The Girl.....	213
66.	Squirrel.....	214
67.	Fashion.....	215

68.	Flag.....	215
69.	Easter Rabbit.....	217
70.	Easter Rabbit - Conference.....	217

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to document two first grade teachers' development and implementation of a portfolio approach to the assessment of writing. These teachers were enrolled in a writing project that provided them time to discuss writing strategies and assessment in their classrooms with the director of curriculum and each other. Release time was also provided to review and analyze student work in student writing portfolios. This writing project was designed to support teachers in the exploration and implementation of alternative writing assessments of individual students. From the writing project participants, two teachers were selected so that a more indepth review of their writing portfolio assessments and their perceptions of the process could be made by the researcher.

#### Statement of Problem

Writing assessment has been out of step with instruction. It has focused primarily on product-oriented information which traditionally focused on elements of the final written product with little

attention to the processes involved in developing a piece of writing.

As our youth confront the demands of the Twenty-First century, educators are realizing that new goals are becoming increasingly apparent as survival skills for their future and the future of our democratic institutions. ...our methods of assessment must be transformed to become more consistent with our goals. We can't employ product-oriented assessment techniques to assess the achievement of process-oriented goals (Costa 1989).

Researchers such as Donald Graves (1983), Nancie Atwell (1987), Lucy Calkins (1986), Brian Cambourne (1988,1990), Jane Hansen (1986), Richard Gentry (1987), Arthur Applebee (1981, 1990-91), Steven Zemelman and Harvey Daniels (1988) have investigated the use of process writing in the classroom, changes in writing classrooms that have led to the need for changes in assessment, and techniques for collecting and reporting information on a student's writing progress.

The writing process in a more 'process-oriented' classroom consists of topics chosen by the students; the creation of multiple drafts; time for teacher/student feedback or response to content through individual, small and whole group conferences; time for editing sessions which focus on the mechanics of writing within the

context of the student's piece of writing; and the creation of a finished piece that is often typed or made into a book. Throughout this process, time exists for individual self-reflection and classroom discussions that support the developing writer.

Assessment that focuses on the day-to-day work of students and on instructional interactions in the classroom is necessary in order to meet individual needs, design appropriate curriculum opportunities, facilitate change over time and successfully report progress on authentic, task-related activities.

Procedures that are based on standardized testing are not appropriate for assessing the writing development of individual students and their writing progress in a classroom in which changes towards a more process-oriented program have been made. Traditional testing of children's literacy development is dependent on the results of multiple choice, norm-referenced, product-oriented testing. The results of these tests are used to provide objective data for purposes of "classification, accountability and progress monitoring" (Johnston, 1987, 745). Many educators argue that "standardized tests measure a narrow band of performance and trivialize the curriculum" (Mills 1989, 8). They are



based on outdated language research and "ignore emergent reading and writing behaviors (and are, therefore) ...incomplete measures of language learning" (Heald-Taylor 1989, 6).

Alternative assessments to standardized testing, often referred to as "performance" or "authentic" assessments, must be designed to measure directly the student's ability to perform in the subject area. Teachers must learn how to successfully collect data about student performance through observation, group projects and discussions, anecdotal records, checklists, journal writing and extended projects. "We must acknowledge that the assessments that count in terms of student learning and academic self concept are those used day-to-day in the classroom...The time has come to redirect our research and development resources and efforts to the classroom..." (Stiggins 1990, 73).

#### Background of the Problem

"The nation is focused on student assessment" (O'Neal 1991, 72). A number of school districts across the country are looking at how best to assess and measure their students' progress with less reliance on highly criticized standardized tests: Assessments that measure student performance on more "authentic", real-life

learning tasks and that require more complex and challenging mental processes from students are being designed and piloted in various states in the United States (Willis 1990). Performance assessments are based on the sampling of students' work within schools. They include student portfolios and the assessment of performance-based tasks. School wide pilots of the portfolio assessment of writing across the curriculum have been conducted in California (Shepard 1989). The state of Vermont is the first to launch a statewide assessment that uses portfolios in addition to standardized exams to measure student abilities (Mills 1989). The nation's most extensive district wide experiment in using portfolios is taking place in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where portfolios are being piloted in music, visual arts and writing (Mills 1989).

California has a teacher-developed performance-based writing assessment (California Assessment Program) in place at two grade levels. They are currently developing an integrated English-language arts assessment for their literature-based state-wide curriculum (Shepard 1989).

California and Vermont are investigating mathematics assessments that will use a variety of approaches. Strategies will include student portfolios and

performance tasks that involve students in complex problem-solving situations (Willis 1990).

In England, "practical" assessment based on performance tasks in the area of science is being investigated, and will include individual and group assessments through both oral and written tasks (Shepard 1989).

As schools nationally are revising their assessment programs to include alternatives that are considered to be better suited to measure student achievement in which instruction is based on a more process oriented approach, teachers are being asked "to play a central role in designing, administering and scoring assessment tasks" (Willis 1990, 5). - Ruth Mitchell, associate director for the Council of Basic Education, comments that these efforts are "the world's best form of professional development because they make teachers carefully consider what they want their students to know and how they can ensure that students have learned it" (Willis 1990).

### Research Questions

As teachers become more involved in classroom assessment and the use, particularly, of portfolio assessment, experiences vary and issues in implementation arise. This study investigated experiences teachers had

in developing a writing portfolio assessment and their perceptions of the issues that did arise as part of the implementation. As more and more interest arises in the practice of teacher/student centered assessment that can be implemented in the classroom, information on the use of these assessments and issues that occur as a result of their implementation is necessary. Questions of the researcher focused around five main areas of investigation:

- A. Changes in writing instruction that led teachers to perceive a need for changes in writing assessment.
- B. Ways in which instruction and assessment are related or connected.
- C. Reporting procedures to parents, other teachers, administrators and students themselves.
- D. The changing role of the teacher as a result of writing-portfolio assessment.
- E. Support necessary for teachers involved in writing-portfolio assessment.

#### Methodology

The researcher collected and reported on first grade teachers' perceptions of a portfolio approach to the assessment of writing by use of a qualitative research design that included interviews of teachers, participant observations and the selection of a collection of student writing portfolios.

Qualitative research enables a researcher to study issues in depth and detail and to know his or her subjects well.

The researcher makes firsthand observations of activities and interactions, some time engaging personally in those activities as a participant observer. The qualitative researcher talks with people about their experiences and perceptions. Relevant records and documents are examined. Extensive field notes are collected through these observations, interviews, and document reviews. The finding, understandings, and insights that emerge from fieldwork and subsequent analysis are the fruit of qualitative inquiry (Patton 1990, 10). Qualitative data are attractive. They are a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes occurring in local contexts (Miles and Huberman 1984, 15).

For the purpose of this study a writing portfolio was defined as a collection of student writing samples collected over a period of time. The portfolios also included teacher/student records of other evidence of achievement such as lists of writings completed, writing conferences conducted with the teacher or classroom peers, student writing surveys, writing checklists for skill development and records of goal setting.



Triangulation was used to provide multiple sources of information:

### Interviews

Interviews were conducted with teachers based on a "general interview guide approach" which outlined a "set of issues that are to be explored with each respondent before interviewing begins" (Patton 1990, 280). This set of issues was used as a checklist so that all intended topics were covered (Appendix C). The second interview was based on a general interview guide approach. However, the questions or topics took on a narrower focus as the interviewer became more familiar with the area of the study.

### Participant Observation

Participant observations were made throughout the year in each teacher's classroom, and the researcher was involved with students in some of their writing projects. The researcher met with teachers to review and analyze portfolios collaboratively. The researcher documented her participation through fieldnotes and selective video-taping of classroom instruction.

### Student Writing Portfolios

Student writing portfolios provided information on ways in which instruction and assessment were related.

They were kept by teachers and students. Samples of students' writing were collected in portfolios and analyzed quarterly by the researcher and the teacher. Information about students' writing was summarized by teachers so that it could be reported to parents and students themselves. Portfolios of four students were selected to represent various levels of developmental progress in writing based on developmental writing stages documented by teachers of the early writer (Appendix D). One student writing portfolio was used to provide evidence of the breadth and depth of the teacher's writing program and of the opportunities for involving students in various writing processes such as collaborative goal setting, peer editing and self-reflection procedures.

#### Limitations of the Study

The researcher is the director of curriculum in the district in which the study occurred and was the sole collector of the data. She was the facilitator of the writing project and met monthly with selected teachers to review their students' writing portfolios. Therefore, the reader must recognize the possibility of researcher bias. The researcher was also the supervisor of the participating teachers. To mitigate teachers' possible concerns about their annual evaluations, participating

teachers were told that they would all receive the same letter describing their participation in the writing project rather than a yearly classroom evaluation write-up. This helped to establish a more supportive relationship between the researcher and the teachers. Limitations were placed on the study by the lack of time that the researcher could spend with each of the teachers and in each of their classrooms. The study sample was small and only included teachers of the early writer. Therefore, further sampling with a larger group of teachers and with teachers of older writers is recommended.

#### Delimitations of the Study

This study is not a comprehensive or evaluative study. The researcher chose to select teachers who were the most productive in the use of writing-portfolio assessments and who provided the most comprehensive information about their perceptions of developing and implementing writing-portfolio assessments in their classrooms.

#### Significance of the Study

Teachers involved in this study participated in designing their own professional development in the area

of writing instruction and assessment with the director of curriculum and their peers. They were given time to design, organize and analyze a portfolio approach to writing assessment.

Data collected by the researcher provided information on these teachers' experiences in developing a portfolio approach to writing assessment and their perceptions as to the issues involved in its implementation. New insights into changes in writing instruction that led to changes in writing assessment and to the use of a writing-portfolio assessment approach that determined day-to-day curriculum and instructional decisions were a result of this study. Involving students in self-assessment processes while designing record-keeping strategies for the writing classroom and determining procedures for reporting student progress were a result of this study. Investigating changes in the role of the teacher and recognizing necessary support for teachers involved in implementing writing-portfolio assessments were also a focus. Conclusions derived from this study may serve as a basis for assessments on the state and national levels. Writing-portfolio assessment could also be used to assess the availability of opportunities for our students to various writing processes in the classroom and in school programs.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Assessment in Process Writing Classrooms

Assessment that focuses on the day-to-day work of students and on instructional interactions in the classroom is necessary in order to meet individual needs and facilitate change over time. Teachers who support students as writers use a formative type of assessment that is diagnostic in nature and informs teachers and students alike of progress made.

Diagnostic teaching is a method that integrates assessment and instruction. ...it is well to think of diagnostic teaching as both cyclical and continuous. Generally the results of diagnostic teaching are used either to establish a new focus for additional diagnostic teaching or to plan an instructional program. The purpose of good assessment is to help us make efficient and significant progress with our students (Valencia and Wixson 1991, 420).

As teachers immerse themselves in the writing classroom, become involved in observing and responding to student work and reflect on their role in the classroom, they will need assessment instruments that will allow them to base their plans on the changing needs of their students as writers and "record results in a systematic fashion" (Valencia and Wixson 1991, 420). As students are asked to reflect on their own development, contribute



to their writing goals, respond to the writing of others and become part of the evaluation process, record keeping and assessment that is more process oriented and diagnostic in nature will become an essential part of a process writing classroom. Teachers and students can work collaboratively to maintain a collection of writing samples and other records that indicate a student's writing development in a writing folder or portfolio. Students can be asked to review their writing portfolios to reflect on their development as a writer. Students might ask themselves What do I like most about this work?

What was important to me when I wrote it? If I revised this, what would I change? How has my writing changed since I wrote this? How is it like other pieces of my work? Is it my best sample?" (Vavrus 1990, 52).

As students reflect on their own development, they are more able to become part of the process of collaborative goal setting and more able to effectively respond to the writing of others. They become more invested in the classroom processes that support the writer and take greater ownership for their own writing development. Portfolios invite "self-reflection and encourage students to assume control over their writing. Accumulating a body of work to return to, to reject, revise, or simply revisit calls on students to become



responsible for the content and quality of their portfolio, and ultimately to confront their personal writing inventories and investments in the activities of the class" (Herter 1991, 90).

Based on an examination of the literature on writing assessment, this chapter will address the following questions:

1. What are purposes for classroom assessment?
2. What changes have occurred in process writing classrooms that have led to the need for changes in assessment?
3. What form can this kind of assessment take in order to best support risk taking and define next steps for teachers and students, facilitate shared development and monitor progress?
4. How can the information gathered be presented to other teachers, parents and administrators?

#### Purposes for Classroom Writing Assessment

Rudman explains that there are three functions for evaluation in an educational program (1989, 195):

1. The monitoring of daily growth and development in writing by the teacher and the student for the purpose of designing curriculum that responds to the student's strengths and needs. This is referred to as formative assessment.
2. Periodic evaluations of collections of writing by the teacher and the student for the purpose of making judgments about the student's achievements and the efficacy of instruction. This is referred to as summative assessment.

3. Reporting progress in writing growth to other teachers, parents and administrators.

Assessment that is formative in nature supports records that are designed for diagnostic and instructional purposes. Formative assessment procedures such as anecdotal record-keeping are formulated to focus on and keep track of the strengths, needs and next steps of a student in a process writing classroom.

"Observations about students in the process of everyday reading and writing allow teachers to see for themselves the reading and writing problem-solving strategies students use and their response to the reading and writing" (Rhodes and Nathenson-Mejia 1992, 502). As the teacher and the student record and reflect on these strengths, needs and next steps, decisions are made about the daily curriculum. Lessons are designed and are based on information gathered from day-to-day teacher/student interactions. Record keeping is designed by teachers and students to facilitate the collection of this type of daily information gathering.

Assessment of a more summative nature "Quantifies what has been learned up to a point (Zemelman and Daniels 1988, 217). In a writing classroom teachers and students can analyze representative samples or collections of

writing over time and with a focus on many different aspects of writing such as topic selection, use of pre-writing strategies, participation in response groups, clarity and completeness of content, evidence of editing and evidence of risk-taking. This type of summative assessment or analysis over time provides a periodic "quantified report to learners or outside parties about what has been learned" (Zemelman and Daniels 1988, 217). The daily progress of students involved in a process writing classroom is based on collections of formative records and can be very informative for parents, administrators and other teachers in reviewing and supporting day-to-day development. Zemelman and Daniels contend that "good formative evaluation stretches and challenges kids to operate in their zone of proximal development" (1988, 217). Assessments of both a formative and summative nature are very useful to those interested in a student's growth and development in writing. However, as Tierney, Carter and Desai stated, "The summarizing and reporting of students' achievement must be consistent with and reflect what we know to be the process of students' learning" (1991, 178-179).

Each of these assessment purposes will be discussed in more detail after initially focusing on changes for the teacher and the student in a process writing classroom that have led to changes in assessment.

### Appropriate Assessments Needed in Process Writing Classrooms

Beliefs about the focus of writing instruction in our classrooms have changed over the last ten to fifteen years as teachers move from a more traditional skills-based approach' in writing to a more 'process oriented approach'. A 'skills-based approach' in writing is based on the belief that the learning of writing sub-skills such as spelling, grammar, phonics and handwriting lead to the effective development of a composition. Emphasis in a 'skills-based approach' is placed on instructional time for these skills which are taught in isolation and separately from students' compositions (Heald-Taylor 1989, 10,12), (Rosen 1987, 12). Writing has traditionally consisted of skills lessons, teacher assigned topics, a single draft composed by the student, a single editing session by the student and the creation of a final copy (Heald-Taylor 1989, 14). Opportunities for writing in a more traditional skills-based writing program are usually assigned on a weekly basis with



little or no time to write daily in the classroom (Heald-Taylor 1989, 15).

Writing instruction in a more 'process oriented classroom' is based on the belief that students need to be involved often in actually communicating ideas through writing. Students communicate stories through drawing pictures, dictating stories and the use of scribbles or invented spelling (Clay 1975, 4,9,59); (Clay 1979, 86-87); (Gentry 1987). The actual mechanics of writing develop as part of the act of writing and are supported by teacher/student and/or student/student editing sessions (Calkins 1986, 55-57); (Graves 1983, 56-58); (DiStefano and Killion 1984, 203-207). The writing process in a more 'process oriented' classroom consists of topics chosen by the students; the creation of multiple drafts; time for teacher/student feedback or response to content through individual, small and whole group conferences; time for editing sessions which focus on the mechanics of writing within the context of the student's piece of writing; and the creation of a finished piece that is often typed or made into a book.

As changes occur in writing instruction in our classrooms, the focus of evaluation changes. The focus of evaluation in a more 'skills-based' writing program is

on the demonstration of isolated skills. A piece of writing is evaluated heavily for the mechanics of writing rather than the clarity and content of the writing or the processes involved in composing the writing (Applebee 1981, 90-91); Zemelman and Daniels 1988, 205-208).

The focus of evaluation in a more 'process oriented' writing program is on the acquisition of actual composing strategies (e.g. use of description and detail, use of a variety of beginnings and endings and the use of different genres), on the development of the mechanics of writing within the context of a student's piece of writing and on students' effective use of and participation in various writing processes for developing a piece of writing (e.g. teacher/student conferences and student response groups) (Atwell 1987, 88).

Changes in teacher to student and student to student interactions in a process writing classroom have led to valuable exchanges of ideas and information that support and promote the growth and development of individual student writing. These changes also place new demands on appropriate record keeping and assessment.

If we take a look at some of the changing aspects of a classroom moving from a more 'skills-based' writing approach to a more 'process oriented' writing approach



we see changes in the role of the teacher and the student that lead to a new look at assessment as well. A teacher of writing becomes a facilitator of learning in a process writing classroom rather than a director of others' learning. Cambourne states that a facilitator in a writing classroom schedules time for students to read, write, respond, collaborate, advise and revise in groups as they discover what it means to take on new roles in the classroom (1988, 114-120).

Graves comments that teachers and students become involved day-to-day in roles as readers, coaches, listeners, advisors and authors (1983, 119-128). As facilitators of writing, however, teachers do not give up their authority to make decisions about classroom scheduling and instruction. They still direct learning; but in a way that enables students to discover much of their own direction (Zemelman and Daniels 1988, 220-226). Teachers and students share in discussions of process on a daily basis. They ask students to explore and to share their own thinking and their own composing strategies. Teachers promote a dialogue between and among students as to their discoveries in experiencing the joys and frustrations in the process of writing.

Teachers of writing provide opportunities for students to ask questions and share their responses to each other's writing and to the writing of published authors through reflective writing and classroom discussions. They create opportunities for communication that enable students to grow and develop as writers and as learners. Student response groups are formed that may involve the whole class, small groups or pairs of students. This 'responsive writing' supports the writer's voice in his or her own writing and in his or her enthusiasm to communicate (Hansen 1987, 126). As part of these opportunities for communication, there is always the underlying message that we are in this learning process together and that individually, we are capable writers and learners who offer valid contributions towards growth. In short teachers of writing promote and support a community of writers who share their knowledge and contribute to the knowledge of others.

A great deal of attention is being paid to the assessment of process in addition to product in reading and writing. Observing the process a student uses provides the teacher with a window or view on how students arrive at products (i.e., a piece of writing or an answer to a comprehension question). This allows the teacher to make good decisions about how she or he might assist during the process or restructure the process in order

to best support more effective use of strategies and students' development as readers and writers (Rhodes and Nathenson-Mejia 1992, 502).

In a classroom in which roles are changing and different kinds of interactions are occurring, new record keeping and assessment strategies are essential so that teachers and students can keep track of teacher/student responses that may influence future revisions in a piece of writing. The record keeping in an interactive classroom such as this also helps to determine day-to-day scheduling needs as students move through the process of developing a piece of writing.

Procedures that are based on standardized testing are not appropriate for assessing writing development among students in a classroom in which these kinds of changes towards a more process oriented program have been made. The testing of children's literacy development is dependent on the results of multiple choice, norm-referenced, product oriented testing. Standardized tests

do not reflect the skills and knowledge that are developing in young children, which we have learned about in the research on emerging literacy. Tests are not sensitive to the development of personal characteristics of young children (Strickland and Morrow 1989, 634-635).

...teachers' informal observations and intuitions about children's needs are far more useful than are scores from formal tests (Shovelson and Stern 1981, 455-498).

What do students do when they write? Where do they get their ideas for writing? How do students develop as writers? How do they perceive themselves as writers? What are students' perceptions of what makes a good writer? What are students doing when they involve themselves in a process writing program? Answers to these questions about writing behaviors can not be answered by more traditional assessment procedures- namely standardized testing. This type of testing does not address the meaningful instructional decision making that occurs between teachers and students daily in the classroom (Heald-Taylor 1989, 109-112).

Valencia recommends that in a writing process classroom, assessment should be the process of gathering information to meet students' individual needs. This kind of assessment information is immediately useful, built into teaching and integral to day-to-day work (1990, 338-340). It facilitates change and progress over time, engages students and is accomplished during the actual acts of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Record-keeping that would support and



facilitate this 'formative' type of assessment includes anecdotal records, actual student writing samples and projects, audio and visual records, personal interest records, conference forms, learning logs or process logs, literacy checklists and self-evaluation records (Parry and Hornsby 1985, 37-56).

Goodman, Goodman and Hood found that as teachers and students interact and become involved in the learning environment of a classroom that supports a process-approach-to-writing and a more wholistic nature of literacy development, teachers begin to explore more appropriate strategies for monitoring and evaluating student progress (1989, 21-24). Assessment techniques that address the developmental nature of student growth in a classroom and facilitate a building store of knowledge about each student's literacy development are emphasized (Goodman, Goodman and Hood 1989, xi-xv). These assessment techniques include student talk about their own processes of development as they reflect on composing strategies. As Atwell points out, individual teacher/student conferences promote student reflection on topics that are meaningful to them, on what they're trying to achieve in their writing, on what they need to revise for clarity or to elaborate on in order to enhance



content, and on an awareness of those skills that they are using well. Through individual evaluation conferences with the teacher and each other, students can more formally reflect on their development and contribute to their own writing goals (1987, 114).

#### Formative Assessment and Record-Keeping

Formative record-keeping focuses on observations of daily student progress through notes, comments and checklists (Harp 1991, 89). Students in a process writing classroom become involved in working with various techniques for expanding content, focusing on clarity and assessing correctness. As students develop these techniques as writers, teachers maintain collections of student writing and keep notes, comments and skill checklists for diagnostic purposes and the documentation of writing development (Harp 1991, 89). Zemelman and Daniels recommends classroom peer writing groups for providing writing support (1988, 195). As students receive feedback from their peers, they can document these suggestions and reflect on them when revising their writing and deciding on goals for future pieces.

As Atwell suggests, records can be developed to follow student progress in various areas of their writing development. More specifically, these notes, comments

and checklists focus on a students' attitudes towards writing, on a students' growth in the use of process skills (pre-writing, drafting, conferring and revising), content development skills (use of appropriate titles, leads and endings; use of detail, description and style; use of variety in sentence structure; use of different genre, etc.) and editing skills (spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting) (1988, 114). These records are used to identify the strengths, needs and next steps of students involved in a process writing program.

Atwell recommends that students keep writing portfolios or folders containing writing samples collected over time that represent a variety of different kinds of writing in as many different content areas as possible. These writing samples include all drafts of student work (1988, 216-218). Formative student/teacher records that consist of notes, comments and skills checklists are included in the portfolio as examples of student's writing growth.

Notes, comments and checklists can be recorded on a regular basis so that teachers can help students see their progress. Hansen suggests that a chart be included in a student's writing folder and used to record progress: (1987, 96). It can be filled out by students

themselves. This chart would focus on the listing of reading and writing skills and processes that the student can do well, activities that are currently being worked on and learning goals for the future. When students can list skills and processes in which they are doing well and making progress, it can be a very informative and positive experience. Building on 'I can do statements' promotes an atmosphere conducive to continued exploration and risk-taking by students. Such a form also helps both teachers and students to keep track of current writing activities and mutually established goals that support students in their development. Hansen comments, "The types of entries for the chart are endless - whatever is important to teacher and child" (1987, 97).

Goodman, Goodman and Hood proposed another format that includes the teacher's comments on skills and writing processes that the student uses, goals that the student is working towards and writing titles that the student has completed (1989, 155). Students follow their progress, are involved in keeping track of goals for composing and record writing titles that have been completed. They monitor their use of various writing processes such as conferring and revising and their exploration of various kinds of writing over time. When

the teacher and the student review writing progress and develop plans for the future, their record serves as a basis for discussion.

Learning logs or process logs involve students in a self-assessment process and serve as another source of information. They can be kept by students as they discuss and reflect on what they've learned, pose questions that they have, solve problems and analyze their particular learning processes. Students reflect on questions that focus on their development of a piece of writing ("Involving Students" 1989).

How did the idea originate?  
Why was this form (essay, poem, short story, or the like) chosen?  
Which new techniques were tried?  
What was added, dropped, rearranged?  
Who gave helpful suggestions?  
What problems cropped up and how they were solved?  
Who might be the perfect audience; an antagonistic audience?  
What metaphor could describe the writing?  
Which lines or sections are best and which still don't satisfy?  
What surprises came during writing?  
How did this work compare to previous writing?  
What was learned in the process?

As students share and discuss their log entries with peers, they learn from each other and perhaps feel supported or affirmed in reference to their own struggles as writers and learners. Log entries are yet another



record of growth. Cambourne notes "...the most effective users of reading and writing are also those who can tell me the most about the processes and knowledge they use in order to read and write " (1988, 197). Wilson reports that in some classrooms reading logs are kept by students so that they can think about their reading by writing about it.

"Teachers encourage students to "respond deeply, write honestly and admit confusion. Students begin to read to answer their own questions and to make decisions about what they will write about. They ask questions, make predictions, form opinions, reread the text to find evidence to support their opinions, notice subtleties of a writer's craft. Writing, students agree, both creates thought and makes it visible" (1989, 63).

The questions and problems that reveal themselves through these logs become opportunities for teaching and responding.

Working collaboratively, students must define problems for themselves and critically explore solutions; in so doing they practice crucial skills in listening, talking, and reading; in generating ideas, generalizing, abstracting, debating; and above all in assessing their own performance. In short, group learning in the writing process allows students direct access to the processes of inquiry and discovery as they naturally occur--processes that oftentimes students only hear about at second or third hand from their teachers" (Spear 1988, 6).

Atwell comments that when teachers conduct conferences with their students, notes can be kept on



skills that the student is using well and on skills to focus in on for future pieces of writing. A conference form could be used for documenting growth and defining next steps (1987, 108).

Atwell records the title, date and kind of writing being discussed in the first column of the conference form. She also leaves room to comment on any other observation that she'd like to remember. Skills used correctly are also listed. This is a list of 'I can do statements' for the student. Atwell explains, "This column forces me to focus on, and then celebrate, what my kids can do rather than falling back into my old deficit-model perspective" (1987, 108). If an arrow points to a particular skill, it refers to a skill that was taught in a previous conference. Atwell uses a third column to record what she will teach or address with the student. A circled number in such a column of skills would refer to a skill that needed to be re-taught.

Such a conference form helps to celebrate individual growth as well as individualize instruction based on needs seen in a particular student's writing. It is a form that helps the teacher to keep track of the different kinds of writing that the student is exploring and the date of each piece. Teacher/student conference

records can include comments on a student's use of mechanics, development of content, and use of style and processes for developing a piece of writing.

This type of assessment is on-going and ever varied in its content. As students interact with print, explore and experiment, make approximations in their learning and take risks in sharing their work and responding to the work of others, their ability as literacy learners changes on a day to day basis. This is a record of those changes in a student's editing skills.

In order to base plans on the changing needs of students as writers, teachers find that they need to continually 'check' in with their students on a daily basis. Students may need to confer with the teacher, share a draft in process with an audience, self-edit, edit with a peer or the teacher, write or type a final copy or complete illustrations to accompany a final copy. Atwell's "status of the class" record keeps track of students' writing progress (1987, 91). Such a report helps teachers to plan for necessary individual, group or whole class content or editing conferences. It provides a basis for designing mini-lessons for revision and for grouping students as they become ready for an audience of their peers. A "status of the class" record indicates

the progress that a student is making in his or her writing over a period of time and provides opportunities to monitor students' writing difficulties.

Atwell asks her students two questions as the 'status of the class' form is filled out:

1. What is your topic?

2. What do you intend to do in today's workshop?

As students listen to each other report on their progress, new writers' options become available to them. They hear topics that others are tackling and procedures that they are using to develop a piece. This report allows the daily planning to come from the students themselves.

As indicated by the format of these formative records, the evaluation process involves students and their peers in commenting on their own papers, establishing goals for improvement and becoming actively involved in their own learning. Peer evaluation in response groups or editing groups allows students to listen to each others' papers and provide feedback. The focus is on students expressing their opinions about others' writing. They encourage, critique and offer suggestions. Students improve on their editing skills and expand their own

processes as writers as they begin to internalize the dialogue that comes from responding to and critiquing others' work.

Teachers need to model ways of responding to writing by working with the whole class on a piece of writing and then allowing students to work in pairs to refine their skills before moving into editing groups. A variety of responses to a piece of writing that is displayed to the whole class on an overhead serve as models for students to discuss. Beaven suggests the following tasks for discussion by writing response groups (1983, 68).

- Identify the best section of a composition and describe what makes it effective
- Identify a sentence, a group of sentences or a paragraph that needs revision. revise it as a group, writing the final version on the back of the paper.
- Identify one or two things the writer can do to improve his or her next piece of writing. Write these goals on the first page of the paper.

Response sheets can be designed with open-ended sentences to complete about a piece of writing. Demonstrations of group processes in a response group could be conducted in the classroom with sentence openers like the following as guides: ("Involving Students", 1989).

You might want to include.....

You might try changing.....

I'm not sure that would work because.....

I really liked.....

Teacher/student response groups are an important part of the formative process involved in developing a piece of writing. Records of comments and suggestions from these response groups provide students with information to address further in their writing.

Peer evaluation through student response groups promotes students' sense of independence and responsibility as writers, reduces the teacher's time as the sole evaluator and helps students to see and appreciate different approaches and styles. Graves suggests that students' progress in receiving and responding to each others' writing be collected on a chart and analyzed by teachers ( 1983, 300). Such a chart would monitor students' particular abilities in receiving information and in asking appropriate questions during peer response sessions.

As teachers and students observe their involvement in the process of writing and conferring, they note characteristics that define the presence of particular literacy skills and attitudes. Through classroom observation and interactions, teacher/student records are kept. These formative records focus on students' growth



in the use of process skills, content development skills and editing skills. These written records along with student writing samples become central to the classroom plans that are designed by teachers and students to meet individual needs. They are created by the teacher and student together so as to include students themselves as an integral part of their own evaluation. The teaching program evolves from these records.

### Summative Assessment and Record-Keeping

The preceding review has focused on the record-keeping involved in evaluation of a more formative type. Grading, however, is of a more summative nature and "rates students against some kind of a scale and puts a final label on a finished paper" (Zemelman and Daniels 1988, 227). It involves assigning a number or letter to represent writing performance and tells students little about their strengths and needs as a writer. It is important to separate the more final and judgmental nature of grading from the more formative nature of teacher/student response and feedback to writing in progress.

Evaluation of a more summative nature can be used on representative samples of students' work rather than on all of their writing. Atwell suggests that a portfolio

of student selected pieces be edited and refined for grading purposes. This would allow for more risk-taking by students on pieces that may not have to be submitted for a final grade (1988, 236-237). Such a process would include grading and correcting objectives as well as an emphasis on supporting students by helping them become aware of their strengths and needs as writers. Atwell also bases quarterly evaluations on student conferences that involve certain questions about writing and on progress made toward individual goals set by the student and the teacher. Evaluation conferences not only involve students in an analysis of their collections of writing but allow them to establish part of the criteria on which their writing development will be evaluated in the next quarter's assessment.

Several evaluation techniques of a more summative nature include holistic scoring, primary trait scoring and analytical scoring (Zemelman and Daniels 1988, 231-233). Holistic scoring of student writing samples uses overall impressions of readers to rate a paper. "...the whole piece of writing is greater than the sum of its parts " (Myers 1980, 1). Criteria for scoring the papers are established by the readers.

Primary trait scoring focuses on specific characteristics of a particular type of writing (Zemelman and Daniels 1988, 233-234). Thus, criteria for assessment vary according to the specific assignment. Analytical scoring also focuses on one or more characteristics of writing but selects certain specific characteristics to evaluate in any composition.

Cambourne refers to his research with literacy learners and states:

...those whom I've considered to be the most effective users of reading and writing are also those who can tell me the most about the processes and knowledge they use in order to read and write. They display high levels of what I have previously referred to as meta-textual awareness, that is, conscious awareness of how they read and write, how they deal with reading and writing problems, how they learn, and so on (1988, 197).

He cites a writing interview with a eight-year-old student named Matthew as an example of this kind of knowledge (Cambourne 1988, 197):

BC: Tell me about writing. Do you like writing?

MR: Yes! I love making up fictional stories. Mostly I get my ideas from fictional books. They give me really good ideas. If you want to make a really good emotional story you should read books with emotion in them. If you want to write a good, non-fiction piece you should read a non-fiction book.

Effective learners can talk about connections among learning, reading and writing. They can talk about how

they learned to spell and punctuate, where they got their ideas for writing and how they solved reading/writing problems. Writers can talk about the effectiveness of appropriate leads, endings and the use of details in writing. They can share ideas for solving writers' block. Students who are becoming effective learners can make comparisons to other authors in reference to plot, setting, style and character development. Cambourne states that his research has convinced him "that there is a connection between the level of meta-textual awareness and the effectiveness of a writer" (1988, 200).

As students become more aware of and more able to articulate their processes for composing - their processes for actually thinking about their writing, they become more effective at critically analyzing their own writing and on giving more appropriate feedback to other writers.

Peter Elbow comments,

Since we are trying for the tricky goal of thinking about our subject but at the same time thinking about our thinking about it, putting our thoughts on paper gives us a fighting chance. ...what most heightens this critical awareness is the coming back to a text and re-seeing it from the outside (in space) instead of just hearing it from the inside (in time) (1986, 58).



Students need to be given opportunities to discuss and write about their writing processes.

Donald Murray comments on "writing about writing",

In recent years I've asked most students to pass in commentaries with their drafts, telling themselves, their classmates, their instructor what worked and what needs work. They also compared their intentions to their accomplishments, explained their working procedures, defined problems and proposed solutions, suggested what they would do next, reported what they had learned and needed to learn, responded to their classmates' and their instructor's commentaries ( 1989, 133).

If we are to involve our students in the design of more summative assessment procedures, they can be part of establishing the criteria on which the summative assessments are based. Students in conjunction with the teacher can establish and "weight" criteria for various writing assignments. They can also reflect on individual goals for improving their writing and negotiate credit for activities and participation. These efforts to involve the student in assessment processes can help to create more substantive revision by students and more constructive peer responses to writing. "Students who have internalized what makes writing work produce better writing and, in turn, can make a fair evaluation of their own and peers' papers" ("Involving Students", 1989).



Teachers of writing often find that they need to compile a more summative type checklist or writing survey for students' perceptions of their writing performance. This list is based on specific classroom observations and questions answered by students that address attitudinal concerns, process issues, content development skills and editing skills.

### Reporting

Records of both a formative and summative nature can be shared with teachers, parents and administrators in order to keep them well informed of student progress. As parents become involved in teacher/parent meetings and grade level observations, they become more informed as to the processes used by teachers and students to determine writing strengths, establish goals and support individual growth in the writing program. Collections of a student's writing work with drafts and conference notes also provide evidence of a student's writing development for parents, administrators and future teachers. Reflections that students make on their own collections of writing are also a source of information to share with others interested in a student's writing development. Turbill states that an end of the year report that includes information on a student's growth in the use of

the process skills, their attitudes towards writing, the kinds of stories being written and the content development and editing skills that are being used provides valuable summative information (1985). This type of record-keeping and reporting provides documentation that is more informative in nature than the testing and number grading that can only assess surface features such as punctuation, grammar and spelling in a piece of writing.

### Summary

Formative assessment focuses on progress along the way and can be invaluable for providing teachers and students information on which to direct learning. Documentation of writing progress involves different kinds of record-keeping which is often a shared responsibility for both teachers and students. These records are "formative, descriptive, qualitative, and longitudinal, and involve samples of students' work" (Goodman, Goodman and Hood 1989, 46). Assessment occurs from moment to moment in the classroom as teachers and students make observations, ask questions and provide feedback and support as they are actually involved in various reading and writing situations. It takes place as students work together as a class in small response

groups and one-on-one in peer conferences and with the teacher. "Adults and children become both teachers and learners, and growth can be monitored within this more natural setting" (Goodman, Goodman, Hood 1989, 53).

Formative assessment is not a one-shot measure but allows opportunities for observing growth and development as an on-going process and in many different situations. As teachers establish a literate environment that promotes authentic reading, writing, speaking and listening activities among their students, they involve themselves in a more natural setting of shared experience and inquiry with their students. Teachers continually observe what their students know, what their students are learning and what they, as teachers, understand about the development of literacy in children. Teachers who are constantly examining their beliefs and assumptions about learning as they involve themselves with their students are empowering themselves and their students as learners. Teachers and their students evaluate their own growth as literacy learners as they become involved in meaningful and purposeful assignments. Day-to-day records all become integral to the learning environment. Formative evaluation is a more personal method of evaluation that

is integrated into daily literacy events and facilitates authentic "next steps" for the learner.

"Good formative evaluation stretches and challenges kids to operate in their 'zone of proximal development'. It neither underestimates their capacities nor asks them to perform feats far beyond their developmental level, but rather gets them to work in the range between the known and the unknown, right at the border of their ability. Students should always be encouraged to stretch, to increase their range, to try new forms, take chances, incorporate new elements. Good evaluation sustains morale, energy, and enthusiasm while challenging kids to explore new possibilities" (Zemelman and Daniels 1988, 217).

Teachers work at becoming more "confident and effective observers and interpreters" and with time and practice, the "find evaluation isn't as overwhelming as it's often made out to be" (Baskill and Whitman 1988, 2).

Summative assessment, in contrast to a more formative assessment, focuses on quantifying what has been learned so as to report results to students, parents, administrators and the community. It is not diagnostic in nature and does not promote emphasis on feedback and support at various steps in the development of literacy in the classroom.

"Because grading is final and judgmental, we worry, justifiably, that grades will discourage students; but we also fear that without grades, the work won't really matter. Separating grades from response and evaluation is a first step in reducing this conflict. Grading then becomes only the last (and occasional) event in a dialogue between teacher and



student. Again, timing is everything" (Zemelman and Daniels 1988, 231).

An emphasis that is strictly placed on a more summative assessment with little focus on the developmental aspect of writing can result in devastating results.

"...we have taken what is potentially the most personal, energizing, and richly meaningful subject in the whole curriculum and sucked the meaning out of it. We've degraded our subject and in so doing have created a nation of wounded, unconfident semi-writers" (Zemelman and Daniels 1988, 208).

If we really say that as teachers we want to emphasize the development of meaningful content and support productive feedback and response to the writer, then we must rethink and redesign our assessment procedures.

"My students tell me they feel freer to make choices in their writing when they don't always have to worry about the grade. They can choose to end a piece of writing in the middle and start all over again because it didn't work, or they can set that piece of writing in the middle and start all over again because it didn't work, or they can set that piece of writing aside for a while and come back to it. When grades are made secondary, the writing becomes primary" (Atwell and Newkirk, 1988, 250).

As a writer begins to develop a piece of writing, the teacher makes observations about the students' processes for dealing with certain aspects of their writing and observes the students' attitudes towards writing. This kind of "observational" assessment at the prewriting level provides information that the



teacher can use to motivate and support the writer without actually looking at the piece or product itself. As the piece is being drafted, the teacher and other students respond as interested readers so as to help the writer elaborate and clarify. As the writer begins to revise, the teacher and other students continue to ask questions that help the writer to look even more closely at his or her revisions. As students work on finalizing a piece of writing, they focus on correcting by editing, and the teacher becomes a judge. It is during the process of finalizing and publishing a piece that a more summative evaluation can occur without threatening the development of the piece. It is at this point that a grade is assigned.

Summative evaluation or grading has its place more appropriately at the final stages of a project or writing activity - at the point of publication. Daniels and Zemelman refer to "evaluating writing as a process" in which a more formative approach occurs during the prewriting, drafting and revision stages while a more summative evaluation occurs at the point of publication (1988, 223).

As teachers and students collaboratively explore and develop techniques and strategies for supporting each

other as a community of writers and readers, new roles are defined and more appropriate, diagnostic evaluation procedures and records are designed. Changing roles in the classroom for both teachers and students place new demands on formulating alternative and relevant assessments for a process writing classroom and on exploring new perspectives for the teaching of writing.

### Teachers' Use of Writing-Portfolio Assessments

Alternative kinds of record-keeping and assessment which are often referred to as "performance" or "authentic" assessments are being designed to look more closely at students' development as writers to "capture" instructional processes offered in the classroom and to provide evidence of collaborative reflection.

...portfolios of literacy development offer exciting opportunities for teachers to create assessments that engage students in authentic activities and provide genuine guidance for instruction" (Valencia and Paris 1991, 681).

Lamme and Hysmith documented one pre-K through grade two elementary school's experience with and transition to portfolio assessment and its effects on children and teachers (1991, 629-640). Teachers in the school were

provided with inservice education and reading materials about portfolio assessment but were expected to design their own specific strategies for the assessment. Teachers collected samples of students' written work, records of work such as reading response journals, dialogue journals, projects and writing notebooks, and records kept by students such as titles of pieces written and writing notebooks that included student reflections on what they were learning about writing and spelling. Anecdotal records, scales and checklists were used to gather observational data, and data from interviews and conferences. Teachers analyzed students' portfolios on a regular basis to determine students' level of performance. Students were also regularly asked to select and reflect on pieces of their best work, and some students determined where they were on a scale of writing development. Parents were also invited to contribute their reflections on their children's progress.

Teachers were asked to complete a questionnaire about their perceptions on what was easy or difficult about portfolio assessment and any questions or concerns that they would like to have addressed. Teachers were then interviewed about their strategies for portfolio assessments in their classroom. The questionnaire and

interviews were transcribed and analyzed. A "scale of teachers' involvement in portfolio assessment was created from this analysis (Appendix G). Five stages of development were delineated with a look at teachers' purposes for keeping portfolios, processes used for collecting and including information in the portfolios and their attitudes towards the assessment. "The teachers responses to what was difficult and what was easy were related directly to the level at which they were involved with portfolio assessment and to their roles on the school staff" (Lamme and Hysmith 1991, 637-38). When teachers were asked about their transition to portfolio assessment, teachers at "high levels of implementation" stated that they were more informed about their students' learning and that the portfolio assessments informed their instruction. "They were able to focus upon individual children more, and portfolio assessment eliminated for them the need for testing and retesting children", and they "reported that the philosophy and theory (of portfolio assessment) fit their own" (1991, 638). Teachers at "middle levels of implementation found keeping the children's writings and artifacts easy and enjoyed using children's work instead of dittos for assessment of progress" (1991, 638).



Teachers at "low levels" did not find the transition to portfolio assessment easy. They relied mostly on skills checklists in the portfolios. Teachers at "high levels of implementation" described difficulties in knowing how to use portfolios, deciding on the best records to keep, determining the kind of information to collect, monitoring the system and getting everything done. Designing a system that was simple and informative and involved students in self-assessment processes was also thought to be difficult. Teachers at "moderate levels of implementation" stated that finding time to gather data for the portfolio was difficult, while teachers at "the lower levels" didn't understand why they should do this kind of assessment.

The degree to which teachers in this school implemented portfolio assessment varied in direct proportion to their degree of involvement with whole language philosophy and practice. Teachers who did not embrace the philosophy became disillusioned about what they perceived as additional work requirements" (1991, 639).

It was determined that inservice efforts needed to meet and support teachers at their varying levels of knowledge and readiness for new information.

This move created diversity among this faculty in attitudes toward instruction and assessment. It also promote teacher collaboration, increased professional activity



on the part of many teachers, and generated reflection on the part of most teachers about their own roles in educating the children in their classes (1991, 640).

Portfolio assessment in which teachers and students maintain folders of writing samples collected over time as well as other records that consist of anecdotal notes, comments and skills checklists to indicate student writing growth are an "instructionally appropriate" alternative assessments (Vavrus 1990, 52). Portfolio-based assessment is one that reveals a range of skills and understandings, supports instructional goals, values student and teacher

reflection, shows changes and growth over a period of time, and provides for continuity in education from one year to the next (Vavrus 1990, 48).

Portfolios include records of product and process-oriented information about developing writers.

Information can be gathered as to the writing process opportunities that are being offered to students in the classroom and to the writing strategies that are working well for students. Students can include reflections on their own writing development and contribute to their own writing goals. "Portfolios should also inform teachers about the interactive dimensions of literacy and make

them sensitive to processes of learning rather than just the outcomes" (Valencia and Paris 1991, 680).

The literature has provided information regarding the use of alternative assessments such as portfolio assessment but few studies of teachers' perceptions of its usefulness and value in practice have been conducted. As teachers become more involved in using writing-portfolio assessments in their classrooms, questions and issues will arise around effective implementation procedures. Time and support will be needed for developing and fully realizing the potential of writing-portfolio assessments as "authentic" and valuable measures of achievement. This descriptive study will look at selected first and second grade teachers' perceptions of developing and implementing writing-portfolio assessments.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

The researcher documented first grade teachers' development and implementation of a portfolio approach to the assessment of writing by use of a qualitative research design that included research and literature on the topic, interviews of teachers, participant observations, fieldnotes kept by the researcher, data from a collection of student portfolios and the analysis of student portfolios by the teachers. For the purpose of this study a writing portfolio is defined as a collection of student writing samples kept over a period of time. The portfolios may also include records of other evidence of achievement such as lists of books read, writing conferences conducted with the teacher or classroom peers, student writing surveys, writing checklists for skill development and records of goal setting.

Specifically, as teachers maintained writing portfolios, they were asked to reflect on:

- A. Changes in writing instruction that have led teachers to perceive a need for changes in writing assessment.

- B. Ways in which instruction and assessment are related or connected.
- C. Reporting procedures to parents, other teachers, administrators and students themselves.
- D. The changing role of the teacher as a result of writing-portfolio assessment.
- E. Support necessary for teachers involved in writing-portfolio assessment.

Triangulation was used to provide multiple sources of information. "One important way to strengthen a study design is through triangulation, or the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomena or programs ....It is possible to achieve triangulation within a qualitative inquiry strategy by combining different kinds of qualitative methods, mixing purposeful samples, and including multiple perspectives " (Patton 1990, 187-188).

#### Participants and Setting

Information about teachers' design and implementation of a portfolio approach to writing assessment was collected and reported on by the researcher from two first grade teachers in the writing project. The following teachers were included in the more indepth portfolio review:

Mrs. Mason teaches first grade in a rural elementary school of approximately 240 students. She earned a B.S.

in elementary education and an M.A. in special education. For the last twelve years, she has taught at the same rural school. She taught special education classes for one year, Chapter I classes in grades two through six for two years and primary classes for seven years. Mrs. Mason has participated in several graduate level courses on whole language and two graduate level courses that focused on writing as a process. During the current research study, Mrs. Mason was teaching a group of sixteen first grade students. These students included three students on individual education plans, three students receiving Chapter I services, three students receiving guidance services and one hearing impaired student.

Mrs. Bennett teaches first grade in the same rural school as Mrs. Mason. She earned a B.S. in 1981 in elementary education and an Associates degree in 1979 in early childhood education. She has since taken graduate level courses in process writing, reading, learning disabilities and whole language. Her nine year teaching background has included the teaching of grades one through six. She taught for three years in a first/second multi-age classroom. During the 1990-91 school year, she was teaching in a self-contained first



grade classroom of seventeen students. These students included five students on individual education plans (two for speech services), four students receiving Chapter I services and one student receiving counseling for emotional problems.

The researcher selected these two first grade teachers from an original group of seven first and second grade teachers who participated in a writing project that had been organized by the researcher, who is the director of curriculum in their school district. These seven teachers were selected for the project because of their interest in writing assessment and because the director of curriculum (the researcher) wanted to implement a writing project that would begin with teachers of the early writer. Chapter II federal funds provided partial funding for substitutes when teachers in the project received release time and for a small stipend to teachers for the once a month meetings with the director of curriculum. The first and second grade teachers involved represented seven of the districts twelve first and second grade teachers. The seven first and second grade teachers were selected based on interest and on the need to represent each of the elementary schools in the district.

This writing project provided teachers time to discuss writing strategies and writing assessment as a group and individually with the researcher. Teachers met once a month after school to share and discuss writing in their classrooms. Specifically, the teachers focused on instruction in the following areas:

1. The use of the writing mini-lesson as part of instruction.
2. Conferring strategies.
3. Classroom management.
4. Writing expectations for the early writer.
5. Record-keeping for writing assessment.
6. Reporting procedures for student development in writing.

Teachers shared writing projects, celebrated accomplishments and discussed next steps for their writing classrooms. Because assessment is so tied to instruction, the researcher also asked questions of the group about various aspects of their writing programs.

The two first grade teachers were selected for the purpose of studying their classroom portfolio assessments in more depth. They were selected because of their high level of involvement with portfolio assessment. The researcher chose to select teachers who were productive in the use of writing-portfolio assessments in order to

share more comprehensive information about the development and implementation of writing-portfolio assessments in their classrooms, risk-taking efforts to implement the writing-portfolio assessments, and an understanding of the ease and difficulty of implementing the assessment. Because these two teachers developed a broad understanding of the potential of writing-portfolio assessments in supporting appropriate instruction and in engaging students in self-assessment processes, they provided a rich laboratory for study. Teacher involvement with portfolio assessment was determined by the "Scale of Teachers' Involvement with Portfolio Assessment Used for Blackburn Elementary School Project" (Appendix G). This scale emerged from responses to a questionnaire answered and interviews conducted about portfolio assessment with teachers at the Blackburn Elementary school in Manatee County, Florida. Teachers were asked to discuss what was "easy or difficult about portfolio assessment and what questions and concerns they had that might be addressed in future inservice work" (Lamme and Hysmith 1991, 636). Teacher responses were transcribed and analyzed to formulate "the scale of teachers' involvement with portfolio assessment" (Appendix G).

Based on teacher interviews and classroom observations, the researcher in this study determined that the two first grade teachers selected for this writing project were indeed at the higher levels of involvement with portfolio assessment. These two teachers used portfolio assessment to guide their instructional procedures for individual students and the class. They both spent time analyzing various reading and writing documents in order to reflect on their students' strengths and goals as developing readers and writers. Students were beginning to be included in a self-assessment process that asked them to reflect on their strengths and goals as writers. These teachers also experimented enthusiastically with different records and procedures for collecting information as it occurred in the classroom.

The implementation of writing-portfolio assessments in these two teachers' classrooms could be more closely analyzed because of their high level of productivity in using these assessments. Writing-portfolio implementation and its implications for instruction and assessment could be more fully discussed and analyzed in various classroom situations by the teacher and the researcher. These teachers used the assessments to guide

instruction in their classrooms. They actively spent time experimenting with different record-keeping systems for collecting information about students and discussing writing strengths and goals with students and parents. As a result of this high level of involvement, these teachers were able to report on a variety of purposes and uses for writing-portfolio assessments and on their effectiveness in a number of situations.

During the study, teachers were given a half day release time monthly from their classrooms to meet with the researcher. When a teacher met with the researcher, students' portfolios were reviewed and analyzed collaboratively so that their writing progress could be determined by the teacher and reported to parents and to students themselves. These sessions allowed the researcher and the teachers to discuss and explore various procedures and processes for collecting information about students' writing processes and for analyzing their writing based on district writing criteria. They used a writing process cover sheet to summarize information about students' writing (Appendix A), and they reviewed and analyzed actual pieces of student writing for evidence of what a student could do as a writer in the areas of content, style, mechanics and



process development (Appendix B). The teacher and the researcher designed writing goals or next steps for students based on this discussion. During these meetings, the teacher and the researcher engaged in informal conversation about classroom writing.

Teachers also had the option to use part of this release time to plan and design particular instructional strategies or writing projects along with the researcher. The researcher tape recorded the sessions and took fieldnotes.

#### Researcher

The researcher in this study has a B.A. in Psychology and a Masters in Education in the area of reading and language arts. She has been involved in extensive graduate level course work in the area of children's reading and writing development and has taught graduate level courses on writing and on critical issues involved in reading and writing development. Currently, she works as a Director of Curriculum and Teacher Supervision for a school district of approximately 2200 students. She is an advisory member and writing network leader for her state's Writing Assessment Leadership Program. The researcher's background was a benefit in the collection and analysis of data in this study.

## Data Collection and Procedures

Information about teachers' perceptions of the use of a portfolio approach to writing assessment was collected by using the following methods:

### Interviews

Interviews were conducted with each of the teachers two times throughout the study, before the writing project began and again at the end of the project which was nine months later. The first interview session was based on a "general interview guide approach" which outlined a "set of issues that are to be explored with each respondent before interviewing begins" (Patton 1990, 280). This set of issues was used as a checklist so that all intended topics were covered ( Appendix C). No standardized questions were written in advance. This list of topics or interview guide allowed the interviewer to explore and to probe more spontaneously as a conversation built, and it also helped the interviewer to stay more focused within a particular subject. An "interview guide provides a framework within which the interviewer would develop questions, sequence those questions, and make decisions about which information to pursue in greater depth" (Patton 1990, 284). However,

this guide did not stand in the way of other topics that emerged more spontaneously during the conversation.

The second interview was also based on a general interview guide approach. However, the questions or topics to be covered took on a narrower focus as the interviewer became more familiar with the area of study. Interviews provided information on the five central areas of investigation which included looking at changes in instruction that led to teachers' perceptions of the need for changes in assessment, providing evidence of ways that instruction and assessment were related or connected, reporting procedures to others interested in a student's writing development, investigating the changing role of the teacher as a result of writing-portfolio assessment and providing necessary support for teachers involved in writing-portfolio assessment.

...later in the fieldwork, the assumption is that you know enough to design a standard framework that will cover the topic in a manner that makes sense to the informants you plan to sample. As you begin to focus your interest on certain topics, the funnel narrows. You may focus because of an a priori interest you brought to the field, because of what you learned in the first period of the fieldwork, or because of both. But still you are alternating learning with tests of what you have learned... As the funnel narrows, your questions may get more specific, but you never stop learning (Agar 1980, 136).

Miles and Huberman discussed the need for conceptual frameworks that rely on "a few general constructs that subserve a mountain of particulars." The researcher is forced to be more selective from the beginning - "to decide which dimensions are more important, which relationships are likely to be most meaningful, and, as a consequence, what information should be collected and analyzed...they need not overly constrain the study; rather, they allow you to get clear about what, in the general domain, is of most interest" (1984, 28,35). Miles and Huberman also contended that questions can be "refined or reformulated in the course of the fieldwork" (1984, 35).

Patton contended that a combination of interview approaches could be used that might include:

using the informal conversational interview early in an evaluation project, followed midway through by an interview guide, and then closing the program evaluation with a standardized open-ended interview to get systematic information from a sample of participants at the end of the program or when conducting follow-up studies of participants (1990, 287).

These interviews were tape recorded. The interviews were transcribed, and the transcripts analyzed for patterns around the five main areas of investigation.

Limitations. Interviews can be limiting as a source of data because participants can only report on what is happening or has happened. Such perceptions can be affected by "personal bias, anger, anxiety, politics, and simple lack of awareness" (Patton 1990, 245). Other factors that can affect an interview include the emotional state of the person being interviewed, the reactions of the interviewer to the person being interviewed and responses made by the interviewer that he or she think will satisfy the interviewer (Patton 1990). In this particular study, teachers' design and implementation of portfolio assessments was limited by a lack of inservice about portfolio assessment because of its innovative nature. Because the researcher was the supervisor of the participants, reactions and responses of teachers interviewed in this study may have been affected. The use of multiple sources of information are important in providing checks and balances for single sources of information.

Tapes were also made of some of the teacher/researcher sessions on the once a month half release days in which student portfolios were reviewed and analyzed so that writing progress could be reported to parents and to students. The researcher and the



teacher explored record-keeping options to facilitate the reporting of student progress. Together, they discussed writing projects in the classroom, and teachers had the option to plan a particular writing project. Any other aspects of writing that the teacher or the researcher wished to address could be discussed during these sessions.

These sessions with teachers were based on an informal conversational interview which relied "on the spontaneous generation of questions in the natural flow of an interaction..." (Patton 1990, 280).

The strength of the informal conversational approach is that it allows the interviewer/evaluator to be highly responsive to individual differences and situational changes. Questions can be individualized to establish in-depth communication with the person being interviewed and to make use of the immediate surroundings and situation to increase the concreteness and immediacy of the interview questions and responses (Patton 1990, 282).

Limitations or weaknesses of an informal conversational interview included the need for more time to collect systematic information from different people, more susceptibility to the conversational skills of the interviewer and questioning that imposed "interpretations on the situation by the structure of the questions" and

data collected could be difficult to analyze for patterns from different people and conversations (Patton 1990, 282).

It was necessary for the interviewer to be aware of these limitations and to provide checks and balances whenever possible. Therefore, multiple sources of information were collected including information from teacher interviews, from fieldnotes collected by the researcher as a participant observer and from data analyzed from selected collections of student portfolios.

#### Participant Observations

Participant observation in the classroom provided information particularly on ways in which instruction and assessment were related or connected. Fieldnotes were taken that focused on questions that supported ways in which instruction and assessment were related or connected:

1. How have assessment procedures affected teachers' day-to-day instruction?
2. What do teachers look for in assessing students' writing portfolios?
3. How do teachers involve their students in a process of self-assessment?
4. What record-keeping procedures are helping teachers and students to organize and keep track of writing in the classroom? The researcher was also able to make some observations as to

the changing role of the teacher when using writing-portfolio assessment procedures in the classroom as well as necessary support for teachers involved with writing-portfolio assessments. .

The researcher worked on writing projects with single students and groups of students in the classroom of the two teachers in the study. This occurred a couple times a week in each classroom for a period of an hour and a half over approximately twelve weeks. The researcher followed the instructional lead of the teacher when in the classroom and participated with students in writing projects and processes as outlined by the teacher. For the most part, this involved conferring with a student or group of students about their writing and their goals as writers. Fieldnotes focusing on the same questions about the relationship between instruction and assessment were taken on sessions with teachers in which student portfolios were reviewed and analyzed collaboratively. The researcher met with each teacher for a half release day on a quarterly basis to analyze student portfolios. Strengths and goals were listed and implementation strategies and processes were discussed for the classroom that met individual and whole class needs as seen in the portfolios. Record-keeping options to facilitate the reporting of student progress were also

discussed. Classroom descriptions were written by the researcher and focused on processes and procedures in the classroom that supported writing instruction and assessment in the classroom.

Patton made reference to statements by Howard S. Becker, one of the leading practitioners of qualitative methods in the conduct of social science research:

The most complete form of sociological datum, after all, is the form in which the participant observer gathers it: an observation of some social event, the events which precede and follow it, and explanations of its meaning by participants and spectators, before, during, and after its occurrence. Such a datum gives us more information about the event under study than data gathered by any other sociological method (Becker and Geer 1970, 133).

Denzin commented that participant observation "simultaneously combines document analysis, interviewing of respondents and informants, direct participation and observation, and introspection" (1978, 183).

Observational data allow for more personal contact by the researcher and a more thorough understanding of the context in which participants operate. The researcher does not have to rely as heavily on perceptions based only on interviews or documents. First hand experience give the researcher an opportunity to make observations that may escape other participants who can take certain aspects of their program for granted or

who are simply unaware of aspects of the program that are important or effective. Observations also allow the researcher to look beyond the perspectives of others. Because he sees and hears the people he studies in many situations of the kind that normally occur for them, rather than just in an isolated and formal interview, he builds an ever-growing fund of impressions, many of them at the subliminal level, which give him an extensive base for the interpretation and analytic use of any particular datum. This wealth of information and impression sensitizes him to subtleties which might pass unnoticed in an interview and forces him to raise continually new and different questions, which he brings to and tries to answer in succeeding observations (Becker and Geer 1970, 32).

Limitations. It was important that the researcher involved in the qualitative research be aware of the limitations involved both in the sources of information collected and in the procedures used in the collecting process and then provide for checks and balances or an analysis of multiple sources of information whenever possible.

Various data collection strategies were used by the researcher as she took on the role of a participant



observer. Limitations in making observations included participant behavior that was affected by the mere presence of an observer, selective perceptions by the observer, external rather than internal observation of people, observations that were limited by the size of the sample and observations that were perhaps limited by the qualifications of the researcher (Patton 1990).

Teacher interviews conducted by the researcher provided a check for the possible selective perceptions by the researcher as an observer and for the fact that observations focused on external rather than the internal knowledge of people.

Miles and Huberman warned us about the possible effect of the qualifications of the researcher on the collection and analysis of data.

Quite simply, you can understand little more than your own evolving mental map allows for; a naive, undifferentiated map will translate into global, surface-oriented data and conclusions - and usually into self-induced or informant-induced bias as well (Miles and Huberman 1984, 48).

#### Student Writing Portfolios

Student writing portfolios were kept by teachers and students. A sample of students' writing was collected in folders and analyzed quarterly by the researcher and the teacher. Information about students' writing development

was summarized so that it could be reported to parents and students themselves. For one teacher in the study, Mrs. Bennett, portfolios of four students were selected to represent levels of progress in writing based on a series of developmental writing stages documented by teachers of the early writer (Appendix D). The first series of developmental stages entitled "Beginning Writing: Watching It Develop" was adapted from the work of McDonnell and Osburne (1980). The second form entitled "First Grade Writing" was designed by a first grade teacher participating in this study. Actual first grade writing samples were used by this teacher to exemplify developmental levels common to the early writer as observed by her in many of her first grade classrooms. Developmental levels were referred to in this form as beginning consonants, labeling and movement of thought. For the second teacher, Mrs. Mason, one student was selected to represent the breadth of the teacher's writing program as documented from the beginning to the end of the school year in the student's writing portfolio. This student represented a writer in the movement of thought level on the "First Grade Writing" form and the "Beginning Writing: Watching It Develop" form. Her work was also selected to represent certain

writing processes that were captured and documented successfully in the writing portfolio.

Limitations. The use and analysis of documents can be limiting in that they may be incomplete, selective and variable in their quality (Patton 1990). Documents can provide leads to asking appropriate questions or making particular observations.

### Analysis of Data

The analysis of data included an identification of patterns found in the interviews, the teacher/researcher sessions, the fieldnotes and video-tapes from classroom observations, data from student portfolios and the analysis of student portfolios by the teachers.

### Interviews and Participant Observations

Data from the interviews and from the fieldnotes taken during the teacher/researcher sessions and the classroom observations were coded, categorized and analyzed around categories derived from the research questions. As Marshall and Rossman advocate, ... "these categories would be revised to reflect additional data that did not fit initial questions" (1989). Categories included:

- A. Changes in writing instruction that have led teachers to perceive a need for changes in writing assessment.

- B. Ways in which instruction and assessment are related or connected.
- C. Reporting procedures to parents, other teachers, administrators and students themselves.
- D. The changing role of the teacher as a result of writing-portfolio assessment.
- E. Support necessary for teachers involved in writing-portfolio assessment.

The question from the interviews that asked teachers about changes in writing instruction that led to teachers' perceptions of a need for changes in writing assessment was:

1. What kinds of changes over the years have occurred in writing instruction that you think have led to the need for changes in writing assessment?

Questions from the interview that supported the ways in which instruction and assessment are related or connected were:

1. How have assessment procedures affected teachers' day-to-day instruction?
2. What do teachers look for in assessing students' writing portfolios?
3. How do teachers involve their students in the process of self-assessment?
4. What record-keeping procedures are helping teachers and students to organize and keep track of writing in the classroom?

5. As a result of the writing portfolio assessment, what can teachers say about students' writing across the group and over time?
6. How can writing surveys be useful or valuable to teachers when working with students?

Questions from the interview that asked teachers about reporting procedures to others interested in a student's writing development included:

1. How are parents responding to the writing portfolio assessment?
2. How might next year's teacher respond to and use the data from students' portfolio assessments?

The question from the interview that asked teachers about the changing role of the teacher as a result of writing-portfolio assessment was:

1. How do writing-portfolio assessment procedures affect the role of a teacher?

The question from the interview that asked teachers about support necessary for teachers involved in writing-portfolio assessment was:

1. What support do teachers need when involving themselves with writing-portfolio assessment?

In this study, the initial interview questions were based on the main categories previously outlined. By the end of the study, the interview questions from each of the main categories became more specific and were derived in part from the patterns and themes that emerged from



the data. The data was then categorized and analyzed around these main categories and questions.

### Student Portfolios

Student portfolios provided information on ways in which instruction and assessment were related or connected. Teachers' assessment procedures which focused on student strengths and goals as writers were evidenced in student writing portfolios and determined daily instruction and long range curriculum planning. Information about students' writing development based on the writing portfolio assessment over time provided evidence of instructional opportunities across content, style, mechanics and various writing processes such as collaborative goal setting, peer editing and self-reflection processes. Student portfolios documented students' development, informed instruction and next steps and served as "windows" into the classroom.

CHAPTER IV  
DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

In this section information is reported and analyzed from teacher interviews and student writing portfolio assessments. Interviews were conducted with each teacher at the beginning and end of the year. Teacher responses were coded, categorized and analyzed around five main areas:

- A. Changes in writing instruction that led to teachers' perceptions of the need for changes in assessment.
- B. Ways in which instruction and assessment were related or connected.
- C. Reporting procedures to parents, teachers and others interested in a student's writing development.
- D. The changing role of the teacher as a result of writing portfolio assessment.
- E. Support necessary for teachers involved in writing portfolio assessment.

Fieldnotes that were taken by the researcher when she participated in various student writing projects or in sessions with teachers as they analyzed their students' writing portfolios were coded, categorized and analyzed based on the same main areas as those for the teacher interviews. Information from fieldnotes taken as a

participant observer were used in analyzing the data collected from the teacher interviews and the student writing portfolios.

The first section of this chapter focuses on classroom descriptions. This section is followed by teacher interviews and a presentation of student writing portfolios from the classrooms of two selected first grade teachers. The student writing portfolios documented students' writing development and informed teachers' instructional decisions. Student writing portfolios were selected to provide information about instructional opportunities available to students with different levels of developmental writing progress and evidence of opportunities for involving students in writing processes. One student's writing portfolio was selected to provide information about the breadth and depth of the teacher's writing program from the beginning to the end of the school year.

### Classroom Descriptions

Mrs. Mason's Classroom. Mrs. Mason based her classroom planning and instruction on skills that students were showing her they were ready to learn and knew as evidenced in their writing and their reading. She looked for evidence of a student's readiness to learn

skills and the evidence of the actual application of a skill by reviewing his or her writing. In 1989 she began to keep "writing scrapbooks" that included writing samples from each of her students. These scrapbooks helped her to assess student needs and next steps.

...it (reviewing scrapbooks) was more involved (than the basal tests) and it took more time, but I think it's more individualized. ... it gave me a better handle on each individual kid. But it also gave me a better handle on the whole group because the way that I'm doing it now, the skills that I'm teaching, are skills they're asking for, skills they're ready for. It's not what the basal says they should be doing at that point in first grade or whatever grade they're in.

Mrs. Mason incorporated whole group and small group instruction based on flexible groups formed around student needs. She integrated phonics, spelling, reading and writing skills into the sharing of a book, a group poem, or a choral reading. Students were encouraged to do rewrites by inserting their own words to fit a story pattern or to complete a story. Often, her students worked in small cooperative groups to write about a field trip experience, a book read together or a common classroom experience such as the creation of a mural, a puppet show or a cooking activity.

In pairs or in small groups, her students shared books that they enjoyed on a daily basis. Several

students might be working with geoboards, creating patterns with tiles, or working with cut and paste activities while the rest of the students were drawing pictures and writing in their journals. Mrs. Mason often worked at a table with several first grade writers and encouraged them to put down the letters that they heard. An alphabet chart with pictures that hung over the board helped some students to form their letters and continue their writing more independently.

Centers were set up in the room for students to choose during choice time. Students were encouraged to explore and take risks as they role played, or discovered relationships at the rice table, the water table or the block center.

Mrs. Mason believed it was important to accept students where they were in their learning. She wanted to foster independence in their learning through cooperative learning groups, access to choices in their own daily learning and planning, and time to reflect on the whole process. Even though she followed a guideline of expected skills, her curriculum was driven by the needs and accomplishments of her students. She continually tried to balance her curriculum between



teacher directed instruction and student initiated learning.

Mrs. Mason began to collect student writing samples on a quarterly basis for the purpose of assessment. Writing portfolio assessment became a critical component in the design of her writing curriculum. Mrs. Mason began to use a writing process cover sheet in the fall of 1990. She collected samples of students' writing and attached a writing process cover sheet that included student writing strengths as evidenced in attached samples and in classroom observations. Future goals that were based on student needs as a writer were also outlined on the writing process cover sheets.

Mrs. Bennett's Classroom. Mrs. Bennett's classroom was a very active place to be at any given time. Children were often found busily talking, drawing, writing and creating in small groups around several tables set up in the room. Mrs. Bennett supported her students in conversing quietly as they worked and in helping each other while reading, writing or working together on various projects. Her classroom was rich in literature and many of her mini-lessons centered around books she shared with her students. Mrs. Bennett's reading and writing program often centered around

comparing story lines and the language of authors, listing rhyming patterns, pointing out descriptive words and discussing the characters, plot, setting and illustrations of a story. Students responded individually or in small groups to literature that was shared. They wrote about the author's illustrations, created letters to the author or to characters in the books, wrote scripts to bring a story line to life with puppets, built book mobiles and painted murals to represent parts of stories. Children in Mrs. Bennett's class made choices, worked collaboratively and shared openly.

At the end of each quarter, Mrs. Bennett would look at the progress of individual students as well as the progress of the group as a whole on working with each other, working on various book projects and on the quality of presentations to the group.

Mrs. Bennett conducted writing/reading mini-lessons daily that were designed around an author being studied, particular writing strategies that could support students in their writing and the writing goals of her students. As students participated in follow-up activities specific

to the mini-lessons, Mrs. Bennett would record anecdotal notes as to their progress as readers and writers.

At the end of each week, Mrs. Bennett's first grade students could choose a book project to do alone or with a partner. These projects were based on books read, discussed and written about during the week. Students wrote scripts for puppet shows, wrote letters to characters in the book or to the author, and created book mobiles, murals or dioramas with a written story summary. Periodically throughout the month, presentations of projects were made by students and anecdotal notes on student progress were made by Mrs. Bennett.

When Mrs. Bennett was asked to comment on the kinds of reading/writing mini-lessons or strategies that she and her students found particularly effective, she explained, "I began to include more cooperative learning and more partner writing in my daily planning. Writing out poems on pocket charts so that we could change the words and their arrangement was effective as a mini-lesson. We also used poetry to discover patterns and rhyming words". She went on to say that the class focused more on the study of authors rather than themes. The class wrote letters to authors and created story maps, big books through rewrites, book reviews and

comparison charts that looked at similarities and differences among authors like Eric Carle, Tomie DePalo, Jan Brett, Marc Brown, Bill Martin, John Archebold and Frank Asche. "We explored giants through Tomie DePalo's books, winter through Jan Brett's books and holidays through Marc Brown's books. When we studied Frank Asche, we compared his turtle tale to Eric Carle's The Foolish Tortoise to Franklin In The Dark by Paulette Bourgeois," stated Mrs. Bennett.

#### Interview and Observation Data Categories

Teachers were interviewed as to their perceptions on developing and implementing writing-portfolio assessments in the classroom. The main categories of investigation included:

- A. Changes in Writing Instruction and Assessment
- B. Ways Instruction and Assessment Were Related
- C. Reporting Procedures
- D. The Changing Role of the Teacher
- E. Support for Teachers

The researcher's comments about the teachers' responses were based on the interview information, fieldnotes and information from the analysis of students' writing portfolios.

## Changes in Writing Instruction

### A. Changes in Writing Instruction That Led to Teachers' Perceptions of the Need for Changes in Assessment

1. What kinds of changes over the years have occurred in writing instruction that you think have led to the need for changes in writing assessment?

The teachers interviewed stated that they were now looking at students' writing for the purposes of designing instruction and providing assessment information. As they collected samples of students' written work in individual writing portfolios, they began to focus more closely on the analysis of student writing strengths and needs (fieldnotes, student portfolios). They began to explore evaluation strategies that supported the new ways in which they were involving their students in process learning and self-evaluation strategies (fieldnotes). These teachers involved themselves and their students in a process writing classroom that allowed students to take a more active role in their own learning by supporting each other as writers. Writing goals were written on the inside cover of students' journals so that they were easily accessible to the student (fieldnotes). Conferences with the teacher and with small groups were often held so that students could share a piece of writing and the goal or



goals that they were working on (fieldnotes). Procedures for revising and adding information to a piece of writing were modeled for students (fieldnotes). These procedures often became student goals (student portfolios). Editing techniques were also modeled so that students could become involved in more peer editing towards the end of the school year (fieldnotes). As teachers and students collaboratively evaluated their progress and designed goals for their future development as writers, procedures for observing progress and collecting information needed to change (fieldnotes and student portfolios).

Mrs. Bennett referred to the introduction of process writing instruction as an impetus for changes in goal setting and assessment. "To look at writing as a process and to shift your focus from mechanics to content necessitated looking at a different set of goals."

Mrs. Bennett began by writing narratives about students' writing development for assessment and reporting purposes. She then set goals for her students.

More and more she began to look at what students could do in their writing, and she began to refine her instruction in writing. "It has been an evolution for me, but it really started with process writing and the realization that process writing was only a piece - a foundation.

However, we need to go further than the process steps themselves". Mrs. Bennett stated that establishing goals together with students, designing appropriate mini-lessons to meet these goals and collecting evidence of meeting these goals are all a part of the process of writing as well. These instructional opportunities led to the need for changes in collecting and reporting information.

Mrs. Bennett continued by discussing the fact that when she began teaching at this particular school in 1983, she was required to use the basal textbook, workbooks and unit tests. "The first year I taught at \_\_\_\_\_, I was censured for skipping pages in the workbook and officially told that it was in a particular order for a particular reason, and that I needed to follow right through in order to do all the pages in both workbooks." She explained that when it was no longer mandatory to use the basal text, she was still asked to use the basal tests. She had to spend time reviewing vocabulary words that were central to these tests. Tests that she contended gave her very little information about students as readers and writers.

As Mrs. Mason reflected on changes in writing/reading instruction that led to the need for a different kind of assessment, she stated,

Information and skills are being taught much more individually in our reading/writing classrooms. You're not teaching material necessarily as it is sequenced in a text or workbook anymore. Plans for instruction and evidence of growth comes from students' own work and not worksheets in a text book. Kids are doing much more writing using their own ideas and the language with which they come to school. Instead of controlling their language by giving them a set of vocabulary, kids are allowed to write freely from their own experiences and with their own language. Students are not learning and applying skills at the same time and in the same sequence. I've allowed them and supported them in exploring their own language and their own thought processes which has improved their self images and made them feel more secure as writers. That's crucial.

Mrs. Mason made reference to the depth of her students' writing. She stated that students were doing more writing on a daily basis and that this led to writing across more topics and a much more advanced use of language. She added,

You need to have their work to indicate where they are in their learning. If I were to use a checklist, I would need five different checklist's ranging from kindergarten to third grade because my first grade students are learning and using skills that are sequenced in third grade text books. Using a single checklist would be confusing and would not give a true picture of a student's writing development. I need to analyze their work

using an open-ended format. When I look at a student's writing, I look at what a student can do as a writer and their growth from previous pieces of writing. Then I set individual goals. I indicate pieces of writing students write by themselves, write with adult assistance, edit with a friend or edit with an adult. I simply don't use their growth as writers by looking at worksheets that ask them to fill in a vowel or an ing ending. Looking at children's pieces of writing shows me skills that they are applying within the context of their own language. Why not take what they are already doing as your records rather than creating more paperwork? The portfolio allows me to do this. ...it's more involved. It takes more time, but I think it's more individualized and it gives me a better handle on each individual kid. But it also gives me a better handle on the whole group because the way that I'm doing it now, the skills that I'm teaching, are skills they're asking for, skills they're ready for. It's not what the basal says they should be doing at that point in first grade or whatever grade they're in.

Mrs. Mason concluded by saying that she referred to the basal and to school district checklists (Appendix B) as teaching guides which helped her to remember to expose students to certain skills and information when they showed her that they were ready. These checklists could also be shared with others while students' work was used to indicate personal application and growth.

#### Ways Instruction and Assessment Were Related

##### B. Ways in Which Instruction and Assessment are Related

1. How have your assessment procedures affected your day-to-day instruction?



Both of the teachers interviewed valued the process of mutual goal setting so as to involve students in a self-evaluation process in the classroom, and they emphasized the inclusion of more advanced writing skills as defined by the development of individual writers and classroom writers as a whole (fieldnotes). For instance, as observed in the classroom, these teachers conducted individual conferences with students to discuss a piece of writing and goals that the student had achieved or could continue to work toward. As students' writing strengths were analyzed in collected samples of work, the needs of the individual writer became much clearer across the development of content, style, mechanics and the processes needed to implement goals and facilitate more independent writing behaviors (student portfolios). Teachers became more sophisticated in designing and using processes to promote independence among student writers (fieldnotes). As observed in teachers' classrooms, strategies such as the use of patterned language, dictation and questioning procedures for building content were modeled. Cut and paste activities for sequencing, story webs for organizational purposes and building content, partner editing and self-reflection



opportunities through student/teacher goal setting and through revisiting the portfolio were all documented (fieldnotes and student portfolios). The portfolio became a record of progress in the development of written pieces and in the processes used to implement writing goals (student portfolios). One teacher also pointed out that because the writing portfolio with its collection of student writing allowed her to individualize her assessments, she was more readily able to ascertain the needs of students who were writing across a range of several grade levels - something a programmed text would not have allowed her to do.

Mrs. Bennett stated that designing implementation plans for individual goal setting was at the heart of what she did during the year as part of the portfolio assessment. "My goal setting in writing was very specific, and I looked at specific steps for implementing these goals," answered Mrs. Bennett. She commented that designing specific steps for goal implementation was new for her, and that a lot of the ideas for the implementation of the goals came from the discussions that occurred in group sessions with other teachers.

Just writing the goals down isn't

enough. You have to go to the next step of implementation and that is where I think the mini-lesson should come in. ...you look at what you want to implement in mini-lessons or in small group conferences. I also think that the kinds of things that make up good writing for first graders are more expansive than any kind of list we have really ever had before.

Mrs. Bennett further explained that checklists for the early writer often focused on skills rather than what we really should value in writing.

My fear is that checklists can keep you focusing so much on mechanics that you forget what you're focusing on in a story. Is what you value in writing that they're using their short vowel sounds and that they use ings on the ends of their words? That's not what we're valuing in good writing. That's really just a mechanic. In first grade we are too focused on learning these conventions and being able to use them. Their writing goals should be very different than some of these mechanical skills.

Mrs. Bennett also commented on the importance of collaboratively setting goals with her students so that they learned how to evaluate their own progress. Mrs. Bennett did say, however, that her students contributed very similar goals from month to month throughout the year. They usually set particular topic goals, goals about the number of sentences that they would write and goals that focused on finishing a conference or an editing step. Mrs. Bennett felt that it was important to

set goals for her students as well. She added, "I need a place to be analyzing what I think I want to orchestrate next for them."

"Writing portfolios have helped me to show my students the growth that they have made, and this builds their self-confidence", stated Mrs. Mason. She reflected on how encouraging it was for some of her students to look through their portfolios to see their growth from the beginning of the year. Some students would find an earlier picture that they had drawn and would write about it. A couple of students actually published books by revising and building on the content of a topic that had been written about periodically throughout the year and had been housed in the portfolio. Mrs. Mason commented on the fact that sharing and collecting students' writing helped them to value their writing and feel comfortable with what they were writing. All the skills that they were learning became meaningful because these skills helped them to actually write and read. "I really want them to know that their reading and their writing go together, and that once you start reading and writing, you can do a lot of things. I want them to really enjoy what they're doing and get a big kick out of writing," exclaimed Mrs. Mason. She explained that writing

portfolios informed her about the development of individual writers as well as giving her a picture of the writing development of the whole class. As a result of this information, she made decisions in a more informed way about a range of material to be taught.

Mrs. Mason summarized by saying that when she compared a first through third grade basal skill's list to the skills evidenced in her first grade students' writing portfolios, it was clear that students had been exposed to and had learned and applied skills from each of the first, second, and third grade lists. ...."had I been designing my writing curriculum based on only the sequenced first grade basal skills list, my students would probably not have been exposed to or challenged by more advanced skills from the second and third grade basal list," concluded Mrs. Mason.

2. What do you look for in assessing students' writing and their portfolios?

Mrs. Mason looked at students' writing strengths over time and across writing pieces collected in the portfolio. Goals were set with the student based on the school district's language arts guide and on the developmental writing needs of the students. These goals focused on the development of content, style, mechanics

and various writing processes. Students were also encouraged to support each other as writers through actual collaboration on the creation of a simple piece of writing and through peer editing (fieldnotes). Strengths and goals for students around peer support and collaboration were also established (fieldnotes and student portfolios).

Mrs. Mason commented, "I compare pieces of writing for growth, and I look at their goals." Mrs. Mason reviewed student writing first to look for skills that the students were consistently using well in their writing. These skills were listed as "I can do statements" on a quarterly writing process cover sheet. Secondly, goals which students were still working with as well as new goals for the next quarter were all noted on the writing process cover sheet in student portfolios. These writing process cover sheets (Appendix A) were placed in students' writing portfolios with attached writing samples. "The new goals were based on the district's language arts guide (Appendix B), and that which student were telling me they were ready to learn through the analysis I did of their current writing", explained Mrs. Mason. She went on to say that students



who were not ready for certain skills would still be exposed to them during a whole class writing mini-lesson and would then use these skills when they were ready.

Early in the year, Mrs. Mason looked at growth in letter formation, at the use of certain sounds and letters, at the direction of a student's writing and at a student's ability to develop the structure of a single sentence (fieldnotes and student portfolios). Later in the year, a student might be ready to further develop a specific piece of writing by building on a particular topic while another student might be in the process of organizing information by using a story web. Still another student might be ready to revisit his or her portfolio to further develop a past topic or to publish a piece of writing by typing at the computer and designing illustrations (fieldnotes and student portfolios). Mrs. Mason allowed students a great deal of choice in topic selection and in exploring the use of words and strategies that brought meaning for them to the page (fieldnotes and student portfolios). She supported their risk taking as individual writers while focusing them on next steps when they were ready (fieldnotes and student portfolios). Writing goals did not simply focus on mechanics, usage and grammar but on a balance among

content, style and process goals. Students were asked to reflect on goals in each of these areas (Appendix B). A list of goals that were discussed by students and the teacher during the year were compiled and entitled "Goals for the Early Writer" (Appendix I).

3. How have you involved your students in the process of self-assessment?

These teachers involved their students in a process of self-evaluation. Their students participated in looking at and talking about their writing strengths with the teacher or in small groups. Students often shared the goal or goals that they were working on in particular pieces of writing (fieldnotes). In many instances observed in the classroom, students shared pieces of writing with the class in order to receive comments and questions from their peers that would help them write more clearly or with more detail (fieldnotes).

As Mrs. Bennett commented on involving students in the process of self-evaluation, she discussed the process of using, discussing and checking on student goals that were listed on the inside cover of each student's writing journal. These goals became readily available to students and to any adult who might confer with them (fieldnotes). Periodically, Mrs. Bennett would have a

student articulate his or her goals in a writing conference. She stated, "Once a week, a student would share a piece of writing in a small group and would articulate his or her goals. Other students would listen and decide whether or not the student had met his or her goals. This helped me to check on student progress in working with their goals". Mrs. Bennett also commented that this process of checking on student goals allowed her to know what each of her seventeen students were doing as writers.

Conferring on goals helped me to write a "status of the class report" (Appendix J) which allowed me to keep in touch with each of my students. Goal setting in my classroom also promoted more writing and a greater sense of ownership across the group. Kids seemed much less subject oriented and much more task oriented after being involved in writing their own goals. They're more worried about the goal and the task that they're starting than looking in the air waiting to decide what subject they'll write on today, concluded Mrs. Bennett.

Mrs. Mason talked about a process of self-assessment that she began at the middle of the school year with her first grade students. Writing strengths that were labeled "I can do statements" as well as next steps for goals for writing development were shared with the first grade students through writing conferences.

This was very new to them, and they wondered why I was sharing this kind

of information with them (the kind of information I share with their parents). In time, however, they began to understand that these were my expectations of them as writers and that I knew they could do this. It really helped students who had the ability but were rather lazy in their application. They were held accountable to their writing goals and were nudged along as writers, explained Mrs. Mason.

She continued by explaining that her students had their goals written on the inside cover of their writing journals. Their goals ranged from writing a certain number of sentences, answering questions about who, what, when and where in their stories, using story webs, using capitals and ending punctuation, editing with a peer and publishing a piece of work.

Mrs. Mason also talked about editing with a peer as being part of the self-evaluation process. Students use skills that they know and that their peer editor may not have yet applied. She stated, "When I ask for students to help another writer, I have students readily volunteer because they feel good enough to help others." Mrs. Mason commented that her students' self-confidence in helping others came from using their individual work to model writing mini-lessons, from working in cooperative groups and from their peer editing experiences. Mrs. Mason concluded, "They learn how to look at others writing and

how to contribute to the editing process. When they feel good enough to know that they can help another person in their reading or their writing, that is self-evaluation."

4. Are you using any other record-keeping procedures for collecting and analyzing information about students' writing other than the writing cover sheets"? If so, what?

On a quarterly basis, writers' strengths and goals were listed by these teachers on a writing process cover sheet with attached writing samples that provided evidence of developing strengths and resulting needs. However, each teacher used other record-keeping procedures to collect and analyze information about their students' achievements, attitudes and peer interactions on a daily basis. Writing checklists from the district's language arts guide (Appendix B) were used. These checklists focused on the content, style, mechanics and processes involved in developing a piece of writing. They were designed to remind teachers to look beyond mechanics when looking at students' writing strengths and setting goals. The teachers in this study included these lists in student portfolios at the end of the year (student portfolios).



Anecdotal note-taking on a class list, "status of the class" reports (Appendix J), writing checklists and the writing process cover sheets were all tools for working daily to manage a writing classroom, to monitor the progress of individual students on the development of a piece of writing, and to organize observational information and other assessment comments (fieldnotes and student portfolios). Both the "status of the class" report and the anecdotal note-taking on a class list helped teachers to see patterns in student writing that defined appropriate future instructional lessons as well as providing information for the timely organization of response groups when needed by writers (fieldnotes). Information about students' writing development was collected in portfolios and analyzed by the teachers in order to reflect on students' writing strengths and to design appropriate goals and instructional plans to support individual and group progress. Use of a "status of the class" report placed accountability demands on students as they became part of the self-evaluation process by reviewing, summarizing and articulating their individual progress on a daily basis (fieldnotes).

Mrs. Bennett stated that she did almost all her record-keeping and anecdotal note-taking by using a class

list. "I make writing conference notes and assessment kinds of comments right on the class list (Appendix J). Seeing this information for individual students and for groups of students allowed me to see patterns in a student's writing or make comparisons among students," explained Mrs. Bennett. Mrs. Bennett kept her class list on a clipboard that she could take with her to individual and small group conferences. She did a great deal of kid watching as she worked with and among her students, and she carefully took anecdotal notes about students' achievements, attitudes and peer interactions as developing writers and readers. These anecdotal records helped in determining student strengths and goals.

5. As a result of your involvement in a writing portfolio assessment, what can you say in particular about students' writing across the group and over time?

In one teacher's classroom, students showed an increased focus on their writing as they became more involved in the process of self-evaluation (fieldnotes).

A greater sense of ownership and personal investment in this classroom resulted from mutual goal setting and from a better understanding of teacher expectations as articulated in individual and group writing conferences. In the second teacher's classroom, students excelled in the application of various writing skills as evidenced in their portfolios. The teacher attributed this to the fact that as her students worked with skills that they were ready to learn, they were continually exposed to skills both on a review level and on a more advanced level as part of a heterogeneous group of learners. Mrs. Bennett responded by saying, "My first grade students were capable of much more involvement in goal setting and evaluation than I had ever allowed before. I had always thought of evaluation as something only for the teacher to do". Mrs. Bennett stated that students were more focused on and task when they were involved in setting goals for themselves as part of the portfolio assessment. Their goals often included choosing a particular topic and writing a certain number of sentences about the topic. Other student goals included using a particular writing strategy, writing a fictional or non-fictional piece, working on the mechanics of writing, or publishing a particular piece. "When

students created these goals with me and knew the goals that I wanted for them as well, they seemed more focused in their writing and better able to articulate their goals," commented Mrs. Bennett.

Mrs. Mason commented:

Fourteen out of sixteen students in my room will write anything at the drop of a hat. They won't hesitate. They never tell me that they don't have anything to write about. They feel comfortable writing about anything they want to write about or need to write about.

She stated that her students were not exceptional kids, but that they had been exposed to a lot of skills through working with other kids and through whole group activities.

Exposing students all the time to material that's above their current level of involvement in the use of certain writing skills, to material that's at their level and to material that's at a review level helped every child in my class to advance much more quickly throughout the year than if I had been teaching according to a predetermined sequence as defined by the basal. Using the skills that they're ready to use and building on where each student is in their writing development is essential.

6. How could the writing surveys be useful or valuable to you when working with students?

Teachers commented on information that they received from a writing survey that was given to students several times during the year (Appendix E). Some students were also asked to review their portfolios and answer the

questions on a second survey (Appendix F). One teacher discovered that students were not aware of how to assess their own writing or how to articulate good writing standards. She felt that self-evaluation skills needed to be taught. She was also interested in students' perceptions of their learning and their goal setting opportunities. The second teacher stated that the survey answers revealed the development of the student as a writer and informed teachers and parents. "I realized from the questionnaires that students have little idea about assessing their writing and about what makes a good piece of writing. Their ideas about good writing were distorted," Mrs. Bennett responded. Mrs. Bennett stated that responses to the questionnaire made her realize that self-evaluation skills needed to be taught and more discussion about what makes a good piece of writing needed to be part of the classroom. She suggested that literature be discussed and compared for its qualities as part of a writing program. "Compare literature with controlled vocabulary to other kinds of literature. What made one better, more interesting or more exciting? Help them to see that you have to visualize details," she commented. "Being able to articulate what makes writing interesting is important even if they are not as capable



yet as writers. They should be able to do this." Mrs. Bennett stated that the questionnaires let her know what students think has been helpful to them in writing instruction, in the use of certain strategies and in establishing certain writing goals. From student answers, she could determine which writing goals had been internalized by students and those that needed to be worked on further. "Do I spend more time on certain goals or do they already get it?" asked Mrs. Bennett.

Mrs. Bennett concluded by saying that she is interested in students' changing perceptions of how they learned to read and write. She also wanted to know about their perceptions of goal setting opportunities. "I would like to have my students answer questions like:

How do you set your goals?

How do you know when to change you're goals?

Do you think that setting goals helps you when you start to write? How?

Mrs. Mason commented that after she read through student answers to the writing survey and portfolio questions (Appendix E and Appendix F), she realized even more just how important it was to encourage her students to verbalize about things that they had learned in writing and that had helped them as writers. "Asking students specific questions gives you a good idea about how they feel about what they're doing and what they've

done," exclaimed Mrs. Mason. "Questioning students about their writing can keep you in tune with the group and where their commonalties are as a group such as the kinds of things they like to write about." She commented on the revealing nature of a couple responses to the question concerning what students had learned in writing. One child answered, "I learned to use webs, rewrites and observations." Another student answered, "I learned that when I write down sounds, I don't have to be perfect all the time." Mrs. Mason pointed out that during the year she told her students that their opinions were as important as hers and that if they had something to say, they needed to say it.

My 1st graders talk a lot with me about their opinions and aren't afraid to tell me about things that they didn't like or that didn't go well for them during the day. I try to promote discussion in positive ways that give students permission to take risks in expressing their opinions and in thinking about their work. I think this helped them in reflecting on their work and in answering the portfolio questions.

Mrs. Mason commented on the value of students' answers to portfolio questions for their next year's teacher. "What would be a goal for you in writing next year? What would you like next year's teacher to know? What did you learn to use in writing that helped you?

Student answers to these questions would be revealing for next year's teacher," explained Mrs. Mason.

If a second grade teacher picks up one of my student's portfolios, she would have a lot of information to use about this child at the beginning of the year. It instantly gives teachers something to key in on that the child can do or can start writing about. When a child talks about wanting to write about llamas as a next piece in second grade or talks about using a web, rewrites or observations to help them, next year's teacher has lots of information about that child as a writer.

Mrs. Mason concluded by saying, "They (the writing survey and portfolio questions) may be valuable to share with parents so that they can see how kids change their ideas about writing."

#### Reporting Procedures

##### C. Reporting Procedures to Parents, Teachers and Others Interested in a Student's Writing Development

1. How have the writing portfolios affected your reporting procedures to parents? How would you like next year's teachers to respond to the data from your students' writing portfolio assessments?

Each of these teachers believed in the effectiveness of sharing information about their students as developing writers to parents. By sharing student writing samples and other writing process records on student writing strengths and goal setting procedures, these teachers felt that they could relieve parent anxieties about their children's progress. As parents reviewed their child's

portfolio, they were able to see tangible evidence of growth from earlier to more recent writing samples. One of the teachers also commented on the need to look at traditional assessments such as the report card in order to determine its usefulness and the appropriateness of trying to "fit" student development into the categories outlined on it.

"Parents like to see their child's work because it is so telling", responded Mrs. Bennett. "Anyone who isn't sharing student work is really missing the boat. Parents need to see samples of everything." Mrs. Bennett stated that parents really like to see growth by comparing earlier student samples to more recent samples. "Parents who are anxious about their child's progress often feel much more comfortable when they see how much their child has grown," Mrs. Bennett concluded. Mrs. Mason began by emphasizing the importance of having parents see their child's writing progress from month to month or from marking period to marking period. She explained that by selecting several pieces of writing periodically throughout the year, one can show the growth of a child who may have begun by drawing pictures and writing one or two letters or words to creating a sentence and expanding on a single topic. Mrs. Mason



commented on the fact that when writing samples go home, she indicated whether or not the child wrote independently or with adult help through conferring.

Mrs. Mason stated,

If you can present to parents that you are teaching what needs to be taught, that you are accepting children where they are in their learning, and at the same time, that you are challenging kids to go beyond, that you are making accommodations for all children, they will be supportive. The portfolios of students' work makes me accountable in this way.

Mrs. Mason also addressed a need to look at current, more traditional assessments which may no longer be serving us well.

I would like to get involved in portfolio sessions for reporting to parents and for discussing and setting goals in common. Parents could receive information on student growth and goals through conferences and through written reports. A packet of information about a child is more valuable than a form (report card) that you are trying to fit their kid into. A portfolio rather than a checklist would be better. Perhaps this would happen twice a year with only two rather than four report cards with grades. This would help teachers in dealing with the paperwork.

Mrs. Mason concluded by commenting on the importance of passing on students' writing portfolios to next year's teacher so that he or she could see the kinds of writing strategies that students were using and the kinds of



skills they were applying. Mrs. Mason exclaimed, "I got tired of hearing what they (the students) couldn't do. I wanted people to see what they could do." Mrs. Mason concluded by commenting that she believes there is an interest among teachers to know what students are doing as writers and the kinds of routines and writing terminology that students are familiar with from previous grades.

#### The Changing Role of the Teacher

##### D. The Changing Role of the Teacher as a Result of Writing Portfolio Assessment

1. How do writing portfolio assessment procedures affect the role of the teacher?

These teachers believed that aspects of their teaching changed as writing portfolio assessment became an integral part of their instruction. These changes affected their roles as teachers. One teacher commented that as students became more actively involved in a self-evaluation process, she was no longer the single classroom assessor. Another teacher described herself as a guider of instruction. They believed that writing portfolio assessment freed them to individualize their instruction and organize it based on student progress.

Mrs. Bennett made reference to an article that focused on portfolio development and assessment and its

positive effects on reading and writing development. She questioned this premise and commented that the questioning and reflection that is based on our beliefs about child development is having positive effects on reading and writing development. The portfolio is the means by which we can collect this information about students' reading and writing development.

Mrs. Bennett pointed out that writing-portfolio assessment procedures cause teachers to be more reflective and to individualize instruction and assessment. As students write, teachers and students reflect on their individual progress by analyzing writing portfolio samples. Goals are set collaboratively and implementation plans are designed based on these goals. Teachers can also look more closely at whole class needs as writers. "Students can take an active role as part of this process of questioning and reflecting. I was no longer assessor and evaluator of things. Instead, students did more self-evaluation."

"Writing portfolios have given me the opportunity right at my finger tips to always have positive information about every child in the classroom," exclaimed Mrs. Mason.

When I am involved in talking with students, writing to parents or contributing at a meeting

to review a child's individual education program, I can offer positive statements about that child's growth, and I can support myself with a continuum of the child's own work from all points in the year. I can also indicate whether the child worked independently or with teacher assistance. This is a wealth of information and has often surprised other educators who have tested students using more traditional methods. As a teacher, the kind of information that I can collect using a student's writing portfolio has freed me to work more on an individual level with students. The evidence of student growth that can be collected has changed my whole idea about allowing students the freedom to use and develop the language with which they come to school.

Mrs. Mason continued by commenting on the freedom that portfolios have given her in making instructional decisions based on actual student work. Writing portfolios have informed her about the progress of individual writers and of the whole group. She more readily knew and accepted where children were in their learning rather than stifling them with a pre-set vocabulary and an over-emphasis on spelling instruction. "Now I can focus more on accepting and supporting their exploration with language and on helping them to develop a positive self image," stated Mrs. Mason. She concluded by reflecting on her relationship with her students.

I have gotten to know kids much more personally and to know just how far they can go in their learning. Developing a rapport with them to the point where they trust me enough "to take the plunge" is really

important. I can share their growth with them on days that they feel they can't do anything. This kind of sharing develops positive relationships with kids.

### Support for Teachers

#### E. Support Necessary for Teachers Involved in Writing Portfolio Assessment

1. What support do teachers need when involving themselves with writing portfolio assessment?

Each of these teachers supported an effort in the process of developing and implementing a portfolio approach to bring teachers together to discuss and agree on just what makes good writing as well as the kinds of writing expectations and goals that can be realistically set at various grade levels or at various developmental writing stages. Teachers beginning this process are often used to a commercial scope and sequence that outlines instructional expectations and procedures. Therefore, according to teachers in this study, it is necessary in the early steps of looking at writing-portfolio assessment for teachers to work together to begin to discuss the meaning of good writing and procedures involved in setting expectations and goals with developing writers. One teacher emphasized the importance of helping teachers to understand the day-to-day teaching potential in writing-portfolio assessments that are based on student writing strengths, goals and



implementation plans. She advocated team teaching as an effective approach for supporting teachers in their learning and in their decision-making while developing a portfolio approach. A second teacher added that teachers need to be trained in child development practices so that they can make informed decisions.

Mrs. Bennett began to address the question of support for teachers by saying that it is very important for teachers who are beginning to use portfolios to see the kinds of goals that other teachers are writing and to understand what one needs to look for in good writing. "If you haven't ever written goals before, and you don't have a list of writing goals by grade, it can be difficult. What also needs to be done is to write down some strategies and possible suggestions for implementing each one," added Mrs. Bennett. Mrs. Bennett continued by saying that some teachers think that when they list "I can do statements" (student writing strengths) that they have to list everything the child can do. She stated that this can be overwhelming and that she lists only new things that students can do as writers. Mrs. Bennett went on to comment that some teachers don't see portfolio assessment and the recording of student strengths and goals as working documents that are useful to their day-to-day teaching. "It all really has to have that useful



step which is the implementation step," stated Mrs. Bennett. Mrs. Bennett continued by suggesting that goal grids be designed so that goals for the four academic quarters could be easily seen along with a list of implementation strategies or plans.

Mrs. Bennett also commented on the importance of team teaching for supporting teachers in learning and taking risks. Teaming can also allow for various flexible grouping patterns in the classroom. One teacher can work with a larger group while the second teacher works one-on-one with a student or a small group. Mrs. Bennett added, "There's just something about planning with someone else that moves you to a better level of teaching."

Mrs. Bennett concluded by commenting on the necessity to involve teachers in the upper grades in the process of developing and implementing a portfolio approach so that they can begin to understand its benefits and contribute to its design as well.

Mrs. Mason commented on the necessity for teachers to be well versed in child development practices.

What is essential is a true understanding of early childhood development. Background in childhood development gives you the understanding necessary to define expectations for the five year old. What can you expect from the thinking, learning, behavioral and social processes of a five

year old? Teachers need to understand how children learn and develop and stop thinking about children as all being on a certain grade or fitting into a particular curriculum. I have students now ranging from four to seven years old in their development. If people can better understand child development, they will more readily trust kids to take initiatives in their own learning and to challenge them when they are ready.

She concluded by stating that teachers need more time to discuss writing-portfolio assessment by being a part of groups like our district's writing project group.

The research asked teachers to reflect on this last question:

Were there any particular reflections or surprises that occurred to you this year when working with your writing students and the writing portfolio assessment?

In looking back over their first year of writing-portfolio assessment, each teacher voiced certain surprises and made particular reflections. The design of goal grids, a growing list of successful strategies for implementing student goals, a declaration of the value of peer interaction in the classroom, the realization that expectations of perfection in published work for the early writer does not support the developmental aspects of the writer and the knowledge that all students will become successful writers in their own time were some of the teachers' stated reflections.

Mrs. Bennett talked about several surprises she had about conclusions that she came to during the year in which she worked with writing-portfolio assessment. She commented again on the need for what she referred to as a goal grid that would include a fold out of goals and implementation plans for the year by quarters. This plan or grid would be designed quarterly based on the individual needs of the students. She stated that story mapping, webbing and framed writing techniques were extremely useful as part of her implementation plans for various writing goals. She went on to say that teacher collaboration during the year was necessary in order to generate creative strategies for the implementation of writing goals. Teachers met monthly to discuss writing. Mrs. Bennett concluded by commenting on the need she had throughout the year to design and develop a management system using a "status of the class" report and independent center time for students.

The "status of the class" report kept me in touch with individual students, and the establishment of center areas for more independent work allowed me time to confer one-on-one or with small groups of writers.

A "status of the class" report (Appendix J) is a record that can be used by a teacher on a daily basis and over the course of a week's time to determine the writing

needs and progress of each student as they develop a piece of writing (fieldnotes). Do certain students need an audience for their rough draft? Is the computer available for those who are ready to type their final copies? Are students progressing well in the development of a piece or have certain students been working at the brainstorming or first rough draft stage for too long a time? This report supports the teacher in the area of classroom management.

Mrs. Mason commented:

What was important to me and my students was coming to the realization that accepting imperfect published work was o.k. When the children realized that this was acceptable, they wrote more and they let go of the vocabulary that they felt safe with.

She referred to one first grader's answer to what he had learned as a writer during the year: "I learned that as I wrote sounds, I didn't have to be perfect all the time." Mrs. Mason commented that particular students wrote very little in the early months of first grade because they simply didn't feel safe. Mrs. Mason continued by commenting on what parents often said about their child's writing: "When I think about what I wrote when I was in first grade, it's amazing what my child is doing". Mrs. Mason stated that parents often talked about the "big words" that the students tried to write.



" They knew their child was not a genius but that opportunities were there for students to write and build on their own language," exclaimed Mrs. Mason.

The biggest stumbling block for me initially, and in turn, the biggest turning point for me was when I finally came to a comfortable, conscious decision to verbalize the standards in my classroom as to what I and the children would accept in reference to their published work. It does not have to be perfect. I have watched students read through past published work and find mistakes. That's rewarding.

Mrs. Mason continued by stating that she is trying to teach young children that are six, seven and eight years old to care about what they write and to use whatever skills they have to put what they want to say into words. She went on by saying that her students write a first draft and share it with a peer to make corrections. Then she sits with them as an adult writer to help them with skills that they have been taught in class and skills that they are indicating that they are ready to apply. Mrs. Mason explained,

If they don't indicate that they can apply it (a particular skill) then I don't believe the child has internalized that skill, and we leave it alone. Now, what does it say to the child after these steps if I take it to the computer and type it perfectly? Most of the time the kids can't read it back to me. Some kids say that it wasn't what they wrote. It tells them not be real careful about what they write and how they fix it because the teacher is going to make it perfect anyway.



That defeats the whole purpose of writing process and developmental sequences for kids who should be reading and writing and using the skills that they are ready to use.

Mrs. Mason concluded by referring to an editor's note that she wrote to be included in student's individual and whole class books. This note communicated her philosophy on imperfect published pieces of writing. Editor's note:

The stories in this book were written by 6, 7 and 8 year old children. The editing was done to the best of their individual skill ability. As the teacher, my goal is to provide each child with the information, skills and the time they need to be successful in their writing.

#### Students' Portfolios

Students' writing portfolios served as a record of students' writing development. Teachers analyzed students' writing portfolios by reviewing strengths across content, style, mechanics and the use of various writing processes over time. These portfolios documented students' writing development and became the basis for developing individualized instructional goal setting that supported next steps for students. As students made

progress with certain skills or strategies as evidenced in collections of their written work, teachers were able to make instructional decisions that were appropriate and specific to the writer's needs and readiness to deal with next steps. The portfolios also served as a "window" into the classroom by providing evidence of process writing opportunities that were made available to students.

#### Student Portfolios in Mrs. Mason's Classroom

In Mrs. Mason's class, students' writing strengths and goals were recorded on a regular basis and supported by representative samples of their work. Students discussed their strengths and could contribute writing goals that were important to them. They were invited to be part of the process of their own development. As observed in the classroom, an effort was made by Mrs. Mason to include and document a full range of writing processes that allowed for opportunities that promoted risk-taking, collaborative goal setting, partner editing and self-reflection. She modeled a number of different writing strategies throughout the year that included brainstorming, dictation and questioning procedures for building content, cut and paste for sequencing information, story webs for organizational purposes and

the use of observations for more scientific writing. Mrs. Mason particularly believed that working with a buddy or in cooperative groups to brainstorm ideas was really helpful. Students who were better writers became models for others.

Katherine's Writing Portfolio. The following writing assessment information was based on the writing development of Katherine from Sept. 1990 to June 1991 in Mrs. Mason's classroom. Katherine represented a writer in the "movement of thought" level on the "First Grade Writing" form and the "Beginning Writing: Watching It Develop" form (Appendix D). Her writing records are included here to exemplify the development of an early writer from the beginning of the year to the end and the record-keeping used to document that development. They also represented the breadth and depth of Mrs. Mason's writing program. On a quarterly basis, Katherine's writing strengths as evidenced by collected writing samples were recorded and analyzed in her portfolio. Next steps for her were established based on her writing needs and on any particular goals that she wanted to contribute after conferring with the teacher on information in her portfolio (fieldnotes).

Mrs. Mason attached writing samples to a writing process cover sheet to begin a summary analysis of the writing development of Katherine during the first two months of school. Katherine's writing strengths included: Use of beginning, middle and end sounds.

Some capitalization and some punctuation.  
Use of invented spelling.  
Wrote complete thoughts with some description.

Her longer pieces were based on classroom experiences or fieldtrip experiences. As observed in Mrs. Mason's class, students often worked in small cooperative groups to write about a common classroom experience or fieldtrip experience.

In several pieces of writing Katherine experimented with the use of dialogue. She was also supportive of others in their writing as observed in the class. Mrs. Mason modeled partner editing throughout the year with the whole class. By the middle of the year, students practiced editing skills on their own writing and with partners.

Katherine's Sept. piece about the sunset (Figure 1) was a free choice piece that she wrote in her journal. She expressed herself in complete thoughts with some description, used invented spelling and some standard spelling and showed readiness for work with contractions.

The sun IS setting And The  
Skcet IS Fild With culers. But Ive never sen  
A Rele SUN-Set.



The sun is setting  
and the sky is filled  
with colors. But  
I've never seen a  
real sunset.

Sunset

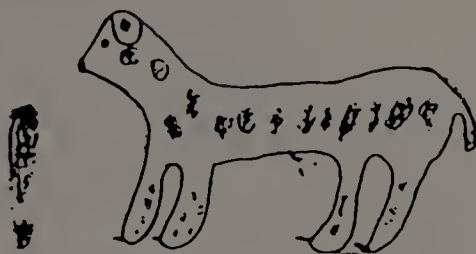
Figure 1

Katherine's September pieces about her dog Toby (Figure 2) and about the house of fun (Figure 3) were also free choice pieces that she wrote in her journal. In these pieces Katherine successfully used dialogue, an exclamation mark to express strong feeling and contractions. As these skills were successfully used by Katherine in her writing samples, Mrs. Mason could make better decisions on next steps for Katherine. As evidenced in the classroom, Katherine also seemed to be comfortable writing about her different experiences during free choice writing time.



STOP IT TOBE Sume Times TOBE  
choos ON thing HE Shod INT TOBE!

9/4/90



Stop it, Toby.  
Sometimes Toby chews  
on things he  
shouldn't. Toby!

Toby in Trouble

Figure 2

The Hows OF Fun  
IS Being Takin over!  
BUT I DO + NO WUT!  
Too dodd in Oh-No!



The house of fun  
is being taken over  
but I don't know what  
to do. Oh no!

House of Fun

Figure 3

Katherine began to work on the computer towards the end of September and was able to type a piece about planting a tree (Figure 4).

the boy and gerll plantid a tree and  
thaye watid fro it too grow.  
the tree groo in the rane it groo in  
the sun shin.then in the spring it  
groo sum apple blosoms. then in the  
sumer the tree got litti gren apples  
. then in the otum the apples wer  
rety too pick and the tree livd haly  
ever after.

The boy and girl planted a tree  
and they waited for it to grow.  
The tree grew in the rain. It  
grew in the sunshine. Then in  
the spring it grew some apple  
blossoms. Then in the summer  
the tree got little green apples.  
Then in the autumn the apples  
were ready to pick and the tree  
lived happily ever after.

#### Planting a Tree

Figure 4

This was one of her longer pieces and was based on a wordless picture booklet to which she was asked to add the text as part of a unit on the seasons. Again, we see good sentence structure, both invented spelling and standard spelling, the use of the ed ending and the period for punctuation. Mrs. Mason based the focus of her assessment of Katherine's writing development on Katherine's strengths as a writer rather than on her errors or needs as a learner. As observed in the classroom, building on strengths as evidenced from collected samples of work promoted positive attitudes towards writing among her students and permission to take risks.

Katherine's early October piece about the sawdust (Figure 5) was a longer piece. It was based on a class fieldtrip experience to a sawmill and the classroom creation of a mural about the experience. It was evident that Katherine was willing to take risks with her use of vocabulary in this piece. She had also successfully used some capitalization and periods at the end of sentences.

I saw A Humungus pile <sup>of</sup> ~~the~~ sawdust,  
 And it was Bigger Than Me. And it was Neatoh.  
 And it was Behind the Planer Room And it was Smoothing  
 the Boards.

I saw a humungus pile  
 of sawdust and it was  
 bigger than me. And  
 it was neat-oh. And  
 it was behind the  
 planer room. And it  
 was smoothing the boards.

#### The Sawmill

#### Figure 5

In early October Katherine chose to write about her dog Toby (Figure 6) in her journal. She wrote two complete thoughts and demonstrated a sense of humor in her writing.

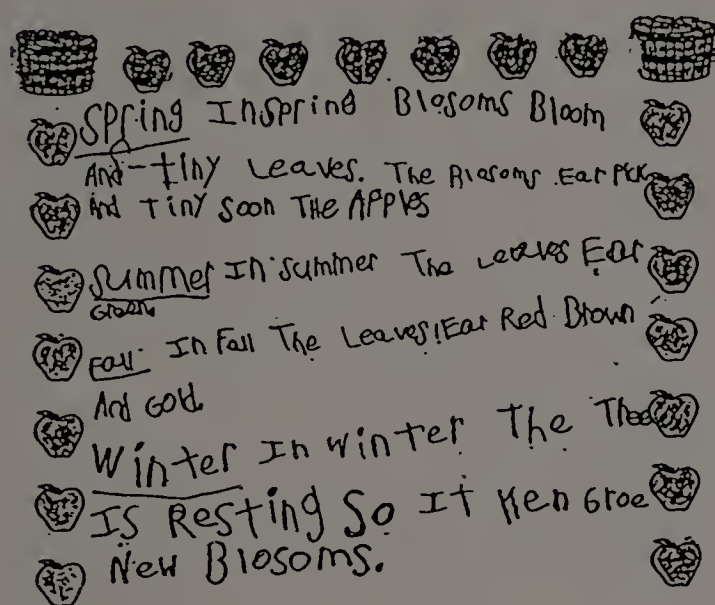
toabe is a vare nise dog theye onle  
 problus are wen he bise ower wen he  
 gose pote.

Toby is a very nice dog.  
 The only problems are  
 when he bends over when  
 he goes potty.

#### Toby's Problem

#### Figure 6

Katherine's mid-October piece on the seasons was also a longer piece and was based on a study of the trees changing according to the seasons (Figure 7). This informational piece showed an understanding of the changing nature of trees as the seasons changed. Complete thoughts were written with good description and good standard spelling.



Spring In spring blossoms bloom and tiny leaves. The blossoms are pink and tiny. Soon the apples...

Summer In summer the leaves are green.

Fall In fall the leaves are red, brown and gold.

Winter In winter the tree is resting so it can grow new blossoms.

Seasons

Figure 7



The late October piece about pumpkins (Figure 8) was the last writing sample attached to Katherine's writing process cover sheet for the first quarter. This piece was a free choice piece that was written in Katherine's journal. It was her longest free choice piece for the quarter. It included four complete thoughts, good description and standard spelling.

The Day Befower Yesterday We Got Tow  
Pumpkins Oun Skiny And Oun Fat. Then  
We Carvd The Pumpkins Laurens Fase  
Wus A Funy Fase Myn Was A Funy Fase

The day before yesterday  
we got two pumpkins - one  
skinny and one fat. Then  
we carved the pumpkins.  
Lauren's face was a funny  
face. Mine was a funny  
face.

Pumpkins

Figure 8

As evidenced in her portfolio, Katherine had the opportunity early in the year to write daily and to make choices about her topics. As observed in the classroom, Mrs. Mason provided rich classroom and field trip experiences from which Katherine could discover and develop her writing topics. Katherine was involved in group rewrites of books and poems, and she was introduced to the use of endings, contractions, exclamation marks and dialogue through literature that had been shared in the classroom. She was not afraid to take risks in experimenting with these new skills in her own writing as documented in collected samples of work in the portfolio. As observed in the classroom and in the portfolios, Mrs. Mason was becoming more and more thorough in her ability to analyze student writing collected over time. As Mrs. Mason recorded Katherine's writing strengths for the first quarter, they included comments on content (wrote complete thoughts), style (description) and mechanics (spelling, capitalization and punctuation). Later, Mrs. Mason would comment, as well, on Katherine's use of writing process skills and her attitude as a writer. Such an analysis provided a more complete and complex picture of Katherine's development as a writer and

provided Mrs. Mason with rich information on which to base future instructional directions for Katherine.

Mrs. Mason set writing goals for Katherine for the second quarter of the year based on Katherine's first quarter development as a writer. These goals included expanding a topic with an effort toward publishing a book, further use of punctuation and the further development of Katherine's experimentation with certain language styles (use of description and dialogue), and helping others edit their work. These goals were "well balanced" across content, style mechanics and process. They were developed as a result of analyzing Katherine's written collections in her portfolio and by observing her use of process in the classroom and in developing her written pieces. She was definitely ready to expand the content of her pieces and further develop the punctuation necessary for clarity. Helping others to edit their work would also give Katherine practice in providing support to other writers.

In early April Mrs. Mason completed Katherine's writing process cover sheet with attached writing samples. Katherine's writing strengths included:

Use of exclamation points, question marks,  
periods and quotation marks.

Use of certain phonetic clues and rules to  
spell some of her words.  
Wrote daily.  
Good sentence formation.  
Elements of fact and fantasy.  
Edits own work for punctuation and clarity.  
Helps others to edit their work.

As observed in the classroom and in her portfolio, Mrs. Mason focused on Katherine's development of content (elements of fact and fantasy and edits work for clarity), on her use of mechanics (punctuation, spelling and sentence formation), on her processes of revision (edits own work) and on her attitude (helps others to edit their work). As evidenced in the analysis of Katherine's collected samples of writing in her portfolio, Mrs. Mason was able to define Katherine's strengths and needs with a great deal of specificity. This allowed Mrs. Mason to more easily communicate information about Katherine's development to Katherine and others who were interested in her development.

The following pieces were attached to her April 1991 writing process cover sheet and included pieces of writing from the middle of January to early April of 1991. Katherine's early February piece about a snowman was written in response to a video and discussion about a snowman who came to life (Figure 9). Mrs. Mason asked students to pretend that a snowman had entered their

house and to answer the following questions about the experience:

What would you show him in your house?  
How would he act or react when he sees it or sees what it does?



I showed him my Nintendo.

The Snowman left the Nintendo on. <sup>Then</sup> he <sup>was</sup> looking at the birds. Then he started to sit on the bean-bag. He scared the birds. The Snowman jumped. When the birds started to squawk and flap.

I showed him my Nintendo.  
The snowman left the  
Nintendo on. Then he  
was looking at the birds.  
Then he started to sit  
on the bean bag. He scared  
the birds. The snowman  
jumped when the birds  
started to squawk and flap.

The Snowman

Figure 9



Katherine answered both questions in this piece with good detail. Even the snowman's feeling of being scared was revealed. The use of action words like jumped, squawked and flapped were quite effective. This questioning technique helped students to build content without having to depend on patterned language as a model. Questioning was used as a next step to having students complete patterned or predictable pre-written phrases with their own words or thoughts. Evidence of the results of the questioning process was documented in Katherine's writing portfolio. Her success in using this strategy to create a clear, coherent and somewhat detailed piece provided information to Mrs. Mason on which to base further instructional decisions for Katherine - particularly around Katherine's readiness to successfully receive peer response through questioning techniques and follow-up revision strategies. Again, evidence of process opportunities like the questioning technique that was made available to students could be documented in the portfolio - providing a "window" into the classroom.

Katherine's next three March pieces were all written pieces based on a classroom or fieldtrip experience. The first piece was written in response to making butter in the classroom (Figure 10). This piece demonstrated

Katherine's ability to write complete thoughts and to sequence events well. Many words were spelled correctly, and periods were used at the end of sentences.

This Morning We Made  
butter. We put cream in too A  
Jar. We Skrood the COVer on tite.  
than We Shook it in the Jar until we Made  
butter. than At the end we HAd butter.

This morning we made  
butter. We put cream  
into a jar. We screwed  
the cover on tight.  
Then we shook it in the  
jar until we made butter.  
Then at the end we had  
butter.

Butter

Figure 10

Katherine's mid-March piece was based on a classroom experience around tapping trees in the school yard and boiling the sap in the classroom (Figure 11). It was a

lengthy informational piece about the experience.

Katherine demonstrated good sentence structure, the consistent use of capitals at the beginning of sentences and periods at the end. Her information was clear and accurate and again documented Katherine's ability to write rather lengthy pieces based on classroom experiences.

It is not hard to tap a tree  
if you have the rite things. Now  
we are boiling sap. It takes  
40 gallons too make 1. Gallon of  
syrup. A tree has too be 10 inches  
long around too put 1 tap in it. It takes  
A couple days too make syrup. After you  
drill a hole in the tree, put the tap in,  
hang the bucket up, put the cover  
on, the sap will run. It starts in  
the early spring and ends when the leaves  
come out then we empty it. When the  
bucket was off we got drips of sap.

It is not hard to tap a tree if you have the right things. Now we are boiling sap. It takes 40 gallons to make 1 gallon of syrup. A tree has to be 10 inches long around to put 1 tap in it. It takes a couple days to make syrup. After you drill a hole in the tree, put the tap in, hang the bucket up, put the cover on, the sap will run. It starts in the early spring and ends when the leaves come out. Then we empty it. When the bucket was off we got drips of sap.

#### Tapping a Tree

Figure 11

Katherine's last March piece was based on a field trip to a sugar house (Figure 12). It was a lengthy piece with a good beginning, middle and end. Katherine used good detail about the sheep, and she demonstrated a sense of humor in her discussion of the sheep that ate their seats of hay. An attached rough draft (Figure 13) demonstrated the use of insertions and editing that she completed on her own. Again, the portfolio successfully documented a process opportunity made available to Katherine. - self-editing.

We went too the suger house and the  
therd stashon we went to was the  
sheep. I fed one of the baby sheep  
with a bottle. But most of the baby  
sheep wer feeding on thair mothers.  
It was vary noseey in thair becos the  
sheep wer bawing. The sheep wer eating  
our seets becos our seets wer haye  
stacks. The baby sheep sed  
maamaaaaa. Some of the mother sheep  
kickt the other babys away.

Sugar House

Figure 12

We went too the Sugar house and the  
 third Station we went to ~~was~~ the sheep. I  
 fed one of the baby sheep <sup>with a bottle</sup>. But most of the  
 baby sheep wer feeding on their mothers. It wa  
 vary nosey in thair becos the sheep wer bawin  
 The sheep wer eating <sup>our</sup> seats becos are  
 seats wer haye stacks. The baby sheep se  
 maamaamaa. Some of <sup>the</sup> mother sheep  
 kickt the other babys away.

We went to the sugar house and the third station we  
 went to was the sheep. I fed one of the baby sheep  
 with a bottle. But most of the baby sheep were feeding  
 on their mothers. It was very noisy in their because  
 the sheep were bawing. The sheep were eating our seats  
 because our seats were haystacks. The baby sheep said  
 maamaamaaa. Some of the mother sheep kicked the other  
 babies away.

#### Sugar House - Rough Draft

Figure 13

As evidenced by her portfolio and classroom  
 observations, Katherine was given opportunities to write  
 stories based on fact and on fiction. She learned how to  
 write about field trip experiences by including clear,



accurate and well sequenced information for the reader. Her fictional story about the snowman included detail and the use of good action words. Her last piece on the sugar house demonstrated her continued involvement in the process of self-editing as she made revisions both for mechanics and for content.

As Mrs. Mason reflected on Katherine's progress as a writer from the middle of January until early April, she listed Katherine's goals for the last quarter of the year. As Katherine wrote longer and more detailed stories, Mrs. Mason knew Katherine needed a pre-writing strategy to organize information prior to creating her first rough draft. Therefore, the use of a story web to organize her writing became a goal. Continued opportunities to practice writing daily in order to improve skills was a second goal.

As students gained confidence as writers in Mrs. Mason's classroom, she introduced them to new writing strategies for moving them along in their development. Mrs. Mason specifically introduced story webs to help students organize information, reflect on additional content and sustain themselves more independently as writers over a period of time. After the story web was designed around a particular topic either by the student

or collaboratively with Mrs. Mason, students found they didn't need to rely as often on the teacher or other students to get started in their writing from day-to-day. The story web helped to direct them as writers.

Katherine's first piece for the last quarter of the year was written in response to a story starter entitled, "The Magic Dream" and included work with a story web. Katherine demonstrated an ability to create a first rough draft (Figure 14) and then to elaborate on this draft by answering questions that were posed by the teacher.

## THE MAGIC DREAM

Look at the picture and the five words  
Write a short story.  
Use each of the five words in your story.



wand bed dream fairy wish

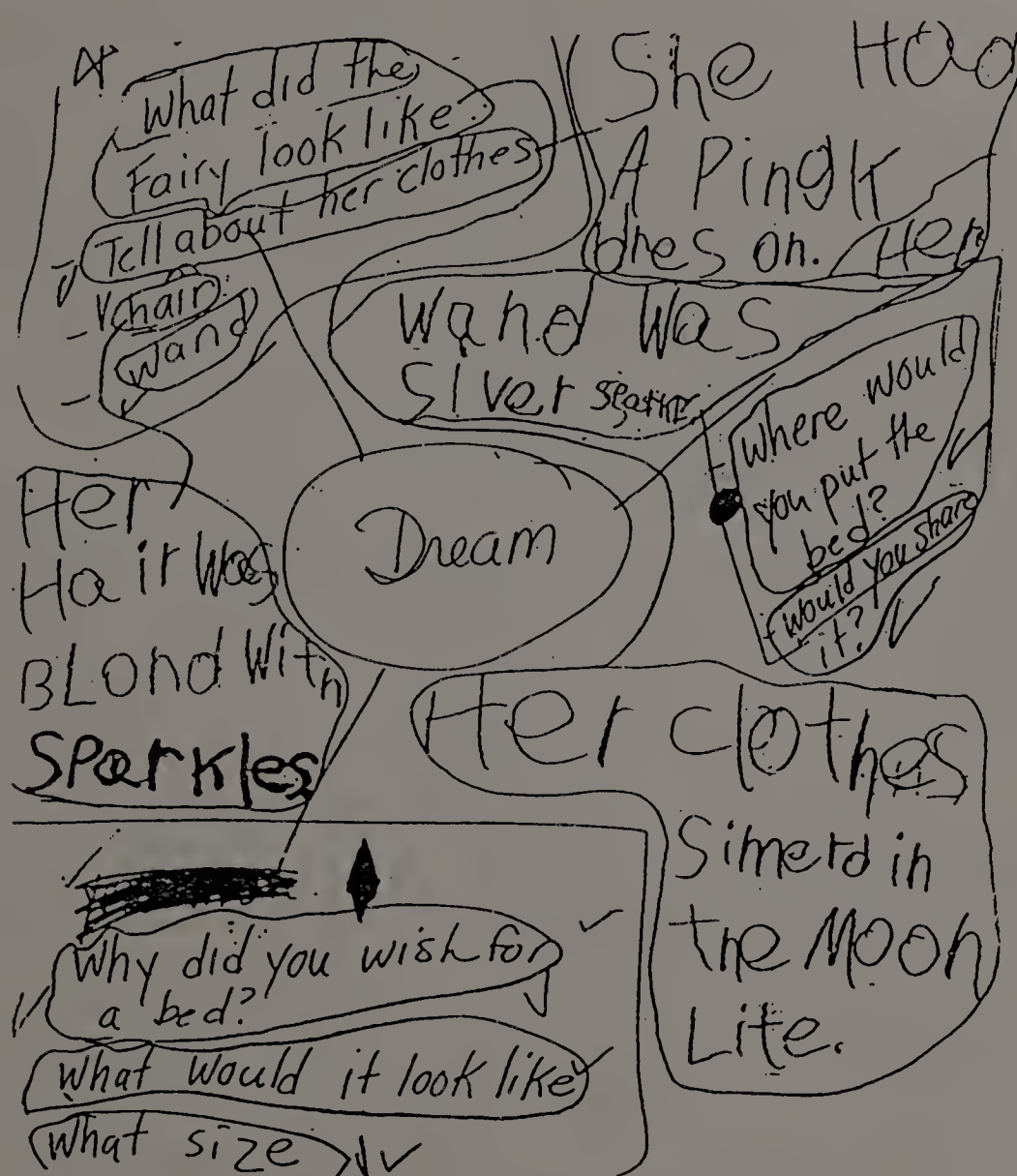
One nite i Had A  
DREAM ABOUT A fairy.  
The fairy HAD A WAND.  
The fairy GAVE ME ONE  
Wish. I Wist thiet I  
Wood HAVA A new bed!

One night I had a  
dream about a fairy.  
The fairy had a  
wand. The fairy  
gave me one wish.  
I wished that I  
would have a new bed!

Magic Dream - Rough Draft

Figure 14

She used a story web collaboratively with the teacher to organize information (Figure 15). As observed in the classroom, Mrs. Mason asked Katherine several content building questions that were grouped together on the story web, and Katherine chose to answer some of these questions right on the story web before creating a rough draft which answered the remainder of the questions.



Magic Dream - Story Web

Figure 15

Her second rough draft (Figure 16) included description and details about the fairy and about her wish.

Katherine used a simile in comparing her bed to a gray horse with white spots. Again, her story had a beginning, middle and end to it.

One nite i had a dream  
about a fairy. She had a pink  
Dress on her, Her Wand was  
Silver and SPARKLY. Her clothes  
Shimmered in the moon Lite. Her hair  
was blond with SPARKLES. The fairy had a  
Wand. The fairy gave me one wish. I wished  
that i wood have a new bed. MY bed wood  
look like a gray horse with white spots on it  
MY bed wood be 4 feet and 10 inches  
long. I wished for a bed becaus i didnt  
like my old bed. I woodint Shaer  
it becaus it wood be to small  
for other Peple.

#### Magic Dream - Revisions

Figure 16

Katherine then typed her third draft on the computer (Figure 17).

One nite I had a dream about a fairy.  
She had a pink dress on her. Her wand  
was silver and sparkly. Her clothes  
shimered in the moon lite. Her hair  
was blond with sparkles. The fairy  
had a wand. The fairy gave me one  
wish. I wished that I wood have a new  
bed. My bed wood look like a gray  
horse with white spots on it. My bed  
wood be 4 feet and 10 inches long. I  
wisht for a bed becaus I didnt like  
my old bed. I woodint shaer it becaus  
it wood be to small for other peple.

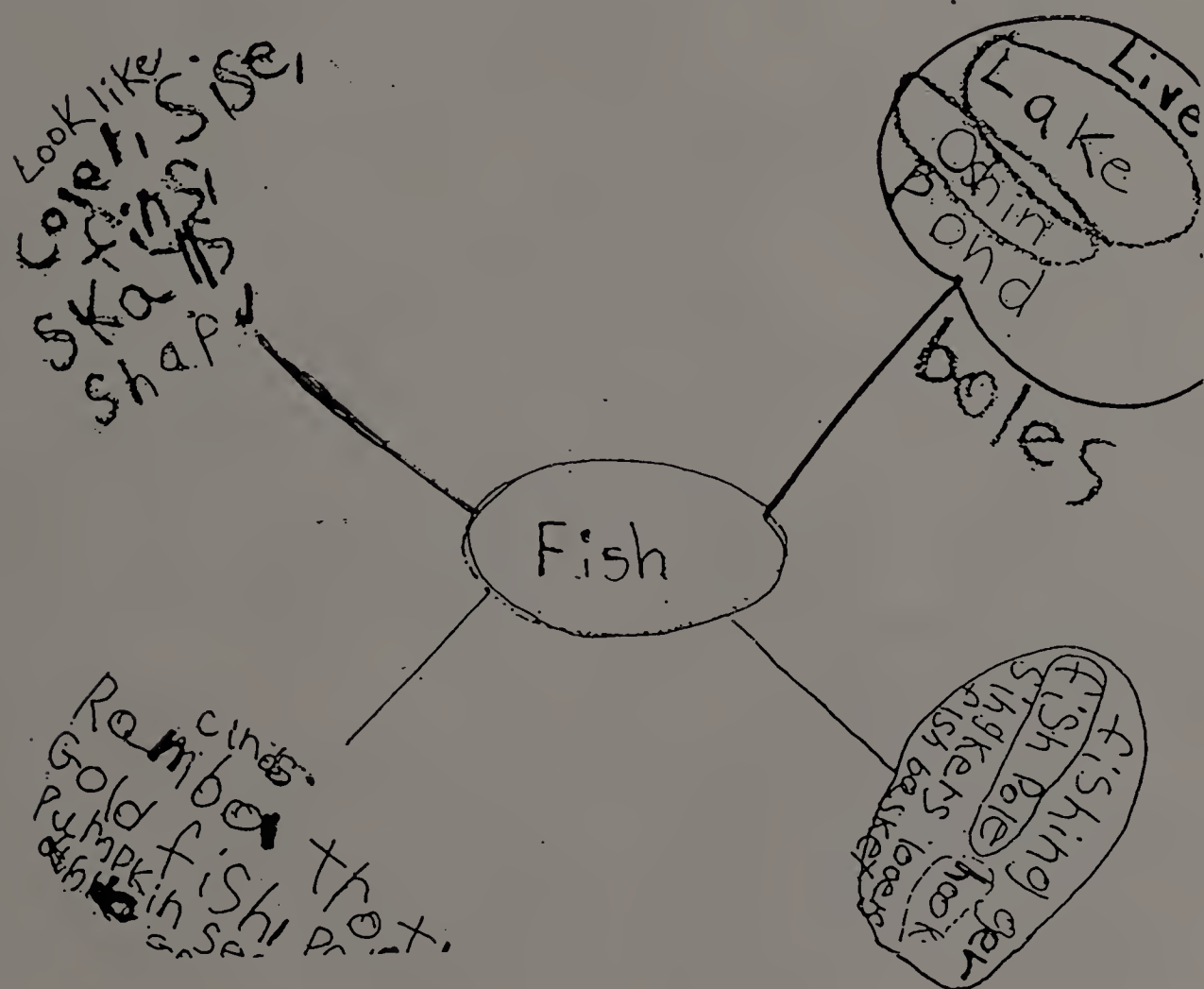
One night I had a dream about a fairy. She had  
a pink dress on her. Her wand was silver and  
sparkly. Her clothes shimmered in the moonlight.  
Her hair was blonde with sparkles. The fairy had  
a wand. The fairy gave me one wish. I wished that  
I would have a new bed. My bed would look like a  
gray horse with white spots on it. My bed would be  
4 feet and 10 inches long. I wished for a bed  
because I didn't like my old bed. I wouldn't  
share it because it would be too small for  
other people.

Magic Dream - Final Copy

Figure 17



Katherine's next piece dated April 1991 was written on the topic of fish which was a free choice selection. As observed in the classroom, she had asked to use a story web (Figure 18) to organize her ideas. This web included words about different kinds of fish, where fish live, what fish look like and the things that one needs to go fishing.



Fish - Story Web

Figure 18

Katherine illustrated and wrote a rough draft for each of these categories on the story web. The drafts were then organized by Katherine to create a computer typed story about fish (Figure 19).

Thari are meney diforent cindes of fish like Ranbow Trout, Goldfish, Bluegales, Perch, and pumpkin seeds.

Fish live in all sotse of playses. In deed they do. They live in lakes, oshins, ponds, and fish boles. Diforent cindes live in diforent playses.

Shape. The shape of a fish is yousholy an ovle and a Triangle. And a little cercle for the eye.

Fishing geer. Thari are meney things you yoos for fishing. Like a fish pole, singkers, hooks, fish bascet, and looers.

There are many different kinds of fish like Rain-  
bow Trout, Goldfish,  
Bluegales, Perch, and  
pumpkin seeds.

Fish live in all sorts  
of places. Indeed they do.  
They live in lakes,  
oceans, ponds, and fish  
bowls. Different kinds  
live in different

Shape. The shape of a fish  
is usually an oval and a  
trangle. And a little  
circle for the eye.

Fishing gear. There are  
many things you use for  
fishing. Like a fish  
pole, sinkers, hooks,  
basket, and louers.

Fish Story - Final Copy

Figure 19

Katherine then wrote a rather lengthy culminating poem about the color, size, fins, scales and shape of fish (Figure 20). It was both creative and informational. Katherine demonstrated a use of standard spelling, periods, commas and exclamation points. This entire writing project was done independently by Katherine (fieldnotes).

Colers. Fish are all diforent  
colers. Green, Blue,Oreng,all  
diforent colers!.

Sise. Fish are all diforent siseis.  
Tacke this one for instins. It is  
allmoste 4 inches.

Fins. Fins are all diforent siseis  
depending on the fish.

Skaylse. Skales are wavey on fish.  
The shape looks like the oshin.

Shape. The shapeof a fish is  
yousholy an ovle and a triangle. And  
a little curcle for its eye.

Colors. Fish are all  
different colors.  
Green, blue, orange.  
All different colors!  
Size. Fish are all  
different sizes. Take  
this one for instance.  
It is almost 4 inches.  
Fins. Fins are all  
different sizes  
depending on the fish.  
Scales. Scales are wavy  
on fish. The shape looks  
like the ocean.  
Shape. The shape of a  
fish is usually an oval  
and a triangle. And  
a little circle for  
its eye.

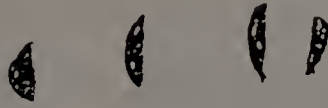
Fish Poem

Figure 20

Clearly, Katherine learned a strategy that helped her to focus on questions about her writing, organize additional information and expand on her content by creating a second rough draft. These strategies will help her become a more independent writer as she takes control of the processes of brainstorming and organizing information about future topics. Her success at using these strategies were documented in her portfolio.

As observed in the classroom, during the later part of April and into May of 1991, Katherine and her peers were introduced to informational writing based on scientific observations. Katherine illustrated and wrote about her observations of the growth of chive seeds over time (Figure 21). Her observations were written in complete thoughts and highlighted how the seeds looked and smelled. As documented in her portfolio, these pieces provided evidence of opportunity to write across the curriculum.

I looked at chive seeds.



I noticed that they looked like grass with little bird feathers on them.

I noticed That They  
smelled like nothing. That  
they look like apple seeds.

they are young.



I notice that they smelled like nothing. That they look like apple seeds. They are young.

I noticed That they looked like  
grass with little bird feathers  
on them.

Observation of Chives

Figure 21



Katherine and her classmates were also introduced to writing about their classroom experiences and their thoughts about their learning in the classroom. They were actively involved in planning and reflecting on their learning and their behavior in the classroom. Students signed up for learning centers of their choice with the understanding that there were certain centers that they had to work at as scheduled by the teacher. At the end of the day, students reflected on the positive and negative aspects of their day by illustrating or writing comments. Mrs. Mason reflected on student progress and read the processing that students wrote about their day. This helped her to plan for individual needs for the next day since she wanted to match students to what they were ready to learn. These pieces of writing were referred to as results since they were about results of the day (Figure 22). For the last two months of school, Katherine wrote about her day and discussed what she liked and didn't like (fieldnotes). As observed in the classroom, she was not shy about expressing her opinions.



Today I helped Mrs. M. <sup>scoop</sup>  
out the rice. And put in the  
water. you were a big help.

☺ The best thing about today was Doing the  
water table becos I liked  
the things.  
☹ The worst thing about today was losing the  
third block of time.



Today I SO The Teacher POURING WATER  
IN THE CRIBTABLE.  
Did you get to use it?

☺ The best thing about today was ART

☹ The worst thing about today was WEN WEHAT  
MIS THE 6 BLOCK TIME

Today I helped  
Mrs. M. scoop  
out the rice  
and put in the  
water.

The best thing  
about today was  
doing the water  
table because  
I liked seeing  
the things.

The worst thing  
about today was  
losing the third  
block of time.

Today I saw the  
teacher pouring  
water in the rice  
table.

The best thing  
about today was  
art.

The worst thing  
about today was  
when we had to  
miss the end block  
of time.

Results of the Day

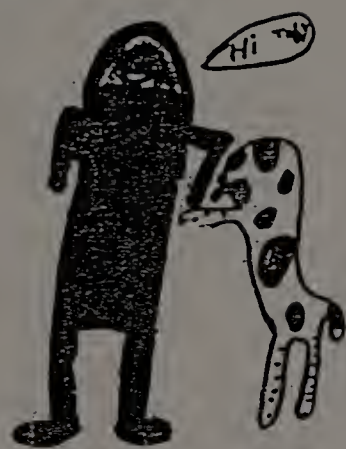
Figure 22

As supported by these previous writing samples from mid-January to early April 1991, Katherine met the goals established for her by her teacher on the early April 1991 writing process cover sheet which were to learn to use a story web to organize information and to continue practice writing daily to improve all skills. She wrote stories based on fact and fiction. She learned to record accurate observations and to express in writing her thoughts and opinions about her learning experiences.

As observed in the classroom during the months of May and early June of 1991, Katherine continued to write daily and with a sense of enthusiasm and independence. She had learned how to receive questions and build the content of her pieces, and she had successfully used a story web to organize information. During the last months of school, she wrote pieces based on classroom and field trip experiences, scientific observations and her views of the results of the classroom day. As observed in the classroom, she had successfully done self-editing and partner editing on her own written work and had begun to take control of her own process of construction as a writer. However, the last month of school demonstrated to her teacher her greatest triumph as a first grade

writer when she published a nine chapter book about her dog Toby. Katherine had revisited her entire writing portfolio which contained writing pieces from September of 1990 through the beginning of May 1991 (fieldnotes). Together, she and Mrs. Mason discovered a recurrent topic (fieldnotes). As observed in the classroom, Katherine independently selected out written pieces over the year from her writing portfolio that had been written about her dog Toby. She revised and added to some pieces on her own and then she edited pieces collaboratively with the teacher. Katherine titled each of the pieces, sequenced them and created a table of contents for the nine chapters. She then added an illustrated title page and a section about herself as the author. Our Dog Toby was written, illustrated and typed on the computer by Katherine (Figures 23-26).

OUR DOG TOBY



WRITTEN AND  
ILLUSTRATED BY:

table of contents

Chapter	Title
1.....	Toby
2.....	Toby takes a ride
3.....	Toby and his doghouse
4.....	Toby plays fetch
5.....	Problems with Toby
6.....	Funny things Toby does
7.....	What Toby likes
8.....	Toby and Molly
9.....	Toby's first christmas

Toby Book

Figure 23



①  
I hav a dog named Toby But  
Some times we call him Toby's. I have  
fish named Toby's too. Toby is a  
orange and  
white dog.

He pawd The  
pizza one night.

Toby is a  
loveable puppy.

He is a very good

puppy. But

Sometimes he bites

When he is in a playful  
mood, or when he is mad.

1/2/11

I have a dog named  
Toby but sometimes  
we call him Tobias.  
I have fish named  
Tobias too. Toby  
is as orange and  
white dog. Toby has  
a 100 bones. He  
pawed the pizza  
one night.

Sometimes Toby looks  
funny when he looks  
out the car window.  
Sometimes he barks.  
his barks bother me.

Toby is a loveable  
puppy. He is a very  
good puppy. But  
sometimes he bites  
when he is in a  
playful mood, or  
when he is mad.

Sometimes Toby looks funny when he looks out the  
car window, Sometimes he barks.. His barks bother me.

Toby Adventures

Figure 24

10-2-90

Toby very nice The only  
 toabe is a vare nice dog, theve only  
 problus are wen he bise ower wen he  
 potty when bise or when  
 guse potty in the house. a poor misst  
 hast to clehe it up.  
 problems

Toby is a very  
 nice dog. The  
 only problems are  
 when he bends  
 over to go potty  
 in the house, when  
 he bites or when  
 poor Missy has to  
 clean it up.

11-26-90

Yesterday we had a good time with  
 chestetne  
 toby. We plad stick with him. We all  
 had a @rn too throff the stick. We  
 throoit high. HE CAINT it BUT  
 we had to take it away  
 from him. He woodnt give  
 it back tooles.

Yesterday we had a  
 good time with Toby.  
 We played chase  
 the stick with him.  
 We all had a turn  
 to throw the stick.  
 We threw it high.  
 He caught it but we  
 had to take it  
 away from him. he  
 wouldn't give it  
 back to us.

Toby is a cute dog. He has a little tail, a  
 little, a very  
 little tail. Toby loves his bone. Some time he  
 barks at his bone. When he is playing with it, he  
 pooshis it around with his nose.

2/13/91

Toby is a cute  
 dog. He has a  
 little, a very  
 little tail. Toby  
 loves his bone.  
 Sometimes he  
 barks at his bone.  
 When he is playing  
 with it, he pushes  
 it around with  
 his nose.

Toby Continues His Adventures

Figure 25

Toby is on his Leske. He is barking th  
 Becus He <sup>wants</sup> wasto go <sup>out</sup> owe t. Toby will eat ~~anything~~<sup>anythg</sup>  
~~agat~~ except vegt~~bk~~ soup. His favrite is  
~~is~~ His dog biskits. "woof woof" ~~that~~ is yum yum in  
 dog Labwig.

Toby is on his leash. He is barking because he  
 wants to go out. Toby will eat anything except  
 vegetable soup. His favorite is his dog biscuits.  
 "Woof woof". That is yum yum in dog language.

Toby and Molly are sister and  
 brother. Toby and Molly love  
 each <sup>e</sup> ~~other~~ they bark. Molly is <sup>D</sup> ~~Debby~~  
<sup>Perry's</sup> dog. Molly loves to jump on me.  
 Toby is our dog. I dont <sup>know</sup> ~~if~~ if Toby  
 has <sup>a</sup> ~~any~~ more brothers. **or sisters**

Toby and Molly  
 are sister and  
 brother. Toby  
 and Molly love  
 each other they  
 bark. Molly is  
 Debby's dog.  
 Molly loves to  
 jump on me.  
 Toby is our dog.  
 I don't know if  
 Toby has any  
 more brothers  
 or sisters.

Some times Toby eats the trees  
 branches. Toby is just looking for  
 his bone. Toby barks at  
 his bone.

Sometimes Toby eats the tree  
 branches. Toby is just looking  
 for his bone. Toby barks at  
 his bone.

Toby the Dog

Figure 26

It is clear from these samples that Katherine was given opportunities to be involved in the process of further developing a rough draft through a self-editing process supported by the teacher. Katherine participated in the process of self-editing for spelling, punctuation and capitalization with teacher support. As observed in the classroom, she understood that she could make revisions on the rough draft and could finalize her work by typing it on the computer.

Katherine revisited her writing portfolio again in June of 1991 to reflect on her development as a writer (fieldnotes). The portfolio included pieces of writing selected from her journal by the teacher as well as selections that were included because they indicated writing growth and supported Katherine's goals (fieldnotes). Other pieces represented different kinds of writing and published pieces (fieldnotes and student portfolios). She and six other students were given time to look through their writing portfolio, select their favorite or best piece and answer a questionnaire about their thinking about their writing (Appendix E). Katherine reviewed her portfolio (Figure 27) and selected her final published piece about her dog Toby as her favorite piece (fieldnotes).

What is good about this piece of writing?

I think the Pitchur is good.

What was special to you when you were writing this piece?

The writing when I with the Pitchur.

What was hard for you when you were writing this piece?

writing some words like angel and eats. I would have some back growled.

If you could work on this piece of writing some more, what would you do?

I would do some more writing.

2. Did you like writing goals with your teacher? Why?

Yes becos it was a chalinig. And writing more words helped me learn more.

3. What would be a goal for you in writing next year?

writing a book about Lilamas.

4. What do you want to tell your next year's writing teacher about what you can do as a writer?

I can write six sentises or

note.

5. What might you like to ask your next year's writing teacher?

What you do in secont grade when you write.

EXTRA:

6. How do you think your writing got better?

I know more sounds. And I know how too write words, Pweryied, exc lemashts, And queshtil marks.

7. What did you learn in writing?

How too write webs, reextits, And obser vashns.

8. What kinds of things happened this year that helped you become a better writer?

writing some things alone insted of a book. I wuled too write on one pees of Paper and hot a bunch.

Thinking About Writing - First Grade

Figure 27



Katherine indicated that she liked the picture that she had drawn to go with her favorite piece and that the writing went with the picture. She felt that some of the words that she had used were hard to write. If she could work further on this favorite piece, she would make more background (in her pictures), and she would do some more writing.

The remaining questions were about other pieces in her writing portfolio, her first grade writing experiences and herself as a writer. Katherine stated that she liked to write goals with her teacher because it was challenging and writing more words helped her to learn more. She stated that a goal for her next year would be to write a book about llamas. She would tell her next year's teacher that she could write six sentences or more, and she would ask the teacher what second grade writers do when they write. Katherine felt her writing got better during the year because she knew more sounds, and she knew how to choose commas, periods, exclamation points and question marks. She also felt she learned to choose webs, rewrites and observations in writing. When Katherine was asked to think about the kinds of things that happened this year that helped her

become a better writer, she completed the questionnaire by saying that she had learned to write some things alone instead of together with her classmates, and she had learned to write on one piece of paper instead of a bunch. Katherine's last comment was difficult to understand so Mrs. Mason asked her to explain her answer. Katherine explained that she learned to write a lot on one page without a picture on that page -just like the chapter books she had begun to read.

Katherine's portfolio included representative samples of work which supported stated strengths and the accomplishment of specific writing goals. It provided documentation for an individualized plan for Katherine's development as a writer. As a "window" into the classroom, her portfolio provided evidence of opportunities for Katherine to write across the curriculum and on a variety of types of writing, to select her own topics, to write for a variety of purposes and audiences and to receive teacher/peer response to her work. Of the seventeen writing opportunities represented in Katherine's portfolio, seven represented topic choices made by Katherine, seven were written as a result of a classroom topic of study or a teacher directed activity, and three were based on field trip experiences. Process

opportunities that were made available to Katherine were documented in the portfolio. Evidence of revision existed through the inclusion of multiple drafts, story webs, additions and deletions in text and changes in wording and mechanics through self-editing procedures with teacher support. As observed in the classroom, Katherine's reflections on her own writing were evidenced in her contributions to the quarterly goal setting process and in her answers to the writing survey that asked her to reflect on her development as a writer while revisiting her writing portfolio.

As Mrs. Mason documented Katherine's progress across content, style, mechanics and the use of various writing processes by analyzing writing samples collected in Katherine's portfolio, she was able to more readily base her day-to-day writing instruction on Katherine's specific needs. Processes for implementing next steps were specifically "tailored" to Katherine's needs as an individual writer. As Katherine began to focus on and develop a single topic more fully, questioning strategies for building content, story webs for organizing and categorizing information and punctuation for clarity and readability became part of Katherine's instructional

plan. Progress in these areas was documented over time in her portfolio.

As observed in the classroom, teacher-student conferences and whole class conferences provided opportunities in Mrs. Mason's classroom for Katherine to share her strengths and discuss her goals with the teacher, individual students or the class as a whole. Katherine was more readily brought into the process of reflecting on her own development as a result of the very specific documentation provided in her portfolio (fieldnotes and student portfolio). An emphasis was most often placed on her writing strengths so as to celebrate her growth and development and create a learning atmosphere that supported a positive attitude towards writing (fieldnotes).

## Students' Portfolios in Mrs. Bennett's Classroom

Mrs. Bennett worked with different kinds of record-keeping and assessment as she worked with developing writers in the classroom (fieldnotes). On a quarterly basis, she completed writing process cover sheets which summarized students' strengths as writers and delineated their goals for the next quarter. Writing samples were attached to these writing process cover sheets to provide evidence of students' strengths as writers. Quarterly writing process cover sheets and writing samples were collected over the year in student writing portfolios.

Mrs. Bennett felt it was important to involve herself and her students in the process of goal setting as writers. Through collaborative goal setting, she knew where students were in their development as writers, what they were working on at any given time and what individual students valued in their development as writers. Mrs. Bennett met individually with students to review their strengths as writers and to set writing goals for the future. Writing goals for each student were written on the inside cover of their journals as daily reminders.



Mrs. Bennett felt that she became exceptionally knowledgeable about her students as writers through collaborative goal setting. She knew, for example that Nancy needed to self-edit because she often left out parts of sentences when she wrote. Sara and Anna had been writing stories on the same topic, and these stories could be organized into a chapter book with illustrations. Tony needed to focus on a single topic and expand his content. Helen couldn't remember or reread what she had written because she was very inconsistent about the sounds that she heard and wrote. Randy was very imaginative and liked to invent things. He verbalized well about his intricate drawings but would often not write more than a single sentence about these illustrations. These were but a few of the insights that Mrs. Bennett reflected on daily as she worked with individual writers, their strengths and their goals.

The writing work and teacher analyses of four students were selected to illustrate Mrs. Bennett's writing-portfolio assessments. These four students varied in their development as first grade writers and represented the make-up of Mrs. Bennett's first grade classroom students. At the beginning of their first grade year, Robin and Anna were both writers whose

writing represented the level of developmental progress referred to as movement of thought on the "First Grade Writing" form and on the form entitled "Beginning Writing: Watching It Develop" (Appendix D). Both students wrote more than one sentence on a topic and were beginning to write cohesive, detailed stories. Tony's writing at the beginning of his first grade year represented the beginning consonants and labeling levels on the "First Grade Writing" form and the "sentence with garbles" level on the "Beginning Writing: Watching It Develop" form. At the beginning of the year, Tony used labeling on some of his journal entries. On others, he completed a sentence with some words that could not be understood because his use of beginning and ending sounds were inconsistent. Helen writing at the beginning of first grade represented the beginning consonants and labeling levels on the "First Grade Writing" form and the "sentence with garble" level on the "Beginning Writing: Watching It Develop" form. She began the year by labeling stories or attempting to write words or phrases with the use of beginning consonants. She wrote sentences with some initial and final consonants but often included extra letters that made her writing difficult to read.

The portfolios of these students provided evidence of an assessment that met the individual needs of students and of writing development opportunities in the areas of content, style, mechanics and various writing processes such as collaborative goal setting, revision and self-reflection. Classroom observations indicated that as students' strengths and goals were delineated and documented in their portfolios, day-to-day instruction in Mrs. Bennett's classroom became more specifically based on individual and whole class needs. As also observed in the classroom, students were more readily brought into the process of reflecting on next steps. The following portfolios were chosen to offer assessment information about four students at different levels of writing development in Mrs. Bennett's classroom.

Robin's Writing Portfolio. Robin was a first grader in Mrs. Bennett's classroom. As an early writer, she used mainly initial consonants with no spaces between words. Mrs. Bennett noted that Robin ended the school year as a prolific writer who often used standard spellings. Her goals over the year as a writer included using periods and capitals, using vowels in all her words, progressing towards more standard spelling, writing four or five sentences on a page, editing for

content after conferring, publishing a fictional story, beginning a personal word bank for editing purposes, watching for repetitive beginnings of sentences and focusing on the elements of a story (character development, setting, plot, resolution, etc.).

By the end of October 1990, Mrs. Bennett indicated on Robin's writing process cover sheet that Robin's writing strengths included the following:

- Consistent use of beginning, middle and end sounds.
- Vowels used in most all words.
- Readable phonetic spellings mixed with standard spelling. Spacing between words.
- Intermittent use of periods.
- Writing more than one sentence on a topic.
- Standard spelling list: cat, he, is, the at, my
- Invented list: hav, blac, n (and), wit, som, tim, sleps, nd (end), ov (of), bad (bed).

Two writing samples were attached to this October writing process cover sheet and included in her portfolio.

Robin's "cat story" (Figure 28) and her "Halloween story" (Figure 29) provided evidence of consistent use of beginning, middle and ending sounds and the use of vowels in most of her words. She used a mixture of standard and invented spellings with a consistent use of spacing between her words.

10-11-90

i hav a cat. he is the blac n wit  
som tim he sleps at the nd ovmy bad

I have a cat. He is the  
black and white. Sometimes  
he sleeps at the end of my bed.

Cat

Figure 28

10-29-60

we had a haween prd it wos fon.

We had a Halloween party. It was fun.

Halloween

Figure 29



Robin's writing goals for the next months included progress toward more standard spellings with a more consistent use of periods and capitals. These goals were listed on Robin's October writing process cover sheet along with her strengths as a writer and placed in her writing portfolio. As Robin's stories increased in length, as documented in her portfolio, it became necessary to include punctuation as a goal for dealing with the clarity and readability of her pieces.

Robin's January and March 1991 writing process cover sheets included the following summary of strengths:

- Uses beginning, middle and end sounds.
- Uses a mixture of standard and invented spellings.
- Uses advanced vocabulary and rhetorical questions.
- Focuses well on one topic over many consecutive days.

Robin's "Easter bunny story" (Figure 30 and Figure 31) was one of several attached writing samples to her January/March 1991 writing process cover sheets. It was a writing piece that provided evidence of Robin's ability to focus well on one topic, to effectively use both standard and invented spellings and to incorporate the use of advanced vocabulary and rhetorical questions.

## THE EASTER BUNNY THAT GOT SICK

Written by

Once there was a sick rabbit. he was the Easter Bunny. He needed a helper because his temperature was so high that the thermometer blew up. He called his other helper. His helper had a headache. What will he do now? He didn't even have a wife!

He thought, "How will everybody get everything?" He said, "I will try to get up."

But he was too sick to get up. He tried 1,000 times to get up, but he never got up.

And then he started feeling a little better. He got a new thermometer. His temperature was only 150. And he tried 100 times to get up. And he did get up this time.

And then it was Easter. The Easter Bunny was better. He had to start to deliver the eggs.

Easter - Final Copy

Figure 30

OWZ THIR WOZ O ZIH  
 ROBBIT He WOZ the  
 EZTR Bone He  
 NIDIZ O HLR  
 Z HIZ TAPCHR BEK  
 ZO HIZ HETAMAMOTR  
 BLOOWP He KALLID HIZ  
 ETR HPR HIZ HPR  
 HADA HADAK WOT WIL  
 He DO NOW? He DINT  
 EVAE HAVO WIF. 1

AND THAN HE  
 ZTARBID FEW  
 NO ALIOL BADR  
 He GOT O N OOW  
 FMQMUTR HIZ  
 TARCH WOZ OLE  
 10050 AND he TRIM  
 100 TIME to GAT  
 UP AN He DID GAT  
 UP thiz TIM. 3

He HROT HO WIW  
 ERE BOTE BAT  
 EKE THING He ZAO  
 i WIW TRI He WOZ  
 TOZIK TO GAT UP  
 He TRIP 1000 TO  
 GAT UP BOT He NOW  
 R GOT UP. 2

AND THAN HE WOZ  
 EZTR + he EZTR  
 BONE WOZ BFOR.  
 He HAD TO ZTR  
 T PLIVRN + he  
 EDOZ. 4

Easter - Rough Draft

Figure 31

Robin's goals for the last quarter of the year included editing her content after conferring, publishing a fictional story, using a word bank as part of a final editing process and watching for repetitive beginnings of sentences. These goals were directly related to her strengths as assessed from reviewing her portfolio. As Robin focused more and more on developing a topic over many days, she needed to confer and edit for clarity and readability. A word bank helped her with her most commonly misspelled words. Robin's writing strengths and attached writing samples for January through March 1991 and her goals for the last quarter were included in her portfolio.

During the last part of the year, Robin was introduced to a strategy for adding content to her stories. She had conferences one-on-one with Mrs. Bennett and then with a small peer group. By using stars as markers, Mrs. Bennett and Robin decided where to put information to be added when answering teacher and student questions about her stories. Robin became very good at receiving the questions of others to clarify and build the content of her stories. Robin also put together a word bank of commonly misspelled words that

she used during a final editing process. Robin's own personal goal was to publish a fictional story.

Robin's end of the year writing process cover sheet listed the following strengths:

- Better spacing between words.
- Varies her writing style to reflect storytelling, dialogue and rhetorical questions.
- Writes prolifically on one topic for many days.
- Beginning to revise content after conferences.

Robin's fictional story about a playmobile was attached to this end of the year writing process cover sheet and included in her writing portfolio. It was evidence of her goal to write a fictional story as well as evidence of her ability to begin to add to content after a conference. At the top of Robin's first rough draft, questions were asked by the teacher and dictated answers from Robin were written down (Figure 32). A second conference on this piece was held with a small group of her peers (Figure 33). They asked Robin a question about her story and she included an answer to their question on her own (Figure 34). She also wrote about herself as the author (Figure 35). Again, documentation of appropriate conferring and revision strategies were included in her portfolio and helped to determine her readiness for further instruction and experiences in these areas.



1. What is a playmobile.  
\*small fake person who can't come alive.
2. Why did he not like where he lived at first? \*He missed his friends.
3. Why did he like this deserted place?  
\*He liked the animals that lived there.

## The Playmobile

2-4-91

Once there was a captain. He was a playmobile. \* A playmobile is LAND. He was in playmobile land where all the playmobiles come alive. But once he built a boat and he sailed away. And then he found that he shouldn't have left his place where he lived. \* Will he like it or will he not like it? Once he started to like the land he was on so he stayed there. \*  
\*IT WAS DESERTED, DA.

HE LIVED FOREVER  
ALL BY HIMSELF  
with his animals.

Once there was a captain. He was a playmobile. A playmobile is a small fake person who can't come alive. He was in playmobile land where all the playmobiles come alive. But once he built a boat and he sailed away. And then he found that he shouldn't have left his place where he lived. He missed his friends. Will he like it or will he not like it? Once he started to like the land he was on so he stayed there. He liked the animals that lived there. It was deserted. He lived forever all by himself with his animals.

The Playmobile

Figure 32

- ① What kind of animals lived there?
- ② About the Author

### Conference

Figure 33

PADO BOAR'S AND  
 LOG L PIGS  
 NIEZUM TIME KANBE  
 BOT NOT TIME  
 TIM <sup>sometimes they bite!</sup> A MOON <sup>ALL</sup> the  
 RABBIT THA  
 FLI to the moon  
 QLL the tim

Polar bears and jungle pigs can be nice sometimes but not all the time. Sometimes they bite! A moon rabbit - they fly to the moon all the time.

### Playmobile Additions

Figure 34

Robin is 7 years old. She goes on a lot of trips. She has playmobiles and she likes to play with them. She likes to publish books a lot.

Author

Figure 35

Robin's story entitled "The Adventurous Seal" (Figures 36 and 37) was a second piece that was included in her portfolio as evidence of her last quarter's writing strengths. It supported her ability to write prolifically on one topic for many days, to write a story with advanced vocabulary, and to use dialogue and rhetorical questions. In a conference observed in the classroom, she was asked to write an ending to her story, which she did.

Ouc thair was a sell. a-vere itvechas sell that livd in a zoo. he dinit lik it at all. oun day or mabe i shood say nite. the sell ascapte. o i frgte to tll wot his name wos. it is jae. so ase i wos saing he wigled ove the cag jae wigld as fete as he coode out ove the kage. locly he nowe ove a ponde neree biye. so he wigld strate too the ponde. wene jae got thair splash. aa sed jae nis to got som wodr. sotle hefoud anothr sell. wot is yor naem? my naem is may houw did you get you naem? jae askt. dot no neoaw comeon may seid. ooo nouwe i fregot o yae i did so as i wos saing wewe air we going? to bide a cabin. k bot it wos your ideae i sead. cabine. stepe 1 mode and wdre. stop doing that i know wote to do. so may wet to get mod and woder for the cabin. on his way ges wot he foud a lost zebra hi he sede. And May wos off. Boy I had a eivchowiz time getting the water and mud. Bot Bot Jae dint thik so. Bot strdid on the cabin. wene ti wos done tha livd hpale evve aftr, Dedocdid to my faurit mom.

#### The Adventurous Seal- Rough Draft

Figure 36

Once there was a seal - a very adventurous seal that lived in a zoo. He didn't like it at all. One day or maybe I should say night, the seal escaped. Oh, I forgot to tell what his name was. It is Jay. So as I was saying, he wiggled out of the cage. Jay wiggled as fast as he could out of the cage. Luckily he knew of a pond near by so he wiggled straight to the pond. When Jay got there - splash. Ah, said Jay. Nice to get some water. Suddenly he found another seal. What is your name? My name is May. How did you get your name? Jay asked. I don't know. Now come on May said. Oh, now I forget. Oh yea, I did. So I was saying where are we going? To build a cabin. O.k., but it was your idea! said Jay. So they found a place to build a cabin. Step 1 -mud and water. Stop doing that. I know what to do. So May went to get mud and water for the cabin. On his way, guess what he found a lost zebra. Hi, he said. And May was off. Boy, I had an adventurous time getting the water and mud, but Jay didn't think so but started on the cabin. When it was done, they lived happily ever after.

Dedicated to my favorite mom.

Adventurous Seal - Final Copy

Figure 37

Mrs. Bennett made several summary comments at the end of the 1991 school year about Robin's next goals as a writer. These comments were part of an end of the year summary sheet entitled, "First Grade Portfolio Literacy Record" (Appendix H). "Robin needs to be challenged as a writer. She sometimes equates volume with quality. Goals would be to further her development of characters, etc." Mrs. Bennett then made a note for next year's teacher to refer to the goals on Robin's June writing process cover sheet which supported Mrs. Bennett's summary comment to convince Robin to worry more about quality than quantity and to focus upon the elements of a story (i.e. character development, setting, plot, resolution, etc.).

By October of her first grade year, as documented in her portfolio, Robin was a writer with many writing strengths. She was consistently using good invented spellings and some standard spellings. Mrs. Bennett was able to individualize her instruction to challenge Robin with next steps that emphasized focusing on one topic over many consecutive days so as to develop content. As Robin found success in developing a topic more fully on her own, her goals focused on developing her conferring



skills with the teacher and her peers for the purpose of further building content, working on strategies for revision and completing final computer-typed copies of her own. As Mrs. Bennett worked regularly with portfolio assessment procedures that allowed her to record Robin's strengths as a writer, to share these strengths and collaboratively set goals with Robin and to collect evidence through a collection of numerous writing samples, Mrs. Bennett could individualize instruction so as to support Robin in moving towards next steps that she was ready for as a developing writer. Opportunities for instruction that moved far beyond just a focus on the mechanics of writing were offered to Robin. A greater focus was placed on content development, the sharing, conferring and revising of stories and the processes for looking at writing strengths and goals collaboratively between the teacher and the student. As Robin ended her first grade year, her teacher provided summary information about next steps for instruction that included an emphasis on the quality of content rather than the quantity by focusing on the development of story elements. This would be invaluable information for Robin's next year's teacher. Indeed, stronger

partnerships between assessment and instruction provided for a more specific analysis of Robin as a writer, for opportunities to capture the processes of teacher/peer interaction in the classroom and for bringing Robin into the process of self-reflection and assessment through collaborative goal setting.

Tony's Writing Portfolio. According to Mrs. Bennett, Tony was not a very enthusiastic writer. He wrote very little unless an adult was working with him, and he did not like to take risks with words (fieldnotes). As observed in the classroom, Mrs. Bennett worked very hard with Tony to explore topics that interested him. By the end of October, Mrs. Bennett had summarized his strengths as follows to be included in his portfolio:

- Copying environmental print.
- Labeling with use of invented spelling.
- Using marks for long vowel sounds.
- Using some beginning and ending sounds.

Tony's Sept. and Oct. writing pieces (Figure 38 and Figure 39) were attached to Tony's Oct. writing process cover sheet as evidence of these writing strengths. Figure 38 represented Tony's efforts at copying print and Figure 39 was a free choice journal entry with adult assistance for the word mousetrap. His goals for the

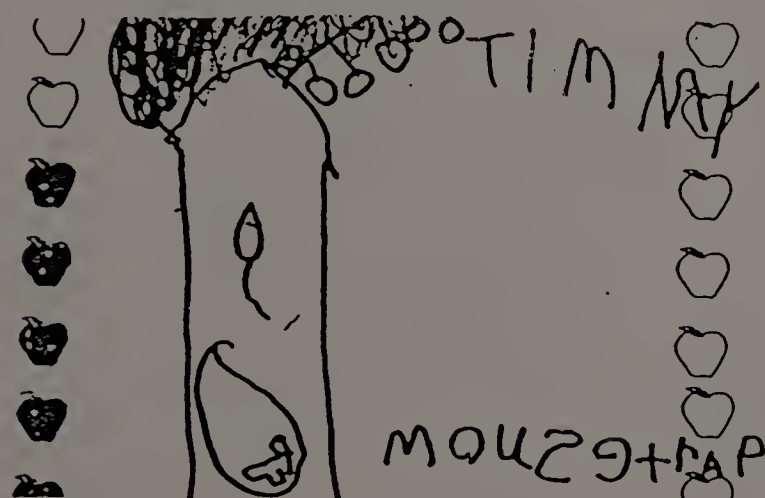
next quarter included moving towards the use of two word labels or simple sentences and writing down all consonant sounds heard. Tony's October writing process cover sheet with the list of his writing strengths and goals were included in his writing portfolio with attached samples (Figures 38 and 39).

9-19-90

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
 cat bat rat sat fat  
 dog log hog fog  
 man kan fan ran tan pan van

Print

Figure 38



Mousetrap

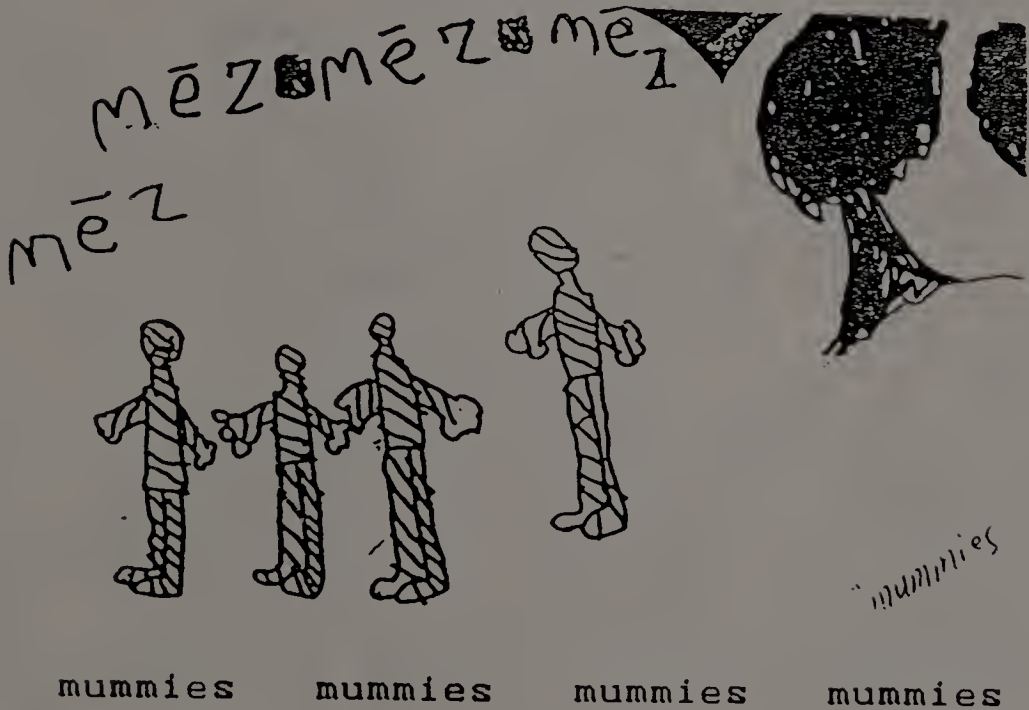
Figure 39

In January, Tony's strengths as a writer were in using beginning sounds, some vowels and some ending sounds. The following attached writing samples supported these writing strengths (Figures 40, 41, and 42):



A Red-Design

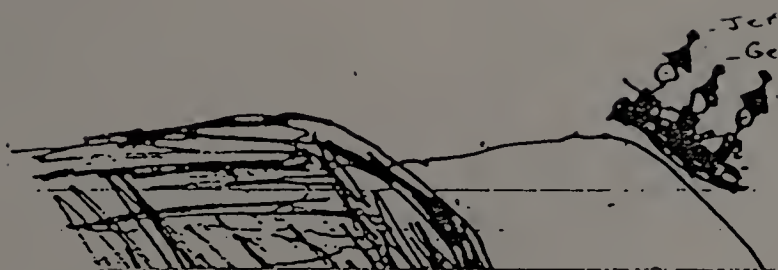
Figure 40



Mummies

Figure 41

I MGOIMGN  
SLIDING  
Fit SNOS



I'm going sliding.  
Snow fights.

Sliding

Figure 42

In Figure 40 the phrase, a red design, was written by Tony. He included a letter for all of the sounds heard. In Figure 41 Tim repeated the word mummies three times. He included beginning, middle and ending sounds for the words. In Figure 42 Tony wrote a sentence that included most of the sounds heard. His goals for the next quarter were to build and expand on a list of ideas for writing, to continue working towards writing a sentence with the use of beginning and ending sounds and to try a framed writing project. A framed writing project began with a pattern or phrase that a student would complete and then



elaborate on with additional information. Tony's writing strengths were written on a January writing process cover sheet along with his goals for the next quarter. Writing samples (Figures 40, 41 and 42) were attached to his January writing process cover sheet and included in his writing portfolio.

By March, Tony was using beginning, middle and ending sounds with some standard spellings. He began a framed writing piece on the seasons of the year with details about the reasons that he enjoyed each season. During this quarter, Tony also participated in a conference to build the content of one of his stories. He dictated his answers, and Mrs. Bennett made the revisions as she typed his final copy. Figure 43 represented Tony's framed writing about the seasons of the year, and Figure 44 represented Tony's ability to write several sentences on a single topic, to participate in a conference and to verbally add content to a story. They were all included in his portfolio. Tony's writing goals for the last quarter were to complete the process of publishing his framed writing piece about the seasons, to extend his ability to focus on a task by completing a story map or web to organize his ideas, to take risks in his use of vocabulary and to consistently space between

words. Tony's writing strengths and goals were listed on his March writing process cover sheet with attached writing samples (Figures 43 and 44) that provided evidence of his writing strengths. The writing process cover sheet and samples were included in his writing portfolio to represent his development during the third quarter. His goals for the last quarter were based on his progress to date and on his readiness to develop new skills.

I Like spring.

I Like wintr.

I Like fall.

I Like ~~summr~~

I Like to swim.

I Like To go campin.

I Like To go slidn.

I Like To Go sken.

I Like To pla at reces

I like spring.

I like winter.

I like fall.

I like summer.

I like to swim.

I like to go camping.

I like to go sliding.

I like to go skiing.

I like to play at recess.

Spring, Winter, Fall and Summer

Figure 43

I HOPE THE EASTER  
BUNNY <sup>comes</sup>  
TO EVERYBODY'S  
HOUSE.

HE PUTS  
EGGS IN THE  
BASKETS. THE EGGS  
WITH PLASTIC WITH  
CANDY IN THEM.

Conference

What would you like this  
year?

What is your favorite candy

About the author.

Title

#### THE EASTER BUNNY

Written by

I hope the Easter Bunny comes to  
everybody's house. He puts eggs in the  
baskets. The eggs are plastic with candy in  
them. My favorite candy is candy bars. I  
hope I get all candy this year.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

is six years old. He likes to  
collect tabs from aluminum cans.

The Easter Bunny and Conference

Figure 44

Tony's writing process cover sheet for the last quarter of the year listed writing strengths that included the use of many standard spellings or correct phonetic markings for invented spellings, consistent spacing between words and the completion of several sentences on a topic each day. His story about an anticipated summer trip to Florida (Figure 45) and his story about his bike (Figure 46) supported these writing strengths and were attached to his end of the year writing process cover sheet and included in his portfolio.

Avtr the skool yer is ovr  
We ar going to Flordo.  
We ar going to driv to Flordo.  
We ar going to sta at dads  
granmthrs huos.

After the school year is over,  
we are going to Florida. We are  
going to drive to Florida. We are  
going to stay at dad's grandmother's  
house.

Florida

Figure 45

I hav a bik that is all most  
two yers old. It is a red  
Hufe. The tirs ned air.

I have a bike that is almost  
two years old. It is a red  
red Huffy. The tires need air.

#### Bike

Figure 46

His goals as a writer were to continue to use story mapping to extend the content of his stories, to address letter reversals and to use periods more consistently. Tony's writing strengths for the last quarter of the year and his goals for the beginning of second grade were written on his May writing process cover sheet and included in his writing portfolio along with writing samples (Figures 45 and 46) which provided evidence of his listed writing strengths. On Tony's "First Grade Literacy Portfolio Record", Mrs. Bennett also indicated



that Tony had successfully used a story map to focus his writing. The form entitled, "First Grade Literacy Portfolio Record" (Appendix H) was an end of the year summary record that included information on Tony's "Writing to Read" level, on the types of books that he could read and on the techniques that had been successful with him. "Writing to Read" is a computerized writing/reading program for students. Mrs. Bennett indicated that the use of a story map or web had been a successful writing technique for Tony.

An instructional emphasis for the first half of the year was placed on discussing and exploring potential topics of interest with Tony, on labeling stories and on using beginning and ending sounds. As Tony continued to work on these areas with teacher support, new goals were set to help him expand on content. Framed writing projects, story webs for organizing information and participation in a conference with the teacher and his peers helped Tony to develop beginning strategies for building the content of his stories and for valuing contributions from his audience. Portfolio documentation of the use of these strategies and their affect on Tony's writing provided information on reasonable next steps for Tony. As evidenced in Tony's portfolio and observed in

the classroom, even though Tony was still struggling with mechanics and spelling, he was introduced to other strategies that helped him to look beyond these initial limitations to more involved content building strategies and collaborative processes with his audience. Tony's instructional goals were well balanced among mechanics, spelling, content development and processes for further developing a piece. His individualized plan was clearly specified and evidenced through this portfolio assessment which included Tony's quarterly writing process cover sheets and attached writing samples in his cumulative writing portfolio.

Anna's Writing Portfolio. As observed in the classroom, Anna was a first grader in Mrs. Bennett's classroom who enjoyed writing and particularly liked to write collaboratively with a partner. Anna began the year with the following strengths as a writer:

Uses complete sentences and periods.

Her writing sounds like a book with a story-like text.

Uses very readable spellings by recording all sounds heard.

Phonetic spellings: bote, wen, derk (dark), owt, sid, mows.

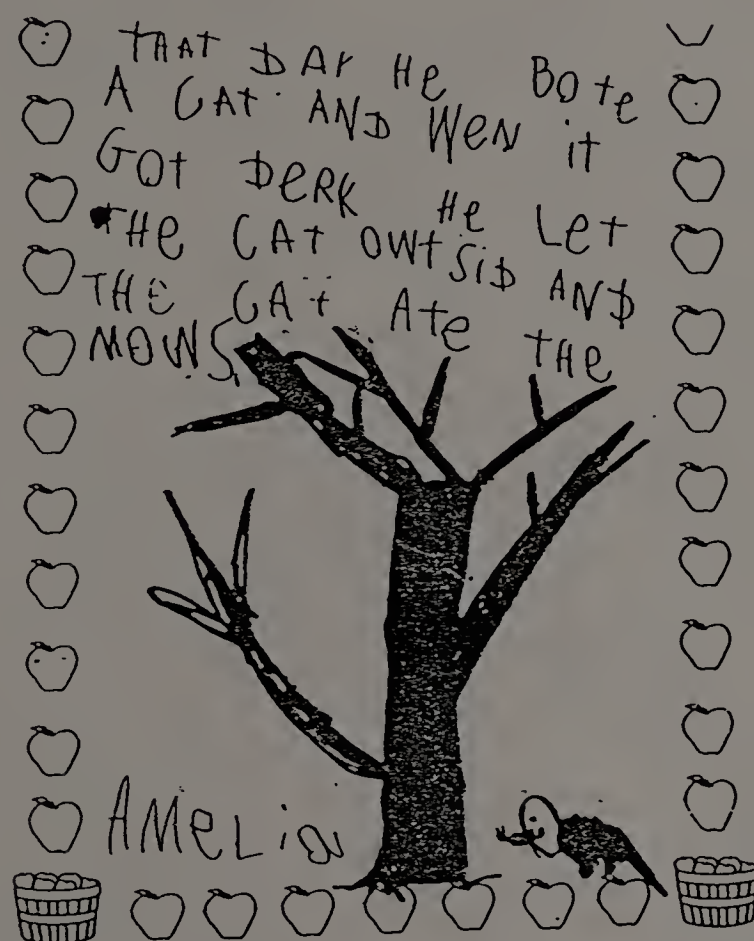
Uses many standard spellings: that, day, he, cat,  
and, it, got, let,  
the, ate.

Uses appropriate spacing.

Uses the ing ending.

Capitalizes "I".

These writing strengths were listed on an October 1990 writing process cover sheet. Anna's story about the cat (Figure 47) was attached as evidence of her appropriate use of sentences and periods. Her story included a mixture of standard spellings, phonetically spelled words and an appropriate use of spacing.



That day he bought a cat. And when it got dark, he let the cat outside and the cat ate the mouse.

The Cat and the Mouse

Figure 47

Anna's second attached writing sample for the first school quarter was seven sentences in length (Figure 48). Capital letters were used at the beginnings of sentences and periods at the end of sentences. Both standard and invented spellings were used. The October 1991 writing process cover sheet and attached samples (Figures 48 and 49) were included in Anna's writing portfolio.

I AM GOING TO BE A  
BAT FOR HALLOWEEN. MY  
GRAMMY GAVE ME AND MY  
BROTHER A PUMPKIN. I LIKE TO  
CLEAN OUT THE PUMPKIN AND  
CARVE THEM. I AM GLAD THAT  
I GOT A PICTURE OF MY KITTEN  
ON THE PUMPKIN. HE IS VERY  
WILD. WE GOT HIM A SOCK. NOW  
HE RUNS AROUND THE HOUSE DRAGGING  
HIS SOCK.

I am going to be a bat for Halloween. My Grammy gave me and my brother a pumpkin. I like to clean out the pumpkins. and carve them. I am glad that I got a picture of my kitten on the pumpkin. He is very wild. We got him a sock. Now he runs around the house dragging his sock.

#### Pumpkins

Figure 48

By the end of the second school quarter, Anna's writing strengths included:

- Writing continuing stories.
- Using descriptive language.
- Working cooperatively when writing.

Using a journal as a log/diary of personal experiences.

Using good spelling inventions along with standard spelling.

The first attached writing sample to her January writing process cover sheet was a free choice journal entry about an after school event (Figure 49).

TODAY AFTER  
SCHOOL I AM  
GOING TO  
RACHEL'S HOUSE  
AND WE WILL  
GET READY FOR  
BALLET. THEN  
WILL DRIVE TO  
RECORDER AND  
CHRIS WILL  
STAY WITH  
RACHEL AND I.

Today after school I'm going to Robin's house and we will get ready for ballet. Then Pam will drive to recorder and Chris will stay with Robin and I.

#### The Ballet and the Recorder

Figure 49

It included evidence of good sentence structure and good standard spellings. Capitals were used at the beginning of sentences and periods at the ends of sentences. Anna also capitalized people's names in her stories. A second and third attached writing sample represented pages from a chapter book that Anna and another student had written



collaboratively about a giraffe and a kangaroo (Figures 50 - 52). The story included action and the use of dialogue with many standard spellings and good spelling inventions.

CHAPTER 11  
 SHAWN AND AMELIA  
 WENT TO  
 KANGROO AND  
 GRAFF'S HOUSE  
 THAT HAD A  
 POPCORN FINITE  
 AND THAT  
 HAD SODA ON  
 KANGROO AND  
 1. GRAFF'S HANDS

KANGROO AND  
 GRAFF WERE  
 MADE SO  
 THAT PUNCHED  
 SHAWN AND  
 AMELIA IN  
 THE TEETH  
 AND SHAWN  
 AND AMELIA  
 2. STARTED TO CRY

CHAPTER 12  
 THE NEXT  
 MORNING KANGROO  
 AND GRAFF  
 FOUND SHAWN  
 AND AMELIA  
 IN THEIR  
 TREE HOUSE AND  
 THAT SAID  
 SORRY WE SAID  
 3. THAT OK

WENT TO COME  
 TO THE MOOVES  
 WITH US WE  
 ASKED YES  
 THANK YOU! SAID  
 KANGROO AND  
 THAT GIRAFFE  
 WAS VERY  
 NICE - OF YOU  
 SO THAT WE WENT  
 TO THE MOOVE  
 OF DRACKULASHAWN  
 AND FRANKLIN  
 4. AMELIA

Kangaroo and Giraffe - Part 1

Figure 50



Amelia and Shawn 10-10-90

ones uppon a time thare was  
a kagroow it met a graf and  
it wottid to marey it. the kagroow  
jumpt up and kisssd the graf on  
the lips. the graf didn't like  
that.

the GRAF got MA+  
AND KIKT+ THE KAGROOW ON  
THE BACK SO THE KAGROOW  
WENT AWAY. AND THEN SHAW  
AND AMELIA CAME.

THEY SOD TO THE  
GRAF DONT KIK THE  
KAGROOW WAY CANT  
IKIK HER. SHE KISSD  
ME ON THE LIPS. BUT  
THARE IS NO RESIN  
TO KIK HER SO WUT+  
YOU BETT NOT KIK  
HER AGEN WE SED.  
THE KAGROOW  
WOT IS TO MAKE  
THE GRAF SO BATH 2

THE KAGROOW BROT HIM  
FLOWRS. THE NEXT DAY  
THE KAGROOW CALLED UP  
THE GRAF ON THE PHONE AND  
ASKED HIM IF HE WUD MARR  
HIM. THE GRAF SAID OK AND THEY  
LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER.

Kangaroo and Giraffe - Part 2

Figure 51

## Part 1

### Chapter 1

Once upon a time Shawn and Amelia went to kangaroo and giraffe's house. They had a popcorn fight and they poured soda on kangaroo and giraffe's hands. Kangaroo and giraffe were very mad so they punched Shawn and Amelia in the teeth and Shawn and Amelia started to cry.

### Chapter 2

The next morning kangaroo and giraffe found Shawn and Amelia in their tree house and they said we're sorry. We said that's o.k. Want to come to the movies with us? we asked. Yes, thankyou said kangaroo and giraffe. That was very nice of you. So they went to the movie of Dracula Shawn and Frankenstein Amelia.

## Part 2

Once upon a time there was a kangaroo. It met a giraffe and it wanted to marry it. The kangaroo jumped up and kissed the giraffe on the lips. The giraffe didn't like that. The giraffe got masd and kicked the kangaroo on the back so the kangaroo went away. And then Shawn and Amelia came. They said to the giraffe, don't kick the kangaroo. Why can't I kick her? She kissed me on the lips. But there is no reason to kick her so you better not kick her again we said. The kangaroo wanted to marry the giraffe so bad. The kangaroo brought him flowers. The next day the kangaroo called up the giraffe on the phone and asked him if he would marry him. The giraffe said o.k. and they lived happily ever after.

Kangaroo and Giraffe - Final Copy

Figure 52

Anna's goals as a writer for the next couple of months were to make a personal word bank of high frequency irregular words, to develop more advanced conferring skills and to begin more complex editing such as adding more descriptive passages to her stories. These goals were based on Anna's readiness for more advanced skills as evidenced through an analysis of the collected writing samples in her portfolio.

Anna's January writing process cover sheet for the second quarter of the year and Anna's goals for the third quarter of the year were included in her writing portfolio along with attached writing samples (Figures 50 - 52).

Anna's third quarterly writing process cover sheet for the year indicated the following strengths:

Asked very focused questions during conferences.

Wrote very cohesive and detailed stories.

Anna's story about Easter was attached as a representative writing sample. It was a detailed, six page, cohesively written story with a well developed plot. Anna had created a rough draft (Figures 53 and 54), a final typed copy and a section about the author.



DU SE IT WAS ESTER  
 AND IT WAS VARI COLD AND  
 ON ESTERES EVE I WAS  
 SO ECSDIDE I PUT ON  
 MY ESTER GACKET ERLEE,  
 AND SO DID MY BROTHER  
 CLAY. WHEN I WENT TO BED  
 I WAS THINKING ABOUT  
 THE ESTER BUNNY AND  
 HOW TIRERDE HE MUST  
 GET, BEAUSE HE HAS TO DIVER  
 ALL THE CANDY.



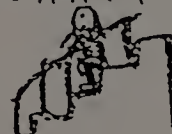
I READ ALOT OF BOOKS  
 QWIGLEE SO I LOAD FALL  
 ESLEEP FAST, BEAUSE I  
 WASNT TIRERD THAN WITH,  
 AND IF I DIDNT GO TO  
 SLEEP THE ESTER BUNNY  
 WOULD NOT COME TO MY  
 HOUSE. I DID NOT KNOW,  
 NOBODY KNEW BUT THE  
 ESTER BUNNY WAS STILL  
 ASLEEP.



I FELL ASLEEP FOR  
 A LITTLE WHILE AND THEN  
 I WOKE UP AND REMBERED  
 THAT I FORGOT TO LEVE THE  
 ESTER BUNNY A SNACK. I  
 SAID TO MYSELF HE PROGL  
 ALLERDE CAME, BUT IF HE  
 DIDNT COME AND IF I HEARD  
 MADE I WOULD HAVE TIME  
 TO GET HIM A SNACK. SO  
 I GOT OUT OF MY BED AND  
 WENT DOWN STAIRS.



4  
 ON THE WAY DOWN STAIRS  
 I LOOKED IN TO MOM'S ROOM  
 AND SHE WAS SOUND ASLEEP  
 I WAS LUCKY FOR THAT BEAUSE  
 SHE WOULD MAKE ME GO  
 BACK TO BED IF SHE SAW ME  
 WALKING AROUND. I GOT DOWN  
 STAIRS JUST IN TIME THE  
 ESTER BUNNY DIDNT COME  
 YET. I THOUGHT HE DIDNT COME  
 BEAUSE HE FORGOT TO SET  
 HIS ALARM CLOCK OR HE GOT

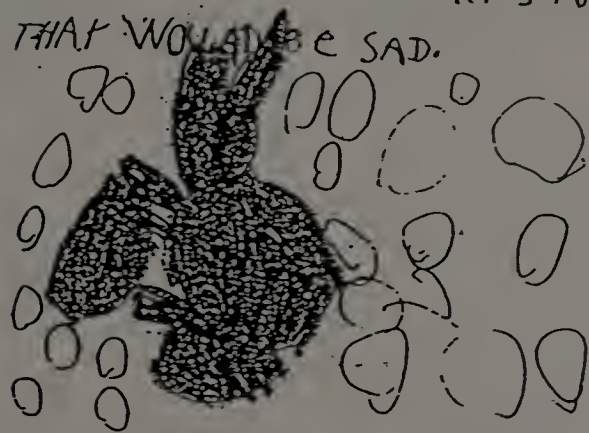


The Story of Easter - Part 1-4

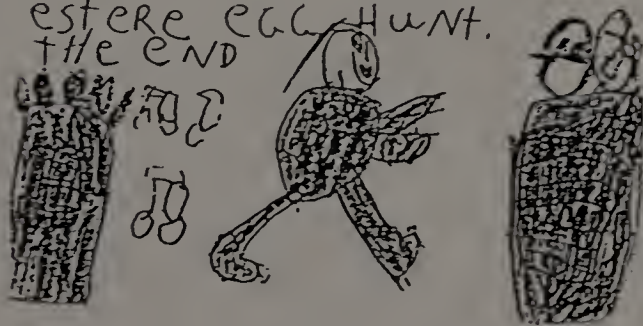
Figure 53



5  
 CAUGHT IN THE GREAT BIG STORM  
 WE WERE HAVING. I THOUGHT  
 ABOUT THAT FOR A WHILE. BUT IF  
 HE GOT CAUGHT IN A GREAT  
 BIG STORM HE WOULD NOT BE  
 ABLE TO DELIVER ESTER EGGS  
 AND CANDY TO THE KIDS AND  
 THAT WOULD BE SAD.



6  
 BUT THE NEXT  
 DAY I WOKE UP AND  
 THE ESTER BUNNY HAD  
 COME AND MOM HAD  
 HIDDEN CANDY. AND WE WERE  
 DONE LOOKING AT OUR  
 CANDY WE WENT TO  
 GRAMMY AND GRANDPA'S  
 HOUSE. AND HAD AN  
 ESTER EGG HUNT.  
 THE END



The Story of Easter - Part 5-6

Figure 54

## THE STORY OF EASTER

Written by  
(Unedited)

Once it was Easter and it was very cold. And on Easter's eve I was so excited I put out my Easter basket early. And so did my brother Clay. When I went to bed I was thinking about the Easter Bunny and how tired he must get because he has to deliver all the candy.

I read a lot of books quickly so I could fall asleep fast, because I wasn't tired that night and if I didn't go to sleep the Easter Bunny would not come to my house. I did not know, nobody knew, but the Easter Bunny was still asleep.

I fell asleep for a little while and then I woke up and remembered that I forgot to leave the Easter Bunny a snack. But I said to myself, "He probably already came." But if he didn't come and if I hurried maybe I would have time to get him a snack." So I got out of my bed and went downstairs.

On the way downstairs I looked into mom's room and she was sound asleep. I was lucky for that because she would make me go back to bed if she saw me walking around.

I got down stairs just in time. The Easter Bunny didn't come yet. I thought he didn't

come because he forgot to set his alarm clock or he got caught in the great big storm we were having. I thought about that for a while. But if he got caught in a great big storm he would not be able to deliver Easter eggs and candy to kids and that would be sad.

But the next day I woke up and the Easter Bunny had come and mom had hidden candy. And when we were done looking at our candy, we went to Grammy's and Grandpa's house and had an Easter egg hunt.

THE END!

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

is seven years old. Her birthday is February 29th. She loves her mom a very, very lot.

The Story of Easter - Final Copy

Figure 55

Mrs. Bennett listed Anna's writing goals for the last months of the school year. They included expanding topic selections to include an interview with a write-up, structuring the use of a personal word bank to edit for standard spelling, watching for repetitive beginnings of sentences and using conjunctions appropriately. These goals, particularly the interview and write-up, were based on a need to challenge Anna as a writer which was becoming evident through lengthy, well-developed pieces in her portfolio. It was time to introduce her to different kinds of writing styles and techniques. Anna's third quarterly writing process cover sheet included her writing strengths for the third quarter of the year and her goals for the last quarter of the year. Attached writing samples (Figures 50 - 55) provided evidence of her third quarter's writing strengths. This information was included in Anna's writing portfolio.

On Anna's last quarterly writing process cover sheet, Mrs. Bennett wrote that Anna could:

- Successfully write questions, record answers, and conduct an interview with a final write-up.
- Edit her writing to remove extraneous information.

The first attached writing sample about the barn dance gave evidence of Anna's ability to include detail

in her stories and to edit out extraneous information  
(Figure 56).

I SAW THE BARN  
DANCE ON T.V. I SAW  
MRS. TREAT PANTARRA AND A LOT  
OF OTHER PEOPLE I KNEW  
~~AFTER I WATCHED THE BARN  
DANCE ON T.V. WITH RACHEL  
SHE CAME TO MY HOUSE AND  
STAYED OVER THE NEXT DAY IT  
WAS SATURDAY WE WENT TO  
THE LAKE WE SET UP  
AND RAKED AND ETC  
UNTIL DARK ON THE  
SUNDAY SKIN~~

I saw the barn dance on t.v.  
I saw Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_ and a lot of  
other people I knew.

The Barn Dance

Figure 56

The second attached piece was an interview of the principal (Figure 57 and 58) that was planned (Figure 59), conducted and written collaboratively by Anna and another student. They conferred about who to interview, wrote twenty-nine questions for the interview (Figure 60) and made decisions about the organization of the questions and who was responsible for each question. They taped the interview, and they wrote out the principal's answers word for word on a note pad (Figure 61). The final interview copy was published in the community newsletter.

Mr. Mann is the principal of the \_\_\_\_\_ Elementary School. He is friendly, kind, well-liked, funny and has a good sense of humor. He is a short man who often grows a beard and then shaves it off. His favorite food is lobster.

Mr. Mann grew up in Brooklyn, New York and went to school at St. Athanasius Park. He was an only child but he wanted a brother and/or a sister. Mr. Mann was born in Madison Park on August 9, 1948. Mr. Mann liked to play with others when he was a kid. He also liked to ride his bike.

Interview - Part 1

Figure 57



Mr. Mann said college was hard but interesting because it was something he wanted to do. He enjoyed college a lot.

Mr. Mann met his wife when she was in a classroom next door. She is still a teacher and a part-time principal at \_\_\_\_\_Elementary School. They have been married for eighteen years. They have two children and their names are Kathy and Philip. Kathy is fourteen and Philip is twelve.

Mr. Mann has been a principal for six years. He was a teacher for fifteen years before that. Mr. Mann helps teachers solve problems and helps all of us learn and grow as people.

Mr. Mann said, "I like my job because I can meet terrific boys and girls. I like being with 250 kids and teachers who want to do their best." Mr. Mann said the worst part of his job is dealing with problems that have to do with people who step on other people's rights. Mr. Mann makes sure that the buses run well and that the school is safe.

We are glad that Mr. Mann is the principal of \_\_\_\_\_Elementary School. We are lucky because he really cares about all the kids in our school.

Interview - Part 2

Figure 58

PLANE CONFERENCE  
 2. WRITE QUESTIONS  
 3. MAKE DECISIONS  
 4. EDIT TITLE  
 5. TYPE  
 6. ILLUSTRATIONS  
 7. BIND

# Plan

1. Conference
2. Write questions.
3. Make decisions.
4. Edit title.
5. Type.
6. Illustrations.
7. Bind

## Interview Plan

Figure 59

1. Do you like your job?

2. What does a principal do?

3. What is the best part of your job?

4. What is the worst part of your job?



5. What school did you go to when you were a kid?

6. Did you ever have a different job?

7. Were you ever a teacher?

## Interview Questions

Figure 60

DO YOU LIKE YOUR JOB?  
 M.K. JOB BESE  
 I CAN MEAT  
 BOYS AND GIRLS  
 WHAT DOES A PRIN  
 CIPAL DO? Busses  
 RUN WELL KIDS  
 GET ON THE BUS  
 SCHOOL SAFE  
 HELPING TECH  
 TECH PROBLEM  
 SALVER HELPING  
 ALL OF KOW  
 LEARN AND GROW  
 AS PEOPLE

Do you like your  
 job? Why?  
 I like my job because  
 I can meet terrific  
 boys and girls.  
 What does a principal  
 do?  
 Busses run well. Kids  
 get on the bus. School  
 safe. Helping teachers  
 teach. Problem solver.  
 Helping all of you  
 learn and grow as  
 people.

#### Interview Notes

Figure 61

Anna entered first grade able to express herself in  
 complete thoughts using good invented spellings and many  
 standard spellings. It was obvious from Mrs. Bennett's  
 portfolio assessment that Anna was offered opportunities

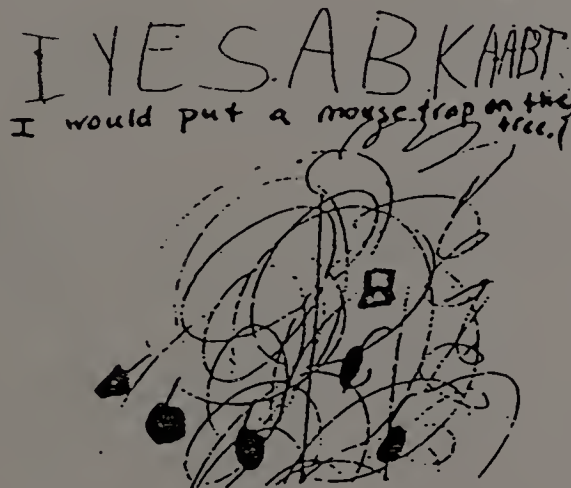
through individual goal setting to challenge herself as a developing writer. Writing process cover sheets that listed Anna's writing strengths and goals for each quarter of the year with attached writing samples provided evidence of opportunities for Anna to write collaboratively with others, maintain a personal word bank, develop more detailed pieces, practice conferring and editing skills, develop her questionaing skills and conduct an interview with a final write-up. Mrs. Bennett's portfolio assessment illustrated and provided evidence of an individualized instructional writing plan that challenged Anna as a writer and provided opportunities for her to work on goals in spelling, content development, development of style and the processes for further developing a piece of writing. As writing portfolio documentation provided Mrs. Bennett with "a picture" of Anna's development, opportunities were introduced to Anna as she indicated a readiness to take next steps as a developing writer.

Helen's Writing Portfolio. According to Mrs. Bennett, Helen was not a confident writer although she enjoyed drawing and discussing her pictures. Each of her quarterly writing process cover sheets included her strengths and goals as a writer. These writing process

cover sheets and attached writing samples were included in Helen's writing portfolio. Her October 1990 writing process cover sheet indicated that she:

Wrote a complete thought with additional information if prompted.  
Wrote with some initial and final consonants.  
Added extra letters in order to approximate the length of words.

Writing samples attached to her October 1990 writing process cover sheet (Figure 62 and 63) supported the fact that Helen could write a complete thought. Initial and final consonants were inconsistently used, and there were no spaces between words. Sound to letter correspondence needed to be worked on with Helen. Helen's goals for the second quarter were to learn initial and final consonants, write only letters that she heard and use spaces between her words.



I would put a  
mousetrap on the tree.

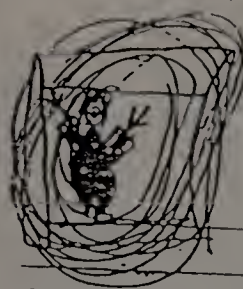
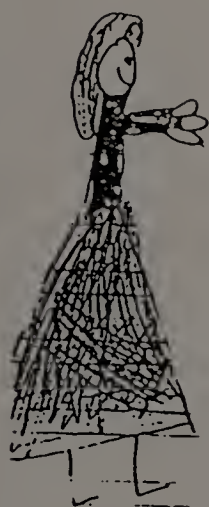
Mousetrap on Tree

Figure 62



I AM AFRAID DADDY LONG LEGS

TO SFPM  
ABT



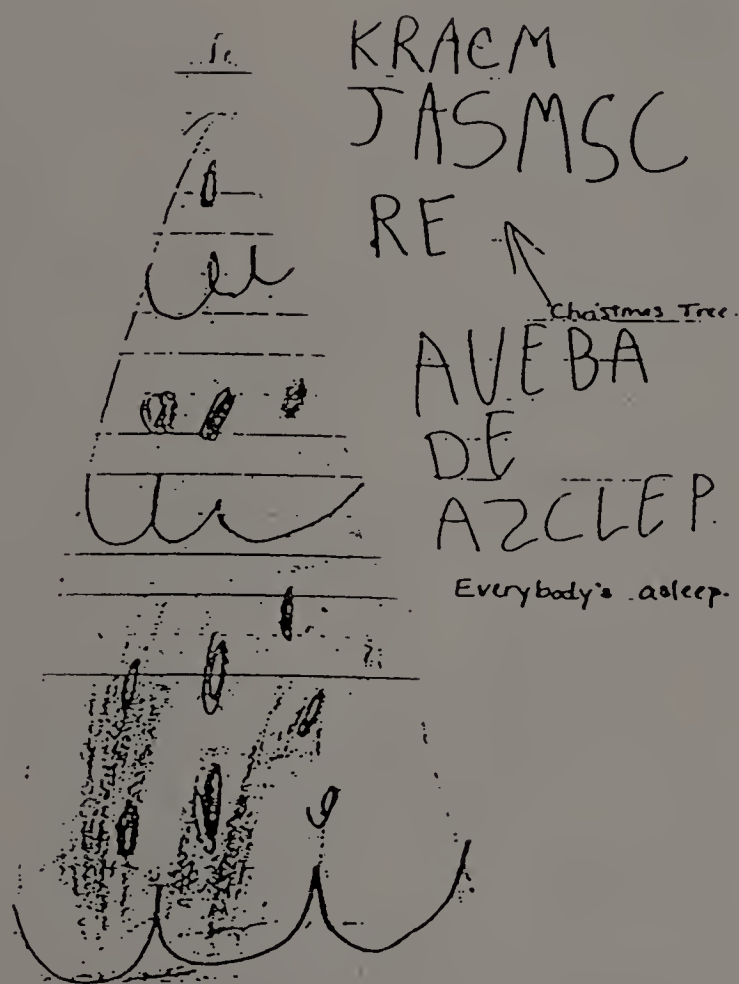
I am afraid of daddy  
long legs. I need to  
step on it.

Bug

Figure 63

By early January of 1991 Helen was writing most beginning sounds and continued to draw lovely illustrations. Two representative samples attached to Helen's January writing process cover sheet (Figures 64

and 65) indicated some use of beginning consonant sounds with writing from left to right. Helen was still writing additional letters that did not correspond to particular sounds heard.



Christmas tree.  
Everybody's asleep.

Christmas Tree

Figure 64



Girl is a star.  
She is a twin.

AZ A zhe  
GRL STRAMZKAABTNGP.UZA  
Girl is a star. She is a twin.

The Girl

Figure 65

Her goals for the third quarter included using a language master to record her sentences. She could play them back and listen for sounds that would be written down. She was to write more with a peer or an adult who could model invented spelling, and she was to work on spacing between her words. Mrs. Bennett felt that it was important, as


well, to continue to help her feel confident about the ideas that she was trying to express in writing.

By early April, Helen's writing strengths were:

Wrote several sentences on one topic.  
Used some punctuation in her writing.  
Used much more readable invented spellings.  
Could now read back most of her writing.

Attached writing samples (Figure 66, 67 and 68) indicated her ability to write more than one sentence on a topic. With adult guidance she began to space her words by underlining words, drawing lines or placing dots between her words.

I made a squirrel  
with Kala and  
Faith today

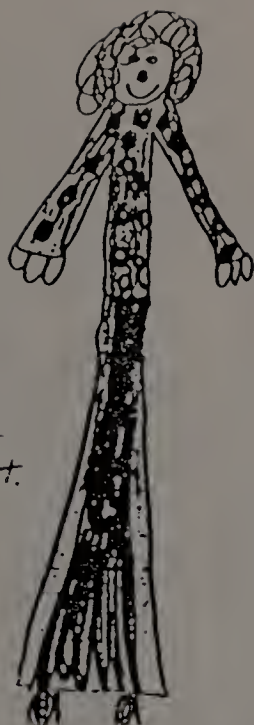


I made a squirrel  
with Kala and Faith  
today.

Squirrel

Figure 66

SHL  
HAS  
KRLC-HAK  
AND  
A-DAULD-HRT  
AND  
ASTRI PSKRT.

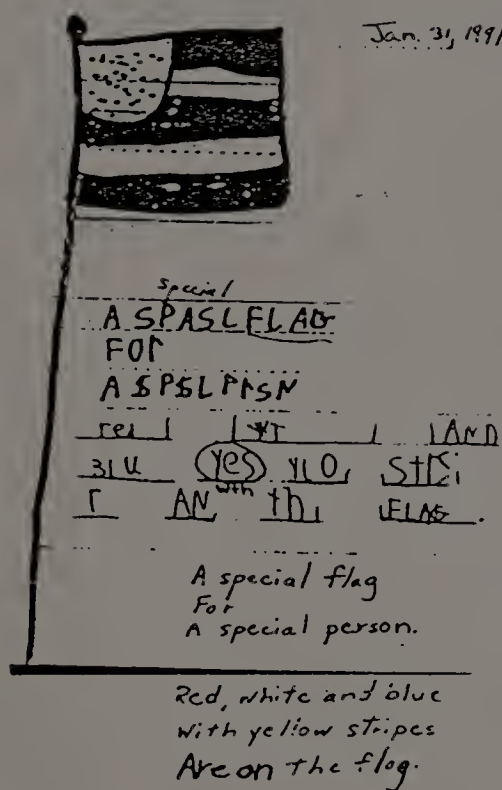


She has curly hair  
and a dotted shirt  
and a striped skirt.

She has curly hair  
and a dotted shirt  
and a striped skirt.

## Fashion

Figure 67



A special flag for a  
special person.  
Red, white and blue with  
yellow stripes are on  
the flag.

## Flag

Figure 68



Her goals for the last quarter included the use of a story map to help organize her writing for publishing, a continued emphasis on reading her writing aloud to another person so as to listen for sounds and more consistent use of spacing between words. An additional comment on the writing process cover sheet for April was made by the teacher and indicated that Helen worked well with adult guidance.

By the middle of May, Helen's writing strengths included: Writing complete sentences.

Writing on the same subject for more than one day.

Beginning to add to her work after a peer conference.

Including most sounds and vowels heard in her words.

Helen's spring Easter story (Figure 69) showed evidence of her ability to write about one topic over several days. She conferred with her peers on this Easter piece (Figure 70), and she was asked a question which she answered at the end of her rough draft. She later added an ending to her story that solved the problem in the story.

WOSO the W2A RABI  
 MAD PEDR HEW2TH  
 E2DRABI+  
 HEDLIVRESRAG  
 ALDALR  
 NTH H<sup>hot sun</sup>TSVAN  
 I+SRTI RANIA  
 AND HE KITI DLAVRESRAG<sup>2</sup>  
 TH<sup>couldn't</sup> HE REMND RD HE HAD  
 AUBRLA  
 AND HE KADLIVRESRAG<sup>2</sup>  
 \*BKTH KLRWWSHNAF  
<sup>could</sup> <sup>colored</sup> washed away

Once there was a  
 rabbit named Peter.  
 He was the Easter  
 rabbit. He delivered  
 Easter eggs all  
 over in the hot  
 sun. And it  
 started raining and  
 he couldn't deliver  
 easter eggs. \* Then  
 he remembered he  
 had an umbrella and  
 he could deliver  
 Easter eggs.  
 \*Because the color  
 would wash away.

### Easter Rabbit

Figure 69

### Conference

- ① Title
- ② What happened to the eggs  
when it rains?
- ③ Ending.
- ④ About the Author

1. Title
2. What happened  
to the eggs  
when it  
rained?
3. Ending
4. About the  
author

### Easter Rabbit - Conference

Figure 70

Helen's end of the year writing goals included a continued effort to space between words, use a story map to help her focus on a single topic and emphasize and strengthen her view of herself as a successful author.

As observed in the classroom, Helen needed a great deal of specific guidance in listening for sounds in words and for hearing and indicating where one word stopped and another word began in her writing. It was evident from Mrs. Bennett's portfolio assessment that a specific diagnosis was made after collecting and analyzing Helen's early written work. Helen was shown various strategies for separating words, and these strategies began to show up in her writing. However, as evidenced by Mrs. Bennett's delineation of strengths and goals, Helen was not asked to concentrate mainly on her areas of weakness. As observed in the classroom, she liked to share her pictures and began to add to her written pieces after being given opportunities to confer with her peers. Again, there was evidence in this portfolio assessment of an individual student/teacher plan for writing based on writing samples collected from the writer. Opportunities that challenged the writer in

the areas of content development and the development of conferring strategies were also evident in the portfolio.

Mrs. Bennett used information from her students' portfolios to inform her teaching by determining a readiness for new skills and strategies and by celebrating and building on individual student's strengths (fieldnotes). She also involved her students in assessing their own growth by providing opportunities on a regular basis for students to reflect on their goals and their successes in moving towards reaching their goals (fieldnotes). For instance, students met in groups to share their writing and the goal or goals on which they were working. Their goals were listed in their writing journals for easy access (fieldnotes). Mrs. Bennett was also very open to experimenting with new assessment ideas and procedures for involving the early writer in the assessment process (fieldnotes). Her writing portfolios also became a "window" to classroom opportunities and processes that were made available to students and to their successes with these procedures.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Conclusions

In order to draw conclusions, I will return to the five main areas of investigation.

#### A. Changes in Writing Instruction That Led to Teachers' Perceptions of the Need for Changes in Assessment.

1. What kinds of changes have occurred over the years in writing instruction that have led to the need for changes in writing assessment?

Both the literature review and this study indicate that changes in writing instruction have led to the need for changes in writing assessment. The focus of assessment in a more process-oriented writing program is on the acquisition of actual composing strategies, on the development of the mechanics of writing within the context of a student's piece of writing and on students' effective participation in various writing processes. In order to design a writing curriculum based on the individualized strengths and needs of students as they interact in the classroom and become involved in the processes of developing a piece of writing, a different kind of assessment became necessary. An assessment that was diagnostic, "build into teaching and integral to day-to-day work" (Valencia 1990, 338-340),



able to provide evidence of progress over time and collaborative in its nature was essential.

In the past, models for evaluating writing in schools were devised by an authority figure who had a priori beliefs as to what good writing ought to be and what children ought to be able to do, rather than empirical evidence about what children actually can and do write. With the present emphasis on the instruction of writing through the various processes of rehearsal, composing and revision, educators have come to realize that the traditional methods of mandated instruction and evaluation of writing are inappropriate. Typical measuring instruments are limiting in that the cognitive operations that students employ and the writers' intentions when writing are not taken into account (Daly 1989, 103).

Teachers in this study began to feel a need to develop alternative assessments that focused on a closer analysis of students' writing strengths and needs. They wanted to know what students already knew and could apply, the processes that worked best for them as writers and the instruction that was needed for students to progress as language users. A need arose for evaluation strategies that focused on student strengths as writers, informed the teacher of the student's development and brought the student into the process of self-assessment. As students became more involved in process learning activities, in looking at a variety of purposes for writing, in supporting each other as writers through student/teacher response and self-evaluation activities

such as collaborative goal setting, a need arose for a different kind of assessment that was more diagnostic in nature and rooted in the actual activities and performances in the classroom.

Katherine's writing portfolio provided evidence that she was challenged with process writing opportunities that were well balanced across content, style, mechanics and processes that emphasized collaborative goal setting, conferring and self-reflection that allowed Katherine to revisit her portfolio. These opportunities were offered to Katherine as she became ready to work with next steps as derived from the analysis of her writing portfolio. These opportunities were documented in her portfolio which became a "window" into the classroom. These process learning opportunities closely reflected those outlined by Lamme and Hysmith in their study. In writing

the move is away from primary attention to handwriting, spelling, grammar and usage toward an interest in communication, organization and purposes for writing, and attitudes toward writing. These changes in curricular orientation bring with them changes in assessment of student progress (Lamme and Hysmith 1991, 629).

Writing-portfolio assessments provided an alternative to more traditional forms of assessment. In the classrooms studied, portfolios included students'

writing samples over time, records kept by students of work that had been accomplished, and notes on conferences and editing sessions held between students and with the teacher. Portfolios in these classrooms provided opportunities for teachers and students to review students' writing strengths and design next steps together. They became a record of student's progress on product and process oriented experiences.

As Jan Turbill suggests (IRA, 1990), we need to "bring learning, teaching, and assessment back together. We need to focus on the process of learning rather than the product and we must include the learners as part of the process." Assessment of writing portfolios allow teachers to collect both product and process-oriented information about their students.

#### B. Ways in Which Instruction and Assessment are Related

1. How have teachers' assessment procedures affected their day-to-day instruction?

In this study teachers' responses to interview questions and their analysis of student portfolios indicated that they were able to more readily individualize their assessments while using writing-portfolio assessments. Writing-portfolio assessments became the basis for instructional decisions.

As collections of writing samples were reviewed and analyzed over time in student portfolios, teachers were able to outline patterns of strengths and needs that led to designing specific goals and implementation plans for individual students and the class as a whole. Their diagnostic nature allowed teachers and students to review strengths and design goals collaboratively. As teachers in this study became more involved in using writing-portfolio assessment, they became more sophisticated in their analysis of students' strengths and needs and much more creative in designing writing strategies to help students meet their individual goals. Teachers were able to more readily define student's zone of proximal development which provided for more specific individualized instruction. As teachers became more confident about their analyses of student progress, they were able to share this information with students and invite them into a process of self-reflection. This type of collaborative assessment provided opportunities for students to see and celebrate their own growth and to become a part of the decision-making process in designing and implementing next steps. As students' writing strengths were analyzed through portfolio assessments, the needs of individual writers become clearer across the

development of content, style, mechanics and the processes needed to implement goals and facilitate more independent writing behaviors. As teachers in this study became more sophisticated in designing strategies and processes to promote writing development among their students, they began to explore assessment strategies that supported new ways to involve their students in process learning and self-evaluation activities. Writing-portfolio assessments informed teachers of their students' development as writers and empowered them to make appropriate instructional decisions based on their students strengths and needs rather than on a programmed text book or pre-determined curriculum. This was particularly evidenced in Mrs. Bennett's writing-portfolio assessments of Tony and Helen whose specific needs emerged from their written samples. As Helen worked on various strategies to listen for appropriate sounds and to space her words, Tony was learning how to select topics of interest to get started as a writer and to build content. Very specific instructional plans for Tony and Helen were based on collections of their writing samples. Their portfolios also offered evidence of well balanced writing opportunities across content, style, mechanics and various writing processes even though they



were both writers who struggled with spelling and mechanics. Portfolios also provided evidence of writing across the curriculum and across a variety of types of writing, of opportunities to select topics of choice and for a variety of purposes and audiences, and of opportunities to revisit the portfolio and reflect on development. Student portfolio analysis allowed teachers to reflect on both students' written products and on the processes involved in developing these products.

Portfolios that were reviewed and analyzed on a regular basis by teachers and students provided a basis for daily instruction and long range curriculum planning. Writing-portfolio assessment provided teachers with an accountability measure that systematically documented the development of students as writer. They also provided a "window" into the classroom and new ways of knowing about our students as learners.

## 2. What do you look for in assessing students' writing portfolios?

In this study teachers reviewed students' writing samples over time in order to compare pieces of writing for growth in the use of various writing skills. They looked at students' strengths as writers and designed goals for future writing development. Individual and

whole class goals became the basis for instruction. These goals were based on the need for a writer to develop the content, style and mechanics of his or her writing. Writing-portfolio assessment in these teachers' classrooms became a vehicle for providing evidence of a "well-balanced" writing program that emphasized writing goals and strategies for developing content, style, mechanics and collaborative processes. Goal implementation plans and various writing strategies to obtain these goals were also evidenced in the portfolios. Teachers reviewed both product and process oriented information that could be included in a student's writing portfolio to be used as indicators of growth as well as a readiness on the part of the writer to take next steps.

As Tierney, Carter and Desai noted, "An assessment program should be multifaceted. There should be provisions to assess more than just the final products. Assessment should focus on achievement, process, and quality of self-assessment" ( 1991, 36).

3. How have you involved your students in the process of self- assessment?

Teachers in this study believed in the effectiveness of involving students in some aspect of a process of self-evaluation. Looking at student strengths as

writers, discussing or setting goals mutually and supporting each other as writers through collaborative response and editing procedures were beginning to emerge as effective processes for developing writers in these classrooms. As teachers in this study became more familiar with analyzing collections of students' written work and articulating students' writing strengths and needs, they began to share this information more and more with students through conferences. The specificity of the assessment allowed teachers to articulate writing strengths to students and invite them into a self-assessment process that focused on their development as evidenced in their own individual portfolios. This kind of collaborative involvement between teachers and students allowed students to better articulate their strengths and needs, encouraged them to take more responsibility for their own learning and, consequently, increased their level of personal investment in the processes necessary to develop as writers. Goals were listed in students' journals where they were easily accessible for discussion or review. On an on-going basis, students were involved in evaluation activities by supporting each other as writers through collaborative response sessions and editing procedures in the

classroom. Collaborative response sessions, editing procedures and mutual goal setting opportunities were particularly evident in Robin's writing-portfolio assessments. Her goals included editing her content and working on strategies for revision after conferring with the teacher and her peers, and she included a personal goal of writing more fictional stories. One teacher, Mrs. Mason, effectively involved a first grade student, Katherine, in revisiting her portfolio to select a favorite piece, review other previously written pieces that she wanted to revise or add to and reflect on her development as a writer by completing a writing survey.

Herter suggested that students be asked to select writing from their folders that

they valued and thought best represented them as writers. Portfolios involve students in assessing the development of their writing skills by inviting self-reflection and encouraging students to assume control over their writing. Accumulating a body of work to return to, to reject, revise, or simply revisit calls on students to become responsible for the content and quality of their portfolio, and ultimately to confront their personal writing inventories and investments in the activities of the class (1991, 90).

Daly stated that goal-based assessment

integrates assessment with the learning process, encourages children to take responsibility for their learning, enables children to articulate what and how they want

to learn thereby making them aware of their own thinking and learning processes, allows individual children to negotiate specific challenges to achieve, allows for collaborative peer and group as well as individual assessment, informs children of the criteria on which they will be judged, enables the teacher to carry out simple but effective (end of the year or term) summative assessment, and presents a tangible record of progress to the child, parent and teacher (1989, 126).

These conclusions around the relationship between instruction and assessment in writing classrooms closely reflected the work of Robert Tierney, Mark Carter and Laure Desai.

Portfolios are systematic collections... Through reflections on systematic collections of work, teachers and students can work together to illuminate students' strengths, needs and progress. ...values that underlie the use of portfolios include a belief in developing procedures for planning classroom learning that represents what students are actively doing (and) a commitment to student involvement in self-evaluation and helping students to become aware of their own development as readers and writers. (Tierney, Carter and Desai 1991, 41).

In Lamme and Hysmith's study of portfolio assessment by K-2 teachers, it was noted that:

children examined materials in their working portfolio's and reflected on which items they benefited from, enjoyed, or noticed improvement over time. If children are to become autonomous learners, they must learn to assess what they have learned and how they learn best (1991, 632).



4. Are you using any other record-keeping procedures for collecting and analyzing information about students' writing?

Teachers in this study used a writing process cover sheet (Appendix A) to record information about students' writing strengths and goals. They took anecdotal notes on students' progress with particular pieces of writing and on their interactions in the classroom. These notes were recorded on a class list. This type of record-keeping created what Nancie Atwell referred to as a "status of the class" report. It included information about where students were in the composing process and allowed teachers to design daily plans around particular student strengths and needs.

Teachers experimented with different kinds of record-keeping to include in a writing portfolio so as to provide information about students' achievements, attitudes and peer interactions as developing writers. Checklists that focused on content, style, mechanics and processes involved in developing a piece of writing were used by teachers in this study (Appendix B). Anecdotal note-taking, "status of the class" reports, and narratives about students as writers were included in student portfolios. Lamme and Hysmith noted that teachers at "high levels" of writing-portfolio

implementation included records in the portfolio that contained interpretive data. They "utilize records to reflect on instruction," (1991, 638), and they enthusiastically sample new ideas for collecting information.

Teachers who were enthusiastic about portfolios gathered the data they needed informally and treated the process and the practice information they gathered more seriously than the skills information. Keeping anecdotal records helped teachers look at the positive, at what the children could do (1991, 634).

5. As a result of your involvement with writing portfolio assessment, what can you say about students' writing across the group and over time?

Teachers in this study reflected on the increased investment that their students had in their writing and in their writing development as they became more involved in choosing their own topics, reviewing their strengths over time, mutually setting goals and better understanding more clearly articulated expectations from teachers through individual and group writing conferences. Students showed an increased focus on their writing. Writing-portfolio assessment supported a move in the direction of more clearly defined individual strengths and needs which allowed teachers to more readily invite students into more collaborative self-

reflection processes. One teacher noted that students in her classroom excelled in the application of various writing skills. This teacher stated that the specificity of the writing-portfolio assessment allowed her to individualize instruction and determine the skill needs of her students by determining their zone of proximal development. Knowing their needs helped her to provide skills and materials at a review level, at a particular instructional level and at a more advanced, challenging level when readiness was determined.

6. How could writing surveys be useful or valuable to you when working with students?

Teachers in this study began to use writing surveys that asked students to reflect on their development as writers. These surveys provided invaluable information on student attitudes and perceptions about their writing, their development as writers and their preferred strategies for developing a piece of writing. Teachers in this study reviewed writing surveys (Appendix E) to better understand their students' perceptions of themselves as writers, their preferred writing topics and strategies, and their perceptions on what good writing is and how it is evaluated.

One teacher had several of her first grade students revisit their portfolios while completing the survey entitled "Think about Writing" (Appendix F). Students reflected on the composition of a selected best piece from the portfolio, addressed their perspective on the process of writing goals with the teacher during the year, discussed a future goal, commented on questions that they had for their next year's writing teacher and reflected on their development as writers. The teacher involved commented on the value of supporting students in discussing their changing perceptions about their development as writers. She stated that surveys can provide information that can keep you "in tune" with individual students and the group. Surveys or questions asked as part of classroom discussions help students to reflect on their development as writers and readers and can be revealing to parents, future teachers and other students as they collaboratively grapple with:

1. What is good writing - articulation of standards?
2. How does it happen - process involved?
3. What topics and strategies work best for me?
4. How do I involve myself in collaborative goal assessment?
5. What do I think of my development as a writer - self-reflection?

Thinking about writing needs to be an integral part of the writing classroom. "Just as assessment is an integral part of my learning and teaching, self-evaluation is a natural part of students' own learning" (Harp 1991, 101).

Students need to be active participants in the evaluation process as well. Self-evaluation provides the teacher with valuable insight about how students perceive their abilities and growth. During the process students gain the ability to think critically, reason, and express themselves in relation to what they have learned and how they feel. When we invite students to participate in the evaluation process and be involved in making decisions about their learning, they become students with high self-esteem and self-motivation (Harp 1991, 203).

C. Reporting Procedures to Parents, Teachers and Others Interested in a Student's Writing Development

1. How have the writing portfolio assessments affected your reporting procedures to parents? How would you like next year's teachers to respond to the data from your students' writing portfolio assessments?

In this study the data reflected that reporting on writing-portfolio assessments proved to be very positive and informative. Teachers emphasized the importance of sharing children's writing progress over time through these assessments. Parents were able to see tangible, systematically recorded evidence of their child's application of various writing skills and processes.



Their child's writing development over time was reported as well as instructional plans for next steps. When teachers shared information on the developmental stages of an early writer (Appendix D), parents were able to identify their child's stage of development. Parents' anxieties over their child's literacy development were often relieved after viewing the writing samples and records in their own child's portfolio. Writing-portfolio assessment often indicated to parents the complex nature of writing instruction and assessment that supported writing development across content, style, mechanics and various process opportunities in the classroom. The assessments "captured" successful individual student processes in developing a piece of writing and in collaboratively reviewing strengths and designing next steps.

Teachers in the study also felt that it was important to provide individual portfolio assessment information to the child's future teacher so that the information could guide writing instruction at the beginning of the year. Reviewing students' strengths, needs and goal implementation plans from the previous year would support future teachers in designing a more appropriate writing curriculum. It would be necessary,

however, to pass on portfolio assessment information that highlighted aspects of a student's writing development over the previous year so that future teachers were not overwhelmed with data for individual students. One teacher also referred to the valuable information gathered from student writing surveys (Appendix E and Appendix F) that could be shared with teachers and parents. Student reflections on their own writing development are invaluable information for individualizing instruction.

D. The Changing Role of the Teacher as a Result of Writing Portfolio Assessment.

1. How do writing portfolio assessment procedures affect the role of the teacher?

Both the literature review and this study indicated that writing-portfolio assessment procedures allowed teachers to individualize their instruction and base it on student progress. As teachers in the study analyzed student portfolios, they found that they became more reflective about their students' progress and their instructional plans for their students. "Portfolios allow teachers to get to know their students - as readers, writers, thinkers, and human beings" (Rief 1990,24). As a result of the specificity of the assessment for individual students, teachers were more

readily able to invite students into the process of reflecting on their own development. Teachers and students in this study collaboratively reflected on individual progress in order to design goals and implementation plans for next steps. As students became more actively involved in a self-evaluation process, teachers were no longer the single classroom assessor and became guiders of instruction. As the result of assessments that took place within the context of real language tasks in the classroom, the teachers in this study became the decision-makers in their classrooms rather than relying as much on commercially produced programs based on a predetermined curriculum for all students with no regard for their personal literacy development and orientation as learners. Teachers supported students as independent learners and monitored their development so as to provide appropriate instruction and opportunities for self-reflection. "The teacher's role changes from one who makes all the decisions, to one who moderates and facilitates a process that is largely the responsibility of the student" (Gitomer, Grosh and Price 1992, 7). As teachers looked at students in new ways and developed descriptive portfolio assessments of student progress, they became

instrumental in selecting information about a students' literacy development which would be most useful for different audiences - the students, the parent, administrators and future teachers.

...rational and penetrating assessment can happen every time a teacher hears a child read, discuss a story, write something, talk about words and so on. Every literacy task in every school day provides a teacher with a potentially powerful medium of assessment, but this will be dependent upon the teacher knowing what to look for and how to record it (Daly 1989, 137).

As goals are collaboratively established between the teacher and the student and among groups working collaboratively on projects in the classroom, teachers roles in the classroom began to change.

Talking with children as they set goals for writing is a valuable experience and an essential part of preparing children to look at themselves as writers and readers and to see where they are going. By writing down their choices the child formalizes the tasks and is helped to think through the range of available options. Through conferencing about goals, the teacher and child gain considerable insights. The child is able to: verbalize their own likes and dislikes, ponder and discuss new ideas which they would like to try, and sense a direction in their writing because it is committed to being shared with others (Daly 1989, 122).

Lamme and Hysmith in a study of elementary teachers moving to portfolio assessment stated that portfolio assessments have "helped promote teacher collaboration,

increased professional activity on the part of many teachers, and generated reflection on the part of most teachers about their own roles in educating the children in their classes" (1988, 640).

Teachers will need to

rethink their relationships with students and consider their roles as coaches or enablers of student performance. Some teachers may need to do some soul searching about whether students are too dependent on them for direction, standards or judgement. The whole point is to put the student in a self-disciplined, self-regulating, self-assessing position (Vavrus 1990, 51).

Teachers in this study commented that having time to meet in order to discuss writing instruction and student writing-portfolio assessments strengthened their confidence for designing implementation plans for individual student goals and for developing strategies for involving students in self-assessment processes. Teachers also talked about standards for good writing and expectations of writers by grade level. Reflecting on product and process-oriented assessments such as writing-portfolio assessments began to promote more professional collaboration among teachers in this study.

#### E. Support Necessary for Teachers Involved in Writing Portfolio Assessment

1. What support do teachers need when involving themselves with writing portfolio assessment?



The literature review and this study indicated that certain kinds of support and professional development activities needed to be made available to teachers involving themselves in writing-portfolio assessments. "Because portfolio assessment is labor -intensive, time will be a critical issue" (Vavrus 1990,51). There is a need for the redistribution of our current use of time.

There's no particular good reason why teachers can't be freed up for a few hours a week or a couple professional day can be called "assessment days". We need to do what other countries do: Set aside time to do this work (Vavrus 1990, 51).

Teachers in this study felt that they needed time to critically review current, more traditional writing assessments which were no longer serving them well. As they moved toward writing-portfolio assessment and instructional procedures based on these assessments, they needed to move beyond commercial scope and sequences that outlined instructional expectations and procedures. In so doing teachers in this study felt that a collaborative effort for designing and implementing portfolio assessments was essential. They needed time to meet with other teachers to create and agree on standards for the assessment of writing, to determine writing expectations based on grade level or developmental writing stages, to

develop goal implementation plans, to design processes for involving students in self-assessment activities and to investigate appropriate record-keeping and reporting procedures. To understand the partnership between instruction and portfolio assessment based on the day-to-day needs of individual writers involved a perspective on the teaching of writing that included time for daily writing, individual and group conferences in the classroom, the mutual development of expectations and critical reflection on writing strategies to support changing writers. One teacher advocated team teaching as an effective approach for supporting teachers in their learning and in their decision making while developing a portfolio approach.

Teachers felt, too, that professional development activities needed to be made available in the area of writing and in the area of child development. When teachers begin writing-portfolio assessment, according to teachers in this study, it is essential to provide professional development that supports teachers at their different levels of involvement and expertise.

Provisions need to be made to accommodate and support individual faculty members at the levels at which they are read for new information and ideas. For some it may be understanding and accepting the basis

underlying assumptions and philosophy, while for other who are already sold on the philosophy, it may be coaching on implementation strategies (Lamme and Hysmith 1991, 640).

As teachers in this study moved away from grading toward a more descriptive form of reporting through portfolio assessments, it became difficult to find the language to describe a student's learning. This became evident as the researcher and teachers in this study worked together to describe children's development as evidenced in their writing and in their classroom performances. Teachers needed support in learning how to explain and describe growth and on deciding on the kinds of information to collect. We wanted to find new words

to describe the learning successes and frustrations that students have. But to have a new vocabulary we needed to look again in new ways. We had to challenge our own views about students and listen differently. If teachers are going to write useful assessments they, like all writers, need to write from a position of knowledge. They also need critical feedback from readers (Daly 1989, 23).

Teachers also needed support in asking the right questions and in designing particular classroom interactions that generated answers to questions such as the following:

1. "What do I already know about this learner's literacy development?"

2. What do I still want to know?
3. Why do I want to know this?
4. How can I find out what I need to know?
5. What kinds of literacy events or learning episodes will give me more information about how this learner operates? " (Daly 1989, 27).

Teachers needed time to investigate ways to get at children's development in an attempt to answer these questions. Think aloud activities that involve children in articulating their reading and writing strategies, conversations and conferences with students, surveys or dialogue journals in which students reflect on their progress as learners, the analysis of audio and video tapes of student interactions and the analysis of cumulative collections of work are some of the ways being explored to tap the "learner as an informant" (Daly 1989, 23). These are time-consuming assessments that ask teachers to make observations, involve themselves in student conversations and analyze cumulative products. As teachers work with students and look for signs of growth, they will also need further support in deciding on which information is significant to report out to parents, administrators and students themselves.

### Recommendations

This study provided insights into two first grade teachers' development and implementation of writing-portfolio assessments. Teachers were able to use student portfolios to analyze and document writing progress over time and to provide evidence of writing process opportunities. Such an assessment supported teachers in making instructional decisions for individual students and for the class as a whole. Teachers also used student portfolios to successfully report student progress to parents and future teachers.

Since this study included only two teachers of the early writer, it is important that future studies include a larger group of teachers as well as teachers of the older writer. It is also essential to include information on the difficulties, frustrations and attitudes of teachers who are new to the use of process writing strategies in the classroom and new to writing-portfolio assessments. Future studies in the use of portfolio assessment also need to examine and answer a variety of questions and issues:

- What changes do teachers who use writing portfolio assessment with upper elementary, middle and secondary level students report in their instruction and in their view of their students?



- What are students' perceptions and comments about the use of writing-portfolio assessments?
- How are portfolios being used by teachers to look at their own skills and development?
- How do portfolios best "serve as a vehicle for changing the schools' conversation with the public"? (Mitchell 1992, 104)?
- How are portfolios being used for program evaluation?
- How are portfolios being used for instruction and assessment purposes in all curriculum areas?
- How are parents involved in the portfolio process?

"Bringing the students' work into the home in the portfolio and asking for written comments is an astute political as well as, educational move" (Mitchell 1992, 113). It provides a larger audience for students, and it informs parents of changes "in writing instruction from an emphasis on correctness to the primacy of meaning and the process required to communicate" (Mitchell 1992, 113).

- How does portfolio assessment affect students' development and their attitudes about their development?
- How are teachers guiding students' self-assessment processes?

Portfolio assessment procedures invite students into the process of self-evaluation. "With time, experience, and conversation, students' ability to read their own portfolios with depth and understanding also develops" (Wolf 1989, 35).

- What form can portfolios take?

Can they include "videos, audio tapes, papers, computer printouts, reports, letters, sketches, semantic maps, paintings, snapshots of constructions, and so on? (Polin 1991, 25).

By providing students with alternative representations of knowledge and alternative forums for the display of expertise, portfolios avoid the literate bias of schooling and align more closely with "real world" work" (Polin 1991, 25).

- How are the use of portfolios supporting diagnostic teaching efforts which depend on a systematic collection of information recorded within the context of the classroom and during the process of a students' active engagement?
- What is the relationship between child development views and writing-portfolio processes and assessments in the classroom?
- How are the use of portfolio assessments empowering teachers and students?
- How can teachers' judgements in portfolio assessments "be supported by evidence and attain some comparability" (Mitchell 1992, 133).
- How are we insuring that teachers' portfolio assessments become central to the process of evaluating student achievement and the basis for state, regional and national assessments?

One of the most dynamic assessment concepts currently being discussed in our field is that of a portfolio approach to the assessment of reading and literature. Since there are no tests or test materials that are specifically associated with this approach, it has the potential for placing teachers and students - not tests and test scores - at the very center of the assessment process (Pikulski 1989, 80).

- What kind of support systems will teachers need in order to use portfolios effectively in the classroom and for reporting purposes?
- What type of inservice format would best support teachers in developing and implementing writing-portfolio assessments?
- Why should we involve students, parents, and teachers as collaborators in this process?

Reflecting on one's work and discussing it with someone else seems to lead students to a greater sense of pride, self-confidence, and responsibility.

...students begin to internalize criteria for judging their work and recognize their own style and taste. If these are inevitable consequences of the portfolio process, than we have finally found an assessment strategy that doesn't waste students' time and functions as a very sophisticated learning experience (Polin 1991, 26).

Portfolio assessment has the potential to provide educators with new ways of knowing and understanding instructional programs, processes and individual student development for the purposes of designing curriculum that empowers teachers and students to strive for meaningful goals. It is an assessment approach that engages students, parents and teachers collaboratively. It is from classroom-based assessments that we must build our local, state and national level assessments if we value a true understanding of our students' literacy development.

APPENDIX A

WRITING PROCESS COVER SHEET

STUDENT: \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE: \_\_\_\_\_

TEACHER: \_\_\_\_\_ SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_

TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_

KIND OF WRITING \_\_\_\_\_

DATE COMPLETED: \_\_\_\_\_

THINGS THAT \_\_\_\_\_ CAN DO AS A WRITER

GOALS:

Teacher comments and/or student comments: (continued on back)

## APPENDIX B

### WRITING DEVELOPMENT CHECKLISTS

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_1. Demonstrates an ability to use a form of scribble as writing.
- \_\_\_2. Demonstrates an ability to distinguish between drawing and writing.
- \_\_\_3. Demonstrates an ability to talk about what they will write.
- \_\_\_4. Demonstrates that writing is a process.
- \_\_\_5. Generates topics and writing ideas.
- \_\_\_6. Demonstrates use of pre-writing strategies.
- \_\_\_7. Participates in writing conferences with the teacher.
- \_\_\_8. Participates in writing conferences with peers.
- \_\_\_9. Demonstrates evidence of the revision of story content.
- \_\_\_10. Attempts spelling generalizations.
- \_\_\_11. Edits for spelling and mathematics.
- \_\_\_12. Willingly shares writing.
- \_\_\_13. Participates in a self-evaluation process.
- \_\_\_14. Demonstrates work in different genre/topics.
- \_\_\_15. Demonstrates an ability to question, discuss and revise.
- \_\_\_16. Use the computer as one tool for writing.
- \_\_\_17. Views self as a effective writer.



\_\_\_18. Maintains a Writing Portfolio.

\_\_\_19. Participates in self-evaluation process.

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT SKILLS LIST K-12

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_1. Demonstrates an ability to organize information.
- \_\_\_2. Demonstrates an ability to use various pre-writing strategies.
- \_\_\_3. Demonstrate an awareness of sentence structure.
  - \_\_\_A. Orally Produces Whole Units of Complete Thought.
  - \_\_\_B. Write Complete Sentences.
  - \_\_\_C. Recognizes Run-on Sentences.
  - \_\_\_D. Recognizes Sentence Fragments.
  - \_\_\_E. Uses Subordinate Clauses.
  - \_\_\_F. Uses Different Sentence Patterns:
    - \_\_\_a. Simple Sentences
    - \_\_\_b. Compound Sentences
    - \_\_\_c. Complex Sentences
- 4. Demonstrates an awareness of paragraph development and organization.
  - \_\_\_A. Shows Topic Unity
  - \_\_\_B. Finds Main Idea
  - \_\_\_C. Groups Supporting Details under Main Idea
  - \_\_\_D. Demonstrates Logical Sequence of Thought
  - \_\_\_E. Indents and Maintains Even Margins

5. Demonstrates evidence of the ability to question, discuss and revise content:

\_\_\_A. Titles

\_\_\_B. Leads

\_\_\_C. Adequate and Relevant Supporting Details

\_\_\_D. Conclusions

## DEVELOPMENT OF STYLE

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Demonstrates an awareness of the appropriate selection of language.

\_\_\_A. Uses Dictionary and Thesaurus

\_\_\_B. Uses Descriptive Words or Phrases Effectively so as to Appeal to all Five Senses.

\_\_\_C. Identifies and uses Figurative Language:

\_\_\_a. Similes

\_\_\_b. Metaphors

\_\_\_c. Onomatopoeia

\_\_\_d. Alliteration

\_\_\_e. Idioms

\_\_\_D. Shows evidence of imitating styles of writing from literature.

\_\_\_E. Demonstrates a Sense of Personal Voice.

## MECHANICAL SKILLS CHECKLIST

### 1. CAPITALIZATION:

- \_\_\_A. First Word in Sentence
- \_\_\_B. All Proper Names
- \_\_\_C. First and Important Words in titles
- \_\_\_D. First Word in Salutation of a Letter
- \_\_\_E. First Word of Closing of a Letter
- \_\_\_F. Abbreviations
- \_\_\_G. First Line of Poetry
- \_\_\_H. Initials of Names
- \_\_\_I. Proofreads for Capitalization in Final Draft

### 2. PUNCTUATION:

- A. Periods after:
  - \_\_\_1. Complete Sentence
  - \_\_\_2. Initials
  - \_\_\_3. Abbreviations
- B. Commas between:
  - \_\_\_1. City and State
  - \_\_\_2. In Series
- C. Exclamation Points when Appropriate
- D. Apostrophes in:
  - \_\_\_1. Contractions
- D. Proofreads for Punctuation in Final Draft

### 3. GRAMMAR AND USAGE:

- \_\_\_A. Subject-Verb Agreement
- \_\_\_B. Double Negatives in Speech and Writing
- \_\_\_C. Verb Form and Tense
- \_\_\_D. Appropriate Irregular Verbs
- \_\_\_E. Eliminating Unnecessart Words and Phrases
- \_\_\_F. Proofreads for Grammar and Usage in Final Draft



4. SPELLING

\_\_\_A. Attempts spelling generalizations

- \_\_\_1. Prephonemic
- \_\_\_2. Semi-Phonemic
- \_\_\_3. Phonemic
- \_\_\_4. Transitional

\_\_\_B. Proofreads for spelling errors in final draft.

\_\_\_C. Effectively uses available spelling resources.

## APPENDIX C

### INTERVIEW GUIDES

#### Interview Guide for the First Teacher Interviews

1. What is your background as a teacher and as a teacher of writing? What kind of training have you had in writing?
2. What are the components of your writing program?
3. How often do your students write?
4. What kinds of writing do your students do?
5. Do your students keep writing portfolios?
6. What do you emphasize in your writing program?
7. What kinds of writing instruction do you do?
8. Do you support the use of invented spelling? How?
9. Do your students write multiple drafts, confer, revise edit and publish their writing?
10. How do you support students in developing a topic?
11. What is the connection between reading and writing in your classroom?
12. How do you assess writing, and what kinds of record-keeping do you use?
13. Have your assessment procedures and your record-keeping effected your day-to-day instruction? How?
14. How do you report writing procedures and your record-keeping effected your day-to-day instruction? How?
15. Has your record-keeping helped parents to understand your writing program?
16. What types of support have you received in teaching writing?

17. What additional support would you like?

18. What kind of language assessment did you use in the past?

## QUESTIONS ABOUT WRITING PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

### SECOND INTERVIEW

1. What kinds of changes over the years have occurred in writing instruction that you think led to the need for changes in writing assessment?
2. How have your assessment procedures affected your day-to-day instruction?
3. What do you look for in assessing students' writing and their portfolios?
4. How have you involved your students in the process of self-assessment?
5. Are you using any other record-keeping procedures for collecting and analyzing information about students' writing? If so, what?
6. How do writing portfolio assessment procedures affect the role of the teacher?
7. What support do teachers need when involving themselves with writing portfolio assessment?
8. As a result of your involvement with writing portfolio assessment, what can you say in particular about students' writing across the group and over time?
9. How have the writing portfolio assessments affected your reporting procedures to parents? How would you like next year's teacher to respond to the data from your students' writing portfolio assessments?
10. How could the writing surveys be useful or valuable to you when working with students?
11. Were there any particular reflections or surprises that occurred to you this year when working with your writing students and the writing portfolio assessment?

## APPENDIX D

### DEVELOPMENTAL WRITING STAGES

#### FIRST GRADE WRITING

September 1990

Beginning Consonants

oi wt f cw s m ft

All I want for Christmas is my front teeth.

Labeling

cat dog

moon  
hand

Movement of Thought

i wt to let joj nihtfon iwtmotnikim n igto koo ni  
hed fon n the word i l i thewodr wozthebost.

I went to Lake George and I had fun. I went  
mountain climbing and I got to canoe and I had in the  
water. I liked it. The water was the best.

we gave away one of are kitty. my mon let as ciep  
one he lacs to play. i mayd him a tinfoil ball. And a  
solc. he will go Arond the hosu driging his solc.



"BEGINNING WRITING: WATCHING IT DEVELOP"

GARBLE: This is frequently an inventory of the child's writing knowledge.

EXAMPLE:    abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
              123456789    tffi    dk    dod    ymy    ctd

EXAMPLE:    SSTLetgrmk

GARBLE and ATTEMPT: While this may include words, it does not usually communicate an idea.

EXAMPLE:    He She run it is nmpsv

SENTENCE with GARBLES: This is a first indication of successful communication.

EXAMPLE:    I can play s nbb i k t.

SENTENCE with NO GARBLES:

EXAMPLE:    I go to a ester hunt at Mi frnds.

TRANSITION: Description - This may be a description of a person, place or thing.

EXAMPLE:    My dog is funny.  
              My dog eats dog food.  
              My dog hats cats.  
              My otr dog loves cats.

MOVEMENT OF THOUGHT: Student beginnint to write a cohesive paragraph. Time and sequence are clearly indicated.

EXAMPLE:    My dog is funny. He makes my laff. Yesterday he hid under the bed. He was scrd. We wudnt come out.

McDonnel, Gloria and Osburn, Bess. 1980. "Beginning Writing: Watching It Develop". Language Arts. 57 (8): 2-3.

APPENDIX E  
WRITING SURVEY

Name\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

Grade\_\_\_\_\_

1. Are you a writer? ( yes - go to 2a, no - go to 2b )

2a. How did you learn to write?

2b. How do people learn to write?

3. What do you like to write about?

4. How do you choose what to write about?

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

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

7. How do you decide which pieces of writing are good ones?

8. In general, how do you feel about writing?

## APPENDIX F

### THINKING ABOUT WRITING - A SURVEY

1. Select a best or favorite piece of writing.

Think about these questions:

Why do you think it is your best or favorite piece of writing.?

What is good about this piece of writing?

What was special to you when you were writing this piece?

If you could work on this piece or writing some more, what would you do?

2. Did you like writing goals with your teacher? Why?

3. What would be a goal for you in writing next year?

4. What do you want to tell your next year's writing teacher about what you can do as a writer?

5. What might you like to ask your next year's writing teacher?

EXTRA:

6. How do you think your writing got better?

7. What did you learn in writing?

8. What kinds of things happened this year that helped you become a better writer?

## APPENDIX G

### SCALE OF TEACHERS' INVOLVEMENT WITH PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT USED FOR BLACKBURN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROJECT

#### First Stage (non-use)

No systematic collection of anecdotal records or samples of student writing in portfolio format.

#### Second Stage

##### Purposes:

- To indicate a child's level of progress.
- To show if a child is accumulating the necessary prerequisite knowledge and skills.
- To tell us what a child doesn't know.
- To see what skills I need to reteach.

##### Content:

- A collection of the child's tests and writings on assigned topics.
- The county's exit skills checklist.

##### Process:

- Teacher collects with no child input.

##### Attitudes:

- Teacher says he/she likes more structures assessment.
- Teacher wants to be told what must be included.
- Teachers feels need for documentation of county exit skills checklists.

#### Third Stage:

##### Purposes:

- To collect and keep more in-depth records of what child is doing.
- To tell me what skills to teach.
- To make decisions about promotion and retention.

##### Content:

- Collections of children's work.
- County exit skills checklists.
- School-issued forms used with no alterations or personal innovations.
- Observations of total group responses to various aspects of the curriculum such as SSR.

##### Process:

- Teacher keeps anecdotal records in his or her head.
- Teacher selects what goes into portfolios.
- Teacher integrates county exit skills with curriculum.

##### Attitudes:

Teacher claims that there isn't time for county-mandated forms and portfolio assessment.

Teacher tries various ways to record information

Teacher states that we need consistency and uniformity by grade level.

Teacher feels the need for more experience to determine the purpose of anecdotal records.

#### Fourth Stage:

##### Purposes:

Teacher understands reasons for portfolio: the importance of determining how children actually use skills rather than just whether they know them or not.

Teacher uses information to inform teaching.

There are authentic reasons for the showcase portfolio - teacher provides an audience with whom children can share their best work.

##### Content:

Teacher uses a variety of strategies for collecting data: observations, checklists, scales, anecdotes, and artifacts.

Teacher keeps a log or record of what has been taught.

##### Process:

Children select work for their showcase portfolios.

Teacher observes systematically (i.e., 5 children a day, each curricular area, etc.)

##### Attitudes:

Teacher is concerned about time and the management system.

Teacher says, "I can now see the progress of each child more clearly."

#### Fifth Stage

##### Purposes:

To inform instruction.

To display and celebrate good work.

For students to assess their growth.

##### Content:

Teacher analyzes artifacts that are kept and student logs, reading journals, etc., so that the portfolio is not merely a collection of things, but contains data as well.

Teacher utilizes records to reflect on instruction.



Process:

Children reflect on why they put work in portfolios and can explain why the work is good.

Teacher keeps a log on what has been taught to each child.

Teacher moves away from systematic observation to recording information as it occurs.

Students keep logs on what they are learning.

Innovations occur on assessment systems.

Attitudes:

Enthusiastic sampling of new ideas.

(Lamme and Hysmith, 1991)

APPENDIX H

FIRST GRADE PORTFOLIO LITERACY RECORD

Child's Name\_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Name\_\_\_\_\_

School Year\_\_\_\_\_

1) Writing to Read Level finished\_\_\_\_\_

2) Type of reader and books child can read:

3) Techniques that have been successful with this child:

## APPENDIX I

### GOALS FOR THE EARLY WRITER

1. Draw a picture and tell about it.
2. Label pictures with a letter or word.
3. Write from left to right.
4. Write from top to bottom.
5. Use space between words.
6. Write a sentence using beginning and ending sounds.
7. Write a sentence using beginning, middle and ending sounds.
8. Check for periods, commas, exclamation mark, quotation marks, capitals and spelling.
9. Confer and edit with a peer, a small group and an adult.
10. Watch for repetitive use of conjunctions.
11. Watch for repetitive beginnings of sentences.
12. Use descriptive words.
13. Write on one topic at a time.
14. Expand a topic with a story web.
15. Expand a topic with a story map.
16. Expand writing by the use of framed writing with added details.
17. Expand a topic by sharing your story with a peer, a small group and an adult. Write down these questions.
18. Revisit the portfolio to collect and edit writing on the same topic.

19. Expand writing through a combination of questioning dictation.
20. Expand writing though interviewing.
21. Type and publish a book.
22. Write a fictional story.
23. Write a factual story.
24. Write a story collaboratively.
25. Sequence your stories.
26. Write about a book.
27. Write about yourself as the author.
28. Write interesting titles by brainstorming several and asking others.
29. Write an interesting beginning or lead by asking others for ideas.
30. Use a word bank to edit for standard spelling.
31. Ask yourself what you do well as a writer.
32. Set goals for your writing with an adult.
33. Visit your portfolio to select a favorite or best piece.
34. Revisit your portfolio to talk and write about how you have changed as a writer.

# APPENDIX J

## STATUS OF THE CLASS REPORT

Week of February 11-15, 1991

First Grade

*	Needs to conference re: goals
	To write a story from story web about his dog, Tibsy. Web works for him.
	Writing story about "spring" "I like spring. I like to -----."
	Working with ----- on a "Cat & Dog" story.
	Working on computer (CPC) to write caption for each picture, "I like <u>cats</u> ."
	Using a story web to write about his bike.
	Finishing publication of book (wants to begin yet another K & G book with -----).
	Has begun 3 stories. Picked "The Dragon" to finish, conference, edit and publish.
	Using a Language Master to help organize a sentence. Circling individual words. Started a web (house).
	Using a story web to write a book about "Aunt Barbara".
	Goal: Use framed sentences. Wants to write book about "Denise". (sister)





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