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Inquiry into the Writing Pedagogy for Middle School Language Arts

William Love Moore

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AN INQUIRY INTO THE WRITING PEDAGOGY FOR
MIDDLE SCHOOL LANGUAGE ARTS

by

WILLIAM LOVE MOORE

(Under the Direction of Ming Fang He)

ABSTRACT

This is a narrative inquiry into writing pedagogies of middle school language arts teachers and an administrator. Six teacher participants were interviewed and observed, their lesson plans were analyzed, and their instructional practices and writing philosophies were examined. Overarching research questions were (1) What role does writing pedagogy play in a language arts program? (2) What strategies were used to teach writing? and (3) What types of assessments were utilized?

The theoretical framework of my research was based on Dewey's (1897) philosophy of education with roots in hermeneutic phenomenology by van Manen (1990). Methods of inquiry were based on narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Phillion & He, 2001) and classroom-based action research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; McKernan, 1993). Data collection methods included school portraiture, participant profiles, interviews, observations, lesson plans, and the researcher's reflective journal.

Although there is an abundance of research on writing, there is limited information on how teachers view their own praxis and how that impacts achievement in state mandated writing tests and writing proficiency. This study is significant for teachers, educators, administrators, and policy makers at the middle school level. It helps middle school teachers to develop a holistic writing pedagogy where writing is perceived

as a process, woven into all content areas, and captures multiple aspects of literacy development. It helps middle school teacher educators to get up close with the real world of writing praxis, recognize the challenges and concerns of this praxis, and develop a university curriculum pedagogically compatible with the holistic middle school pedagogy. It helps middle school administrators to foster a community of learners where teachers, students, parents, and staff work together to weave the importance of writing into school curriculum which promotes student achievement. It also helps policy makers to recognize successful practices, concerns, challenges, and future directions of middle school writing practices in order to make policies that meet diverse needs of middle school populations and to create a policy milieu where all members of the society work together to help all students to reach their highest potential in an increasingly diverse American society.

INDEX WORDS: Narrative Inquiry, Action Research, Classroom-Based Research, Writing Instruction, pedagogy, Writing Across the Curriculum, teacher preparation, writing as a process, writer's workshop

A NARRATIVE INQUIRY INTO THE WRITING PEDAGOGY OF
A MIDDLE SCHOOL'S LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAM

by

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M.Ed., University of Georgia, 1983

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Georgia Southern University in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

STATESBORO, GEORGIA

2006

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AN INQUIRY INTO THE WRITING PEDAGOGY OF
A MIDDLE SCHOOL'S LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAM

by

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is first dedicated to the glory of God through whom all things are possible.

To my wife, Carolyn Lefkoff Moore, whose love and support kept me going when all seemed dark.

To, Clint, my son, whose love for learning makes him who he is and who he will become.

To my parents who instilled a desire to learn that has not been extinguished.

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To my brother, like my wife, who never gave up on me and helped me remember that our parents would be so proud of this accomplishment in my life.

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To Emily and Michael Coffee, your help in rewriting two chapters and in encouraging me to finish this process have been invaluable. Thank you both.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study explored the writing pedagogy of six middle school language arts teachers. Participants in this study included two sixth grade, two seventh grade, and two eighth grade middle school language arts teachers, an assistant principal, and myself, the teacher-researcher.

The written word preserves our thoughts and feelings, knowledge of our past and present, and our hopes for the future. Considering the importance of this form of communication, it is paramount that instructional practices should be based on relevant research and significant practical experience. “Writing fixes thought on paper,” states Van Manen (1990, p.175). This study recounts the perceptions and strategies educational practitioners utilize to promote and assess their students’ writing ability.

The theoretical framework of this inquiry is based on the philosophy of John Dewey and hermeneutic phenomenology. The methodology of this research is a combination of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998) and classroom-based action research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993).

Dewey’s (1897,1938) philosophy of experience and education provides the framework for my own philosophy and teaching. Dewey begins his book with the statement, “All social movements involve conflicts which are reflected intellectually in controversies” (1938, p. 5). Dewey knew that breaking with the traditional practices of education would create controversy and problems. Difficulty comes when trying to abandon traditionally entrenched systems while formulating and implementing a new and innovative system. An innovative system does not follow the mistakes of the traditional

way of doing things. This knowledge led Dewey to want a design for an infrastructure to make changes less difficult.

Dewey's educational belief that quality or authentic experience should drive students' educational training was one reason his ideals support my use of hermeneutic phenomenology. The need for students to learn through experience and then reflect on that experience is hermeneutic phenomenology in action. Both Dewey's and Van Manen's theories build on and support one another.

Hermeneutics is reflection (Van Manen, 1990). This idea is restated by Crotty (1998) who proposed that hermeneutics has the "...potential to uncover meanings and intentions that are hidden in the text [interview]...interpreters may end up with an explicit awareness of meanings, and especially assumptions, that the authors [participants] themselves would have been unable to articulate" (p. 91).

Phenomenology is "the study of lived experiences" (Van Manen, 1990, p.9). Phenomenology is "on the one hand, description of the lived-through quality of lived experience and on the other hand, description of meaning *of the expressions of lived experiences*" (p. 25). Hermeneutics helps interpret the lived experiences of the participants. "Hermeneutic phenomenology is a science that studies person" (Van Manen, 1990, p.6). Perceptions that may be hidden or obscured are revealed through the utilization of hermeneutic phenomenology.

The methodology of this study is a combination of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998) and classroom-based action research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). As pioneers of narrative inquiry, Clandinin and Connelly (1998) advocate the explorations of lived experiences in qualitative research. Narrative inquiry will create a dialectic "context

for making meaning of school situations” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998). Narrative is viewed as the practical means to answer problems that researchers encounter since it empowers both the participants and the researcher by promoting a sense of equality (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998). Narrative inquiry, an approach that focuses on “contextualized, historicized, placed experience” (Phillion & He, 2001), is being developed as a means of understanding experiences.

Elliot (1976) defines action research as “a study of a social situation designed to improve the quality of an action within it” (pg. 1). Classroom-based action research will promote connections between personal and professional lives, educational theory, and classroom practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993).

Data collection in this study was conducted in a middle school located in Chatham County and included school portraiture, participant profiles, open-ended structured interviews, observations, artifacts from the participants’ lesson plans, classroom anecdotal records, and the researcher’s reflective journal. All participants received a cover letter explaining the research study, and permission forms from the principal and the teachers were obtained. A time to be interviewed was established that was convenient for all parties. With their permission, interviewees were audio-taped and a synopsis of the interviews was written and submitted to the participants for review. All tapes were catalogued and kept in a secure place.

Research Questions

The general research question is:

- What role does writing pedagogy play in a middle school’s language arts program?

Specific questions are:

- How do teachers develop relevant writing pedagogy for language arts programs?
- What practices/strategies are utilized in two sixth, two seventh, and two eighth grade language arts classrooms to promote writing?
- How are middle school students encouraged/motivated to engage in writing in middle school's language arts classrooms? To what extent are these strategies successful?
- What strategies are utilized to assess writing in a middle school's language arts classrooms?

Context of Study

Effective pedagogical strategies that enable students to communicate fluently in a written format were vital in the past, are vital today, and are vital for the future (e.g., Calkins, 1986; Indrisano & Squire, 2000; McKenna & Robinson, 2006). The National Literacy Act of 1991 defined literacy as “an individual’s ability to read, write, and speak in English and compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, to achieve one’s goals, and to develop one’s knowledge and potential” (National Council of Teachers of English, [NCTE] 1996, p. 4). The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (1999) reported in 1998 that only 1% of the students in the fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades scored at the Advanced Level in a writing assessment, and an average of only 24% in each grade scored at the Proficient Level. This means 75% of the students in the target grades tested below the Proficient Level in writing abilities in our country. Critics blame schools and teachers for failing to train students to read and write well (NCTE, 1996).

According to the NCTE, language arts teachers need to prepare students for the diverse literacy demands they will face throughout their lives and to enable students to

gather and convey information on various academic subjects through meaningful activities and settings. On a national and cooperative level, the International Reading Association (IRA) and the NCTE co-published a list of standards for teachers to facilitate literacy in their classrooms. Five of the twelve standards offer support for my study.

Table 1

Selected IRA/NCTE Standards for Student Writing Abilities (1996, p. 2)

Standard 4	Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conversations, style, and vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a wide variety of audiences and for different purposes.
Standard 5	Students employ a wide variety of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences.
Standard 6	Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.
Standard 11	Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literary communities.
Standard 12	Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

Regie Routman (1988) posited, “Our schools are turning out functional literates, children who can read and write *in school*, but who do not necessarily read or write in other contexts” (p. 15). Routman called for a change in the way we teach these skills. Her call for change in the teaching of writing has been echoed by others (e.g., Atwell, 1998; Bruffee, 1993; Calkins, 1986).

The National Commission on Writing in America’s Schools and Colleges (*Reading Today*, 2003) recently published its findings on the state of writing in the

United States. The Commission echoed the finding of the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress's findings in their report, *The Neglected "R": The Need for a Writing Revolution* (2003). Their findings declared that fourth graders wrote for less than three hours a week while watching over 21 hours of television; 66% of high school seniors did not write a three-page essay more than once a month; 75% of seniors did not receive a writing assignment in social studies or history classes; and research papers as a senior requirement have been all but eliminated.

The Commission's report calls writing "an essential skill" (*Reading Today*, 2003, p. 4). Writing is the avenue through which students are able to express themselves and make reflections and evaluations. The report states, "Students must struggle with the details, wrestle with the facts, and rework raw information and dimly understood concepts into language they can communicate with someone else. In short, they must write" (p. 4). The Commission has demanded a "writing revolution" (p. 4). Without a radical change in the way we approach the teaching of writing, we will continue to get what we have produced in the past – a nation of mediocre writers (p. 5).

There is a large body of information on writing research (e.g. Atwell, 1998; Calkins, 1986; Hayes, 1996, 1980); however, there is limited research concerning writing practices as they pertain to the middle school student. Research into elementary and secondary writing instruction has been tied to language arts as a whole. The early focus on writing in the 19th century concentrated on penmanship - not content. Any thought of teaching writing beyond penmanship came about in upper grades once teachers believed that the students had mastered the basics of reading (Applebee, 1974).

Writing instruction has undergone change in the last thirty years. The change has primarily been in the way writing is presented to students (Moore, 2006). A writer's workshop approach (Atwell, 1998; Allington & Cunningham, 2002) incorporating conferencing with students and more "free writing" is becoming popular; however, research is still not the main focus in writing pedagogy. No recent, large-scale research has been done on writing. The last significant study was the National Study of Writing in the Secondary School (Applebee, 1981, 1984). Writing instruction, according to Applebee (1981), had become problematic in implementation and narrow in extent. Instead of creating text with content, students were expected to merely fill in the blank. Writing in the classroom had become nothing more than a process that included a rough draft, a revision, then having the student complete the final copy at home. Many times the purpose for writing was to review or summarize something already taught rather than to produce an essay for persuasion, narration, or fact (Applebee 1981, 1984). Other researchers (Haneda & Wells, 2000) echoed Applebee's concern that there was a lack of depth in this research area. These authors noted the lack of impact writing research has had on writing pedagogy in classrooms. The focus of writing instruction and/or writing research was mainly on the community in which the writing took place. It is from these findings that writing research has become a part of the push for literacy and has come under its umbrella components – reading, writing, and fluency (Haneda & Wells, 2000). My own participants' lesson plans stated that the main kinds of writing were in response to a lesson read or in the form of mechanics. Their lesson plans did not indicate that the students had time to just write. There did not appear to be a choice in the students' writing. The writing, when it took place, was directed from the teacher.

Nationally, the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) has undergone revision which included adding a written portion as well as changing the verbal section and refining the mathematics section. The creation of the writing component emphasizes the need for developing writing in the classroom and providing more research on practices within classrooms. There is now a twenty-five minute written essay portion in the new version of the SAT (McDonald, 2002). This new requirement provides another reason for increased interest in improving writing instruction and consequently students' writing abilities.

Georgia participated in the 1998 NAEP study which encompassed 41 states and other jurisdictions, of which 39 qualified for inclusion by meeting the statistical reporting requirements for publishing their schools' performances in the evaluation from the 1998 NAEP Report for our nation's schools. Georgia's average scale score was 146. This score is compared to a scale score of 143 for the Southeast and a scale score of 148 for the nation. Georgia had a total of 83% of their students at or above the Basic Level of achievement. This included 23% at or above the Proficient Level, and 1% at the Advanced Stage of writing. These statistics are in line with the nation and, at all points, higher than the total of the Southeast's levels. While Georgia's scores are equal to the nation's and are slightly higher than several of Georgia's neighbors, we still have room for improvement in our writing scores.

The colleges and universities in Georgia require a reading and writing exit exam as part of the continuation of the student's program of study for an undergraduate degree. After thirty hours of college credit, students are required to take what is known as "The Regents' Exam". This test must be passed before the student completes forty-five hours

of credit; if the student does not pass, he or she must enroll in remedial classes until the test is passed *in toto*. The written section of the exam asks the student to respond to a choice of one of four topics. The topics vary in nature from academic subjects (e.g., humanities, natural science, social science, and mathematics) to writing genres (e.g., argumentation, narrative, and expository). Writing is reinforced as a skill necessary to complete university and college requirements. Graduate programs in schools, such as Georgia Southern University, require a writing component for entrance into doctoral programs.

Savannah-Chatham County also recognizes the importance of their students writing well. Their web site contains information about using Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) as an instructional strategy. WAC is a program designed to help students write more, understand the importance of writing in each subject area, and become better writers, and the Board of Education has the county report card published via the state web site. Individual schools can also be accessed from this web site. Obviously the need to better prepare our students to become writers is paramount in schools today. Writing scores for the Savannah-Chatham County School System, as a whole, were below the state's average. While the county exceeded the state in "On Target" scores by 1%, the Exceeds Target scores were half of the state's 12%. Chatham County and Georgia increased their On Target scores from the previous year by 15 %. The average scale score (ranging 300 – 400) for the system was 354 while the state was 357. Both of these scale scores represented a rise in scores over the previous year (Georgia Public Education Report Card, 2002).

The 2001 – 2002 Title I Task Force at Shuman Middle School targeted writing improvement as two of its four Title I reading goals in the School-Wide Improvement Plan. Shuman's goals were to continually improve the eighth grade writing scores and to ensure they would meet or exceed the state average. Eighth grade writing scores at Shuman coincided with the state and county's averages. Shuman had 81% of the eighth grade scores at or exceeding the target score for the Eighth Grade Writing Test. Shuman's rise was in line with the system's and the state's increases. The school's scores in the Exceeds Target section remained lower than the system's and the state's scores.

Shuman Middle School chose to include writing in their Title I School-Wide Plan. While the state's writing assessment test takes place in the eighth grade, all language arts teachers are expected to prepare students to do well on this test. Examining our middle school's language arts teachers' writing pedagogy helped identify areas to be strengthened in preparing students for the writing exam. It also helped develop a more effective writing pedagogy for the language arts program at Shuman Middle School. Our lead teacher identified a need to have each grade focus on one area and then the next grade's teachers could build on what the previous teachers had done.

Autobiographical Roots of My Inquiry

My interest in this inquiry derived from my own struggle to be a writer, teacher of writing, and a researcher. Writing allows one to express one's feelings, thoughts, and desires. These may be personal reflections, as in diaries, intended only for the writer, or letters, essays, or other forms of communication. Writing gives permanence to thoughts. Berke (1976) elaborated

It is only when we view writing in its broadest perspective – as an instrument through which people communicate with one another in time and space, transmitting their accumulated culture from one generation to another – that we can see how vitally related our written language is not only to the life of the individual but to the total community. (p. 3)

The ability to communicate effectively and fluently through writing is what I envision for my students and myself. My lack of writing skills led me to take staff development courses in writing. These courses have allowed me to teach my students how to write more effectively.

Writing has never been easy or natural for me. During my early formative years, I remember reading voraciously and in several genres, but my early memories of writing were simple thank you letters for gifts I had received. The earliest and best writing memories can be traced back to the fifth grade. During this time I wrote short stories, mostly science fiction or horror, and even kept a journal of the stories.

Memories of junior high, high school, and college do not evoke positive reflections about writing. I went through junior high and high school without being required to write a single research report which left me ill-prepared for the demands of writing while in college. I remember borrowing models of various types of writing to complete English assignments required for college courses. Looking back on that experience, I realize what a disadvantage that was. It kept me from becoming a more accomplished and competent writer.

Throughout my tenure as a teacher, I have been asked to sit on various committees and to be part of action teams that required producing a written product.

These experiences, along with working on my Master's in Education, made me realize that I had good content but was unable to express myself well. While working on a paper or project, I constantly struggled with structure, syntax, and grammatical errors. Over time my writing improved as I worked on another degree in education and taught in schools. While working on my Master's, I was involved in several committees at different schools that required me to write grant proposals or applications for recognition (i.e., Blue Ribbon Schools or Schools of Excellence). Working on these committees forced me to look carefully at my writing. I was often required to produce high quality writing in the daily course of my job. As a teacher, it is necessary for any communication, written or oral, to be correct. Now I proofread my own writing or make sure I have someone edit my work, so I will not be compromised by the criticism of a parent, student, or colleague.

My training in the teaching of writing has been limited. Other than the two courses for the core requirements for my undergraduate degree, I received no training in writing pedagogy until I became a teacher at Shuman Middle School. I did not envision myself as needing to be trained in the methodology of writing nor did I view myself as a teacher of writing. My training in writing occurred after I entered the doctoral program at Georgia Southern University. I began to seek college level and staff development opportunities to improve my own writing and to develop my knowledge in the teaching of writing. The literacy component in my doctoral program introduced me to writing praxis taught through workshops. When attending conferences, I looked for sessions relating to writing or a combination of both writing and reading. I am always looking for

ways to improve my writing pedagogy in the classroom and to improve my own ability to create written responses and reports.

My search for appropriate teaching methods to improve my students' writing skills has been a research project in itself. However, my attempt was not without some challenges. I have been using two methods consistently in my writing pedagogy - journal writing and Mountain Language™. The journal writing topic is based on prompts relevant to what we are doing in class each day. Mountain Language™ is a skills maintenance program that provides repeated practice on twenty skills that are tested in the Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Test. Through review and instruction my students became better at using English conventions and had a better attitude toward writing in general.

Motivating twenty-six to twenty-eight students to write was no easy task. Few students were willing or able to tackle writing assignments. For many of them it was a question of, "What is the minimum I need to do to pass the assignment?" For the remaining students the act of writing actually seemed to be a punishment. If the writing assignment was not completed, then the student got a failing grade and possibly detention as one of the consequences. The discouraging part of my job was the need to coddle, coerce, push, or punish to get many of my students involved in the writing process. I viewed writing as an essential activity that helped students maintain focus and develop understanding of the materials used, not only in language arts classes, but across all content areas. Writing supports reading through the interaction of reflection and expression. Having to synthesize what an author is saying and putting it into a

paraphrased paragraph or essay requires the students to become engaged in a conversation with the author.

Teaching in a language arts classroom was an enlightening experience for me. The second year I taught seventh grade reading and language arts together in a block schedule was a learning experience for me as well as for my students. During that year, I felt I was still learning and applying what I had gleaned through my program of study as well as the other classes I took during my college career. The teaching of writing and the studying of literacy as part of my course work for my doctorate developed my desire to study the experiences of my participants and myself.

Limitations of the Study

The limited number of participants restricts the widespread applicability of the study. Limiting the number of participants allowed me to cull the stories more completely but limited the study to a narrow focus. The biases that the participants and I, as the researcher, brought to the open-ended structured conversations limited the discussions.

Another consideration that limited the study was the time commitment that I needed to ask from the participants. Since interviews took place after school, problems arose as many teachers had tutorials and other responsibilities after work. In addition, my closeness to them possibly made us all feel vulnerable, thus creating some constraint between the participants and myself. However, since my participants and I had been colleagues for some time, I enjoyed a very good relationship with them. My own biases and the filters through which I view the world may have slanted my interpretation of the study. My role as a researcher may have constrained my own openness with the participants.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) described the struggles of being a researcher and participant in one's own study. They discussed the idea of inside/outside not being opposites but being employed in a conversation between the participants. Additionally, they believed the disclosure that takes place as one hears and understands views allows one to improve his/her own praxis. They reasoned that if research about teaching is going to continue, as it has for over fifty years, then it should involve teachers in the planning and carrying out of those research projects. Teacher research is defined from their own experience as being "systematic, self-critical enquiry and in part of [sic] an ongoing survey of the literature of teacher writing" (p. 7).

The term "teacher research" has been used in a Pangean approach - one that is all encompassing of a variety of activities that derive their roots from action research. Action research has been bandied about with terms such as "research", "action", "collaborative", "critical", and "inquiry" and now has had the term "teacher" combined with it to denote a great scope of interpretations (Cochran-Smith, Lytle, 1993, p. xiii). They posited the terms "teacher research" and "action research" were neophyte terms; however, those forms of inquiry have roots stretching back to Dewey. Dewey (1916) encouraged pedagogues to not only teach but reflect on their teaching which laid the foundation for Schön (1983), who portrayed teachers as qualified individuals who "practice intellectual processes of posing and exploring problems identified by teachers themselves" (pp. 68-69).

Significance of the Study

My study has varying levels of significance. Policy makers at the national and state level may discover that the findings of this research will provide insight on how

teachers use writing in their language arts classrooms. This study may add to the impact of The National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges (2003) as their demand for a writing revolution may be strengthened. Curriculum specialists who work with school systems and state departments should find this research particularly beneficial in planning staff development budgets or programs for training teachers in the improvement of writing pedagogy. The opinions and ideas gleaned from the open-ended structured interviews with the participants could provide insight for curriculum specialists as they plan and evaluate what works in the teaching of writing. Education professors who teach writing instruction or classes on research/history about writing may find the information beneficial in teaching their classes or helping college students better understand the importance of teaching writing in their future classrooms.

On a smaller scale, schools, especially middle schools, which employ Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) or other content writing programs will also find this research salutary as it reviews the bodies of research on writing and what impacts the teaching of writing. Finally, teachers themselves may find the results of this research thought provoking because it may stimulate them to reflect on their own practices and to determine if the strategies they employ are effective. This is especially true for the research participants and me. The results will be shared with administrators and teachers at Shuman Middle School as a means of reassessing the teaching of writing in the middle school language arts classrooms, thus allowing educational practitioners to formulate pedagogical goals and strategies to improve the teaching of writing and the writing skills of students.

The findings from this study will help me to re-evaluate my own teaching of writing. Additionally, the findings will enable the participants and myself to identify barriers that prevent us from developing proficient writers within our classrooms

The necessity to communicate in written form is becoming increasingly significant. Just as there has been an impetus to better students' reading ability there is a necessity to scrutinize strategies that are prevalent in language arts classrooms. This research allowed six language arts instructors at Shuman Middle School to reflect on and ameliorate their instructional practices in teaching writing.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND RELATED RESEARCH

This study explored the writing pedagogy of six middle school language arts teachers, how they taught writing in their classrooms, and the writing plan of Shuman Middle School. Data collection comprises school portraiture, open-ended interviews, observations, artifacts from the participants' lesson plans, anecdotal classroom records and the researcher's reflective journal. Reviewing the relevant literature within writing pedagogy helped set the context for the research and helped me understand the history and types of writing instruction used in pedagogical situations. Four bodies of literature were examined: (1) the history of writing instruction (i.e., grammar, handwriting, rhetoric, and composition); (2) difficulties in learning to write; (3) methods and strategies of teaching writing in the language arts classroom (i.e., process writing, Writing Across the Curriculum, writing workshop, responsive writing, activating prior knowledge, writing projects, etc.); and (4) the assessment of writing (i.e., rubrics and portfolios).

Understanding the history of writing instruction, pedagogy, and research was important as there have been, and still are, differences of opinion concerning when and how writing should start. One school of thought is that some younger children are not inclined to learn how to write nor do they write when we (teachers) want to begin teaching writing formally (Vygotsky, 1999, pg. 181). Knowing that there is a continuing debate over how, when, and why to teach writing led me to choose the topic of middle school teachers' writing pedagogy.

Constructing a literature review for this study involved searching several databases. Using the keywords "writing instruction", "history of writing instruction", and

“writing pedagogy” in an AskERIC™ search resulted in over 1200 cites as potential sources. Few web sites provided data that was directly related to the history of writing instruction or to the area of writing instruction that I proposed to study. Using ProQuest™ to search for recent dissertations provided me with four dissertations that came close to the domain I researched. Examining the databases and seeing a lack of research about the topic of writing instruction and teacher perceptions and strategies made this a timely and necessary topic.

An examination of the history of writing revealed the development and rebirth of writing instruction in education. Currently process writing, free writing, topic choice, multiple perspectives, multiple drafts, writer’s craft, writing with a sense of audience and purpose or writing personal understanding is expounded in teacher education programs. In the assessment of writing, a battle between process and product rages as unabated as the ongoing war between phonics and whole language has. Academic writing must remain in the forefront of any educational reform in writing, but an imperceptible marriage of process and product will produce profluent writers.

History of Writing and Writing Instruction

Writing gives permanence to oral communication and, hence, to knowledge. While no scheme or classification of the history of writing is complete or wholly satisfactory due to the very nature of the topic, for the purpose of this study the history of writing begins with our current English writing system. Knowing the history of writing did not impact my students directly, but it gave me, as their teacher, a broader and more complete view of my writing praxis and how the strategies of teaching writing developed and their impact on my writing instruction.

Teachers have not had much training in writing pedagogy (Moore, 2004). Writing in a chapter about issues and trends in writing, Moore related that his and others' knowledge of writing pedagogy in the seventies was limited. It was almost a "trial and error" approach to the teaching of writing. He talked of the "paradigm shift" in the teaching of writing that caused teachers to radically change their philosophies about writing. Moore described his astonishment at the lack of knowledge and the presumptions that were made about what was happening within the field of writing in teacher education programs. The cry of concern about the limited research on writing was echoed by other researchers in the field (Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod & Rosen, 1975; Haneda & Wells, 2000). Knowing that until forty years ago we still had a limited research base for knowledge of writing pedagogy and that no recent major research in writing had been undertaken, the inclusion of the history of writing in my research project was validated.

Our current system of writing started in Great Britain around the close of the sixth century as a result of missionary efforts of the Catholic Church to convert Anglo-Saxons to Christianity. To ease the problems of translating the Scriptures, Roman and Irish missionaries used Irish equivalents of the Latin alphabet from the oral language of the Anglo-Saxons or Old English. Toward the eleventh century a fairly sound method for written communication was established (Crystal, 1995; Scragg, 1974).

Various transmutations of oral and written language occurred over time. Scragg (1974) mentioned the influence of William the Conqueror after his invasion in 1066 and how the adoption of French as the language of the court impacted Old English and ushered in the Middle English period. After Chaucer, the "Great Vowel Shift" occurred between the twelfth and eighteenth centuries resulting in long vowel sounds being

stressed which changed their articulations. Many other shifts and transformations took place between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries leading us to the Modern English that we use today. Samuel Johnson and Daniel Webster's dictionaries formalized American and British spelling customs.

Rhetoric research for western culture has roots in Greece from about the 400's BC. This period, known as the Classical Rhetoric Period, dealt with oratory practices and held the innate postulation that a person could find truth and then proceed to put that truth into words (Feinberg, 1998). Aristotle was the main influence during this period. Langer and Flihan (2000) traced writing's academic roots to classic Aristotelian rhetoric. Aristotelian rhetoric was the archetype for American schools, especially the academic colleges and universities that grounded their models in the curriculum instruction of English universities.

The medieval and Renaissance periods of rhetoric were mostly involved with grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic. During the Renaissance, classical texts of Roman writers were rediscovered and studied for insight into writing. The work of Peter Ramus in 1549 was also influential during this time. Ramus was a reformer who wanted to change the medieval rhetoric forms. His reforms concentrated on style, memory, and delivery. He encouraged writers to dress up their writings as elaborately as possible (Feinberg, 1998).

In the eighteenth century, the Scots influenced American writing instruction. Hugh Blair's work, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles-Letters*, published in 1783 and adopted by Yale as their official text in 1785 and by Harvard in 1788, was the most significant book to originate in Edinburgh and make its way to America. The Scottish

revisionists and their ideas had particular impact on rhetoric in American academia. The Scottish rhetoricians gave American colleges a standard on which to build their reputations and provided a sense of *éclat*.

Harvard influence dominated writing instruction in the nineteenth century. In 1806, the Boylston Professorship of Rhetoric and Oratory placed Harvard at the forefront of rhetoric innovations for colleges in America. The lists of literary examples illustrating rhetorical principles became the standards for secondary schools' curriculum as the guide for entrance requirements to the more prestigious institutions of learning. Since Harvard and other universities used these standards, other institutions became forced to accept similar ones in order to stay competitive with those universities (Feinberg, 1998).

The Progressive Education Movement of the late 19th century to the mid 20th century coincided with a growing dissatisfaction among various groups of English professors with the reading lists produced by Ivy League schools and the idea that education was primarily a way to continue the elitism of American society. The Progressive Movement wanted a shift in focus for writing instruction. Progressives supported the idea of ensuring that students wrote correctly but believed writing should be more than grammatical excellence. With large numbers of immigrants coming into the schools, writing needed to focus on the "communicative function", helping to bring the immigrant population into American society. The Progressive Movement did little to sway those in charge at the university level to split rhetoric into composition and literature. It did, however, provide an impetus to use one's own experiences to respond to literature. Large-scale change in composition and literature would not come to the university level until after World War II (Feinberg, 1998).

A new movement known as New Criticism began in the 1930's and took on an intimate examination of literary texts. Moore (2004) states, "the text was the point of emphasis, not the writer or the circumstance of the text. Everything we needed to construct meaning was in a given text" (p. 202). It seemed to have no mutually agreed upon connections with rhetoric or composition study. This new movement caused a division within English departments that allowed many to neglect any writing curriculum. This new movement finally had an esoteric consequence on writing pedagogy with compositions having rigid structural guidelines. New Criticism argued that when words were changed, as in a poem, their meaning changed (Feinberg, 1998).

The prevalent pattern of freshmen composition classes became problematic because the traditional method of instruction was too machine-like. NCTE acknowledged a need for revamping the curriculum for freshman writing. The Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) was held in 1949, and a journal representing that body and name appeared in 1950. CCCC worked for change in composition classes to improve the stature of graduate assistants and to have Doctor of Philosophy programs in English departments include studies in linguistics as part of the training for teachers of writing instruction. NCTE in 1963 commissioned a study by Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Lowell Schoer, which became known as "The Braddock Report". The report which found that limited significant research had been done up to that point, was a wake-up call for research and resulted in the NCTE establishing the *Journal of Research in the Teaching of English* as an avenue to provide the desired focus of research in the field of writing (Feinberg, 1998).

The 1960s brought a revival of interest in the classical model of writing that broke writing into a five-stage process: invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery. Under the Ramists' influence, invention and arrangement had to be excluded while the concepts of memory and delivery were simplified into elocution, the art of effective public speaking. Writing in American schools had lost the perception of writing as a process. Increased interest in the process of writing and writing to express oneself resulted in a ground breaking joint conference at Dartmouth College. This conference cosponsored by NCTE and Modern Language Association (MLA) was attended by American and British conferees representing all educational levels from elementary to college. The focus was on students' interests in writing - using their own knowledge as opposed to exterior artificial demands from teacher advocates, such as Wayne Booth (1983), who also began writing about rhetoric in the 1960s.

The 1970s saw an increase in interest of writing researchers conducting discourses on how the writing process might benefit from information gathered by insightful, cognitive psychologists and psycho-linguisticians and a shift in focus of writing pedagogy. During this time the work of Janet Emig (1971) created a linguistic change in writing from the writing process to the composing process. The shift from the physical activity of writing to mental actions of the writer resulted from a concern in universities about the growing number of college students who could not articulate their thoughts on a college level. That is, they lacked the necessary skills to communicate like professors thought they should.

Many professors felt that there should be a cross-discipline approach to writing that became known as "Writing Across the Curriculum." The first programs were

established at Carleton College in Minnesota and Beaver College in Pennsylvania. These programs dealt with getting students into the writing process or composing and not emphasizing the product (Feinberg, 1998).

In the 1980s, the focus of research turned in a new direction with scholars such as James Kinneavy (1990), Shirley Brice Heath (1988), and others scrutinizing the social nature of writing. Earlier research field-interests continued to contribute to the body of knowledge for writing pedagogy but now composing was viewed through the lens of social circumstances. Composition research expanded its focus to include all language, not just the written word, but also speaking, listening, thinking, and reading. Research became more interdisciplinary in nature. If rhetoric was epistemic, then language must demand explication. Writing allows one to bring a variety of disciplines into play creating an atmosphere that is naturally reflective in nature (Feinberg, 1998). Composition as a field of study came respectably into its own in the 1980s. NCTE, its various related organizations, the U.S. Department of Education, and some universities funded and published research documenting the history of rhetoric and composition.

The foundation laid by the movement of rhetoric toward an examination of social and communal aspects of writing was followed in the 1990s by the challenges of diversity in the classrooms (Feinberg, 1998). Gender, literacy, politics, and social construction issues all continued to be important in the 1990s. Connections with postmodernism and cultural studies also came into play during this time. Diversity came to the forefront of research interests, and the idea of crossing borders became a focus of composition studies.

With the emphasis of research on writing instruction in the last forty years, composition inquiry has matured and seasoned itself as a respected field of study. The writers of the *Braddock Report* might find this amazing considering the way they described the state of research as being in an elementary state when they issued their findings in 1963 (Feinberg, 1998).

Other research interests included examining the history of textbooks and instruction. It was not until the nineteenth century that the United States published textbooks dealing with the concept of writing instruction. Up to a quarter-century ago, half of the country's secondary teachers had no academic instruction beyond freshman composition, as was the case for primary or intermediate teachers who had limited or little language development instruction in writing pedagogy. This trend seemed to have changed around 1992 (Applebee, Langer, Mullis, Latham, & Gentile, 1985). They point out that only 16% of eighth-grade teachers received specific training in techniques of writing praxis. Over time writing praxis has metamorphosed, going through one phase after another. Since writing does lend permanence to knowledge, and knowledge on the whole is transmitted through the educational processes, as strategies change so must writing pedagogy.

Carl Smith (2000) is a well known and widely published authority on writing and reading as well as a provider of programs that benefit parents and schools. He is director of ERIC Clearing House on Reading, English and Communication Skills and Director of the Family Learning Association. His knowledge led to the publication of several ERICDIGEST™ articles relating to the history of writing and writing instruction. In an ERICDIGEST™ article, Smith (2000) wrote on the history of writing instruction and

how it has changed over the years. His research echoed what I found -the first major study of writing instruction was commissioned in the early 1960s by NCTE to discover what practices were being employed to teach writing. The study came to be known as “The Braddock Report.” This report on writing research viewed the body of literature on writing instruction and research as being very elementary in nature. Since this study was first published, writing instruction has created a basic foundation for itself and solidified itself in the research field. Smith traces this process in a series of articles combining the decades of the 1970s and 1980s, a look at the 1980s alone, and then the 1990s.

Difficulties in Learning to Write

For the majority of children composing is difficult. Vygotsky (1999) discussed why writing is so hard for children to grasp, and he repudiated the idea that writing is learned in the same sequence as speech or reading stating that writing or written expression is a “separate linguistic function, differing from oral speech in both structure and mode of functioning” (p.180-181). Writing requires a high level of abstraction. The student must [separate oneself] “from the sensory aspect of speech and replace words by images of words” (p. 181). Writing is “speech without an interlocutor, or one who interprets or questions, and this is new to the child” (p. 181). Vygotsky went on to say that “children are not motivated to learn to write when we begin to teach writing” (p.181). The child understands the need to talk or read because there are motives to each, but writing is an abstract concept to the child and one that requires detachment from a situation (Vygotsky, 1999).

Methods and Strategies of Writing

This study reviewed strategies and methods of teaching writing in middle school language arts classrooms. Two contrasting models of teaching writing, the traditional model with an emphasis on product and the process model with an emphasis on composing, still compete in classrooms today. Most teachers seem to shuttle between these two models. High-stakes testing leads some teachers to abandon the process model for the more skills-oriented traditional model. The ability to teach students to write in authentic, meaningful contexts is crucial today (Fox, 1996).

John Hayes (1980) described writing as an act of communication that needs a “social context and medium” (p. 11). He also postulated that writing requires motivation and is a thinking activity requiring the brain to use its processes and memory components. Hayes discussed the task environment and the individual as they relate to writing. He divided the task environment into two areas - the social and the physical environment stating, “Writing is primarily a social activity,” (p.12). Communication is the primary reason we write, but it has other components that make it social and important. Writing becomes a social artifact, and the reasons we write are shaped by the social environments in which we write. Our culture can also determine why and how much we write. Hayes detailed the ways and reasons different cultures and social classes communicate in a written format. He stated that the factors that influence writing are strong, but there is little research in this area, describing the research as “young.” Hayes went on to advocate for research on the social component of the environment of writers in order to have a more complete understanding of the writing process.

Britton, Burgess, Martin, Mcleod, and Rosen's, (1975) *The Development of Writing Abilities (ages 11 –18)*, described their inquiry into how young people write and/or improve their writing skills. The authors described the lack of an adequate way to classify writing. They acknowledged that writing a poem is as different from writing a letter as writing an essay is different from writing a haiku. Their body of research in writing, and specifically the assessment of writing, was inadequate for what they proposed to do at the time which was to evaluate the writing abilities of students aged 11 – 18.

The methods to be reviewed in this study include process writing, responsive writing, activating prior knowledge, writing processes, and writer's workshop (Atwell, 1998, 1987; Fletcher, 1993). A review of each of these methods of teaching writing is necessary to understand the context in which the participants and the researcher taught writing in their middle school language arts classrooms. I also examined which methods were dominant in each of the participants' classrooms. Writing assessment was also examined briefly as a component of the writing instruction process.

Process Writing

Writing is often taught as a step by step process for beginning writers; however, rather than linear, it is more of a cyclical or circular process that gravitates toward an end product (Calkins, 1986; Murray, 1987). As a writer one weaves in and out of the writing processes, often revising during each stage. Applebee (1986) stated that writing instruction previously was prescriptive and product-centered, stressing correct usage and mechanics. The 1970s saw a groundswell of support for process approaches in writing instruction as opposed to a focus on the final written product. While opinions differ as to

the exact meaning of process approaches, a general consensus defines this method as instructional activities designed to help students think through and organize their ideas before writing and to rethink and revise their final drafts (Applebee, 2000).

What does it mean to teach writing as a process? When one teaches writing as a process, one focuses on only one aspect of writing at a time. Dividing writing into a five-step process makes the teaching of writing more tractable. The process writing steps taught in classrooms today are: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Included in this strategy are activities such as brainstorming, journal writing, teacher/student conferences, and an emphasis on multiple drafts. In many instances, portfolios are maintained throughout the year to provide ample opportunity for students to polish their compositions. In the lower grades of many schools, these portfolios follow the students as they move through the grades.

Process writing involves a five-step process to create a finished product. The process involves creating one of four forms; expository, narrative, expressive and persuasive writing. Students begin with a prewriting activity such as webbing, brainstorming, or clustering and then begin their first draft. After their first draft, the student either self-edits or has a peer edit the piece. In this process the strengths of the work are discussed as well as what might be improved. After this the student rewrites and prepares for revision or the final draft.

There are many different stages of the writing process. Different students and teachers use different approaches to meet their needs. It is by no means a linear process. Instead the writer may go back and forth through different stages.

The process writing classroom is one designed for collaboration where the students are organized in ways that allow them to share their writing through discussion. Students are charged with filing their own writings in their writing folders. These folders contain the various stages of their writing (Process Writing Classroom, 2002). Students use the folders daily. Teachers examine the students' writing and then decide what to teach in writing mini-lessons. This method appears to be very close to what the Writing Workshop approach describes.

Writer's Workshop

One current theme of writing practice addressed by Smith (2000) was a change in emphasis from product to process. The main conversion came in the form of writers' workshops. In a writing workshop a mini-lesson is presented, students are given time to engage in a writing topic of their choice, and then allowed opportunities to share their compositions. Conferences, the foundation of the instructional component of writing workshop, can be conducted by either the teacher or a peer. Smith believed writer's workshop was the best environment for writing to take place. He posited students as young as first grade could profit from this approach. Nancy Atwell (1998) echoed his sentiments. Her work with writer's workshop has been emulated across the country.

While the use of writing workshops has grown over the years, the implementation within classrooms has been problematic. Smith described classrooms where teachers misused the concept of workshops, much as whole-language was abused or misused. He disclosed that teachers did not necessarily confer with students nor follow up on the principles of writer's workshop. Too often time to share students' writing was [and is] omitted. Although the implementation of writing workshop has been somewhat

capricious, the emphasis on student choice, longer periods of engaged writing, and the opportunity to share has engendered its use in many classrooms.

Writing Across the Curriculum

Writing Across the Curriculum has often met with the same resistance that faced reading teachers who have long advocated content reading strategies (Gladstone, 1987). This method of writing is sometimes also known as *writing-to-learn* or *writing across the content areas* (Jacobs, 2002). As with reading in the content areas, many middle and secondary teachers are resistant to cloak themselves with another mantle (Jacobs, 2002). While many middle and secondary teachers acknowledge the need to help students better understand the subject matter they teach, they do not always understand that writing can help a student better understand the material and clarify misconceptions they may have about the new concepts they are encountering. Middle and secondary teachers almost seem to feel that this extra burden will keep them from accomplishing the goal of helping students learn the required materials (Jacobs, 2002).

Jacobs (2002) argued that “strategies that accomplish the purposes of composition-based inquiry engage students in developing their thinking...” (p. 60). The very action of writing helps students place time order to their thoughts, and allows them to name, embody, change, or more completely assemble; and writing to learn stakes us in becoming invested in our own learning (Jacobs, 2002).

Just as each subject area has a technical vocabulary and a different purpose or goal for reading, each subject area has a different reason to write or need for written responses. Having students write in each of their subject areas not only justifies the need for writing, it also impresses the need for writing on the student. They see writing as

necessary, not only in the English class, but in mathematics or business class as well (Highshue, Ryan, McKenna, Tower, & Brumley, 1988). Writing Across the Curriculum embodies the idea that we can utilize one skill from one subject area to another (Gladstone, 1987).

Responsive Writing

Responsive writing incorporates a genre of prose forms, such as letters, journals, fables, interviews – any written response to a variety of readings. Responsive writing is designed to help students organize their thoughts and to transmit these thoughts in writing. Responsive writing is usually low-stakes writing with the emphasis on exploring ideas and interacting personally with them.

The writer's relationship to print is an interactive one. The intentions a writer brings to a composition help to formulate sentences while simultaneously causing changes in the writer's thinking. Myers (1985) described this as utilizing writing as a means through which students can clarify, analyze, and integrate their own thoughts and knowledge of subject matter.

A study including responsive writing would be incomplete without discussing Louise Rosenblatt's (1983) work. Rosenblatt placed herself in the tradition of Dewey (1916) who believed in democracy as a way of learning. Rosenblatt's *Literature as Exploration* (1983) is "intertwined with democracy and literature" (p. xv). Rosenblatt felt that the teaching of literature would facilitate democratic life. Her use of literature in what ever form it takes (i.e., poetry, essay, novel, short story, etc.) helps one make "sense of life."

Rosenblatt (1983) stated that we need to challenge students through questions that will evoke responses that explain, analyze, and reflect on their reading. These responses can be verbal or written. Expanding on Rosenblatt's ideas, Robert Probst (1990) described how some teachers have employed Rosenblatt's reader response theory in the classroom. Probst cited use of free-writing responses immediately after a selection was read, reading logs, or full-fledged papers written in response to a reading. Probst echoed Rosenblatt's warning that overuse of any one method to elicit students' responses was to be avoided.

Free Writing

Writing prompts are often used as springboards to motivate reluctant or struggling writers. A type of responsive writing is "free" writing in which the student constructs text in a set amount of time by simply writing without regard to mechanics or process. Peer editing may take place at a later time. The point is to get down as many relevant ideas as possible on a particular topic. From this "bank" of ideas the student can move into the process writing model.

Activating Prior Knowledge

Applebee and Langer (1983) wrote "Instructional Scaffolding: Reading and Writing as Natural Language Activities" and published it in *Language Arts*. They used the idea of scaffolding to create the image of school devoirs. Applebee and Langer suggested that schools do not scaffold knowledge building on what students bring to the classroom community, but instead ask students to simply identify facts or regurgitate information from the textbook. They concluded this article by acknowledging that the processes of learning to read and to write become intertwined in mutually supportive

natural language activities. This was an idea addressed by Butler and Liner (1998) in the book, *Natural Language Arts in the Middle Grades*.

Vygotsky's idea of scaffolding built the framework for Langer (1984) in "Literacy Instruction in American Schools: Problems and Perspectives." Vygotsky's (1999) ideas about language opposed Thorndike's view (p. 186). Scaffolding, as described by Vygotsky, meant that students were able to draw from a wide array of information stored in their own minds. This information was also available for use in other subject areas. Each subject area could provide support or a scaffold for other subjects. These ideas were valid and effective in 1984, but for the most part, fell on deaf ears in legislatures and state and local boards of education. These ideas need to be addressed and implemented because they are appropriate for today's teacher and students.

Writing Projects

The 1970's saw major permutation in writing instruction with the *Bay Area Writing Project* which started in the San Francisco area by James Gray of the University of California at Berkeley (McKenna & Robinson, 1996). This idea gave importance to writing as a means to understand and learn about writing. It included the teacher in the process as a participant as well as facilitator during the instructional part of the writing lesson. The National Writing Project (Sizoo, 2001) was based on the Bay Area Writing Project. The National Writing Project is an effort to train teachers to lead National Writing Project type programs in schools around the country. The Writing Project Workshop is a summer institute in which teachers are trained in writing methods for use in their classrooms with their students. During the summer institutes, teachers meet with each other and form writing support groups - places where professionals can come

together and write and share ideas about writing and the teaching of writing. During these sessions the teachers not only hone their writing craft, but they study research about writing strategies and pedagogy. The teachers, or facilitators, of these institutes are modeling the methods for teaching this style of writing instruction for the classroom.

Various sites offer these programs for students in grades five and up. The students spend about ten days practicing similar writing styles (e.g., narrative, persuasive, poetry). These programs are intended to encourage young writers to practice their craft and thereby create a life-long writer.

Assessment of Writing

Writing assessment has taken many forms in the course of its history. From the five-step process of writing or the workshop method there have been assessment issues. These issues have generally revolved around product versus process.

Keeping records of students' writing development is a necessary component of assessing the students' writing skills. Assigning grades on essays provides little information for instructional planning. Grades alone can not and do not demonstrate how the students' writing might be improved. Assigning grades provides scant information to the parents about their child's writing progress. Allington and Cunningham (2002) advocated written observations by the teacher about the students' writing development. Observations about spelling (development) or attention to writing conventions (capitalization and punctuation) identifies areas of improvement. Written observations of students' writing development should be recorded regularly and communicated to the children, to support staff, and to parents.

What does "Good Job" or a grade of C+ mean on a writing assignment designed

to compose a narrative essay? Stiggins, Frisbie, and Griswold (1989) confirm that grading practices offer unreliable assessments of students' writing development. A different teacher may evaluate the same assignment differently. This is because, for the majority of schools, there is no clear and consistent policy for grading students' writing, and as a result, grades vary widely from teacher to teacher. (Allington & Cunningham, 2002) Grading practices differ based on the importance teachers assign to effort, timeliness, test scores, extra credit efforts, creativeness, compliance, neatness, homework, makeup work, participation, and attentiveness (Allington & Cunningham, 2002).

Looking at students' writing samples over time assesses whether the writing is becoming clearer, more focused, and more organized. Examining the first and final draft of the same piece offers feedback as to whether the students are able to revise, edit, and polish their writing.

Many states have mandated grade-level writing assessments for students. The ability to pen descriptive, narrative, and persuasive writing pieces is expected at certain grade levels. These pieces are graded by the current teacher, depending on the grade level, or sent away for an outside state assessment. Some common standard is utilized to assess students' writing development based on the finished product. In Georgia, the standards are in the form of a rubric. The Middle Grades Writing Test is given to all third, fifth and eighth grades in January of the school year. In many middle schools the sixth and seventh graders participate in mock writing tests to simulate what the test will be like in eighth grade.

Some problems may occur in this type of "one-shot, one-day" assessment (Allington & Cunningham, 2002, p. 152). "Certain prompts are more relevant to some

children than to others. Although the scorers are trained to achieve reliability, there is sometimes a very fine line between a sample scored 2 and another scored 3” (Allington & Cunningham, 2002, p. 152). Samples of writing need to be examined over a period of time, not just in the time frame of a testing day, in order to ascertain a more reliable idea of a student’s writing ability (Allington & Cunningham, 2002).

Although the use of mandated writing tests is problematic, they do provide useful information. Unlike norm-referenced tests, students can not guess their way through the test, and the end product closely matches the individual’s writing ability.

A major benefit of the mandated writing tests at the fifth, eighth, and eleventh grades is that students now spend more time in actual writing activities. Assessments tend to focus more on how clearly students communicate ideas in writing. Worksheets on grammar have been replaced by compositions. “Teaching the conventions of writing is most powerfully done in the context of children’s writing activities – their attempts to communicate their ideas in print” (Allington & Cunningham, 2002, p. 153).

Teachers demonstrate the importance of writing when they participate in composing pieces with their students. “Composing opens a window to the thinking processes children use” (Allington & Cunningham, 2002, p. 153). Compositions provide a bounteous record of students’ literacy development. Allington and Cunningham (2002) state, “Ideally, a teacher’s evaluation of student work would assist students in understanding what additional learning or demonstrations of learning were needed to improve the performance being evaluated. Likewise, evaluations would inform parents and other teachers about what strategies students had acquired and indicate what strategies remained undeveloped” (p. 162).

Rubrics are a favored way of judging writing as they give students a guide to what the teacher is expecting and an example of the criteria required for a paper that meets the teacher's expectations. Rubrics also allow the teacher to modify the requirements of the writing assignment and allow for a variety of skills to be addressed under one system.

Portfolios also address the idea of evaluating students from a multiple perspective. The portfolio allows the teacher the opportunity to show the student and parents the growth he has done over a period of time. The portfolio is a means to demonstrate that the student has improved his writing ability.

Summary

Examining teachers' practices and strategies requires the researcher to understand the pedagogical background of the participants. Pedagogy deals with questions of teaching and learning. How and why we teach is as important as what we teach (Lee, 2000). Lee maintained pedagogy "has to be informed by both our ideal visions of the function and possibilities of teaching writing, and by attention to the conditions within which we teach writing. Conditions name the local factors at play in a specific classroom, as well as the institutional, social, and political factors that inform and pervade our classes" (2000, p. 2).

Writing instruction has been a topic of serious inquiry and investigation for forty years. Smith's analysis of writing instruction showed a dire need to contribute to this body of writing research. Integrating reading and writing and improving my own knowledge of writing has taken on a new meaning for me. The writings of Kirby and Liner (1981) as well as Atwell (1998) have provided guidance for reforming my own writing praxis. Their use of the workshop approach to writing sounded intriguing, but

initially my own perceived inadequacies in writing deterred me from utilizing them for a period of several years. As I grew more confident in my writing skills, I became more comfortable with using a workshop approach. An added result was that my confidence in my ability to write also improved.

Writing has a long history as a means of communication. The research aspects of writing are now varied in nature. The body of research from which to choose research today is greater than the first major study of writing that took place back in 1963. Tracing the historical roots of writing gave me a better perspective from which to launch and develop my own study. Looking at how writing is being taught in a middle school by a language arts department and comparing what each grade does in the instructional program challenged me as a researcher and created a desire to inquire and grow.

While the body of research continues to grow in writing instruction there does appear to be a need to examine the instructional praxis of teachers and to conduct classroom-based action research. The collaborative effort between my participants and me provided each of us with a better sense of why and how we teach writing.

As the fields of rhetoric and composition have evolved, so have I as I read and researched the area of my study. My knowledge of how and why different concepts and theories were formed and crystallized has been expanded. The fields of rhetoric and composition have been transformed as society has been transformed. The historical issues of rhetoric and composition have followed what society itself has found to be issues. Collaboration and social constructions that were important in the 1970s and 1980s were also important issues in education and in businesses as the ideas of teamwork and quality came to the forefront of business practices. The 1990s challenges of diversity in society

and the need to give a voice to various groups not only affected the focus of writing researchers but also concerned politicians and others.

Little is actually understood about the impact of various writing instruction methods on achievement, and this relationship needs to be researched further before drawing any conclusions based on the NAEP (1999) data. Perhaps spending more time discussing writing is not helpful. Instead, all beneficial instruction must be reinforced with more opportunities to implement what is learned in actual writing situations.

While notions of literacy and what it means to be a literate individual have taken on different meanings at many points in history (Resnick & Resnick, 1977), it is argued here that throughout the twentieth century the underlying views of literacy instruction seem to have remained relatively stable, as have the underlying beliefs about teaching and learning... that issues in reading and writing instruction are essentially issues of curriculum: what should be taught and how to evaluate the success of that teaching (Langer, 1984).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The methodology utilized in my study was qualitative in nature, combining narrative and classroom-based action research. Qualitative research within an action inquiry setting was the most appropriate methodology to accomplish the goals of my study. Quantitative analysis is an easy way to present data in a neat and concise package. However, inquiry is neither neat nor a concise procedure. It is a process that requires one to question, reflect, assess, and interpret the issues and participants' responses in a narrative format. Narrative inquiry was used to relate the stories of six middle school language arts teachers. Classroom-based action research allowed the application of our lived experiences to promote reflection and/or change in our methods of instruction. The theoretical framework of my inquiry was John Dewey's (1938) *Experience and Education* and hermeneutic phenomenology. John Dewey's educational philosophy put meaning in the context of the individual and states truth must be known in the context of individual experience. Nature is ever changing, so one must learn how to learn. Dewey's philosophy emphasizes inductive thinking and problem solving.

Hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry is a type of interpretive investigation that focuses on human perceptions (Willis, 1991; Van Manen, 1990). Asking the participants to reflect on their teaching experiences and then write about them was a phenomenological action. In my study I asked each of the participants to consider instructional strategies they utilized in their classrooms. I then constructed a narrative based on the conversations about our writing pedagogy. This promoted change in our instructional practices, hence, fulfilling the goal of classroom-based action research.

Theoretical Framework

John Dewey's Philosophy

While positioning myself in any one philosophical camp was problematic, I found that John Dewey's philosophy of experience and education paralleled my ideas and beliefs as a middle school teacher. Dewey's (1897) philosophy outlined in his book, *Experience and Education*, mirrors the middle school concepts of developing problem-solving abilities and creating a democracy within the classroom. Inductive thinking and problem solving were the driving force of John Dewey's philosophy. These goals reflect the ones in the National Middle School Association's (NMSA) *This We Believe* (NMSA, 2000). Dewey's role for the student was to learn by doing. Learning by discovery utilizes research projects and group processes with democratic procedures and positions the teacher as a facilitator. This complements the NMSA's goals and beliefs which state that learning should be integrative, engaging, fairly abstruse, interactive, and applicable to the life of the student. Reading from John Dewey's (1897) *My Pedagogic Creed* reinforced my grounding in Dewey's educational philosophy. His creed could almost replace *This We Believe* (NMSA, 2000) because they both tout the same ideals.

Dewey viewed the school as a community where children were not only provided with opportunities for learning by doing, but also socially constructed society's values. Schools should help build a stronger sense of community. The teacher was viewed as a person who directs or guides the student to appropriately respond to influences that concern the student and his/her place in society.

Dewey's view of school was one of a specialized milieu instituted to educate students by consciously bringing them into cultural partnership. His concept of the

school's function was threefold – “simplify, purify, and balance cultural heritage” (Gutek, 1997, p. 94). He realized that with the increase in technology, industry, and continued urbanization, society was generating a larger breach between the adolescent's activities and the adult's responsibilities. Further, he viewed the teacher as a resource person who guided students in their learning by providing advice or assistance. This is in line with the NMSA's (2000) view of what a teacher is and does, as well as my own educational philosophy. It was Dewey's reflective view that the school should simulate life that led me to hermeneutic phenomenology.

Dewey's (1938) call for a need for “theory of experience” (p. 25) was not undertaken on a whim. He knew that advocating a radical change in the way education was presented would be met with resistance. He also acknowledged that the change must be paired with a system to accomplish the goals of an experiential education. Dewey outlined the empiricism of experience which is a pursuit of knowledge by observation and experiment. Empiricism is also a philosophical theory that attributes the origin of all knowledge to experience. That being said, he stated, “the belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean all experiences are genuinely or equally educative” (p. 25).

Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Hermeneutics traces its roots back to the Greek philosophy labeled “practical philosophy”. This framework has a long history that can be traced back to Aristotle's *Peri Hermenia*. Hermeneutics deals with the interpretation of information attempting to interpret the lived experiences of people to gain knowledge. It allows one to cross cultural boundaries and encourage dialogue between groups of people, especially those of

diverse backgrounds (Smith, 1988). According to Smith, hermeneutics allows for an understanding of understanding or reflection. This reflection enables the researcher to provide an interpretation of the participants' beliefs and methods of pedagogy. Smith (1991) states, "...the mark of good interpretative research is not the degree to which it follows a specific methodological agenda, but in the degree to which it can show understanding of what is being investigated" (p. 201).

Hidden perceptions are uncovered through hermeneutics. Crotty (1998) proposes, "[Hermeneutics has] ...potential to uncover meanings and intentions that are hidden in the text; and especially assumptions, that the authors themselves would have been unable to articulate" (p. 91). Knowledge is acquired when shared communication occurs between the participants and the researcher.

Phenomenology is an interpretive form of inquiry that focuses on human perceptions and experiences (Willis, 1991). In this study I asked the participants to think about their practices and, in turn, to describe how their teaching praxis influenced their students. Phenomenology is "not introspective but retrospective" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 10). It emphasizes human experience and how this experience is cyclical – one that involves a series of re-evaluations and reflections. Part of my study included interviews of the participants thereby allowing the participants to reflect on the processes they employed in their classrooms. Phenomenology requires successful practitioners to be a part of the process of the study as they will need to be self-critical and comfortable with how and what they teach (Willis, 1991).

The best description of my philosophical framework is taken from Max van Manen's (1990) hermeneutic phenomenology. Van Manen brings hermeneutics and

phenomenology together with a hybrid he calls hermeneutic phenomenology. His combining or integration of hermeneutics and phenomenology enabled me to tell my participants' and my story more completely and clearly. His philosophy allowed me to write about the experiences of others and myself.

Van Manen (1990) defined hermeneutic phenomenology as a human science that studies people primarily through writing. The very nature of educators is to constantly reflect on their pedagogy. It is natural for professionals within their vocations to want to research areas of interest. Van Manen (1990) stated that research using the human science approach is one that is “avowedly phenomenological, hermeneutic, and semiotic, or language oriented, not just because that happens to be the particular interest of the author but rather because pedagogy requires a phenomenological sensitivity to lived experience” (p. 2). He further posited, “Pedagogy requires a hermeneutic ability to make interpretive sense of the phenomena of the lifeworld in order to see the pedagogic significance of situations and relations...” (van Manen, 1990, p. 2). The term, “human science” (p. 2) is often used interchangeably with the terms hermeneutics or phenomenology according to van Manen. Phenomenology describes the way people adjust to a lived experience while hermeneutics describes how a person interprets the “texts” of life (p. 4). The use of signs, symbols, or graphics called semiotics, provides the language to both (van Manen, 1990).

Hermeneutic phenomenology is a reflective means of acquiring information about a group of participants. It is a means to inquire about one's own profession, especially one that deals with people such as teaching. Writing is a primary activity of hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry (van Manen, 1990). Because I inquired about writing activities utilized in the middle school language arts classroom, hermeneutic

phenomenology provided a means to understanding the experiences and methodology of my participants. Examining the various ways language arts teachers approach writing pedagogy within their discipline is consistent with van Manen's description of what hermeneutic phenomenology accomplishes. Writing, an integral component of hermeneutic phenomenology, and my desire to tell the stories of my language arts colleagues' writing pedagogy necessitated hermeneutic phenomenology as the avenue to conduct this qualitative inquiry.

Narrative Inquiry

Joining the theoretical framework of my study is narrative inquiry intertwined in classroom-based action research. The purpose of this study was to explore how middle school teachers in one school utilized writing in their language arts classrooms. I chose narrative inquiry and classroom-based action research methods because they best fit the focus of my research.

Narrative inquiry was chosen as the design for this study because conversations with teachers about their use of writing in their classrooms required the teachers to tell their stories. Narrative allowed the researcher to become a part of the lives of the participants and to be a part of the story (Phillion and He, 2001). Narrative inquiry allows a researcher to tell what he finds in a manner that is less obtrusive than some other research methods. Phillion and He (2001) state, "For narrative inquirers, research, education, and life experiences are intertwined" (p. 16). Phillion and He consider narrative inquiry one way to know and relate experience to life.

My experience with narrative began with the courses I took from Dr. Ming Fang He - the writings she has produced and the readings she required. Articles she and

her colleague, JoAnn Phillion, wrote along with collaborative works with her major professor, Michael Connelly and his collaborator, Jean Clandinin, encouraged me to examine narrative inquiry as an avenue in which to do my research for this study.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) described John Dewey as a “pre-eminent thinker in education” (p. 2). Dewey’s interest in experience framed Connelly and Clandinin’s work. They viewed Dewey’s use of experience as a synonym of inquiry. They held that Dewey’s experience is personal and social. Clandinin and Connelly interpreted Dewey’s ideas on studying or writing about experience, life, and education to be the same as studying experience.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) described narrative as a way to describe life and what life is. Within this description they talked about how education should be dialectically described. A dialogue between student and teacher takes place every day in the classroom. Describing the dialectic relationship in a language arts classroom was best served through a narrative approach.

Choosing the most comfortable inquiry method was an important process. Using narrative inquiry and classroom-based action research to accumulate data appealed to me. For a long time I wanted to tell my classroom story and find out why my students responded to my teaching style. I envisioned this research project and the methodologies described as the beginning of a journey with twists and turns that provided me with unexpected and surprising insights to my participants’ and my own teaching.

I used narrative inquiry to relate the findings, questions, puzzles, and riddles I encountered as I conducted my research. My goal was to tell the story of my colleagues and our journey within the bounds of narrative inquiry guided by the requirements of

action research. Connelly and Clandinin's account of what narrative is first caught my attention in Edmund Short's (1991) book, *Forms of Curriculum Inquiry*. Their further commentary in *Narrative Inquiry* (2000) increased my desire to use narrative as a part of my dissertation process. Citing Dewey, Connelly and Clandinin (2000) stated

For Dewey, education, experience and life are inextricably intertwined. When one asks what it means to study education, the answer – in its most general sense – is to study experience. Following Dewey, the study of education is the study of life... We learn about education from thinking about life and we learn about life from thinking about education. This attention to experience and thinking about education as experience is part of what educators do in schools. (p. xxiii)

Michael Connelly and Jean Clandinin's research (1995 & 1999) into the professional lives of teachers as researchers gave insight into what they call "epistemological dilemmas" (1995, p. 5). They saw themselves as students constructing teacher knowledge. They looked at how teachers think and construct knowledge for their own praxis (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999).

Classroom-Based Action Research

Action research has a long history. McKernan (1988) provided insight into action research and described three types of action research (i.e. scientific, practical, and critical action research). Corey (1953) defined action research as research undertaken by practitioners to improve their practices. Typical of these studies was a desire to "hypothesize or predict that certain results will follow from what appear to be better practices" (Corey, 1953, p.27).

McKernan (1988) went on to define “practical action research” as a “form of practical reflection related to curriculum choice” (p. 175). McKernan further stated [The] aim here is to develop the practitioner’s personal interpretive account of professional practice and theory. In short, action research aims at an epistemology of practice (Strike, 1979) for the practitioner while contributing a utilitarian or use function to the solution of social practice problems. John Elliot (1981) defined action research as “the study of a social situation with a view to improving the quality of action within it. (p. 2)

McKernan (1988) elaborated that teachers use action research to solve their own puzzles and riddles, thereby providing them with a way to reflect and answer their concerns. He provided a series of procedures for conducting action research. They include the following

- 1) defining and clarifying the problem
- 2) conducting a situational review/needs assessment
- 3) formulating hypothesis/ideas for solution
- 4) developing an action plan
- 5) implementing the action plan
- 6) researching/evaluating the effects of the action taken
- 7) making decisions – reflecting, explaining, and understanding actions taken
- 8) reordering and disseminating the procedures and results
- 9) if a solution is not evident, this cycle is begun anew; the problem is redefined.

Action research is now being done more and more by teachers themselves as well as by outside researchers coming into the classroom. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) discussed the role of teachers who do research in their own classrooms and schools in their book, *Inside/Outside Teacher Research and Knowledge*. They did not view outside and inside as opposites per se but as a dialogue between the researcher and the participants. Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1993) work is identified or defined as research designed and carried out by teachers in a systematic and intentional method. Much of Cochran-Smith and Lytle's work is based on Lewin (1948) who stated that research on social conditions would lead to social action.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) admitted that while the terms "teacher research" and "action research" are reasonably new, their concepts and foundations are not (p. 8). They traced the origins of teacher research to Dewey (1916) where teachers were expected to reflect on their own practices and make intelligent decisions. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) felt that involvement in classroom-based action research required significant enterprise by ingenious and committed educators to remain in their classrooms and, at the same time, create occasions to examine and deliberate on their own praxis.

Role as a Researcher

Reviewing the literature concerning research on reading and writing provided mounds of material to interpret. The importance of such an activity demands confronting, processing, and analyzing information concerning reading and writing and discovering the necessity of inquiry into this area. Another aspect is the plethora of articles and papers written, published, and presented over the last twenty years. Sifting through the mountain of material is a daunting task, as is screening and selecting the

appropriate articles that will validate and encourage further research without simply regurgitating and/or recycling the past.

My role as researcher was further defined by the modification of the Dissemination Efforts Supporting School Improvement (DESSI) method that characterized efforts to research implementation or research programs. These efforts are presented in the *Handbook of Research Curriculum* edited by Jackson (1996)

- to identify locally and nationally developed programs that are appropriate
- to provide evidence regarding the effectiveness of the program
- to create awareness of the program
- to provide training so programs may be implemented in other classrooms and/or school; and to provide ongoing monitoring and follow-up activities necessary for the continuation of the program.

My role of researcher was one of vulnerability. Our working relationships allowed me to foster a sense of closeness to my participants. While their roles at the school were equal to mine, they may have felt cautious in responding during our interview session. My role as a researcher may have caused them to feel intimidated, knowing I would be examining their writing pedagogy and practices.

The very relationships that we built over the course of five to eleven years was tenuous within the school's setting with the issues of power and trust ebbing and receding. My participants' willingness to contribute was necessary to the completion of this study. While we maintained a professional and courteous relationship, we rarely had a friendship that was considered social. The very isolation of our working in separate classrooms, on different teams, and on various grade levels kept us from becoming close,

yet we were still able to have a congenial and respectful attitude toward each other while working within the confines and constraints of our jobs.

Data Collection

“Qualitative research incorporates a variety of methods to conduct research,” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 5). Qualitative methods allowed for a more complete picture of this data. From my theoretical perspectives a variety of data collection methods were chosen to direct my study. The data collection methods for this study included: school portraiture, participants profiles, open-ended structured interviews, observations, artifacts, (e.g., lesson plans, notes, memos), and the researcher’s reflective journal.

School Portraiture

School portraiture was included to position the study and to provide a sense of context for the reader. Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis (1997) declared a school portraiture reveals the “...dynamic interaction of values, personality, structure, and history” (p. 11). Demographics of the community, school, the faculty, students, and parents were included. The reader may become interested in the lives of the participants and see research as an on-going part of life (Phillion, 2001). School portraiture is developed with the purpose of providing a sense of context for the study. A picture of the physical, intellectual, and social make-up of the school will help readers position the study. The information contained in this portraiture comes from the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) that has replaced the traditional Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) report and the school’s yearly Title I report.

The school in which this study took place was Leiston T. Shuman Middle School located in Savannah, Georgia. Shuman Middle School was originally built as a junior

high school in 1963. It was named in honor of a former businessman, civic leader, and Board of Education member. Initially it was a neighborhood school serving five hundred white, American seventh, eighth, and ninth graders. Later, a sixth grade level was added.

The first level of integration in the late 1960's brought the first African-American teachers, followed in the early 1970's by a court ordered desegregation plan, resulting in a more racially balanced student population. White flight or changing demographics of east side Savannah resulted in a flip of racial balance leading to a higher than countywide balance of black to white at Shuman. Shuman began the only English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) laboratory in Chatham County middle schools, and it continues to serve a multicultural student body.

Shuman Middle School is located in east Savannah about one mile south of the Savannah River. To its immediate north is a private golf and country club, to its east and south are residential districts, and to the west is a historic Catholic cemetery. Within walking distance are three housing projects in which many students reside. The population includes students from the entire school district whose first language is not English. Magnet students are drawn from all of Chatham County, with the remaining students from the residential neighborhoods near the school. The population is diverse and reflective of the community. Prior to the 1997-98 school year, the school boundaries had not changed since 1987-90. Even though the school system realigned the districts in the summer of 1997, for most of the schools, including Shuman, the demographics of the student population changed very little.

In 1991, Shuman Middle School became the Performing and Visual Arts/Communications Technology Academy. This curricular addition brought about

significant changes in the student population and ethnic composition of the school. The percentage of white students increased to meet the federal desegregation guidelines for the school system, and the overall student population grew significantly. Magnet students came from all areas of Savannah and Chatham County. Students became a part of the Magnet Program through an audition and screening process that included identification of a particular talent, personal recommendations from teachers, academic recommendations, and availability of space in the program. The Magnet Programs for the Performing and Visual Arts and Communications Technology were in place by 1991. Since then, a French foreign language component was added as part of the widening curriculum for the 2002-2003 school year.

While Shuman is a Magnet school drawing its population from the whole of Savannah and Chatham County, it does have four feeder schools, East Board Elementary, Spencer Elementary, and Islands Elementary and Thunderbolt Elementary Schools. Thunderbolt's students are split between those living north and south of Victory Drive in Savannah. Those living north of Victory Drive go to Shuman while those living south of it go to Myers Middle School. Islands Elementary is split in a similar fashion but on an east-west line. The students on the west side of Islands attend Shuman. The four elementary schools provide over two-thirds of Shuman's student population.

Shuman Middle School currently has two administrators: an African-American woman as principal, and a white female assistant principal. Supporting the administrators are two guidance counselors. Shuman's two guidance counselors meet the needs of Shuman's student population and also conform to Roy Barnes's, the former governor, educational bill. The administrative support staff consists of two secretaries, three clerks

(data, media, and counselor), a school nurse, social worker, hospital-homebound (the social worker and hospital-homebound teachers are part-time positions) and a School Resource Officer (SRO). The nurse is full time, as is the School Resource Officer, but the social worker and the hospital-homebound teacher are divided among a team of schools and are at Shuman once a week.

The School Resource Officer's (SRO) job is varied. He helps with security of the school and provides a sense of safety as well as a means of conflict resolution and mediation for our students. The SRO is also a role model for our young black males.

The nurse, social worker, and hospital-homebound teacher help us with a wide range of issues that confront Shuman. The nurse does initial vision and hearing screening as a first step in a Student Support Team's efforts to meet the needs of the students. The social worker deals with problems of repeated tardiness and absences. She provides another way to check on attendance problems or other areas of educational neglect or abuse. It is the hospital-homebound teacher's responsibility to visit and teach students who will be out of school for more than a two-week period.

Shuman's staff is as varied as its student population. In the sixth grade the student/teacher ratio is 23:1; in the seventh grade, it is 26:1; and in the eighth grade, it is 27:1. The teacher/staff ratio is 2.2 teachers for each staff person. The sixth grade has four academic teams of three teachers each. The seventh grade has three academic teams of three teachers each, and the eighth grade has three teams, with two consisting of three members and one consisting of four members. There are seven special education teachers and four paraprofessionals serving our students with special needs. Three of the special education teachers are in self-contained classrooms. One works with Mildly Intellectually

Disabled (MID) students, another works with specific learning disabilities, and a third teacher works with students who have emotional behavior disorders (EBD). Three of our special education teachers work within the resource or pull-out model of instruction. One of the teachers serves the gifted population (SEARCH). Shuman had over fifty students who were identified as gifted and talented. In the fall of 1997, Shuman implemented a Schoolwide Title I Project to better serve its at-risk population.

The magnet program has full time teachers of Visual Arts, Dance, Chorus, Strings, Band, Drama, French, and Communications Technology. Connections courses include: enrichment reading, computer keyboarding, physical education, health, general music, guitar, art, remedial reading and math, video production, photography, and introduction to technology. The media center staff has one media specialist and a media clerk. The media center has over 1, 000 books. There are over 800 books identified as Accelerated Reader™ (AR), but the AR program was not supported to a high degree.

Each teacher extends the guidance counselor's reach through an Advisor-Advisee program. "Writing Across the Curriculum" (WAC) is a part of the guidance activities and is included in the Title I school-wide plan. The students respond to a series of writing prompts to provide reflection on a variety of topics. Teachers also support the guidance program by initiating the Student Support Team, a process that addresses the academic and behavioral needs of individual students.

Interscholastic and intramural athletic events are a part of the physical, social, and emotional education of the students. Seventh and eighth graders can compete against other local middle schools in sports such as football, softball, cheerleading, volleyball, soccer, and basketball. Sixth graders can participate in track in the spring. An intramural

program led by the athletic director allows the students to not only compete but also develop physical skills such as hand to eye coordination and social skills such as team building.

Shuman is an example of a model middle school in the many ways it applies the concepts of the NMSA's guidelines and yet is unique in that it applies the concept of the middle school to fit its own educational environment.

Participants' Profiles

In this research, six middle school teachers participated in studying how writing was taught and presented in their classrooms. The participants were a mixed group – five females and two males. Four participants were African-American and three were Caucasians. The assistant principal was the administrative voice of our group.

Jenene had taught for twelve years. She started her first year of teaching at another middle school and was excused to Shuman. She is a single, African-American female from a family of teachers. She had taught language arts and reading on a four person team for most of her time at Shuman. She had been a team leader and department chair for the entire time I knew her.

Jenene and I worked together for eleven years. I had been a part of the language arts department on and off for about five years. Except for the last two years, I had taught three subjects – science, social studies, and reading; this caused me to overlap into three academic departments. This limited my getting to all the departmental meetings which caused me to have limited access and interaction with Jenene. Teaching only language arts during the last two years at Shuman allowed me to get to know Jenene better since she was our department chair.

Jenene was born and raised in Savannah. She attended parochial schools for her elementary, middle, and high school years. She went to the local community college, Armstrong State College, as it was known when she graduated. She had always been required to write, however, the styles of writing changed as she grew older.

Elementary writings were basic in nature. She explained that the writings were more or less corrections and diagramming of sentences. Her high school experiences demanded that she compose a number of expository and argumentative types of essays. She felt like these demands helped her in college. As department chair and an eighth grade teacher, Jenene believed the students coming to her were unprepared for the demands of eighth grade and high school.

Terri is a married African-American female and had taught at Shuman for seven years. Her teaching experience was primarily from her job assignment at Shuman. She was a graduate of the Pathways to Education program funded through the DeWitt-Wallace Foundation. She was originally a secretary for the Corps of Engineers but then decided she would like to teach. She realized that the Savannah-Chatham County Board of Education would pay for her classes if she was an employee. She quit her job at the Corps and applied to the Board of Education. While working as a paraprofessional at a local elementary school, she received her undergraduate degree in education. After graduating from Armstrong Atlantic State University, Terri was hired to teach reading and language arts. She believed she had found her niche teaching in the eighth grade.

Terri and I knew each other for seven years. We never worked together on the same team but had attended workshops together. Our relationship was not close, but from

our limited work together I came to know that she is a bright and capable teacher who had high expectations for her students.

Terri is originally from a small town approximately 150 miles southwest of Savannah. She described her upbringing as rural and said, “I would not take anything for the way I was raised”. She grew up on a farm and had to help in the fields when planting and harvesting times came around. She felt that her elementary, middle, and high school writing experiences were negative. Her teachers mainly concentrated on the mechanics and correcting through the use of worksheets. It was in college that she changed her opinion of writing. Terri said that there was a professor in college that used a workshop approach and that helped her change her perception of writing from a negative one to a positive one. She tried to provide this type of encouragement to her own students.

Terri wrote with her students and tried to model the writing process for them. She developed some unique ways to involve the students in the writing process. One of those ways included having the students kinestically build a paragraph.

Leslie is a seventh grade teacher who is African-American, single, and female. She is one of thirteen children. Her parents died when she was one and a half. Her aunt and uncle already had six children of their own but chose to adopt her and her six other siblings. She was raised on Saint Helena’s Island, South Carolina in a Gullah environment. Being the youngest of the adopted siblings, she learned the Gullah dialect and continued to practice and honor its traditions.

Leslie had taught at Shuman for five years. Her teaching responsibilities were primarily in language arts or reading. As an educator, Leslie believed it is the educator’s

responsibility to encourage “ a sense of enthusiasm about learning.” She also felt that learning is enjoyable and priceless and that an enthusiastic teacher will create enthusiasm in her students. She believed that teaching is more than just academics pulled from textbooks and that students must experience a variety of learning experiences. Leslie believed that teaching necessitates several components: commitment/dedication, high expectations, motivation, and innovation. Commitment and dedication are two in one - a teacher must be dedicated to the profession in order to become successful in it. Teaching is a work-in-progress with dedication the key to any success.

Leslie believed, as a teacher, you master the task of dedication then set high expectations to create an environment where your students produce the type of work you expect them to create. The teacher’s expectation level is the level to which the students will work. Motivation was a part of her teaching process because the use of motivation encouraged students to go beyond their own expectations. She affirmed, “Children are stripped of so many dreams before adulthood and are facing great odds. It is our responsibility as their teachers to help them succeed against the odds and be a part of making their dreams come true.”

Leslie and I knew each other for five years. During that time we had not worked on the same team, but we worked on the same grade-level. Working on the same grade-level allowed us to work cooperatively as we shared the same planning time.

Tracy is a white, female, sixth grade teacher. She had taught for four years, all at Shuman. She had a Master’s in Education with an emphasis in reading. She was married and the mother of three girls. She is a native of Texas. Tracy worked eight years in a series of what she calls unrewarding jobs when she made a decision to make a change in

her life. She decided to better herself and try to make a difference in society by going back to school. Tracy realized that she wanted to work with adolescent students after taking her first psychology course. She also realized that working with at-risk students and teaching them to read was not only challenging but rewarding as well.

Tracy and I knew each other for five years. She took a year off and was a stay-at-home mom. She and I did not teach on the same team, but we did teach on the same grade-level together and shared a common planning time. Besides Jenene, I probably knew Tracy best. We lived in the same area of town and shared rides home from work, and I also taught her oldest daughter. We had conversations about raising children and how best to educate our students.

During her undergraduate and Master's courses, Tracy spent a lot of her practicum time in middle school settings. It was during this time that she realized teaching reading was important to her and to the students she observed. She was touched and troubled by the fact that many of the students she observed progressed through the middle school experience without mastering many of the basic skills required to be an efficient and proficient reader. She knew that without the ability to read and comprehend the chances that these students would be successful in high school or in life decreased tremendously. In essence, their schooling would cease. Tracy came to realize that one of her biggest challenges was to help students set goals when they may not want or be able to see the need for goals. She characterized her approach as one of setting high expectations coupled with appropriate guidance and support. She felt that a great teacher is able to connect with her students. Overcoming the emotional, social, and physical needs that each student brings each day can be a challenge for any teacher.

Terry is an African-American, female, sixth grade teacher. She began her educational experience as a paraprofessional assisting special education and elementary students. After being a paraprofessional for over a year and a half, she realized she could help students better if she were a certified teacher. She remembered that as a child she always wanted to teach and write.

In college she pursued a Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communications with an emphasis in print media. Terry had taught all subjects, but realized that her love of reading and writing compelled her to teach in the language arts area. Terry taught elementary school but wanted to specialize in reading and writing, so she transferred to Shuman Middle School where her new principal placed her in a sixth grade reading and language arts class. She avowed her love of teaching and declared that she would prefer no other career.

Terry felt that children can better grasp the concept of reading through extensive writing and creative discussion. She said, "After all, what good is a story if it is not read aloud? If you notice, most people read silently with their lips moving. They have a need to verbalize." She posited that students need to write daily, and teachers need to hold daily sessions to allow students to orally express their thoughts and writings. Writing was seen by this participant as an important tool needed in every aspect of life. She felt proud and glad to be a teacher because she touched so many lives.

I knew Terry the least amount of time. We worked on the same grade-level but not as teammates. She worked on a different wing, so we had little contact. Our lack of familiarity caused some tension but that may be in part to our really not knowing each other well.

As the researcher participant, I am a white, male, seventh grade teacher. I was raised and have always lived in Georgia. My secular schooling consisted entirely of public schools. I came from a lower to middle-class background and have a younger brother. My parents always felt that education was important. While neither of them attended college they believed and expected both my brother and I to not only attend but to graduate from college and go on to become professionals. Neither of my parents expected or wanted me to become a teacher. They expected me to be a preacher, lawyer, doctor, or some other profession that required multiple years of college.

As I attended school I was known for having terrible handwriting. This did not bother my teachers too much as they told my parents – “Don’t worry, he’ll be a lawyer or doctor and won’t need to write. Someone else will write for him.” While my handwriting was atrocious, I did enjoy writing, at least for a while. During fifth grade I remember writing science fiction and horror stories. I have pleasant memories about those writings. I don’t know what happened to them or why I quit writing. I just know that until I took the Southern Writing Project at Georgia Southern I had not written for pleasure in a long time.

Teaching writing was of little significance to me until I was on a two-person team in middle school. From that experience I developed an interest in combining reading and writing through an integrative approach. Luckily for me, that is a driving force of many language arts and reading textbook companies today. I got the opportunity to teach language arts in a seventh grade classroom a year ago. Since I was working on my Doctorate in Education, I found this an ideal situation to try out my ideas on writing and reading.

Carl, our assistant principal, was originally from Wisconsin but had lived in the Savannah area for the majority of his life.

Carl did not have many fond memories of school life. Academics were not very important to him though he did attend college at the urging of his father. Actually, it was while attending a private boarding school that Carl decided to complete his education and seek a higher degree.

During high school and college he avoided writing and reading as much as possible. Music and drama were the creative outlets he employed as an emotional release, and became the source of income later in life.

While teaching in Georgia, Carl was drafted into the army. Later in Michigan, he used the GI Bill to work on a master's degree in elementary education.

After his military service, Carl moved to Savannah, Georgia where he taught music in one of the high schools. A few years later he became a middle school administrator. Carl was the assistant principal at Shuman Middle School where he became a participant in my study.

Of all my participants, Carl probably wrote the most, both professionally and personally. His Reflections© (1990) and Q's© (1999) have been shared to express his views and philosophies about education and teaching. He expressed pride in his writings.

Open-Ended Structured Interviews

Interviews between the researcher and the participants took place on two levels. One level was the individual daily conversations with the participants to discuss the process of the study. On another level the researcher was conducting structured interviews with the participant and discussing what practices and methods were used in

their classrooms. These meetings allowed for a more accurate picture of what went on in the classrooms during the school day.

Qualitative researchers have relied on interviewing participants. Kahn and Cannell (1957) defined interviewing as “a conversation with a purpose” (p.149). Marshall and Rossman (1995) gave interviewing a nebulous definition or description when they stated “interviewing varies in terms of a priori structure and in the latitude the interviewee has in responding to the questions” (p. 108). Interviewing does have requirements that may be seen as weaknesses. The interview “requires personal interaction and cooperation is essential” (p. 110). The interviewee may not fully disclose what the researcher wants to know or be totally comfortable within the interview process. The interviewer may not ask the “right” questions and may not be able to sift through the conversation and understand the true meaning of the interviewee’s response (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). However, Marshall and Rossman avowed that interviews have “particular strengths” (p 108). The strength for me was that interviews allowed for a great quantity of details to be gathered quickly. That encouraged participation in my study.

Marshall and Rossman (1995) described in-depth interviews as conversations designed to find out how the participant comes to be involved in the research process. The interviews were audio-taped to allow my study to more fully concentrate on what the participant was saying and to notice their body language. During the interviews I hoped to more fully understand the writing strategies of the participants and to find more details than the observations revealed.

Observations

Classroom observations were a component of the data collection for my study. The observations were nonjudgmental noticings conducted to capture the complex interactions and actions within the participants' classrooms. The notations were holistic descriptions of events and behaviors (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The value in conducting informal observations allowed me to discover recurring patterns of behavior and relationships. While identifying the "big picture" during fast-paced, authentic situations may be problematic, Marshall and Rossman (1999) avow, "Observation is a fundamental and highly important method in all qualitative inquiry: It is used to discover complex interactions in natural social settings" (p. 107). While there are no objective observations, (Denizen & Lincoln, 1998), becoming a silent member of my participants' classrooms afforded me valuable insights into their writing practices.

I was unable to observe all the teacher participants as two of the teachers transferred to other schools during the dissertating process. Being one of the participants, this researcher was also excluded.

Artifacts

The artifacts were the lesson plans from each participant and Shuman's Writing Plan. I included reflections on the interviews and observations of my colleagues and other information they shared with me. Standardized test scores such as the writing test taken by the eighth graders or the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) were viewed to assess where the students were in relation to the expectations of the teachers.

Examining the artifacts provided concrete evidence of what the participants talked about in the interview process. Having access to the participants' lesson plans and other

anecdotal records enabled me to better understand their attitudes toward writing and the strategies they use in their classrooms.

Researcher's Reflective Journal

During the course of this study I kept a reflective journal. This journal included not only my thoughts as I went through the various stages of this project, but also comments on the observations and conversations that took place throughout the research process. The journal allowed me to reflect on the various components of the study as they occurred and gave a sense of where I started, where I am, and where I am going. The journal became a part of the data analysis and data interpretation.

A journal provided time for me to not only reflect but to speculate and hypothesize about my participants' comments. Interpreting the participants' comments was an important part of sharing the lived experiences that we had in common and provided insight into our differences.

The journal became a private component of the study, but sections were used in the study as I made comments on the progress of the study and did my evaluations and commentary on the data collection process.

Data Management

All the data gathered throughout this study was kept under lock and key in a safe file cabinet. My supervisor and I were the only two who had access to this information. Back-up copies of all data were made following each section of the study. This information was stored on the computer via floppy discs and the hard-drive with a password protection as well as CDs and flash drives. These multiple back ups insured that important information would not be lost during the research process.

Data Analysis

Marshall and Rossman (1995) guided my data analysis process. They suggest: organizing the data in separate folders, creating categories (i.e. identifying themes and discrepancies), color-coding data, testing emergent understandings (i.e. evaluating data for plausibility and exploring the usefulness of the data), searching for alternative explanations, and writing the dissertation. Using a variety of data sources may help triangulate the data for validity (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993) Shared thoughts and findings from the participants and the anecdotal records helped form the triangulation process.

Data Representation

I represent the data in my dissertation in a series of six chapters. Chapter 1 deals with the introduction of my topic of study. Included in Chapter 1 is my introduction, research questions, context of study, autobiographical roots, limitations of the study, and the significance of the study. This section positions my study and declares its importance.

Chapter 2 is a review of the literature and related research. In this chapter I discuss the history of writing and writing instruction, difficulties in learning to write, methods and strategies of writing (i.e., process writing, Writing Across the Curriculum, responsive writing, activating prior knowledge, writing projects/workshops, assessment of writing, and a summary.) Chapter 2 positions my study in the history of writing and its instruction.

Chapter 3 deals with the methodology of my study. My theoretical framework is based on the educational philosophy of John Dewey (1997) and hermeneutic phenomenology espoused by Max van Manen (1990). Within this framework I am

writing a narrative inquiry utilizing classroom-based action research. School portraiture, participant profiles, open-ended structured interviews, observations, artifacts (i.e., lesson plans etc.), and a researcher's reflective journal will comprise the data collection component. This chapter also includes a data management and data analysis section. A review of the limitations and the significance of the study were also examined.

Chapter 4 is a more in-depth look at the participants, their profiles, relationship with the researcher, and the interviews about their writing instruction.

Chapter 5 is an analysis of the data and the findings that occurred during the study. This chapter will disseminate any common threads between the teachers' writing instruction and their philosophies of education.

Chapter 6 summarizes the dissertation and brings this part of the process to completion. As with any research endeavor one hopes that the questions raised and the answers found will take one on further journeys to discover more about one's self and one's praxis. The experiences uncovered and encountered may help me be a better practitioner and more reflective in my teaching.

Limitations of My Study

The small number of participants and the limitation of one school is an inherent concern. The familiarity of the researcher with the participants could pose another issue. Finally, the researcher's own biases may interfere with the ability to appropriately analyze all aspects of the research.

Significance of My Study

Learning is not a static process. It is a dynamic environment within an atmosphere of change. Robb (2000) stated, "To move forward, it's helpful to look backward, for by

looking backward, a school community gains insights into its history, comes to know how certain events shaped its climate and environment, and can use those understandings to plan for professional study” (pg. 49).

A community of teachers can discover its strengths through collaborative study and use their collective voice as an impetus to promote change to develop congruent beliefs about how students achieve success. The significance of my research is seen and heard in the individual and collective voices of the teachers of Shuman Middle School as our reflections focused our perceptions of writing instruction. It is hoped that the administration will utilize the finding of my research to develop professional staff development to improve writing practices at all grade levels.

Significance of my research also lies in the fact that while there is research on writing there is a limited body of knowledge on how teachers view their own praxis. Another significant fact is the ability to reflect on the current writing practices in my school. As a department we will be able to examine whether we are using strategies that we, collectively, feel are valid. We will each be able to reflect on our own teaching practices and think about the whys of what we do. This time of reflection will hopefully provide our school with improved practices for our students’ writing abilities.

Summary

The methodology of this research involved a variety of themes. The use of narrative with classroom-based action research utilizing school portraiture and participant profiles allowed for a natural conversation to take place between the participants and researcher. My reflective journal allowed me to identify and analyze insights and nuances that occurred within the conversations and structured interviews.

The school portraiture positioned the research in Savannah. It also gave the reader background on Shuman Middle School – from where it came and where Shuman may be going. It provided a capsule of the school setting.

Narrative allowed me to tell the stories of the participants, the school, and my findings as my research developed. It allowed me to have an in-depth relationship with the participants and still provided me with information and knowledge to improve upon my own praxis and make a contribution to the research field I am studying.

The use of participant profiles allowed the reader and future researcher to know my colleagues in a more familiar light. The profiles also allowed me to better know those with whom I work and their educational philosophies, strategies, and expectations.

The open-ended conversations allowed for a more complete trust to be established between the participants and myself. We could participate in discourses reflecting not only on ourselves and our praxis, but also on what we wanted our students to know as they moved through Shuman. These conversations could help us to improve our teaching and our students' abilities to become better writers.

The stories recounted in this qualitative research could provide the impetus for change. Reflection allows one to analyze past and current practices while focusing concurrently on future improvement. This endeavor brought me back to the basis of my philosophy and Dewey's (1997) that reflection is a part of the teacher's responsibility and role.

CHAPTER 4
DATA REPRESENTATION:
INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHER PARTICIPANTS
AND THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

In this chapter I present interviews with the teacher participants and the assistant principal at Shuman Middle School. Part I contains the teacher participants' responses to the interview questions. In Part II the responses are from the questions asked of the assistant principal.

This study was designed to explore the writing pedagogy of six middle school language arts teachers and one administrator and their attitudes toward writing. The methodology was based on the hermeneutic-phenomenology of Van Manen (1990) and narrative inquiry rooted in Phillion and He (2001) and Connelly and Clandinin (2000) as well as classroom-based action research from Cochran-Smith & Lytle (1993) and McKernan (1991). The theoretical framework was based on John Dewey's (1938) philosophy of education.

In this study I have attempted to discern the essence of my colleagues' pedagogy and their philosophies on teaching writing in their language arts classrooms. The six teacher participants included two from each of the three grades in a middle school – two sixth, two seventh, and two eighth grade teachers. Five of the participants were female and two were male. Four of the participants were African-American and three were Caucasian. After providing the setting for the research, I introduce the setting through school portraiture and then acquaint the reader with the teachers and assistant principal through participant profiles. These profiles provided

more in-depth understanding of who my participants were, from where they came, and how they got to where they were in their professional lives.

Chapter 4 presents the data gathered from the open-ended structured interviews. The interviews took place after school and in the classrooms of each of the teacher participants. The participants selected the time and place for our interviews. The assistant principal's interview session took place at his home early one Saturday morning.

I presented each question to the participants allowing them to respond freely and with as much detail as possible. Each participant's response was recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. The researcher's response/reflection on the session is provided, thus allowing the reader a more complete picture of each participant's practices in writing and an opportunity to perceive the participants' similarities and differences.

Each of the participants' responses was transcribed and any problems in syntax are the result of my trying to honor and retain the voice of my participants. Their stories were recorded, and as I listened to the tape, I wrote what they shared.

Each of the participants worked at Shuman Middle School and had known the researcher for at least six years. Participants were chosen because of their teaching positions and their willingness to be a part of this research. An administrator was selected in order to garner a complete understanding of the design and requirements of the school's improvement plan for writing.

Carl was our assistant principal, and we became friends during his tenure at Shuman. He headed most committees that involved writing reports or grants at

Shuman. His own writing ability contributed to the success of many of the school's grant proposals. As a vital member of the school improvement plan, Carl was significant to our participant group. **Jenene**, a journalism major with a passion for writing, was our department chair, eighth grade teacher, and the colleague I had known the longest except for Carl. Her insight into the department's goals and the requirements of the Middle Grades Writing Assessment made her inclusion in this study critical. **Terri** was another eighth grade teacher, and since her students' scores in writing were superior and well documented in the past, I wanted her as a part of the research. Terri and I had worked together for five years at Shuman. **Leslie** was one of my counter parts in the seventh grade. We had developed a rapport over the years and had discussed our attitudes toward writing, language arts and reading for a couple of years. Her style and mine, while different, shared some common themes. **Tracy** was a fairly new teacher to the profession. Her friendship was the first reason I asked her to participate and later her students' examples of work caught my attention. She tried to get all her students involved in the process of writing. **Terry** was the last of the group I asked to participate. I really did not know her that well, but I realized after our interview and time together that she not only taught writing, but was a writer herself. I chose to include myself as the counter to Leslie in seventh grade, as an avenue of addressing a male perspective, as a means of reflecting on my own pedagogy, and to strengthen my own writing praxis.

Part I presents the teacher participant's responses to the interview questions. Carl's responses to the interview questions are found in Part II of this chapter. While Carl responded to the first three questions asked of the teacher participants, the

questions asked of him were of a different nature since he did not teach on a daily basis. The last five questions asked of Carl were designed to elicit information relating directly to Shuman's school-wide writing plan.

The transcripts of the interviews are followed by my reflections and analyses. My reflections are in italicized print to be easily distinguished from the participants' responses. I did not write a reflection to any of my own responses.

Part I: Questions and Responses of Teacher Participants

Question 1: What was your attitude toward writing as an elementary school student? a secondary student? an adult? a teacher/professional?

Jenene: I kept a diary or journal because of my third grade teacher. I did not like writing to prompts, but if it was about something I wanted to write about, then I wrote. I write poems and stories as well as notes or letters to friends and family. It is cathartic and has helped me through my grandmother's death and things I have had to deal with lately. In high school most of our writing focused on the preparation for the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test). In parochial schools we did not have a writing test per se; there were no state-mandated tests. I was in the Advanced Placement (AP) classes so there was a lot of writing in those classes. I did not mind these kinds of writing because when I finished them I could go and write about what interested me –my thoughts and travels. Elementary writing was teacher-directed/dictated and mostly religious based – perhaps writing about the sacraments. Most of the writing was timed – 15 minutes or 30 minutes to complete an assignment. In

high school my writing assignments were more like my college requirements. They were still primarily teacher directed but sometimes choice was involved.

I believe writing is a necessary means to communicate. As an adult I know this, and I write letters and notes more than I e-mail. I try and convey this to my students. You need to write not only well, but concise[ly]. As a teacher I hate paperwork. I find that I need to write along with the students. I am trying to give the students more control in their own writing or topic choice.

Writing should be something you enjoy. Yes, it can be tedious, but we want the students to see the joy and beauty of the English language. If we can do that then we won't stifle the students toward writing. Not everyone will love writing but maybe they won't resist it so much.

Jenene wrote in all areas of her life. She had used writing as a type of therapy to help her through difficult times in her life such as her grandmother's death. She seemed to like writing both in and outside the classroom. While growing up her attitude toward writing fluctuated, yet she remained a writer. She realized the importance of writing, not only for herself, but also for her students.

Jenene did not remember being given any choice in writing topics until high school and college. Her early memories were of product-oriented, teacher directed assignments. Jennne differed from the other participants in that she attended a parochial school rather than a public school; therefore some of her writing was about religious topics. While the elementary years were very structured and teacher-controlled, Jenene recalled that it was a third grade teacher that got her interested in

keeping a journal or diary. She echoes what I believe most students feel, if it is something that is relevant to them, they will write; if it is not, the teacher will meet with resistance.

Jenene is a writer, both in her professional and personal life. Her love of writing was evidenced by the students' work displayed outside her classroom. She got the most out of her students because she was enthusiastic about what she did. I believe her students sensed Jenene's passion for writing and they responded to that emotion.

Terri: We did not do much writing in elementary school and was given worksheets to complete. This is probably why I was against writing. I did not get much experience in writing itself. My exposure to writing was mostly worksheet oriented and concentrated on the mechanics. I have begun to keep a journal that reflects on my life professionally and personal[ly]. I write while I have my students write.

Terri, while growing up did not like writing or find it rewarding; however, as an adult she came to appreciate writing and knew the need for it. She evidenced this in the way she approached writing (i.e. she wrote while her students wrote). Terri mirrored Atwell's (1987) belief that students need adult role models who write. She had less experience than Jenene in teaching but was commended for teaching her students to write well and for their scores on the Middle Grades Writing Assessment™.

Terri's response was very brief perhaps due to her negative experiences with writing in elementary school. Using worksheets to emphasize mechanics did not

appear to motivate her to write. Composing should be purposeful and relevant to the students rather than simply focusing on discrete skills. Writers improve their use of mechanics by writing in a meaningful context.

Leslie: As an elementary student I did not like writing because the teachers would tell me what to write. They did not make it interesting for me. They did not tell me why I was writing. I did not know what the teachers wanted. Did they want me to write what they wanted to hear, or did they want me to write what I thought or heard? I mostly wrote summaries, and they were o.k. It was the journal writing that I disliked. I worried about spelling and other mechanics. My teachers would tell me not to worry about those things, but I did. I could not finish because I worried about spelling and the like.

In middle school I liked writing poetry. I was told I could write my own feelings, and I could rhyme, so poetry was fun; I was the author. I was from a large family, and there was a lot of poetry in me.

Essays and other compositions scared me. I began to feel comfortable about writing in graduate school. One of my professors would give us a five-paragraph essay to write each week. I discussed with my professor what I thought my weakness was. I told him staying on topic was difficult for me, so he planned some activities outside of the class for me to practice. He explained the process in a non-threatening manner; then through practice and the use of prompts I became a better writer.

As an adult I have written lesson plans that I am very proud of and believe that my students could accomplish. When I get the students' papers

back, however, I get depressed because they have not been able to do what I wanted them to do. I know many of them are in the same situation I was in at their age. It would discourage me to teach writing because there were so many mistakes on their papers. I ask my students, “What is it that you don’t understand? Is it the way I explain it?” I try and give them topics that they can relate to, such as rap or music.

What has been working for me the last two years has been to approach writing as a dessert. We begin by discussing what a paragraph is and then I ask them what their favorite dessert is. Most of them say ice cream. They are then asked to introduce the ice cream without mentioning the type. Then I ask them to include three things they like about the ice cream or descriptions of it and then write a conclusion. The students seem to enjoy it, and it seems to work.

Outside of school I occasionally write in my journal. I write poetry but only for special occasions.

It is still a struggle or battle for me to teach. I became comfortable with writing at such a late stage in my life, and I want these students to want to write from what they know. Students need to know how to write a paragraph. The sixth graders need to have a good grasp of how to write a sentence. If they have that knowledge then we can work on the writing of a paragraph. Basic skills are necessary in writing.

Leslie wanted a purpose for writing. It sounded as though there was a lack of communication between Leslie and her teachers. Atwell (1987) advocated giving

students a choice in selecting their topics. Choice allows students to use writing as a means to shape their thoughts and ideas.

Leslie preferred poetry over journal writing. The emotional aspect of poetry appealed to her. Her comment about coming from a large family and having “a lot of poetry in me” was somewhat of a conundrum.

The guidance Leslie received from her professor enabled her to become a better writer. The use of prompts helped her to focus her thoughts. It has been said that we as teachers teach in the manner we were taught. The very problems Leslie experienced in school resurfaced in her own classroom. She attempted to motivate her students by assigning topics she thought they would find interesting and to which her students could relate. She tended to blame herself for the students resistance to writing.

Leslie, like Terri, did not care for writing as she went through elementary and secondary schools. It was only when she went to college that she began to enjoy writing. Writing became important to her. Her description of the pride she took in creating her lesson plans was a measure of a growing love for writing.

Leslie, while admitting she struggled to teach writing, wrote well herself. I heard her share some of the pieces she had written and they were compelling. The passion and emotion she displayed in her writing was something she shared with her students. Writing was an emotional release for Leslie.

Tracy: In college I wrote all the time and got good grades. I really don't remember high school assignments. I don't remember elementary or middle school writing experiences either, but I can tell you about my daughter. She loves to

write. In elementary school she wrote all the time, and wrote really neat stories.

Like Terri, Tracy's response was very brief. She appeared reluctant to talk about herself as a writer. She wanted to tell me about her daughter. Talking with her one day, she said she wrote all the time in college, but she did not remember writing experiences prior to or during high school. Any theories I may have about her reticence in responding to the question or her inability to remember anything about writing in school would simply be conjectures.

Terry: I really liked to write and thought I was a good writer as an elementary student. I had some really strong teachers who helped me write. I enjoyed school and was an honor roll student and did quite well in creative writing. I don't recall writing that much in junior high. We did a lot of hands-on work. The school system seemed to be changing in format, so I really don't remember writing a lot in junior high. High school was a turn around for me. I joined a creative writing group, and it was one of my teachers there that encouraged me to go on to college where I majored in Mass Communications. I wrote a lot of essays and enjoyed my English classes.

As an adult I am a children's book writer and am trying to get published as a writer of children's books. I have written several books but have not yet been published. I have a poetry anthology that I am trying to get published. I love to write. I love to write it. It helps me to remember. It is my way of communicating. I encourage writing in the classroom.

Terry is a writer. She even aspired to be published and become a writer of children's book. She had always written and was passionate about her writing. Terry attributed her skill as a writer in part to her elementary teachers. She sought out writing opportunities in high school and there found encouragement in her desire to attend college. Writing was Terry's method of communication. She sought to impart her passion for writing to her students.

Bill: I really don't remember writing as an elementary student other than the fifth grade. I wrote short stories about space and horror, but after that I don't remember writing too much. Junior high and high school writing experiences draw a blank. It was not until college that I really had to write. My not being asked to write in junior high and high school affected my ability to write research papers in college. As an adult I used to write a lot – cards, letters and the like. Now my writing is regulated to the classes I take and the dissertation I am writing. I still e-mail friends, but other writing has gone by the wayside. I want to pick back up my journalizing for my sake rather than for a project. As a teacher, most of my writing relates to school.

The joy of writing for me has come and gone in spurts. I have enjoyed writing, but at times it has been an anathema for me. For a long time writing personal notes and letters was very important to me, but now I don't seem to have the energy to write and keep in touch with friends and family. Writing is still important; I just want writing to become a central part of my daily life.

Question 2 – What kinds of personal writing do you do now?

Jenene: I continue writing in my journal and personal letters. I am amazed at the naiveté that my early writing reveals when I review what I wrote in my youth. I continue to write in a variety of places and for a variety of reasons. I use my journals to reflect, not only on personal issues and thoughts, but on my own professionalism.

Writing is still important to Jenene both in and out of school. Her journals allowed her to reflect on how far she had come as a writer. Her letters kept her in touch with her family and friends. Writing is a dynamic process that evolves over time. The more we write, the better our writing. This is reflected in Jenene's perception of the growth in her writing.

Terri: The journal covers both professional and personal issues with me. I write poetry and other types of writing with my students.

Like Jenene, Terri kept both a professional and personal journal. Her poetry that she shared with her students was also part of her personal writing. Perhaps it was this sharing of her own writings that caused her students to respond in their writing and to write well in different settings.

Leslie: My personal writing is to my journal and in a Bible study response journal. I do not write as much as I should.

I think Leslie hit on a good point here. Each of the participants expressed the thought that they did not write as much as they would like to write or should. Like the first two teachers, Leslie kept a journal. She did not elaborate as to whether the journal was a reflection on school issues or personal thoughts or a combination of

both. I have heard her recite some of her writing. Some of it was done in her native Gullah and was very interesting and compelling to hear.

Tracy: Right now the only writing I am doing is a Bible study. I am also writing a journal based on what I am reading in the Bible.

Again, Tracy gave a short response like Terri's and Leslie's. Tracy's personal writing revolved around a Biblical theme like one of Leslie's journals. I wonder if the amount of writing one does is proportionate to the amount one asks of their students. The motivation to write emanated from personal issues. Tapping into relevant, authentic topics with the students may be the impetus that will unlock the writer in them.

Terry: I am writing in a journal as part of an Ed.S. program at Lincoln Memorial University. I am formatting some more books for the series I am writing. I have five of them together right now. I write anywhere and anytime. I just write. I write late at night when no one is around. It may be silly stuff, but it sounds good to me. I just write. I write poetry. I just wrote an essay for my Teacher-of-the-Year nomination.

Terry wrote a lot. She found time to write everyday. Her desire to write and be published was evident in these interviews. She wrote whether she thought people would like it or not – "It may be silly stuff, but it sounds good to me." This is an interesting concept for our writing classrooms. Any author needs to like what they write. This is especially germane for students. So often they become defeated because they think their writing does not sound "good". Terry wrote with the confidence of a true author. Writing was an integral part of her life.

Bill: Currently most of my writing is limited to personal and professional e-mails and the dissertation process. I have really lost the energy to write cards and notes to people though I do write a letter to family and friends at Christmas to keep them abreast as to what is happening with our family. I hope that comes back after the dissertating process is over. I keep trying to keep a journal to reflect on my daily teaching. I keep an anecdotal record so that I can reflect on what goes right and what I can improve in my daily teaching experiences. I do not want to repeat activities that do not work well with my students, and I do want to remember strategies that went well and not just trust I will remember the lessons that worked. Anecdotal records are a part of my job.

Question 3 – What training have you received in teaching writing?

Jenene: In both my undergraduate and graduate programs, writing was a requirement. Once I began to teach at Shuman, my principal sent me to the Coastal Writing Project. This helped me become a writer. The workshop puts you in the position of being a writer. I have not had any other training. I am considering starting work on an advanced degree, and I know I will need to improve my writing as I move along in the process.

While writing was a requirement of undergraduate and graduate programs for Jenene, she did not state that she had any classes that taught her the pedagogical reasons or strategies for writing. The Coastal Writing Project provided an avenue for teachers to hone their own craft but did not provide strategies per se for the teaching of writing to students. As Jenene mentioned, the workshop helped her become a better writer, but it did not offer specific help on teaching writing to her students. Even good strategies can be improved.

Terri: I have taken several conferences or seminars from the Coastal Writing Project.

My formal training in writing has come from my college days and these workshops. I've had some staff development courses.

Again, Terri received no specific training in the teaching of writing; however, she also attended the Coastal Writing Project. Conferences and seminars seemed to be the training for the majority of teachers. It is interesting that Terri did not mention her writing experiences in college earlier.

Leslie: I have taken staff development and the class I mentioned before with the professor who helped me. I have taken workshops and even gone on-line to try and find information on ways to teach it. I even participated in a workshop that presented writing strategies.

Leslie searched for ways to teach writing to her students, but again there seemed to be limited training in the teaching of methods that would enable teachers to instruct their students in writing. Asking about the workshop she attended may have provided more information about the type of training she received. The Coastal Georgia Writing Project is attended the most often.

This was the first mention of any use of technology to enhance instruction. The Internet offers a plethora of strategies and activities that may motivate students. Unfortunately, the classrooms at Shuman were equipped with one computer for the teacher's use. The computer lab could have been utilized for students to compose, but was usually reserved for practice on skills for the GCRCT. This is a weakness in the writing plan at Shuman.

Tracy: The only training I have received was in college. The method I learned was [writing] workshop. We wrote draft after draft with conferencing between drafts. It was modeled after the method Nancy Atwell recommends. My training in writing came from my language arts methods class. My undergraduate degree was in Middle School with an emphasis in language arts and reading.

Tracy was the first participant to mention a course that taught her how to write and how to teach the students to write. The workshop approach of Nancy Atwell does train teachers in methods that instruct students in writing and the process involved. Tracy was one of the youngest participants in my study. Nancy Atwell's writing workshop approach flourished in the 1980's which would account for her receiving this training.

Terry: I have been to several workshops through the board, and I have attended workshops offered through the Coastal Georgia Writing Center. I have taken workshops for staff development. My theses for my Master's and my Specialist's Programs helped me improve my writing skills.

Again, a participant cited staff development or a workshop through the Broad of Education as a means of learning how to teach writing to our students. Very little, if any, formal training for writing instruction was part of the participants' educational program. Higher degrees offer opportunities to better our pedagogy, but how many of our teachers are capable or motivated to pursue further education? Ten hours of staff development is mandated in order to renew our certificates, but the

choice as to what training we receive is usually left up to the teacher. Only in special cases does the administration specify a particular course for a teacher to attend.

Bill: My formal training in writing? Mostly I have learned to write through workshops offered through staff development here in Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools. I did take the Southern Writing Project as a part of the dissertation process. Those would cover my experiences in learning how to teach writing to my students. The readings I did for my course work provided me with insight as to how students learn to write.

Question 4 – What practices/strategies do you utilize to teach writing in your classroom?

Jenene: This past year I had children who were weak in their language skills. I needed to start at the beginning. At first I provided the journal topics for the students, but after that the students got more freedom to pursue their writing. Sentence structure was an issue they needed a lot of help on. My own teaching is to a point where I need to reflect and restructure how I teach the writing process. I am a process-oriented teacher.

As a department we need to sit down and decide what we are going to teach each school year. I would hope that by the time they get to me, students would know the basic sentence structure and subject-verb agreement. This would allow me to begin with teaching the five-paragraph essay. If they knew the terms for the various essays, such as narrative or expository, then we could have a more fluid flow. I want them to have a good foundation for writing when they come to me. If they don't, they won't be as successful as they could be.

Evaluating where the children are when you get them is important. Jenene's assessment that her students were weak caused her to rethink her goals for the year. While she tried to use the writing process as her forum for getting her students to write, she realized that she needed to start where they were in order to move them to where she hoped they would go as writers.

Jenene offered students some choice in their writing topics. This apparent growth in her approach to writing is echoed in the realization she needed to re-examine her writing praxis.

Jenene had a vision for our department. She had goals she wanted us to accomplish and had a plan to help us become better at teaching writing to our students. She was aware that there had not been a cohesive, well-planned strategy that cut across the grade levels for the teaching of writing. Her plan envisioned each grade level being responsible for a particular style or genre of writing so that students would have a firm foundation for mastering the for Georgia's Middle Grades Writing Test.

Terri: Basically, we just write. I use their writing as examples. Fortunately, I have students who are "right there", and I can use their papers as examples of where we want to go or be. Then I have students who are just not quite there and some who are far from where I would like them to be. We look at examples from each group. Then I teach the basic five-paragraph set up. They need a good sense of the paragraph and how it is put together. I can build on that if the student has that understanding.

Using peer examples seemed to be the main method for Terri. Her use of the five-paragraph model may have been what helped her students do well on the Middle Grades Writing Assessment™. Emig (1971) affirmed in her study that the five-paragraph is alive and well in classrooms today. The use of this model at Shuman confirmed that statement. Most, if not all, the upper grades had the students write using the five-paragraph essay. In their defense, this was modeled after the writing assessment the students took in the eighth grade, however, creativity suffers within such a lock-step approach to writing.

Terri also had the students to just write and then used those examples to expand their writing. That sounded like a free write approach, but she did not call it that. Just writing helps students become better writers.

Terri focused on writing paragraphs while Jenene focused on writing sentences. Terri's belief that she could take the students where they needed to go if they had a "good sense" of paragraph structure, shows she realized the students needed a basic foundation for her to build on in order to move them to where they would need to be for high school.

Both teachers had similar responses. While one focused more on paragraphs, they both felt the students were not adequately prepared for the literacy rigors of eighth grade.

Leslie: I use the "Before You Read" section from the literature book. There are writing prompts before each story. When I introduce vocabulary words for a story they must write a prediction story. They use the vocabulary words in

their story. After we read the story I have them pull out their stories and compare them to the actual story.

I have journal entries, and I use a project called the portfolio. That is done over a nine weeks [period]. They write reflections on each story. There are six questions per reflection story. I ask questions like, “If you were the author what would you write differently about this story? What did you like best about the story? What did you like least about the story? Were there good descriptive words in the story? What words would you add?” At the end of the project they write a “Dear Teacher” and “Dear Reader”. The students in the class exchange portfolios, read, edit, and grade each other’s work. I collect the stories we use; they are not part of the literature series.

Leslie gave me the most information of all the participants. She seemed to use a variety of means to get her students writing. Like Jenene, she used the journal approach. Her use of reflective questions promoted higher order thinking skills. While Leslie had her students engaged in writing activities, most still appeared to be grounded in a textbook context.

Having students edit and grade another student’s work is problematic. I have found most students do not have the academic ability to adequately edit or grade another’s work. Students need a guide to help them with these activities. Rubrics are a good tool to use when having students look at work, be it another’s or their own. It is too overwhelming to simply hand a paper to a student and expect him/her to find all the mistakes and assign a grade without some kind of guide. Rubrics are used in most of the classrooms.

Tracy: I get them to write about things they like - things that are important to them - that they are familiar with. Sixth graders want to share. As soon as they finish their work they are ready to read it and share. The whole class wants to share. I let all that want to share, share. Those who share and have something to say, I give extra points to them. When we are reading we talk about the way an author uses things like foreshadowing, or what the author's purpose is. I also model the kind of writing I want them to write. If we are studying poetry, I will model writing a poem or when we did "Letters to the Editor", I wrote the first letter and modeled the process I used to write, then the students write.

Tracy permitted the most freedom of choice to her students. As a result, more actual writing occurred in her classroom. I have had difficulty getting students to write on any topic in the seventh grade. Tracy's description of her children sounded different from the students I got. Their eagerness to share was lost due to self-consciousness when they got to me.

Modeling the writing process and allowing time to share their work were strategies of the writer's workshop method she learned from Nancy Atwell. Students need time to share their work in order to see themselves as authors. This component to writer's workshop is the first to be eliminated due to lack of time, yet it is one of the most effective motivating strategies to get students to write.

Tracy also discussed author's craft with her students through modeling. It is important for the students to see the teacher actively engaged in the writing process. It validates what the students are being asked to do. Writing is not an isolated assignment that only they are required to complete in the classroom.

Terry: We write a lot in my classes. On the language arts side of my job, I am weak in the mechanics. I listen to what my children say and then work from there. I use the five-paragraph method. I try to get them to do a good introductory paragraph and then work from there. Each paragraph builds from the introductory paragraph. The introduction provides three ideas for the body to build on. I tell them not to worry about mechanics, because I am not good at that. I tell them to try to be consistent and keep to one idea at a time. I ask them to try and keep the theme or idea together.

Terry said they wrote a lot in her class. She described the way she taught writing. Her telling the students not to worry about the mechanics was problematic as was the use of the five-paragraph essay. While she and I both readily admitted we were weak in mechanics, I knew that mechanics either made the paper flow more smoothly or caused bumps for the reader creating a challenge to read or appreciate it.

Bill: I believe listening to the students is the first step in motivating them to write.

Listening lets the students know you think they have something worthy about which to write. Often, the best way to get a reluctant writer to put pen to paper is to get her/him to talk about their ideas first.

I mainly use journal writing and the prompts that are offered through the textbook for assignments. I use some peer editing and the five-step process writing method. I try to give a fair amount of time to write in the classroom and at home. However, I have found that the more time I give my students to write at home, the less writing (total words written on a page) I get back than

if I have them write in class. If a student does not like a particular topic, sometimes I let them choose their own topic.

Writing is a hodge-podge for me. I try a variety of means and methods but get frustrated with the lack of return from my students. I am not sure if it is my directions or if it is the motivation of the students that attributes to the quality and quantity I get back.

Question 5 – What forms of assessment do you use in your classroom?

Jenene: I use the peers to provide feedback. I also like to conference with the students. The use of immediate feedback seems to encourage their writing. You just have to make time to provide one-on-one instruction. I try and not use red ink but use bright and colorful ink. Peers critique first then I go behind the peer review.

Use of peer editing is something with which I need to become more comfortable. I felt that I had too many students who did not have the prior knowledge and skills necessary to evaluate their peers' papers. Peer evaluation is a way to provide a type of feedback to the students, and it is quicker, but very problematic. Teachers must use caution in assigning students to read others' work. Peer conferences allow students to collaborate and learn from each other, but students must be trained in conducting peer evaluations. As stated earlier, this is not something they can do without guidance.

The one-on-one conference is something I need to improve also. It is vital to provide constructive feedback as to how the students' writing is progressing.

Conferring is the foundation of the writer's workshop. One-on-one instruction takes

place during conferences, but, in addition, residual learning may take place with students who are nearby. Conversations during conferences may be the impetus that gets the pen to the paper. The art of listening is vital during the conferring time with students.

I have often heard that “making the paper bleed” is discouraging to students. I am not sure a different color ink would ease the pain of having one’s work slashed. The use of sticky notes works well when providing feedback and does not mess up the students’ papers. It seems instruction in writing would keep down the use of any color ink to assess student work.

Terri: Generally I use a rubric that allows the students to know what I am looking for. When I give the rubric, I go over what a “good” paper is and how it should look. Other times I just read each paper and give individual comments. This takes a lot of time, but the students respond better. If I notice the same kind of mistakes reoccurring often, I will do a mini-lesson on that specific error.

The use of models to emulate good writing was a valid point as was the use of rubrics. The utilization of rubrics takes the mystery and guessing out of assessment if the criterion is valid. Rubrics focus instruction and provide relevant feedback to the students. The students and the parents are more involved when rubrics are used for assessment. If students were given rubrics to use while assessing another student’s work, the feedback would be more objective and beneficial to both students.

Teacher commentary is another strategy for providing feedback on student’s work. Sticky notes work best for commentaries because there is space for concise,

pertinent comments. Students are motivated to write when good writing is recognized. Terri saw this in her student's compositions. A mini-lesson is another component of the writer's workshop. These can be structured to meet the needs of the students – whole or small group, pairs or individually.

Leslie: I have a rubric for the portfolio I use. I collect the journals on Fridays. I give 10 points for each full paragraph. I also use what is called focused correction errors. For example, if I were to give them a writing assignment on desserts, then this week I would check for grammar and punctuation. Next week I would focus on three other errors using the same paper.

The idea of 10 points for a full paragraph was intriguing; however, what constituted a full paragraph? The rubric for focused correction errors sounded like it could take some of the burden off grading the paper for every little mistake. Students tend to get overwhelmed if too many topics for correction are addressed at one time. Three may have been too many topics to focus on for one session. Focusing on one convention at a time in a mini-lesson may take longer, but have a lasting impact over time.

Tracy: That's the part with which I have the hardest time. This is the hardest thing for me. This was my first year teaching writing, so I have just sort of winged it. I can't help take into account where these students are coming from. If I have a "terrible paper", but it is the best that this child can do, I have to grade that student on a different scale. I can't judge it with or against the child who writes all the time. I need to develop a rubric. My goal is to develop some rubrics.

I understood Tracy's frustration about "grading" each student even when you know the best that some can do is to write a sentence, and for others that may be impossible. A student who comes to you with the ability to write well is a gift. It is hard to know what and where to take that child, especially if they are in a class where the majority does not write well.

With a good rubric, subjectivity is all but eliminated from an assignment. There are a number of websites that provide good, free rubrics Tracy could have used. Rubistar.com allows teachers to build their own rubrics. If assessment is to have any validity, standards need to be the same for everyone.

Terry: We have done oral listening skills. I have gone over their work and graded it myself. I read their work and make suggestions. I have never been taught a real way of assessing writing. I am not strong on that part. I have had to come up with my own methods. The workshops I have been in have not talked about that either. I assess them on whether their ideas meld together, if their paragraphs are well formed, they are structured in their thoughts, and they have the information needed to support. I look for details to support the main idea. I have used rubrics in the past, and we have an autobiographical project that is due soon. It helps the children to have a rubric or guide to know what I am looking for. The children will use the rubric to grade each other.

Terry started with a listening activity and then moved into the writing activity. She, like Tracy and me, had difficulty grading the paper. Each of us realized that a rubric would help us evaluate our students more effectively. Terry seemed to use subjective and objective assessments. Her list of points for assessment is reminiscent

of a checklist. She said she had used rubrics in the past, and she spoke of the students using a rubric to grade each other. It was unclear as to what extent Terry was actually using rubrics. She said she had not been taught a real way of assessing writing, but was familiar with one of the most accepted methods of assessing writing. Sometimes we do not know what we know. Her assessment points sounded valid and relevant. Terry and Tracy expressed concern about assessing writing. The Middle Grades Writing Assessment Guide™ would help both teachers.

Bill: I use a rubric and read each paper. I try to be consistent in my evaluations, but when you are reading more than seventy papers and providing comments on them, it is difficult to stay consistent. The rubric helps my students and me. It gives my students an idea of what I am looking for in the paper and it helps me to focus on what I am grading the paper for in the first place.

The rubric is my first choice but developing one is often time consuming. I know that there are web sites that have them, but many times they are too generic. I recently discovered that the Middle Grades Writing Assessment Guide™ has examples that are very good, plus they mirror what is asked on the assessment. Use of these examples would provide a double benefit for my students. They would know what is being asked for on the assessment, and they would have a guide as to what is considered good writing.

Question 6 – In what ways do you encourage your students to write (motivated as well as reluctant students)?

Jenene: I always use my own writing. I let them know that I am not going to ask them to write about something that will make them uncomfortable. I give them the option to opt out of a writing assignment. They must take an alternative assignment. They can only opt out once a nine-week period.

The choice to opt out of an assignment once each nine-weeks offered comfort to some students who did not always want to write or found a particular prompt intimidating. Also the modeling seemed to encourage the students as they saw the process Jenene used to compose a piece of writing. Students need to see themselves as authors. They need to know that someone believes they have something worthwhile to share. For Jenene to use her own writing to motivate her students demonstrated it was okay to take a risk. Students write most about topics that concern them when given a choice. Jenene tried to do this with her students.

Terri: I let them know that their writing is good no matter what they write. I pull it out of them. I try to make them feel comfortable and let them know they will not be ridiculed in the classroom. We talk about that everyone has the right to share and that their thoughts are important. I praise a lot. If someone tries and then someone tries to make fun of someone who is reading a piece of their writing, I put a stop to that at once. The students need to feel they are in a safe setting and that it is safe to share. I publish their work.

Terri used praise a lot. The idea of pulling it out of them was an interesting way of saying how she got them to write. Again like Jenene, Terri did not ask the

students to write about issues that made them uncomfortable. The safety students must have felt in her classroom could have been an encouragement for her students to write.

Terri, like Jenene, also created a risk-free environment in her writing class. From her comments students were affirmed at whatever point on the writing continuum they happened to be. Learning to write is a challenging task for anyone. It takes effort to get students involved in the writing process. Publishing student work is so important. Students are motivated to write when their best efforts are recognized.

Leslie: I try to open up with a conversation or get them to come up with a topic they would be interested in. Then we would get into a discussion and once I know I have their interest, I start with an introduction. I ask them to tell me about their topic of interest, not only me, but with each other.

A student's best composing comes from what they already know. Having the students involved in a conversation first probably activated a prior knowledge or set a stage for the writing to take place. Calkins (1994) stated that when we help students make reading/writing connections, they view themselves as writers of literature. Conversations can be one-on-one or part of a whole class or small group instructional setting.

Tracy: I start with the basics. You have to know how to write a sentence. I make two of my classes write sentences and paragraphs because they need to know how to do the basics. I had to teach them what a sentence begins with and what it ends with. Some of the students wanted to go on and write stories, but I had to

make them slow down and learn what a sentence is and what a paragraph is before we moved on to stories and the like. Everything they wrote had to be in paragraph form. All their answers had to be in complete sentences. I would not let them write anything else until they could write a paragraph that made sense. It takes about nine weeks.

Tracy's class needed extra scaffolding in writing instructing. She talked earlier about writers who had difficulty putting together pieces for her to read. To motivate her students, Tracy moved them slowly through the writing process as she identified where they were as writer's and then guided them to where they needed to be. It was important for her to meet the needs of her students starting with where they were and building on their strengths. This demonstrated her commitment to employ effective teaching strategies. The students control of English conventions and structures were reflected in their compositions. It took time for Tracy to build on their strengths. Too often we tend to rush the learning process and, in essence, gaps are created and too many students fall through.

Terry: This year I really have not had a problem getting students to write. I have not had any slackers. I have had a problem with children trying to express themselves. You know, not every child is on the same level. The ones who can not write very well, I let them tell the story or what they want to write first and then ask them to write. It seems to help letting them say the story first and then writing it out. I do this because we sometimes write like we speak. Whatever we do, we talk about it first – so we can get the ideas flowing.

Terry had the students engage in conversations before they wrote. Their success in committing their conversations to paper may be the reason she felt her students did not have problems writing. She seemed to want the natural voice of each of her students to be heard - "I do this because we sometimes write like we talk."

Terry's class enjoyed writing, but needed help in expressing their thoughts. This happens more often than we imagine in writing sessions. She apparently hit upon a very natural and germane strategy to motivate her students – let them talk. When we say less, students say more. We just need to listen. Verbally relating a story stimulates the requisite to put pen to paper.

Vygotsky (1978) stated

The most significant moment in the course of intellectual development, which gives birth to the purely human forms of practical and abstract intelligence, occurs when speech and practical activity, two previously completely independent lines of development converge... A child's speech is as important as the role of action in attaining the goal... The more complex the action demanded by the situation, the greater the importance played by speech in the operation of the whole. Sometimes speech becomes of such vital importance that, if not permitted to use it, young children cannot accomplish the given task. (pp. 24-26)

While Vygotsky was talking about younger children, it is just as important for adolescents to be given the opportunity to verbalize their thoughts before trying to commit them to paper.

Bill: I try to provide the students with a comfortable environment that is conducive to writing and learning. The topics I use are varied and should appeal to many in the class; however, no one topic appeals to everyone, so I do allow for some individual expression. I use sports and music magazines that capture the interest of my students. If I can relate the topic to something authentic to them, they are more motivated to be engaged in the writing assignment. Though I want my students to have more choice in their topics, the requirements for the Georgia Writing Assessment™ limit my ability to offer alternative options.

I have students who need help in writing simple sentences just as Tracy does. We both seem to be starting at a disadvantage for our grade levels. I give the students daily practice in English conventions in an effort to build their writing skills, but this takes time away from actually being engaged in composing. Skills are important if they are to write well.

Teaching someone how to write better is difficult. The students seem to have mixed feelings about their writing ability. If they feel they are adequate or good at writing, the first draft is all they feel they need to do, but if the student feels they are poor at writing, then they don't even want to approach the piece with any degree of seriousness.

Question 7 – In what ways do you feel that writing supports reading?

Jenene: Writing is a tool to express your thoughts in a clear and concise manner.

Everyone can't always verbally articulate a response.

Jenene's response made me think I may not have conveyed the essence of the question to her properly. This question was embedded in the overall interview and was subsumed in our discussion of writing praxis.

Terri: Basically, they go hand in hand. I often give them something to read that has not only the comprehension questions but also a written response to the reading. If you're a good writer then you are a reader. As we read a selection or work I ask them, "How is the writer getting his point across?"

I agree with Terri that reading and writing go hand in hand. Students approach reading and writing in ways that are similar, yet different. Reading good literature or stories provided students with excellent models for writing. Noticing the author's craft engaged the students in examining how the writer used words to express themselves. The activity of writing a response to reading favored the use of critical thinking skills. Going beyond the recall of most comprehension questions to write responsive answers to a story or selection allowed the student to become more engaged in their reading.

Leslie: I believe they go hand in hand. When you read you should be able to comprehend what you have read not just going back into the story and answering comprehension questions. They should be able to state why they liked or did not like a particular story. They should be able to tell why some stories are more interesting than others stories.

Critical analysis during reading was one of the characteristics that the Quality Core Curriculum (QCC) asked teachers to address. The ability to express and evaluate why a story is more interesting than another story provided the student

with skills that would increase their ability to communicate more effectively. Leslie, like Terri, professed the idea that reading and writing are intertwined – “They go hand in hand.”

Tracy: When teaching a novel unit, I use the writer’s own words and mechanics to teach writing. I use the novel as a model for how to write.

Utilizing the novel or story to model writing was important for Tracy. Her background in reading was what drove her to use the novel (gleaned more from conversations outside the interview than from the interview itself). Modeling the writing using the author’s actual words and craft was a theme that seemed to be in at least three of the participants’ writing praxis.

Leslie focused on comprehension skills while Tracy focused on appropriating the author’s crafts. Both concepts are of great importance in promoting balanced literacy. Learning how to write from writers is a fairly new concept in many classrooms today, however, many professional writers attest to that very practice. Calkins (1994) posited when students make reading and writing connections, they view themselves as writers of literature.

Terry: In every way, because by learning to write it can help you learn to read. It can help you in many ways academically. I use the children’s writing to help them identify sounds and syllables. In order for students to have a good year you have to intermingle writing with reading – they go hand in hand. I find that students lose that academic edge when they don’t have the opportunity to write.

Terry's comments confirmed the connectedness of reading and writing when used in conjunction with Leslie's and Tracy's. Terry used writing to scaffold her students in reading while Leslie and Tracy used reading to scaffold their students in writing. What does it mean to read like a writer and/or write like a reader? Frank Smith (1983) believed students could never gain all the knowledge to write successfully from a systematic instructional program. Simply put, he concluded students must glean what they will need to know about writing from reading. This is an intriguing concept.

Terry had a pragmatic component to her writing instruction. She used her students' editing and revisioning drafts as an avenue to incorporate phonetic skills. Her reading strategy of teaching phonics during writing could be a bit paradoxical if not problematic. This could be a topic of further study.

Bill: I believe that reading helps students see good writing. If students are exposed to what authors are saying in their writing and then allowed to discuss the reading and finally respond to the reading, I believe they can become better writers. Reading widely can help us see a variety of writing styles and models from which to construct our own writing.

Question 8 – What practices and strategies do you use that connect reading and writing?

Jenene: I have the students give me a quick write on a topic and not just having the students answer the questions at the back of the book, but responding to the story while reading.

The "Quick Write" was part of the reading program that our reading/literature text used to engage the student in the story. Often it asked the

student to remember an incident that was related to the story they read. Sometimes it called for the student to discuss an issue and defend their position on a subject. The textbook series provided models to demonstrate how to keep a reader's journal or log.

Terri: I use what I call a power thinking/writing activity. If we have talked about pronouns one day, the next we will think out a review of the previous day. We put together a paragraph. It is a kinetic activity where the students act out the paragraph and actually place the main idea in the proper place and then put the supporting details and conclusion together.

I am not sure my question was fully understood by Terri. She really just responded by telling me about a writing activity they did in class. While the activity sounded excellent, I am not sure how she used it to connect reading and writing. Reviewing the next day would be beneficial.

Leslie: After each selection they are required to write a paragraph reflecting on the reading. They also reflect as they respond to the portfolio questions.

Responding to literature was straight from Rosenblatt (1983, 1978) and Langer (1995, 1986, 1982, 1981) who advocated the use of writing to reflect and respond to reading. Leslie seemed to position herself with Rosenblatt (1983) and Langer (1995) when she required her students to write about what they had read.

Active readers respond to a "speaking-out-loud voice" (Skeans, 2004, p. 211) in their heads when they interact with a text. Leslie mentally engaged her students in a reading/writing connection by having her students reflect in writing on various assignments. This is a text to self connection.

The portfolio responses could identify key behaviors for diagnostic purposes depending on the questions. The physical act of writing could facilitate learning which strengthens the reading/writing connection.

Tracy: I use the novels that I teach out of to help connect reading and writing.

I believe Tracy was saying she had the students respond to the reading as they move through the novels (again I make this conjecture based on conversations I had with Tracy outside the interview times). Tracy's very brief response denoted a lack of understanding as to the question being asked.

Terry: In forming the essay, the children must read what they have written. It can help them with comprehension. When reading an essay or story the children write the story elements about a particular story. Writing helps the reader do well academically.

Terry mentioned that she had the students respond to the reading and stories they had written using a series of questions she called the story elements. The story elements covered the plot, theme, characters and other components of the story. She also mentioned she had the students read what they had written as a way of connecting reading and writing.

Terry admitted she had a distance to go in her teaching of writing (stated in an informal conversation). She has since moved to teaching eighth graders and is trying to find ways and means to help them do well on the writing assessment required of all eighth graders at Shuman Middle School.

Bill: Our literature textbook starts each section with a reader's response. It may ask the students to discuss something, or it may ask them to write a response to a

question about the text. Perhaps it tries to evoke what prior knowledge the student has concerning the upcoming selection. The publishers also have asked that the students question the text as they read. They go so far as to model the activity for the students.

The publisher describes for the students what metacognition is (thinking about thinking or thinking about what you have read and its purpose) and how the student can improve their own cognition by writing a response to what they have read. Opportunities to write abound in the current textbook and in the textbook we are adopting.

Writing as a means of providing scaffolding is based on the work of Vygotsky (1999) and evokes the prior knowledge that some students may have about a story they will read. The fact that the textbook publishers are providing support within their textbooks to encourage teachers to connect writing and reading is another indication that reading and writing are related and should be taught with each other. The strategies to write before, during, and after reading can keep the reader involved with the story. We need to be careful though that we do not overwhelm the student and that we allow the student to write for writing's sake and read for reading's sake.

Part II: Questions and Responses of the Administrator

Carl's questions were of a different nature since he did not teach on a daily basis. His knowledge of and the expectations of the school system as well as the requirements from the state department were necessary to fully understand the writing culture at Shuman Middle School.

Carl responded to the first three questions asked of the teacher participants. These questions examined his attitude toward writing, his current role as a writer, and any training he had received in teaching writing. As one of the administrators, his responses were indicative of the overall expectations of the writing program at Shuman. Additional questions were asked to expound upon the expectations and requirements of the administration in assessing the language arts program.

Question 1: What was your attitude toward writing as an elementary school student? a secondary student? an adult? a teacher/professional?

Carl: As an elementary student I would write because I was supposed to write. I loved spelling, and I liked spelling bees. It was not extensive, mostly answering questions and a little bit of writing paragraphs. I did not write on my own as an elementary student or as a secondary student except letters to my mother. I enjoyed writing in graduate school; the digging and putting together material and forming conclusions [were] surprising to me because I did not like writing in undergraduate school. I hated writing term papers. I even failed a night class because I refused to write a term paper. However, at Georgia Southern in graduate school, I discovered that I enjoyed writing.

As a “Sally Mae” teacher (an award given to exemplary first year teachers) and an administrator, I have always had to do a lot of writing – internal communications, memos, perusal of teachers’ letters, recommendations, and program proposals. That has been the fun part – writing rationales to make things happen in the building, but with grants you are dependent on someone else’s money, so I do not like writing them. As for

recommendations, I have written several “references for first year teachers. I have had one national winner, a state winner, and a district winner. That was fun because it caused me to do an analysis of what was going on in the school.

The communication between the teacher and myself required a lot of information and editing. I like to write in the building both personal and for the faculty. Reflections (1996) and Qs (2000) are quite short. [Reflections are short educational related ideas, usually a half a page. Qs are longer pieces and more in-depth personal issues about which Carl felt passionate.] I write a quarter to half a page. I wrote a series of those (about forty) several years ago. I started passing them out at Myers Middle School, and some teachers said I should publish them. I was giving out about one a week. I saw that it touched the teachers. Their attitudes were better. They seemed to approach teaching with more energy and enthusiasm. The Qs were a little longer - about a full page. They took a topic that was pertinent at the time. Then there were about twenty more reflections that were very personal to me. I use the Reflections (1996) in the workshops and courses that I teach. The best of my Reflections is probably the one I wrote on education. I wrote it as I ran for School Superintendent of Effingham County. It has become a philosophical position I have taken since 1991.

I like putting things in words with a somewhat unusual take - words that I feel are probably inside other people’s heads and their personalities. I very much like to share them because I like to see the reactions people have - their improvements and their hope and courage increasing. I know that I am

effective that way. I know I am effective in the analysis on the kinds of things I have done on tasks within the school, analyzing the kinds of things that happen and putting that into language. I also like to share the personal things in my life that have given me hope and courage. I try never to put anything out before I have someone to bounce it off because I want the grammar to be right. I always have some peer editing going on. I like my writing enough that I absolutely will tear someone up if they change something after I have written it. I have gotten into the face of someone who has tried to edit my writing and make claims about what it was trying to say. How do you edit a personality? How do you edit a person? Maybe I have a double standard on that, I don't know. I make suggestions; I don't demand that one change their own writing. I am always thinking in terms of audience when I write.

Carl's response was lengthy due in part to the fact that we were friends, and he may have felt more comfortable with me. His love for writing developed over time. I found it intriguing that he first found writing interesting on the graduate level. I remember he told me he did not read for pleasure but liked to read to learn. The fact that he loved to write about school was interesting as he stopped reading for pleasure because of the amount of required reading during his graduate courses. His Reflections (1996) demonstrated his love of education and the fact that he pondered important educational issues.

Carl's memories of writing in school reflected a product-oriented approach. No mention was made of student choice or sharing of writing in his early years. His later compositions, by his own choice, were directed toward teachers and school

improvement issues. The use of technology was just beginning to gain momentum when Carl was at Shuman.

*Carl was a writer. He had a way with words. While I was not one of his Sally Mae nominees, I was nominated Teacher of the Year and was a member of the Team of the Year during his tenure at Shuman. His editing skills helped me in both endeavors. He had insight into people and had a way of expressing his ideas that was evident through his *Reflections* (1996) and *Qs* (2000). His knowledge of language was excellent and to a level I strove to emulate.*

Question 2 – What kinds of personal writings do you do now?

Carl : I wrote the Student Success Plan© that is based on life habits that are essential to succeeding in life. They are habits of the mind and are related to Steven Covey’s work, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. Those habits there are right on the money. I believe the Student Success Plan© is a document worthy for any school to adopt. It’s more than a document – it’s a practice.

Writing was almost a therapy for Carl. His writings not only helped him, but he wanted them to help others. The Student Success Plan© (SSP©) was freely offered to the Savannah Chatham School. Many of the components in the Student Success Plan© were incorporated in the Code of Conduct used by the school system and other schools have “borrowed” from the SSP©. Carl’s professional and personal writings seemed to be intertwined.

Question 3 – What training have you received in teaching writing?

Carl: The only other teaching or training in writing besides my mother was in the eighth and ninth school years and once again in the twelfth grade where

grammar was so well taught with the diagramming and the punctuation. That was a training tool in itself. I have found that using writing in the classroom and teaching students has helped me be a better writer. The only training I have had besides that in high school was the Georgia State Department of Education's requirement that all certified teachers take the course, The Teaching and Evaluation of Reading and Writing, which I took in 2001.

Carl's response was not unlike those of the teacher participants. There was no real or formal training of teachers to teach writing. The training that most participants received was done in high school or through some form of staff development offered at the request of schools and/or school districts, many times as a result of state mandates as with the course – The Teaching and Evaluation of Reading and Writing. Even so, Carl viewed grammar skills as instruction in writing. Could this have been the case because product-oriented writing has dominated the language arts program for so long?

Question 4 - How important is writing?

Carl: Well, until people are able to write coherently and are able to express themselves in terms of language and terms of the variety of language they have [the] capacity to read, they have no capacity to comprehend what they see. So, it is dual this learning to read and learning to write. Really one can not be separated from the other for a person to be effective in language arts and an effective communicator, and so I put writing as extremely important. And if you will notice recently, just a few weeks ago, the new SAT now has essay writing. Just because someone can point and click and download

something off the Internet and use word processing skills on electronics does not mean they can use the true word processor the pencil-very well. Obviously there has been some very recent acknowledgement or recognition of how important writing is because I think they, university and college professors, have found students coming to school that have no clue as to what they are writing. I have read the work of a person working on a six-year degree at Georgia Southern – not to put down Georgia Southern, but the work was atrocious. However, that person has since become a better writer.

Carl was passionate in his belief that writing was important. His belief that one cannot effectively communicate or comprehend unless she/he is able to write well spoke volumes about his attitude toward writing. He obviously put writing on a high level. Teachers at Shuman were expected to be effective language arts instructors that integrated reading and writing in their classrooms.

Though Carl was very traditional in his approach to a balanced literacy program, it was evident he kept abreast of any new pedagogy that would benefit the students of Shuman Middle School.

Question 5 - What practices and strategies do you look for in a teacher's lesson plans/classroom?

Carl: I look for it [writing] in all the lesson plans because “Writing Across the Curriculum” (WAC) is a strategy that the school uses. It shows up the greatest amount in the exploratory teachers’ lesson plans because they have found ways to incorporate writing into their curriculum. I am looking for the kinds of questions that teachers ask students to answer. Some of them will spend

once a week with twenty minutes of writing. Physical education teachers might have the students writing the rules for the sports and games the students play. Health teachers might have the students write personal beliefs about it. Three teachers frequently, at least weekly, have students write five-paragraph essays which means they are taking probably at least an entire class period to write those essays.

Now, in the language arts classes I see that the language arts teachers are doing those five-paragraph essays frequently. More so in the eighth grade, but each of the sixth and seventh grade teachers do those five-paragraph essays at some point in time during the year. It is not the only staple they have, but it is used frequently enough that every kid is exposed to doing that. Two of the special education teachers also use that five-paragraph essay extensively. So no one is off the hook in the building.

As to specific strategies that they may use, I will see that on the product, performance, and portfolio kinds of assessments that are reflected in the lesson plans. I see a lot of writing in the social studies and Science Fair projects.

All I really am looking for is the presence of something that brings the students to personalizing their experience with the curriculum. Now that nearly always has something to do with a writing component. That's why the product assessment, portfolio, and performance assessment I see are expected to be seen in the lesson plans.

I would like to add this next year the lesson plans will have all the components that we have continuously used for the past seven years along with the Bernstein Model™ which include: the significant question, masterworks and evaluation tied to each unit and totally aligned to the Bernstein Model™. We have added this so the teachers can evaluate the effectiveness of the unit. It is a formative evaluation for the lesson plan its.

To hear Carl's analysis of the lesson plans, there was a lot of writing going on in the school. The students were engaged in writing several times a day and in a variety of ways. I wonder if the examination of the lesson plans will bear this out for me. Since Shuman incorporated WAC as part of the School Improvement Plan, it was not surprising to hear that exploratory teachers included writing in their lesson plans. From Carl's response, it appeared writing was simply any activity that employed paper and pencil such as writing rules in the physical education classes or describing what had happened that day.

The five-paragraph essay was prevalent in the teachers' plans. Katie Wood Ray (1999) said educators oftentimes must fight against what our own educational histories have taught us. The five-paragraph essay has been the traditional, formulaic method of teaching writing in middle schools for decades. Emig (1971) denounced its use stating, "A species of extensive writing that recurs so frequently in student accounts that it deserves special mention is the five-paragraph theme, consisting of one paragraph of introduction ...three of expansion and example...and one of conclusion. This mode is so indigenously American that it might be called the Fifty-Star Theme" (p.97).

Carl saw writing as the means of getting students to personalize their experiences with the curriculum. He found evidence of this in the assessment section of the lesson plans. This is documented in portfolio, end products, and most importantly, performance assessments.

The Bernstein Model, through the Getty Corporation, was a method of utilizing art criticism in teaching content. Several years earlier Shuman adopted Discipline Based Arts Education, another educational program based on the arts, as a means to better serve its magnet students especially those in the fine arts. Questioning techniques are very beneficial in motivating students to think. This impacts what they commit to paper. Obviously, Carl was convinced of this truism. Shuman, as a middle school, was often looking for grants to help defray the costs of a burgeoning budget, and the Bernstein Model came with grant monies.

Question 6 - What staff development classes were offered for improving writing instruction at Shuman?

Carl: This year we had a large portion of the faculty take that class, *The Teaching and Evaluation of Reading and Writing*. Others will continue to take that class as well. That has been a significant improvement. I was very skeptical of that class when we began but was very pleased to have done it. We sent ten to twelve or more teachers to the Coastal Writing Project which is a branch of the National Writing Project. Teachers have really embraced that and have come back to the school doing really cool things with writing. That's mostly staff development. Teachers do talk to each other about what they are doing.

A good school, an improving school, an effective school will put a lot of eggs in the basket of staff professional development. There are only two ways to improve education - I was preaching this before it hit the professional literature – one is to improve teaching, the other is to improve learning. It is our job as professional educators to improve our teaching, and as our teaching improves so does the students' learning. So the more staff development a school can offer, the more staff development that teachers engage in, the better results they will have with their students. Period. Don't need to challenge the statement because it will happen every time.

Improving teaching is done through staff development. That came through loud and clear. The class "Teaching and Evaluating Reading and Writing" and the Coastal Writing Project have been the main avenues for providing staff development to improve writing at Shuman.

Question 7 - What makes a writing program successful?

Carl: First of all I don't know what existed before Mrs. Myles and I came to the school, but I do know the score was 170 on the [writing] test. Each year that we have given the [writing] test we have closed the gap every single year percentage-wise between the Shuman score and the state score. We're virtually even with the state, and we might be two hundredths of a percentage point behind where the state is.

Next year the school will exceed the state, and I can predict that from the data I have looked at over the last couple of years with what is going on in

our school and also as a result of the class I took for the analysis of our writing scores. Because our four feeder schools during the past three years have made improvements in their general scores and the percentage of students reaching the higher levels, Shuman's scores should improve.

We [Shuman] have also improved our scores throughout the entire seven years that we have been keeping data. We will see improvement in two main places, if I can remember what they were. One is in style, and I can't remember the other area. Style is the biggest part. We will improve our test next year, I predict, by five points plus or minus two, maybe as many as nine points. Shuman scores will exceed the state and the district and will probably be the best in the district because of what has been going on. The trends in the data are all going up, and the feeder schools' scores are also rising. The percentage of students going into the higher levels will translate into higher scores for Shuman."

Carl's response reflected an increase in the scores Shuman had made on the writing assessment. The pride in the gains the school as a whole had made was very obvious from his comments. Achievement was a process attained overtime as students progressed through the grades. The demand of the state for Average Yearly Progress places tremendous pressure on schools to maintain or exceed scores in high stakes testing. Shuman had demonstrated the students' abilities to write well on these tests. Carl was confident they would continue to improve. The question is: Do test scores indicate Shuman's language arts program is producing effective writers?

Question 8 - What changes were employed to improve writing instruction at Shuman Middle School?

Carl: We have done so much, and we should continue to do what we are doing. I say 'we' because I have been part of that, as I just alluded to with where the improvement will take place in the style. I think a greater, more specific analysis of the sub-tests of the students, maybe over the last couple of years, will help us. If we convert those to profiles for our students' targeted areas of greater need to individual students and then targeting these same kinds of needs, those systemic things to our classes, I believe that will improve our writing scores. As long as we don't give up on another area. Even though we are improving we need to address all areas of the writing test and do the same thing with our reading. Probably the most the important factor is the will to improve, and the belief that we can improve. If we think we are too good, for ourselves we will most certainly fail, but if we have the will to focus our efforts to continue improving we truly are 'in all things exemplary'. You don't remain exemplary in all things by not paying attention to what you are doing, and I think the school will focus. I think the professionals in the building are committed to improvement. If that will be their focus, and if they are willing to do the best they can on a daily basis, then excellence will occur. Excellence does not happen based on a singular event or time.

The theme I heard here was that we needed to study our weaknesses and strengthen them. Carl thought teachers should use writing scores as a diagnostic tool

to improve writing instruction. The promotion of a balanced literacy program was Carl's goal. He saw the connection between reading and writing.

Carl had high expectations for the school and the students. Our school motto was "In all things exemplary". Carl felt Shuman was on the way to becoming exemplary with continued self-improvement. He assumed teachers and students would set realistic goals and strive to meet them. He was committed to school improvement as was the principal.

One score on a writing test did not mean the school had achieved excellence. Achievement, like writing, was a process to be attained over time rather than an end product. Carl wanted a picture album, not a single snapshot, that would reflect the staff's commitment to excellence for Shuman Middle School.

Summary

This chapter related my relationship with my participants and a brief profile of each member. A transcript of the interviews conducted with the participants yielded their perceptions and pedagogy of writing. My own perceptions were chronicled in my reflections as they related to the information gleaned from the interviews. The interviews were collegial and dialogical in nature so as to elicit responses with the least amount of reservation.

Each of the teacher participants discussed their attitudes toward writing, their role as a writer, any training they had received, and related information about their writing praxis. Their views on assessment and motivation as well as their thoughts on reading and writing connections were a part of the dialogue. The administrator

participant responded to the first three questions asked of the teachers and then to questions that examined his philosophy of writing, his expectations for teachers – their praxis and participation in staff development – and his views on writing in general and at Shuman Middle School.

Conducting this research helped us have a better understanding of who we were as a school and as a department and prompted an in-depth self evaluation and reflection from us all. Each grade level seemed to have a different idea of where we were and what we were doing or should be doing as teachers of writing. Having heard the perceptions of each participant it was apparent the writing methods and practices at Shuman Middle School can and should be re-evaluated. The goals our principal and assistant principal laid out when they developed the writing plan needs to be revised to meet the changing needs of Shuman's divergent student population in the 21st century.

CHAPTER 5

DATA REPRESENTATION: ARTIFACTS AND OBSERVATIONS

Artifacts

In this chapter I discuss and reflect on the artifacts and observations of my participants and the writing plan developed by Shuman's writing team when Mrs. Myles (principal) and Mr. Waterbrook (assistant principal) were assigned to Shuman. I was able to observe only three of six participants due to three of the participants transferring to other schools.

While each participant turned in lesson plans in a uniform format, their approach to filling out the lesson plans varied. A typical lesson plan submitted is included. An analysis of their lesson plans provided me with a better understanding of their philosophy and pedagogy of writing instruction. The lesson plan indicated the level to which the individual participant incorporated writing strategies into his or her lessons.

Shuman's writing plan was developed as a means to alleviate the concerns of the writing scores being less than the county and state averages on the annual eighth grade writing test. It had been revised each year since its inception in 1994. Each of the participant's lesson plans should have reflected the goals and strategies from Shuman's writing plan.

Observations allowed me to discern the extent to which writing took place in each of my participants' classrooms. They also allowed me to verify that the writing plan was being implemented and the lesson plans were an accurate reflection of writing practices in the language arts classrooms.

Analyzing the three components – lesson plans, observations, and the school’s writing plan focused the lens through which I viewed my research and also the participants’ commitment to teaching writing in their respective classrooms. The teachers’ lesson plans and the school’s writing plan were the two artifacts I examined to determine to what extent writing was actually practiced in the participants’ classrooms and the extent to which the teachers were complying with the school’s expectations.

Most of the lesson plans were uniform; however, there was one participant who utilized a supplemental artifact that was based on the model Artful Learning™ (Bernstein Model) a method or strategy to engage students in the learning process. This method involves the use of masterpieces, such as Vivadli’s *Four Seasons* or DaVinci’s *Mona Lisa* to encourage thinking and writing. It also used kinesthetic movement to motivate and promote learning. This teacher did not submit the Artful Learning™ component to the administration but kept it as a guide for her own use.

My overall impression while examining the lesson plans was that writing, as a discipline, was not emphasized to a large degree in the participant’s classrooms. There appeared to be writing every week, but the amount of writing did not represent a significant amount of time. Additionally, there seemed to be a limited amount of actual composing required in the classrooms. Most writing was in the form of homework. Even as homework, the writing activities seemed limited in scope. The following is an overall analysis of the lesson plan for each participant.

Jenene: The plans Jenene used in her class were kept within her lesson plan book along with the plans reviewed and returned to her by the administration. Her first sample lesson plan was for the week of September 8th, three weeks after school

started. My analysis of her lessons plans for the first nine weeks indicated that most of the writing in her class took place on Fridays.

The writing activities included using the prompts from the literature textbook. The reading selections begin with a “Before You Read” and a “Quick Write” which asks the students to respond to a series of statements or to make predictions based on a scenario related to the story they are about to read. Jenene had the students choose from the “Building Your Portfolio” section that followed each selection. This segment allowed the students to choose from three or four writing or subject-based choices to show they understood the story concepts.

Other forms of writing often included poetry and letter writing. Students were involved in composing pieces using the writing process. Usually these were initiated using writing prompts. More germane activities had the students writing autobiographies to be shared with the class. She also had the students writing sentences with specific directions; for example, “Write sentences that contain adverbs.” They also created an advertisement for a book, an ad campaign called “Try It Out”, and “Daily Oral Language Review”. Identifying similes and metaphors, characterizations, and responding to quotes were all included as writing activities. Outlining passages and varied note taking activities were written in the lesson plans. Writing spelling words two times each during the week was part of her writing assignment for students.

The lesson plans did not give a clear picture of actual writing instruction that was taking place in the classroom. Neither student choice nor an opportunity to share their writing was evidenced in the lesson plans. Jenene’s lesson plans

documented a wide variety of writing activities; however, a good number of them were worksheets. Even so, her students were assigned writing that engaged them in relevant, meaningful composing. Actual instruction during writing could not be ascertained from the lesson plans.

Terri: Terri's lesson plans began in September. Around the middle of September, she began to review the writing process. Also during that week, the first mention of journals occurred. The journal topic was a prewriting activity for a research project about the origin of the students' names. The students were also asked to work on creating compound sentences during this week. Later that month the students were instructed to write an acrostic poem. More work on compound sentences as well as revision and completion of the name essay was completed in September.

October writing activities included an "I Am" poem, a descriptive paragraph, graphic organizers, writing sentences with prepositions, and an essay entitled, "All About Me." Answering questions from a reading selection was another writing exercise.

November's writing assignments included writing metaphors, responding to Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, a five paragraph essay, "What am I Thankful For?", and a summary of a reading selection, and writer's workshop activities. During this month students wrote a poem in writing workshop.

Writing activities in December included "Quick Writes" from the literature text book and answering the "Making Meanings" section of the text.

Mention of creative writing activities and working with graphic organizers for a “news” story were the only other writing activities for the month.

January brought increased preparation for the writing assessment given around the middle of the month. A mock writing test was given, persuasive essays assigned, and copying spelling words made up the activities for January. The rest of Terri’s lesson plans through April included research on Jacob Lawrence, writing activities for Mondays and Tuesdays, an essay about Native Americans, and writing another “news” article.

TEACHER'S NAME		Hutchinson, T.		LANGUAGE ARTS		GRADE SECTION#	8-9	DATE:	10/07/02-10/11/02
MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY	
TEXT OR MATERIAL Who am I?, by Aylette James		TEXT OR MATERIAL Handouts		TEXT OR MATERIAL Elements of Writing		TEXT OR MATERIAL Handouts		TEXT OR MATERIAL Elements of Writing	
OBJECTIVES 8.10 Applies standards of English. 8.14 Follows oral directions and asks questions for clarification. 8.64 Uses the writing process. 8.33 Expands reading vocabulary 8.29 Responds creatively to literature		OBJECTIVES 8.10 Applies standards of English. 8.14 Follows oral directions and asks questions for clarification. 8.64 Uses the writing process. 8.33 Expands reading vocabulary 8.29 Responds creatively to literature		OBJECTIVES 8.10 Applies standards of English. 8.14 Follows oral directions and asks questions for clarification. 8.64 Uses the writing process. 8.33 Expands reading vocabulary 8.29 Responds creatively to literature		OBJECTIVES 8.2 Recognizes the function of the eight parts of speech 8.9 Recognizes and uses verbal phrases		OBJECTIVES	
PAGE		PAGE		PAGE 150-158		PAGE 474-476		PAGE	
PROCEDURE Test (Sentence structure) Teacher will read Who am I?, by Aylette James Students will discuss the conflict, plot, setting of the book. Students will create an "I AM" poem for their "All About Me" portfolio. Students will compose an autobiographical essay: "The Me I See"		PROCEDURE Vocabulary test. Students will continue the writing process with their poem and essay.		PROCEDURE Students discuss chapter 5 Using Description. Students will begin their descriptive paragraphs: "My Favorite Place"		PROCEDURE Language Lab: 3 sentences will be written on the board. Students will be asked to fill in each sentence with an appropriate word. Students will discuss Prepositions Students will complete/check exercise 12. Students will discuss prepositional phrases. Students will complete/check exercise 13		Records Day HOLIDAY	
HOMEWORK-study for vocabulary test EVALUATION-Observation		HOMEWORK-essay EVALUATION-Observation and assessing of various tasks and assignments		HOMEWORK-none EVALUATION-SAME		HOMEWORK-copy commonly used prepositions from page 474 EVALUATION-Observation and assessing of various tasks and assignments		HOMEWORK-none EVALUATION-SAME	

- Special Education Modifications
1. Material will be given written as well as verbally.
 2. Work with partner
 3. Assignments are written on the board or given to the student on a typed sheet.
 4. Extra time will be given to complete tasks if needed

- SEARCH MODIFICATIONS
1. Acceleration of pacing
 2. Provide opportunities for self-directed practice involving research
 3. Provide a greater degree of complexity
 4. Encourage the development of challenging, creative products.

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Figure 1. Terri’s Lesson Plan.

Terri's lesson plans were similar to Jenene's. Some assignments were textbook related while quite a few were worksheet type activities that addressed English grammar. Pieces of writing using the writing process were in her lesson plans. Many of the writing assignments were responses to questions from the literature book.

Tracy: September writing activities for Tracy included creating flash cards, completing a comprehension activity, working on a time line, outlining a passage, creating a character analysis, and writing a bio-poem. Students created an "All About Me" book, and answered reading comprehension questions twice a week. October and November assignments included journal entries Monday through Thursday, letter writing, creating figurative language, and book reports.

Graphic organizers, journal entries, fantasy essays (creative writing), bio-poems, self-portraits, and note taking were in January and February's plans.

Person		LESSON PLANS		Grade/Section #:		10/21-10/25	
Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday	
Text or Material:		Text or Material:		Text or Material:		Text or Material:	
Notes on the board Sheet		Tuck Everlasting Vocabulary Test Notes on the board		Notes from Tuesday Practice exercises		Vocabulary packet Tuck Everlasting	
Objective: 70		Objective: 14		Objective: 70		Objective: 29,30,53	
Identify simple and compound subjects and predicates		Understands figurative language Similes, metaphors, personification		Identify simple and compound subjects and predicates		Identifies story, character, and plot development Identifies new meanings of words Understands figurative language	
Page:		Page: 31-63		Page:		Page:	
Procedure:		Procedure:		Procedure:		Procedure:	
Journal Entry: Have drugs ever affected you personally? Explain. Daily Language Review Students will copy notes on the board about subjects and predicates. As class we will do examples. Working in pairs students will complete subject/predicate exercises and grade. Students will complete vocabulary test.		1) Journal Entry: What affect do drugs have on your community? Explain. 2) Daily Language Review 3) Students will copy figurative language notes from the board 4) While reading chapter 6-10, we will find and examine examples of figurative language 6) Students will work in groups to create their own examples of similes, metaphors, and personification. Students will illustrate the example using construction paper, ect. 7) Vocabulary Test		1) Working in pairs students will complete subject/predicate exercises 2) As a class we will grade and discuss the exercises		1) Students will finish figurative language project from Wednesday. 2) Students will complete a quiz on chapters 6-11	
Homework/Evaluation:		Homework/Evaluation:		Homework/Evaluation:		Homework/Evaluation:	
Vocabulary Test		Figurative Language worksheet		Subject/Predicate worksheet			

Figure 2. Tracy's Lesson Plan.

The assignments for March and April's included journal writing, writing comic strip conversations, library research, and poetry through a workshop approach. Tracy's lesson plans ended in April.

Tracy's assignments initially were worksheet and text book related activities. As the year progressed, journals became part of her class's writing routine.

By March, Tracy was using a writer's workshop model to teach writing. As Terri's, the lesson plans did not specify the components of writer's workshop.

Terry: September through November’s lesson plans for Terry included responding to reading, journal entries, discussion and completion of questions from the “Making Meaning” section of the literature book, copying and writing sentences, creating morals and fables, defining words, writing a paragraph, and an essay on “What Career/Job I Want.”

Teacher's Name: T. Ferree - I.A.		LESSON PLANS		Grade/Section #: 6-10	Date: 03/10-03/14
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	
Text or Material: Elements of Writing Grammar IF	Text or Material: Elements of Writing Grammar IF	Text or Material: Elements of Writing Grammar IF	Text or Material: Elements of Writing Grammar IF	Text or Material: Record's Day	
Objective:	Objective:	Objective:	Objective:	Objective:	
Parts of Speech Prepositions 6.2, 6.9	Parts of Speech Prepositions 6.2, 6.9	Parts of Speech Prepositions 6.2, 6.9	Parts of Speech Conjunctions 6.2, 6.9	Record's Day	
Page: 406-410	Page: 406-410	Page: 406-410	Page: 411-412	Page: 411-412	
Procedure:	Procedure:	Procedure:	Procedure:	Procedure:	
Introduce Prepositions - Discuss and Model Part of Speech. Complete and discuss Exercise 11 on p. 409	Review Prepositions Practice identifying Prepositions. Complete Sheet	Administer Test on Prepositions Sheet 55 HRW Workbook.	Introduce Conjunctions. Discuss and Model Part of Speech Complete and discuss Exercise 13 on p. 411	Record's Day	
Homework/Evaluation:	Homework	Homework	Homework	Homework	
Study and Complete sheet for Review. TO Graded	Study and Complete sheet for Review. TO Graded	TO Evaluation Graded	TO Graded	Record's Day	

Figure 3. Terry’s Lesson Plan.

January’s lesson plans had the most writing activities. Terry began with responding to a “Quick Write” section of the literature book and answering questions to the selection. Later in the month were writing assignments for research reports, biographical profiles, and exercises with the students’ vocabulary words such as writing sentences and defining the words.

During February and March the students wrote letters to a famous person, wrote vocabulary words, did another “Quick Write”, wrote a newspaper article about the south, defined vocabulary words, wrote “Name Game” poetry, and wrote an essay on their favorite ice cream.

For most of the first semester Terry’s class engaged in text book writing activities. Usually these are “canned” prompts that do little to motivate the students to write. These type activities were seen in the previous lesson plans of the participants.

Research reports and biographical profiles hold more promise of actually immersing the students in writing experiences. The letters to a famous person could motivate the students to write depending on the person and the student’s interests.

Leslie: September and October writing activities for Leslie included writing paragraphs, answering questions, graphic organizers, “Quick Write” and answering “Making Meanings” questions from the text. Shape poetry, Daily Language™, responding to literature, a Fire Prevention Essay, “I Used to . . .” poems, writing the literary elements to stories, creation of crossword puzzles, note taking activities, and answering essay questions finalized the first two months of lesson plans for Leslie.

November and December activities involved taking notes on the writing process, student produced illustrated stories, more notes on literary elements, utilizing vocabulary words in predictions about the stories students read, book reports, creative writing assignments, paragraph writing, responding to questions about story selections, a narrative essay, a “Dear Teacher” letter, and a title page for their portfolio. Other activities for the time period reported were portfolio

work, a reflection on an essay, another “Dear Teacher” letter, cover page for the portfolio, narrative reflections for several pieces of writing, graphic organizers revisited, more note taking on the writing process, create your own questions about reading selections, and homework assignments for writings to be included in the portfolio.

Swatanbano	LESSON PLANS		Grade/Section	Lane Arts	Date
Tuesday	Wednesday		Thursday		
Material:	Text or Material:		Text or Material:		Text c
Transparency Notes Grammar & Writing Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparency • English Composition 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparency • English Composition 		•
Objective:	Objective:		Objective:		Objec
3,4 9, Student usage of verbs, linking & action	QCC. 7- 9, Student recognize the use of Adverbs		QCC. 7.30, 32,33 Students will select best replacement for conjunctions and preposition		QCC. will se for co prepo
0 – 525	Page:		Page:		Page:
Procedure:	Procedure:		Procedure:		Proce
Daily Language Review Discuss Notes Assessment 29-45 (page 13)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily Language Review • Exercise 7 & 8 (pp.317-319) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily Language Review • Exercise 14 (pp.325-326) 		• •
RECEIVED			OCT + 5 2002		
HOMEWORK		HOMEWORK			
Exercises 3 & 4		Exercises 15-16 (pp.461-464)			St

Figure 4. Leslie’s Lesson Plan.

January and February’s assignments involved creation of a chart, taking notes on various topics, outlining passages, peer editing essays, work on a variety of essays, completing final paragraphs, completing questions, answering questions about myths, defining words, student-created word puzzles, an

expository essay, revising drafts of essays, brain storming for a new narrative essay, continuing drafts, and completing graphic organizers.

March to May writing assignments involved creating an African-American booklet, a letter to one of our teachers serving in Iraq, writing questions while watching a video on the Odyssey, note taking on couplets, writing poetry (haiku, quatrains, cinquins, and limericks), vocabulary exercises, creating Venn diagrams, and completing portfolios.

Leslie's students were more involved in actual writing experiences than the other participants. Her lesson plans reflected her writing pedagogy as expressed in her interview. While there were worksheet activities from the textbook, assignments that prompted attention to a writer's craft were also included. Leslie allowed the students to have more creative assignments that motivated them to write.

Bill: In my lesson plans for September and October, I included activities responding to journal topics, language arts skills maintenance (Daily Bites™ and Mountain Language™), answering “Making Meanings” to reading selections, spelling homework, notes on how to do research, research project on scorpions, and a “Fire Prevention” essay.

Writing activities for November and December were to respond to reading selection stories and answering questions from *Action* and *Read* magazines. The activities for January and February included writing responses to Dr. Martin Luther King's “I Have a Dream Speech” and other writing activities about Dr. King. Also during this period students created fairy tales and wrote an autobiographical incident.

March through May’s writing assignments included more responding to “Making Meanings”, writing paragraphs, choosing from the “Building Portfolio” section of the literature book, an open book test with several essay questions, a persuasive writing essay, and writing fables and myths.

All English mechanics objectives relating to English are met through skills maintenance program Mountain Language™.

Scorpions
(Update - revision)

Umbrella Theme – Changes
IEPs on file with ~~principal~~ ^{Principal}
Search Through MS. Ashman

Teacher's Name: William L. Moore LESSON PLANS Grade/Section #: 7-1,2,3 Date: 11/18-22/02

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Text or Material: Elements of Literature(HRW)/(READ) English(HM)/(ACTION) Objective: 1- 12, 13, 14 16,	Text or Material: Elements of Literature(HRW)/(READ) English(HM)/(READ) Objective: 17, 21- 25	Text or Material: Elements of Literature(HRW)/(READ) English(HM)/(ACTION) Objective: 31- 45, 56, 63	Text or Material: Elements of Literature(HRW)/(READ) English(HM)/(ACTION) Objective: 64, 65, 66, 67,	Text or Material: Elements of Literature(HRW)/(READ) English(HM)/(ACTION) Objective:69, 70, 75, 74
Grammar and Usage Listening, Writing	Listening, Literature Writing	Reading, Speaking, Writing	Reading, Writing	Reading, Writing
Page: <i>Sleepy Hollow</i> Procedure: Each day: Silent Sustained Reading 1. Agenda HW written----- 2. Journal Topic changes each day. 3. Mountain Language 1- 8 (left-side) 4. HW Check 5. Oral reading 6. Read Finish reading <i>Sleepy Hollow</i>	Page: <i>Sleepy Hollow</i> Procedure: Each day: Silent Sustained Reading 1. Agenda HW written----- 2. Journal Topic changes each day. 3. Mountain Language 9 – 16 (left-side) 4. HW Check 5. Oral reading 6. Start Wrap-up activity for <i>Sleepy Hollow</i>	Page: <i>Sleepy Hollow</i> Procedure: Each day: Silent Sustained Reading 1. Agenda HW written----- 2. Journal Topic changes each day. 3. Mountain Language 17 – 20 (left-side) 4. Mountain Language 1 – 4 (right-side) Check ML 5. HW Check 6. Oral reading 7. Finish Wrap-up activity for <i>Sleepy Hollow</i>	Page: <i>The Monkey's Paw</i> Procedure: Each day: Silent Sustained reading 1. Agenda HW written----- 2. Journal Topic changes each day 3. Mountain Language 5 – 12 (right-side) 4. HW Check 5. Assign spelling words for the next week. 6. Oral reading 7. Start <i>The Monkey's Paw</i>	Page: <i>The Monkey's Paw</i> Procedure: Each day: Silent Sustained Reading 1. Agenda HW written----- 2. Journal Topic changes each day. 3. Mountain Language 13 – 20 (right-side) 4. Mountain Language check 5. HW Check 6. Oral reading 7. Finish <i>The Monkey's Paw</i> 8. Spelling test
Homework/Evaluation: Spelling words defined and syllabication. Read each night for 15 min.	Write each word in a sentence or a story with at words underlined. 5 sentences min. Read each night for 15 min	Write words in two times each and ABC order. Read each night for 15 min	Write words three times each. Spelling test Friday Read each night for 15 min	Read for sixty minutes. Begin spelling HW

Figure 5. Bill’s Lesson Plan.

This concludes the examination of lesson plans from each of the participants.

While the lesson plans appear vague, it may be a natural fault of the lesson plan format.

The procedure section of the lesson plan was seen as an itemized account of what occurred for a particular block of time. The plan does not specifically ask what

instructional practices will take place in the class room. It is assumed students will be taught how to do the tasks assigned. Example copies of the participants' lesson plans also appear in the Appendix.

Observations

Observing the participants in the study was problematic. Two of the teachers transferred during my research project, and I was a participant also, therefore I could observe only half of the participants – two eighth grade teachers and one of the seventh grade teachers. Getting to observe the participants proved a delicate issue also. I approached each of the participants, and they all agreed to the observations. I told them I would like to video-tape and/or audio-tape the observation for a more accurate transcription. Two of the participants agreed readily to the taping; the other participant did not feel comfortable with the idea of being taped or having the students taped. The observations took place over a ten-day period. I observed the eighth grade teachers during the third block of the day and the seventh grade teacher during the first block of the day.

Jenene: Jenene was our department chair and an eighth grade teacher. Her class was composed of twenty-one students – ten boys and eleven girls. The observation took place on a Tuesday during the second block of our schedule from 9:45 a.m. until 10:55 a.m. Her room was similar to mine in that she had many posters and information on the walls around the room. Instead of an overhead, she used chart paper for presenting information. There was limited writing going on during my observation. The writing I noted most was note taking. She used an agenda to let

the students know what they would cover that day. The agenda was posted on the board.

At the start of the class the students were taking notes on literary terms related to idioms. They also took notes on folk heroes such as John Henry and Paul Bunyon. Jenene tied in “Westward Expansion” to a reading selection they had studied in social studies with taking notes on folk heroes. Her lesson discussed the use of exaggeration in writing. During the course of the lesson the students listened to a taped version of “The Ransom of Red Chief” by O. Henry. After listening to the story Jenene led a review of the main events and orally tested the students’ recall of the story.

Debriefing the observation with Jenene was refreshing. Her style, while different from mine in many ways, was also similar. We both used several mini-lessons to teach our students during the time we had them. We both reviewed the previous lessons and connected the current lessons with things we had already taught or that our team had taught.

Jenene agreed that the notes from my observation covered what she taught in the class I observed. She talked with her students about the need to write and communicate effectively. She pointed out the importance of writing sensibly and how it can improve their school, job, and career choices. The “real world” discussion made the value of what they were learning important to them.

Terri: Terri was an eighth grade colleague of Jenene’s. Her class had twenty-one students also. She had eleven boys and ten girls. The observation took place on a Wednesday during the second block from about 9:45 a.m. until 10:55 a.m. The

time of the observation was of Terri's choosing. Terri also used an agenda posted on the board for the students to know what they were to cover that day. As I entered the class the students were engaged in a Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) review of antonyms and synonyms. After working on the exercise the students exchanged papers and then graded each other's paper. Terri collected them and recorded them in her grade-book.

After reading the students a story, Terri asked them to predict what would happen next. The story was used to review participials and verbals. The students were to locate the verbals and then write the sentence that contained the verbal and underline it. Many students protested they did not know what to do. Terri reviewed the definition of a verbal and asked other students to define what verbals were and how they were used in sentences. The students finally understood and were able to complete the assignment.

During the lesson another teacher came in, and I realized that I was in an inclusion class (a class in which special education students are mainstreamed into a regular education class with support from the special education department). The colleague came in and moved among the students helping as needed, not pointing out the student or students with whom she was there primarily to work.

The students moved to a series of group activities related to the newspaper. Each group of two to four students had a different activity involving the newspaper and was given a set amount of time to perform the activity. Because of the length of time the verbal activity had taken, Terri had to change her plans and make the newspaper activity a two-day activity.

Following up on the observation of Terri's class with an interview allowed us to discuss what I had seen. We both agreed my summary was accurate. Terri felt I had caught the essence of the lesson I observed. I asked her how she grouped the students, and she said it was an alphabetical order based on last names.

Terri said she would often have a lesson planned and would come to find out during the lesson that the students may not be ready to show they understood what she had taught. This was evidenced by the students' inability to complete the verbal activity without a lot of redirection and reminders.

Observing Terri's lesson allowed me insight to my own teaching. I did many of the same things she did while she was teaching. The ways she monitored the students, managed the grading, and motivated the students were similar to how I conducted my class.

Leslie: Leslie was the seventh grade counterpart to me. Her class had twenty-six students – twelve girls and fourteen boys. The observation was on a Tuesday during our first block 8:05 a.m. until 9:35 a.m. Leslie's classroom was attractive with many posters that promoted learning and a creative environment. She had many resources, such as supplemental texts and other materials. During my observation, our assistant principal observed Leslie.

Leslie broke her block into several mini-lessons. They were studying folk tales. She and her students reviewed a study guide for a video shown to the class. The class had watched a part of the video in a previous lesson. The study guide was called "Folk Tale Critique."

The lesson began with a quiz over the elements of folk tales. The students exchanged papers and graded each other's work. After the quiz and grading, the class watched the second half of Roger and Hammerstein's *Cinderella*. During the viewing of the video Leslie fast-forwarded past longer parts, then paused to discuss items like special effects and how they are different today than when that film was made. After the film they moved back to the "Folk Tale Critique," finished it, and moved to another lesson on adjectives.

Debriefing with Leslie confirmed that I had captured the essence of the lesson for the day. I told her I thought we had a similar style in our teaching and that our rooms were similarly decorated. We both used peers to help grade and review daily work but not our tests.

My observation of Leslie's class was a little off kilter in that the assistant principal chose to observe that day. I think that may have skewed what Leslie was doing or had planned to do. I know for me it is unnerving enough to be observed by one person, but the inclusion of another person creates even more anxiety.

Writing was documented in the lesson plans of all participants, but did not seem to be evidenced to a great degree within the classrooms. In the interview, lesson plans, and observations, it was ascertained writing took place, but direct instruction in how to write did not seem to be part of the daily routine. Participants mentioned teaching components of the writing process, but other than the writing workshop approach, little other evidence was found by the researcher. The lack of training, as admitted to by the participants, was also problematic. The need for teachers to be trained in how to teach

writing in teacher preparation classes was evidenced by the comments that each of the participants made to the researcher.

During my observations the types of writing I noted were limited. It seemed the writing was relegated to note taking or answering questions in response to the readings for the day.

Writing, regarded as part of a balanced literacy program, may need another section added to the lesson plan that would allow one to more easily assess that writing is being stressed and the degree to which it is being taught.

Shuman's Writing Plan

Beginning in 1994, Shuman developed a writing plan or strategy to improve the scores on the eighth grade writing test and to improve overall student writing at each grade level. The basic plan can be read in Appendix B of this research. The overall plan did not change much from the first year's inception. The main changes that took place were a review of test data and a reflection of how well we had accomplished our goals each year. We began to make sure the data was recorded and read diagonally so the same groups of students were being compared with each other; in other words, we compared the results as the students moved through Shuman. This allowed for the same groups of students to be tracked and their progress monitored.

Each subsequent year's plan began with an analysis of the test data and then determination as to which strategies should be employed to best meet the goals the writing team had established. Shuman's main strategy was to use "Writing Across the Curriculum" as the means to engage most of the students in writing. Each day of the

week a different subject area both academic and exploratory was to assign 15 minutes of writing on any topic the teacher chose.

Another part of our plan was that each homeroom teacher was provided with a tracking chart to post the Iowa Test of Basic Skills™ (ITBS) scores. These scores were shared with the academic team. The tracking chart was later modified to include the Georgia Criterion Competency Test (GCRCT) as well as the ITBS. Use of the tracking chart gave each teacher, at a glance, a look at how the student and class did on a particular test. This allowed the teacher to better prepare instructional strategies.

Utilizing the chart and the information gathered from the testing data, the teachers were asked to provide both remedial and enrichment data to show how they planned to address the students' weaknesses and to continue to build on and maintain their strengths. An inventory taken of the various test-taking resources was provided for all teachers to use for writing instruction. Evidence that the resources were being used should have been reflected in the weekly lesson plans.

Summary

Examining the lesson plans and observing the teachers was insightful. The lesson plans gave me information as to what the participants were doing in their classrooms; however, reading a lesson plan alone leaves one with little true knowledge of what is actually occurring in a particular classroom. The observations allowed me an overall view of the day-to-day activities in their classrooms. Even combining the lesson plans and an observation, the observer may not get a completely accurate picture of the proposed learning because the day of the observation may not find the teacher following the lesson plan for that day. This could be problematic in light of the need for the

observer to accurately interpret what is happening in the participant's classroom. These problems do not lessen the importance of analyzing the artifacts and the information gained through the observations. This could necessitate the need for more observations. This need for more observations becomes difficult due to time constraints, teachers transferring, or moving, and the instability of faculties within schools. Teachers may teach one subject one year and another subject the next year due to the dynamics of the middle school.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY: FINDINGS, CONCERNS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

In this chapter I summarize five major findings that emerged from my research:

(1) Many teachers in content areas may need more training in writing instruction in order to help students become proficient writers and readers. (2) Employing hermeneutic phenomenology, there emerged from this study a realization of the need for utilizing more technology in language arts classrooms. (3) It seems that there is more emphasis on the mechanics of writing but not enough on writing as a process in language arts classrooms. (4) There is a need for developing a writing pedagogy for language arts classrooms which captures the multiple aspects of literacy development. (5) All members of society must work together to develop communities of learners where support for and the importance of writing is woven into the policy milieu, university curriculum, school writing pedagogy, and classroom writing practice to help all students to reach their fullest potential in an increasingly diverse American society.

The participants in my dissertation research were colleagues who taught writing as part of their language arts program and our assistant principal, who oversaw the lesson plans and curriculum of Shuman Middle School in Savannah, Georgia. As a teacher of language arts I was expected to have my students actively engaged in relevant and authentic activities that facilitated learning. My goal was to have my students find their voices as writers as they became confident skilled communicators. Feelings of inadequacy prompted the beginning of this research process where I became a participant/observer – immersed in the role of teacher as I conducted research on Shuman

Middle School's language arts program. My dual role was mirrored in Phillion and He's (2001) "to be believable the researcher must live the research inquiry" (p.14).

I observed and analyzed the participants' methods of teaching writing, and during the process I, too, became a better writer. As I interviewed the participants, analyzed their lesson plans, and observed them teaching, it became apparent that we all wanted the same thing - to create effective and proficient writers of our students. Using narrative to tell the story allowed me the opportunity to better understand not only my participants, but also myself in this process of research and reflection.

This dissertation process allowed me the opportunity to refine my skills and improve my own pedagogy both in writing and in all aspects of my teaching. It also provided an opportunity to observe first hand some of my colleagues' practices. Talking with the participants and having them describe their writing praxis helped them ponder the efficacy of the language arts program at our school.

Conversations with teachers revealed concerns they had regarding the lack of writing skills students were evidencing in their classrooms. Though motivating techniques were many and varied, reluctant writers sat at desks with pens resting securely in their wells and blank sheets of paper matching blank expressions as students were assigned "canned" writing prompts. Effect and efficient writers were not forthcoming. Product-oriented activities did not actively engage the students in meaningful writing tasks but rather engendered boredom with no desire to compose creative or imaginative texts. Teachers and students alike were becoming disenfranchised with writing.

We believed with appropriate scaffolding, our students could and would become authors in their own eyes. Our beliefs must be translated into instructional practices if

students are to benefit. The bottom line is this: If students are not reading and writing, the teacher must change his/her approach to teaching them. Teachers are agents of change, but change happens to the teacher as well as to the students. Writing assignments should empower the students to effect change in their world. The act of writing offers the opportunity for the writer to learn more about themselves as they communicate with others. Writing is a regenerative undertaking shrouded in a living document where the writer is renewed and reformed as she/he constructs and composes text.

Lee Odell (1993) on teacher composition and needed research postulated a guiding principle for teachers is to “effect” their students writing and clarify and mold the writings they produce. Teachers of writing should be researchers and discourse theorists whose function is not only to help students become better writers but also be informed as to trends, issues, and movements (Robinson, McKenna, & Wedman, 2004) within composition theory and practice. This belief Odell espoused summarizes what I feel the writing teacher’s responsibility is to his/her students. In a position paper on *Teaching composition* (NCTE, 2004), the NCTE echoed Odell’s beliefs that teachers need to be informed and knowledgeable about the current state of research in composition. NCTE’s position supports the idea that writing is a reflection of what the writer knows and feels which supports the hermeneutic phenomenology that focused this research.

Believing that teachers of writing should also be writers is a position held by the National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE). Teachers must become participant/observers in the writing process to impart the necessary skills students require if they are to perceive themselves as authors. The teachers become risk takers as they model and share their writing with the students which encourages them to do the same.

Participating in this research helped me refine my ideas on writing. Burke (2003) stated that “writing is always personal even when it is academic.” Burke continued his thought that helping students learn to write helps them find and develop their own voice as well as the skills writing requires. This dissertating process revealed to me how insecure we are in the perception of our abilities to convey the “right” or “proper” way to educate students in becoming better communicators.

There were some inherent limitations in my research. The number of participants was relatively small, and all were situated in the same inner-city middle school. The decision to add observations after the interviews were conducted and to analyze the lesson plans necessitated my being able to observe only three of my participants. This, in and of itself, narrowed my research even more. Limitations with perceived collegiality - the fact that regardless of how long one has known someone or how close you may feel you are, teachers are uncomfortable when it comes to being observed teaching or when asked questions about their teaching pedagogy. Scheduling times to interview and observe were problematic due to the general nature of a school environment.

Strengths also were found within my research. The closeness of the participants as colleagues allowed us a greater freedom to talk while we interviewed and helped ease some potential problems that might have occurred because of distrust of an outsider. Each of us was an insider on how our classrooms worked, but we were outsiders in how we worked with each other. Prior to my research we did not have any insight into what was going on in our own classrooms. To improve writing within our school we needed to talk more with one another and discuss what was happening in our classes.

The theoretical framework of my research was based in John Dewey's (1897) educational philosophy with roots in hermeneutic phenomenology by Van Manen (1990). The primary methods of inquiry were narrative based on Clandinin and Connelly (2000), Phillion and He (2001), and classroom-based action research by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) and McKernan (1991).

Through my interviews, observations, and conversations with my participants, I realized that teachers in content areas may need more training in writing instruction in order to help students become proficient writers and readers (**Finding 1**). Each of the participants talked about the lack of training in writing instruction offered through their college programs and/or staff development (see more detail in Chapter 4). They all came to the classroom from different backgrounds and for different reasons. Their self awareness of the need to have formal training reflected their desire to be better teachers of writing.

Michael Moore (2004) stated that when beginning his teaching and graduate work in the seventies there was little or no course work offered that specifically taught or mentioned the teaching of writing. The seventies and early eighties witnessed a transmutation of the conventional approaches to teaching writing in undergraduate and graduate schools. It was around this time writing was perceived as a process and not simply a product.

The lack of courses and requirements in the teacher preparation programs may be the identifying cause as to why the participants felt overwhelmed at times and unprepared to teach writing to the students. Although all the participants mentioned some type of instruction, either during college or the Coastal Writing Project or, in my case, the

Southern Writing Project (see more detail in Chapter 4), in response to the question on their past training, they gave vague, fleeting replies. The assistant principal had received no formal preparation for teaching writing (see Carl, Part II, Chapter 4, p. 129). An assumption could be proffered that if one is a licensed teacher, no other training is necessary to teach writing.

Most, if not all, teacher education programs require some course in language arts, but writing is usually subsumed as a component of literacy courses. At times, writing is no more than a medium by which knowledge acquisition of other disciplines is transmitted. In some areas writing is at best a penmanship activity, and with the technology explosion, even that has fallen to the wayside with the use of computers and/or word processors. Yet the ability to communicate well offers the promise of success more consummately as few other talents or abilities can.

Writer's craft – clarity, audience, good beginnings, word choice, style, correct conventions and so much more – are teachable skills. All students have experiences to write about if given the opportunity within a safe environment. Emig (1983) posited four implications for writing in language arts classrooms: (1) Although writing is natural, it is activated by enabling environments. (2) These environments have the following characteristics: they are safe, structured, private, unobtrusive, and literate. (3) Adults in these environments have two special roles: they are fellow practitioners, and they are providers of possible content, experiences, and feedback. (4) Children need frequent opportunities to practice writing, many of these playful (p. 139).

Now, more than at any other time, professional leaning programs and staff development sessions exist that provide in-depth training in methods and strategies to

teach writing. The National Writing Project has established workshops across the United States that promote the role of teacher as writer while training teachers in writing as a process. National conferences promoted by IRA and NCTE offer more sessions on how to teach writing. Colleges, in undergraduate and graduate programs, are scheduling more courses that address the need teachers have for explicit training in writing instruction, and more research is being conducted as to how writing instruction is taking place in classrooms. It would benefit educators in all content disciplines to take advantage of the opportunities to expand their knowledge base and skills in this vital component of a balanced literacy program.

The concern that each participant voiced is reflected in Schön's (1983) book on reflective practitioners. Schön stated there has been a decline in professional's abilities to "fix" problems within their own fields. This creates an inability to have sufficient knowledge to overcome society's ills; in this case the ills are the unpreparedness of teachers to help students become proficient writers. While Schön (1983) was not talking specifically about teachers he was talking about communities of professionals, and teachers are professionals. My participants' fears were addressed with our participation in staff development and gaining advanced degrees in language arts. Jenene stated in Chapter 4, "I am considering starting work on an advanced degree, and I know I will need to improve my writing as I move along in the process" (p.99). Terry is working on her Ed.S. at Lincoln Memorial University (see Chapter 4, p. 98). There is no easy solution to ensure that teachers become confident and at ease in perceiving their own training as an educator. With more tools and knowledge of current best practices the

participants in Shuman's language arts classrooms will become what they truly are – teachers of writing and facilitators of learning.

Employing hermeneutic phenomenology throughout my study brought to my attention the need for utilizing more technology in language arts classrooms (**Finding 2**). Shuman Middle School housed a computer lab that accommodated a class of 23 students, but unfortunately on any given day up to five of the computers were inoperable. Additionally, the time spent in the lab was reserved for practice on the Criterion Referenced Competency Test in reading and/or math. The only mention of technology by the participants was from Leslie (see Chapter 4, p.100) who used the Internet to locate appropriate activities that would motivate her students. A viable and necessary resource in today's expanding technological society as well as a strong motivational tool was being overlooked in the language arts program at Shuman.

Technology has changed the world in which we live. As educators we must adjust our definition of content literacy to accommodate word processing, new software and hardware upgrades, and composing concepts. Technology is transforming literacy at an alarming rate. "Technology has enhanced the basics of effective teaching and learning about writing and it has made the writing process easier. Technology has changed our ways of writing, thinking, and communicating, and it has affected both what is written and how it is written" (Bromley, 2006).

The National Center for Educational Statistics in 2002 reported that 85% of schools had Internet access, and 87% of the classrooms had at least one Internet computer.

Computers facilitate a positive impact on student writing. Word processing aids in speeding up the writing process thereby allowing the writer to devote more of their concentration to content (Robinson & McKenna, 2006). With the use of word processors, students write longer compositions and tend to engage in the revision process more readily. Text editors make revising and editing easier. Spell checkers and grammar checkers provide feedback quickly thereby freeing the teacher to conduct one-on-one conferences or small group mini-lessons (Bromley, 2006).

Technology affects the audience as well as the author. Compositions on the computer are easier to read and with the use of graphics can be more interesting and entertaining. Creativity and imagination is fostered with the use of computer graphics. Nevertheless, there are some concerns about the use of technology in classrooms today. There is the ethical dilemma of plagiarism with the wide-spread use of the Internet. Teachers must be careful that the students' work is actually their own. This ties into the need for more teacher training since students need to be taught how to properly reference sources and cite authors used in written work.

A socio-economic concern arises due to the inability of every household to afford a computer, software, or printer for students to use. This is being offset by computers being housed in public libraries, malls, and even some schools being opened on weekends to accommodate this need. Another caveat is the lack of keyboarding skills needed to make word processing an efficient and timely activity. With courses offered in schools and with practice this can be overcome fairly quickly. Computer labs in schools

should be used consistently to teach this skill until it is adequately mastered, otherwise the tediousness of hunt-peck typing will discourage students and become a detriment rather than a benefit to writing.

The future will see an increase in the use of technology in schools and homes. Teachers must keep pace with today's technologically expanding society to better equip students with the expertise needed to succeed. Educational institutions must foster the use of technology to prepare students for living in a technological society. Courses that address new advances in cyberspace must be included in the curricula. At the same time courses that teach our teachers methods and strategies for redelivery in classrooms are essential to assure the success of all.

My research revealed that there seemed to be more emphasis on the mechanics of writing but not enough on writing as a process in language arts classrooms (**Finding 3**). A major concern of the participants was the number of students who were weak in the basic skills of language arts. Jenene complained, "This past year I had children who were weak in their language arts skills I needed to start at the beginning" (see Chapter 4, p. 102). Having a range of students from those who could not write a complete sentence to those who were able to compose stories or essays was frustrating to the teacher and to the students as well (see more details Chapter 4). Those who could produce stories were made to re-demonstrate their knowledge of mechanics by completing English worksheets dealing with subject/verb agreement or some other less meaningful or irrelevant topic. This frustration crossed all grade levels and created a challenge and struggle for the teachers to actively engage all the students regardless of where they were on a writing continuum. A significant portion of the language arts block was spent in review using

paper/pencil worksheet activities to bolster a forgotten (if ever acquired) knowledge of grammar mechanics. Tracy commented, “I have to teach them what a sentence begins with and what it ends with” (see Chapter 4, p. 115). This was evidenced in the participants’ interviews responses, their lesson plans, and in the actual teacher observations. From this research it was ascertained more, if not most, of the writing tasks were product-oriented. Instruction in basic sentence structure before progressing to paragraphs was a recurring theme.

Writing spelling words or defining specific content terms appeared weekly as a writing activity in some aspect of the participants’ plans (see more details Chapter 5). Usually peer editing is no more than an exercise in correcting English conventions. Informal teacher conversations bemoan the inability of peers to edit each others work due to lack of skills in normative conventions, hence, the “back to basics” approach of so many teachers.

Each of the participants averred the teaching of writing was important to the success of their students. Their perceptions, if not their actual practices of teaching writing, mirrored what Burke (2003) wrote, “Writing is a powerful instrument of thought. In the act of composing writers learn about themselves and their world and communicate their insights to others. Writing confers the power to grow personally and to effect change in the world” (p. xv).

While each participant was concerned that their students be able to write well, neither their lesson plans nor the lesson observed had much in the form of writing instruction. Lessons included spelling activities, responding to reading selections, and other similar activities, but no detailed, specific lessons on writing genres or writing

workshops (see more detail Chapter 5). As a teacher at Shuman Middle School, I knew Writing Across the Curriculum was encouraged. The evidence was just not ascertainable in the lesson plans or in the classroom observations.

Content literacy is the ability to use reading and writing to acquire new content in a given discipline (McKenna & Robinson, 2006). The writing-to-learn movement emphasizes that writing is a means to clarify, analyze, organize, refine, and extend the internalization of content (McKenna & Robinson, 2006). “Writing, like reading, becomes a tool for acquiring content” (p. 8). Teachers can maximize learning by engaging students in appropriate content literacy activities. Policy makers of today are demanding the right to be literate in our society be seen as more than a privilege but as a new civil right (Cosgrove, 2001).

Teachers must consciously attend to the use and effects of the practices in the language arts classrooms. In teaching writing conventions, we slow down the writing process so that students may take advantage of that time to deliberate and reflect on the development of text (Lee, 2000). While this will not occur for every piece of writing, with a gradual release of responsibility, students may be empowered over time to write deliberately as an author.

It is imperative that students be allowed to foreground their writing from their own experiences, to see their lives as important thereby empowering their text. Normative conventions or forms should be deemphasized to permit writing as a constructive action that is designed to deliberately communicate to an audience (Lee, 2000). That is not to say conventional correctness is not necessary. Prose with a plethora of mechanical errors detracts from the message the author is trying to convey. Meaning

may get lost in the struggle to decipher poorly constructed pieces. That being said, a better theatre for reviewing or teaching basic sentence structure and/or English skills could be in the form of a mini-lesson or one-on-one conferences. Differentiated instruction is sweeping the nation; it is past time it was given more than lip-service in the classrooms of America's schools. Using differentiated instruction honors and affirms all voices in the classroom. Emig's (1983) enabling environment promotes a willingness and eagerness to write and share.

Writing is a complex, recursive process that ennobles our thoughts and experiences. It should not be and must not be trivialized to the point of copying rules or writing spelling words. There is a place and time for those skills to be addressed, but they are not composing tasks that will facilitate life-long learning. An emphasis needs to be placed on writing as a process, not on correcting normative conventions.

There is a need for developing a writing pedagogy for language arts classrooms which captures the multiple aspects of literacy development (**Finding 4**). Shuman has had a writing plan since 1993 when Mrs. Myles and Mr. Waterbrook were assigned to the school. The writing plan (see APPENDIX B) consisted of employing a "Writing Across the Curriculum" approach and an analysis of the writing scores of Shuman's eighth graders through an explication of those scores from TSARS (the scoring center at the University of Georgia where the writing test was evaluated). While this program was initially embraced and utilized by a majority of the teachers and staff in later years, it was not monitored as closely, and some of the initial focus was lost. It would be advantageous for Shuman's administrators to revisit the implementation of the writing plan – how it is monitored and how samples are collected.

Shuman's writing scores climbed, plateaued, and climbed again under the use of the writing plan. The plan was reviewed and slightly revised during the first years of Mrs. Myles and Mr. Waterbrook's administration. The latest revision was part of the Test Improvement Plan during the 1998-1999 school year. A series of examples and suggestions were given so that traditionally non-teachers of writing would have ideas from which to draw in implementing the program. The program itself was focused on improving writing skills, but the limited time for writing (15 minutes) did not allow for any real in-depth writing time or discussion of how students could improve their writing.

Writing Across the Curriculum is not a new model for writing in middle schools. It has been well-grounded in theories of writing and language use (Idrisano & Squire, 2000). Usually students whose schools promote this model have an advantage over students who do not. It is the implementation and monitoring that make the difference. Writing is effective in exploring and understanding academic subjects if utilized properly. Research studies in England and the United States revealed that writing assignments in content area classrooms tended to focus on reproducing information rather than using information to think more critically about subject matter (Idrisano & Squire, 2000). Just as in this research, there was little evidence of writing that required students to elaborate on what they were learning, to inquire, to make discoveries, or to think analytically. Most tasks directed students to take notes, copy outlines, or answer questions about the reading designed to regurgitate the text. Burke (2003) listed several common traits necessary for students to function in all discipline areas

1. Make statements or claims about events, ideas, or processes.

2. Support these statements using details and evidence from other texts or research.
3. Write with clarity, organizing information in the way that best meets their and their audience's needs.
4. Determine the purpose for this piece of writing: to persuade, inform, explain, entertain, learn; these are common to all subject areas at one time or another (p. 21).

When students make text-to-self, text-to-world, or text-to-text connections, better results are produced rather than simply note-taking or study questions. Executing these traits and connections increase the students ability to achieve in all content areas.

Having Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) as a writing plan for schools, monitoring teachers to ensure they are utilizing inquiry-based learning strategies, and planning creative, thought-provoking tasks will not guarantee proficient writers if enough time is not given for students to be totally engaged in the writing process. Shuman's limit of 15 minutes for every student to write in an academic subject - anything so long as they were writing (e.g., rules for physical education) misses the heart of the WAC model (see Appendix B for complete plan). Wedding WAC with writer's workshops is a model that would facilitate learning and assure schools are producing effective, proficient communicators.

The essential characteristics of writer's workshop merge with Burke's (2003) views of WAC. Students see themselves as writers because they are treated seriously as writers. Genuine talk takes place within reading and writing activities. Students are reading and writing for real and meaningful purposes. Individual strengths and needs are

recognized in a differentiated instruction format with effort and improvement noted. Students are taught to be responsible for their writing and most importantly, expectations for achievement are high (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). Writer's workshop may start with a mini-lesson or with an oral reading selection lasting from 15 to 20 minutes. Students are actively engaged in the writing process during which time the teacher is conducting individual conferences with students. These take place at the student's seat where, if they are in small groups, some residual learning may take place as other students "listen in". Drafting, editing, and publishing occur in a recursive fashion while students are composing. This section takes the greatest amount of time – usually 30 minutes or more. The conferring component is the foundation of the writer's workshop. It is during the conference that mechanics, spelling, or author's craft is addressed. The culminating activity allows time for students to share their work with each other, either in pairs, small groups, or with the entire class. This lasts about 15 to 20 minutes as well and is a vital component to the writing workshop. In some classes, the sharing is eliminated from lack of time. This should not occur for it is in sharing their writing that students are recognized as published authors.

Obviously, writer's workshop could not be conducted fully in all the academic disciplines, but the components could be implemented in an abbreviated fashion so students could reap the rewards and benefits. In the language arts classrooms, where the focus is on reading and writing, the writer's workshop would be very efficacious in producing skilled communicators. Refining and revising the WAC model to merge with the essential characteristics of writer's workshop will enhance and better the instructional

practices in all academic disciplines across all grade levels from elementary schools through universities.

Incorporating an addendum to the writing plan to offer staff development in learning methods and strategies to improve writing instruction could promote a community of learners and writers. Staff development energizes teachers and adds a sense of excitement and encouragement that carries over to the students. New learning may be shared with other staff members to create a community of learners.

All members of society must work together to develop communities of writers and learners where support for and the importance of writing is woven into the policy milieu, university curriculum, school writing pedagogy, and writing classroom practice to help all students reach their fullest potential in an increasingly diverse global economy (**Finding 5**). We were outsiders in that we had not really found a way to come together and create discourse among ourselves that would address the development of good writing pedagogy to guide our students. Discourses need to be established among and between pre-service and in-service teachers, teacher educators, administrators, and policy makers that promote the sharing of ideas and concerns. A community of writers and learners must be created bringing together educational practitioners, community members, parents, and students who share a goal for students to become writers who are life-long learners.

It is hoped the reading of this dissertation will transform the writing pedagogy of middle schools' language arts programs. As Leslie (see more detail Chapter 4) sought professional learning development to improve her instructional practices, other educators would benefit from doing the same. However, school systems, local and state, along with

institutions of higher learning must offer courses that address teachers' and students' needs in writing. It is vital to our growth as educators that universities seek out and sanction innovative, timely research projects to further our knowledge base in balanced content literacy and in writing pedagogy in particular.

My dissertation has to cease. However, the inquiry into the writing pedagogy for middle school language arts programs will continue. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 1999), only 1% of the students in the fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades scored at the Exceeds Level. 75% of the students scored above the Basic level leaving 25% of our country's children below the basic level of writing ability. This is a grave concern.

I sincerely hope that this study will be significant for teachers, teacher educators, administrators, and policy makers at a middle school level. For middle school teachers, this study will help develop a holistic writing pedagogy where writing is perceived as a process, woven into all content areas, and captures multiple aspects of literacy development. For middle school teacher educators, this study will help them get up close with the real world of writing praxis in middle schools, recognize the challenges and concerns of this praxis, and develop a university curriculum that is pedagogically compatible with the holistic middle school pedagogy. For middle school administrators, this study will help them foster a community of learners where teachers, students, parents, and staff work together to weave the importance of writing into school curriculum which helps all students reach their highest potential. For policy makers, this study will help them recognize the successful practices, concerns, challenges, and future directions of middle school writing practices in order to make policies that meet the

diverse needs of middle school populations and to create a policy milieu where all members of society work together to help all students reach their highest potential in an increasingly diverse American society.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A
TEACHER PARTICIPANT LESSON PLANS

TEACHER'S NAME		Hutchinson, T.		LANGUAGE ARTS		GRADE SECTION#		8-9		DATE: 09/23/02-09/27/02									
MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY											
TEXT OR MATERIAL		TEXT OR MATERIAL		TEXT OR MATERIAL		TEXT OR MATERIAL		TEXT OR MATERIAL		TEXT OR MATERIAL									
Elements of Writing		Elements of Writing		Elements of Writing		Handouts		Elements of Writing		Elements of Writing									
OBJECTIVES 8.3 Analyzes the parts of a sentence. 8.6 Uses types of pronouns. 8.10 Applies standards of English. 8.7 Writes simple, compound, complex, compound-complex sentences. 8.14 Follows oral directions and asks questions for clarification. 8.48 Uses interviewing to gather information. 8.64 Uses the writing process.		OBJECTIVES 8.3 Analyzes the parts of a sentence. 8.6 Uses types of pronouns. 8.10 Applies standards of English. 8.7 Writes simple, compound, complex, compound-complex sentences. 8.14 Follows oral directions and asks questions for clarification. 8.48 Uses interviewing to gather information.		OBJECTIVES 8.3 Analyzes the parts of a sentence. 8.6 Uses types of pronouns. 8.10 Applies standards of English. 8.7 Writes simple, compound, complex, compound-complex sentences. 8.14 Follows oral directions and asks questions for clarification. 8.48 Uses interviewing to gather information.		OBJECTIVES 8.3 Analyzes the parts of a sentence. 8.6 Uses types of pronouns. 8.10 Applies standards of English. 8.7 Writes simple, compound, complex, compound-complex sentences. 8.14 Follows oral directions and asks questions for clarification. 8.48 Uses interviewing to gather information.		OBJECTIVES 8.3 Analyzes the parts of a sentence. 8.6 Uses types of pronouns. 8.10 Applies standards of English. 8.7 Writes simple, compound, complex, compound-complex sentences. 8.14 Follows oral directions and asks questions for clarification. 8.48 Uses interviewing to gather information.		OBJECTIVES 8.3 Analyzes the parts of a sentence. 8.6 Uses types of pronouns. 8.10 Applies standards of English. 8.7 Writes simple, compound, complex, compound-complex sentences. 8.14 Follows oral directions and asks questions for clarification. 8.48 Uses interviewing to gather information.		OBJECTIVES 8.3 Analyzes the parts of a sentence. 8.6 Uses types of pronouns. 8.10 Applies standards of English. 8.7 Writes simple, compound, complex, compound-complex sentences. 8.14 Follows oral directions and asks questions for clarification. 8.48 Uses interviewing to gather information.							
PAGE 533-537 PROCEDURE Language Lab: 3 sentences will be written on the board. Students will identify the independent or subordinate clauses. Guided Practice: Students will discuss independent clauses and subordinate clauses. Students will complete/check exercises 1 and 2.		PAGE 561-563 PROCEDURE Review Homework. Language Lab: Students will add independent clauses to clauses to make complete sentences. Input: Students will discuss complex sentences. Guided Practice: Students will complete/check exercise 4. Students will share their acrostic poems, and then finish connecting their names with classmates on newspaper. Students will research the meaning of their name using name books and the internet.		PAGE 564-566 PROCEDURE Modeling: Teacher will model building a compound-complex sentence for students. Independent Practice: Students will create their own complex sentence by following the model. Input: Students will complete/check exercise 5. Guided Practice: Using the interview information, research material, journal responses, students will create a "name story".		PAGE 569-570 PROCEDURE Language Lab: Student will identify complex, compound-complex sentences from worksheet. Students will complete/check 1-10 of Posttest 1.		PAGE 570-571 PROCEDURE Review Homework Writing Workshop Students will proof read, revise and write final copy of their "name story". Students will share their stories.		HOMEWORK-Exercise 3, page 536 EVALUATION-Observation		HOMEWORK--none EVALUATION-Observation and assessing of various tasks and assignments		HOMEWORK-Review page 567 EVALUATION-SAME		HOMEWORK-11-20 of Posttest EVALUATION-Observation and assessing of various tasks and assignments		HOMEWORK--none EVALUATION-SAME	

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- Special Education Modifications
1. Material will be given written as well as verbally.
 2. Work with partner
 3. Assignments are written on the board or given to the student on a typed sheet.
 4. Extra time will be given to complete tasks if needed

- SEARCH MODIFICATIONS
1. Acceleration of pacing
 2. Provide opportunities for self-directed practice involving research
 3. Provide a greater degree of complexity
 4. Encourage the development of challenging, creative products.

 Administrator's Signature

TEACHER'S NAME		Hutchinson, T.		Reading/Language Arts		GRADE SECTION#		8-9		DATE:		03/10/03-03/13/03		
MONDAY	TEXT OR MATERIAL Read' magazine Handouts of poems	TUESDAY	TEXT OR MATERIAL Read' magazine English Book	WEDNESDAY	TEXT OR MATERIAL Read' magazine English Book	THURSDAY	TEXT OR MATERIAL Read' magazine English Book	FRIDAY	TEXT OR MATERIAL					
PROCEDURE *1 Language Lab - Affixes *Students will begin reading stations. At each of 4 stations, students will read a short story and complete an activity. *Students will take a test after completion of each station.	PROCEDURE *1 Language Lab - Affixes *Check homework *1 Language Lab - Affixes Students will continue with reading stations.	PROCEDURE *Check homework *1 Language Lab - Affixes Students will continue with reading stations.	PROCEDURE *Check homework *1 Language Lab - Affixes Students will continue with reading stations.	PROCEDURE *Check homework *1 Language Lab - Affixes Students will continue with reading stations.	PROCEDURE *Check homework *1 Language Lab - Affixes Students will continue with reading stations.	PROCEDURE *Check homework *1 Language Lab - Affixes Students will continue with reading stations.	PROCEDURE *Check homework *1 Language Lab - Affixes Students will continue with reading stations.	PROCEDURE *Check homework *1 Language Lab - Affixes Students will continue with reading stations.	PROCEDURE *Check homework *1 Language Lab - Affixes Students will continue with reading stations.	PROCEDURE *Check homework *1 Language Lab - Affixes Students will continue with reading stations.	PROCEDURE *Check homework *1 Language Lab - Affixes Students will continue with reading stations.	PROCEDURE *Check homework *1 Language Lab - Affixes Students will continue with reading stations.	PROCEDURE *Check homework *1 Language Lab - Affixes Students will continue with reading stations.	PROCEDURE *Check homework *1 Language Lab - Affixes Students will continue with reading stations.
OBJECTIVES 8.35 Uses context clues to determine meanings of unknown words. 8.38 Adjusts reading speed according to purpose and rereads for comprehension. 8.39 Interprets written instructions. 8.42 Analyzes relevance of data. 8.44 Applies reading strategies	OBJECTIVES 8.35 Uses context clues to determine meanings of unknown words. 8.38 Adjusts reading speed according to purpose and rereads for comprehension. 8.39 Interprets written instructions. 8.42 Analyzes relevance of data. 8.44 Applies reading strategies	OBJECTIVES 8.35 Uses context clues to determine meanings of unknown words. 8.38 Adjusts reading speed according to purpose and rereads for comprehension. 8.39 Interprets written instructions. 8.42 Analyzes relevance of data. 8.44 Applies reading strategies	OBJECTIVES 8.35 Uses context clues to determine meanings of unknown words. 8.38 Adjusts reading speed according to purpose and rereads for comprehension. 8.39 Interprets written instructions. 8.42 Analyzes relevance of data. 8.44 Applies reading strategies	OBJECTIVES 8.35 Uses context clues to determine meanings of unknown words. 8.38 Adjusts reading speed according to purpose and rereads for comprehension. 8.39 Interprets written instructions. 8.42 Analyzes relevance of data. 8.44 Applies reading strategies	OBJECTIVES 8.35 Uses context clues to determine meanings of unknown words. 8.38 Adjusts reading speed according to purpose and rereads for comprehension. 8.39 Interprets written instructions. 8.42 Analyzes relevance of data. 8.44 Applies reading strategies	OBJECTIVES 8.35 Uses context clues to determine meanings of unknown words. 8.38 Adjusts reading speed according to purpose and rereads for comprehension. 8.39 Interprets written instructions. 8.42 Analyzes relevance of data. 8.44 Applies reading strategies	OBJECTIVES 8.35 Uses context clues to determine meanings of unknown words. 8.38 Adjusts reading speed according to purpose and rereads for comprehension. 8.39 Interprets written instructions. 8.42 Analyzes relevance of data. 8.44 Applies reading strategies	OBJECTIVES 8.35 Uses context clues to determine meanings of unknown words. 8.38 Adjusts reading speed according to purpose and rereads for comprehension. 8.39 Interprets written instructions. 8.42 Analyzes relevance of data. 8.44 Applies reading strategies	OBJECTIVES 8.35 Uses context clues to determine meanings of unknown words. 8.38 Adjusts reading speed according to purpose and rereads for comprehension. 8.39 Interprets written instructions. 8.42 Analyzes relevance of data. 8.44 Applies reading strategies	OBJECTIVES 8.35 Uses context clues to determine meanings of unknown words. 8.38 Adjusts reading speed according to purpose and rereads for comprehension. 8.39 Interprets written instructions. 8.42 Analyzes relevance of data. 8.44 Applies reading strategies	OBJECTIVES 8.35 Uses context clues to determine meanings of unknown words. 8.38 Adjusts reading speed according to purpose and rereads for comprehension. 8.39 Interprets written instructions. 8.42 Analyzes relevance of data. 8.44 Applies reading strategies	OBJECTIVES 8.35 Uses context clues to determine meanings of unknown words. 8.38 Adjusts reading speed according to purpose and rereads for comprehension. 8.39 Interprets written instructions. 8.42 Analyzes relevance of data. 8.44 Applies reading strategies	OBJECTIVES 8.35 Uses context clues to determine meanings of unknown words. 8.38 Adjusts reading speed according to purpose and rereads for comprehension. 8.39 Interprets written instructions. 8.42 Analyzes relevance of data. 8.44 Applies reading strategies	OBJECTIVES 8.35 Uses context clues to determine meanings of unknown words. 8.38 Adjusts reading speed according to purpose and rereads for comprehension. 8.39 Interprets written instructions. 8.42 Analyzes relevance of data. 8.44 Applies reading strategies
PAGE	PAGE	PAGE	PAGE	PAGE	PAGE	PAGE	PAGE	PAGE	PAGE	PAGE	PAGE	PAGE	PAGE	
HOMEWORK - Study and complete vocabulary exploration sheets for this weeks vocabulary work.	HOMEWORK - worksheet	HOMEWORK - study vocabulary words	HOMEWORK - none	HOMEWORK - none	HOMEWORK - none	HOMEWORK - none	HOMEWORK - none	HOMEWORK - none	HOMEWORK - none	HOMEWORK - none	HOMEWORK - none	HOMEWORK - none	HOMEWORK - none	
EVALUATION Graded language lab work. Graded assignments	EVALUATION Graded language lab work.	EVALUATION Graded language lab work.	EVALUATION Graded language lab work.	EVALUATION Graded language lab work.	EVALUATION Graded language lab work.	EVALUATION Graded language lab work.	EVALUATION Graded language lab work.	EVALUATION Graded language lab work.	EVALUATION Graded language lab work.	EVALUATION Graded language lab work.	EVALUATION Graded language lab work.	EVALUATION Graded language lab work.	EVALUATION Graded language lab work.	

- SPECIAL EDUCATION MODIFICATIONS**
1. Material will be given written as well as verbally.
 2. Work with partner
 3. Assignments are written on the board or given to the student on a typed sheet.
 4. Extra time will be given to complete tasks if needed
- SEARCH MODIFICATIONS**
1. Acceleration of pacing
 2. Provide opportunities for self-directed practice involving research
 3. Provide a greater degree of complexity
 4. Encourage the development of challenging, creative products.

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Administrator's Signature

TEACHER'S NAME		Hutchinson, T.		Reading/Language Arts		GRADE SECTION#	8-9	DATE:	04/14/03-04/17/03
MONDAY	TEXT OR MATERIAL Handout of story, "Walking the Road to Freedom" by Jeri Ferris	TUESDAY	TEXT OR MATERIAL Handout of story, "Morning Gift" by Michael Dorris	WEDNESDAY	TEXT OR MATERIAL Handout of story, "Where She Leads, I Will Follow"	THURSDAY	TEXT OR MATERIAL Handout of story, "The Story of Sitting Bull, Great Sioux Chief, by Lisa Eisenberg	FRIDAY	TEXT OR MATERIAL
OBJECTIVES	8.35 Uses context clues to determine meanings of unknown words. 8.38 Adjusts reading speed according to purpose and rereads for comprehension. 8.39 Interprets written instructions. 8.42 Analyzes relevance of data. 8.44 Applies reading strategies	OBJECTIVES	8.35 Uses context clues to determine meanings of unknown words. 8.38 Adjusts reading speed according to purpose and rereads for comprehension. 8.39 Interprets written instructions. 8.42 Analyzes relevance of data. 8.44 Applies reading strategies	OBJECTIVES	8.35 Uses context clues to determine meanings of unknown words. 8.38 Adjusts reading speed according to purpose and rereads for comprehension. 8.39 Interprets written instructions. 8.42 Analyzes relevance of data. 8.44 Applies reading strategies	OBJECTIVES	8.35 Uses context clues to determine meanings of unknown words. 8.38 Adjusts reading speed according to purpose and rereads for comprehension. 8.39 Interprets written instructions. 8.42 Analyzes relevance of data. 8.44 Applies reading strategies	OBJECTIVES	8.35 Uses context clues to determine meanings of unknown words. 8.38 Adjusts reading speed according to purpose and rereads for comprehension. 8.39 Interprets written instructions. 8.42 Analyzes relevance of data. 8.44 Applies reading strategies
PAGE		PAGE		PAGE		PAGE		PAGE	
PROCEDURE	*Students will read the story, answering question as they read. *Students will write an article about a person who tried to solve a problem. Students will share their articles	PROCEDURE	*Students will read the story, answering question as they read. *Students will write a story about a special event that made them realize that they were no longer a child.	PROCEDURE	*Students will read the story, answering question as they read. *Students will compare and contrast the two articles from the story.	PROCEDURE	*Students will read the story, answering question as they read. *Students will write an essay explaining and defending a Native American name that they would choose for themselves	PROCEDURE	
HOMework-Vocabulary EVALUATION -Graded assignments	HOMework-Vocabulary EVALUATION -Graded assignments	HOMework-Vocabulary EVALUATION -Graded assignments	HOMework-Vocabulary EVALUATION -Graded assignments	HOMework- none EVALUATION -Graded assignments	HOMework- none EVALUATION -Graded assignments	HOMework- none EVALUATION -Graded assignments	HOMework- none EVALUATION -Graded assignments	HOMework- none EVALUATION -Graded assignments	HOMework- none EVALUATION -Graded assignments

- Special Education Modifications
1. Material will be given written as well as verbally.
 2. Work with partner
 3. Assignments are written on the board or given to the student on a typed sheet.
 4. Extra time will be given to complete tasks if needed

- SEARCH MODIFICATIONS
1. Acceleration of pacing
 2. Provide opportunities for self-directed practice involving research
 3. Provide a greater degree of complexity
 4. Encourage the development of challenging, creative products.

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Administrator's Signature

Teacher's Name: Tracy Anderson LESSON PLANS Grade/Section #: 6-4 10/21-10/25

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<p>Text or Material: Tuck Everlasting Worksheet</p> <p>Objective: 29,30,53</p> <p>Identifies story development Identifies characters actions, motives, emotions, traits, feelings Responds appropriately to questions</p> <p>Page: 3-30</p> <p>Procedure: 1) Journal Entry: What do you think it will take to solve the drug problem in America? 2) Daily Language Review 3) Students will read along with the tape discussing the book along the way 4) Students will complete a quiz on chapters 1-5</p>	<p>Text or Material: Notes on the board Worksheet</p> <p>Objective: 70</p> <p>Identify simple and compound subjects and predicates</p> <p>Page: Procedure: 1) Journal Entry: Have drugs ever affected you personally? Explain 2) Daily Language Review 3) Students will copy notes from the board about subjects and predicates. As a class we will do examples Working in pairs students will complete subject/predicate excercises and grade 5) Students will complete vocabulary test</p>	<p>Text or Material: Tuck Everlasting Vocabulary Test Notes on the board</p> <p>Objective: 14</p> <p>Understands figurative language Similes, metaphors, personification</p> <p>Page: 31-63</p> <p>Procedure: 1) Journal Entry: What affect do drugs have on your community? Explain. 2) Daily Language Review 3) Students will copy figurative language notes from the board 4) While reading chapter 6-10, we will find and examine examples of figurative language 6) Students will work in groups to create their own examples of similes, metaphors, and personification. Students will illustrate the example using construction paper, ect. 7) Vocabulary Test</p>	<p>Text or Material: Notes from Tuesday Practice excercises</p> <p>Objective: 70</p> <p>Identify simple and compound subjects and predicates</p> <p>Page: Procedure: 1) Working in pairs students will complete subject/predicate excercises 2) As a class we will grade and discuss the excercises</p>	<p>Text or Material: Vocabulary packet Tuck Everlasting</p> <p>Objective: 29,30,53</p> <p>Identifies story, character, and plot development Identifies new meanings of words Understands figurative language</p> <p>Page: Procedure: 1) Students will finish figurative language project from Wednesday. 2) Students will complete a quiz on chapters 6-11</p>
<p>Homework/Evaluation: Analogies, Homophones, Homonyms worksheet Study for vocabulary test</p>	<p>Homework/Evaluation: Study for Vocabulary Test</p>	<p>Homework/Evaluation: Figurative Language worksheet</p>	<p>Homework/Evaluation: Subject/Predicate worksheet</p>	<p>Homework/Evaluation:</p>

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Teacher's

Anderson

Name: LESSON PLANS Grade/Section #6

Date: 1/27-1/31

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Text or Material: Quiz Test Notes on board	Text or Material: Grammar book Worksheet	Text or Material: Novel-Holes	Text or Material: Grammar book worksheet	Text or Material: Test Novel
Objective: 11, 16, 37, 39, 30, 78, 72, 75	Objective: 69, 72, 11, 16	Objective: 29, 30, 53	Objective: same as Tuesday	Objective: same as Wednesday
Understands direct objects Learns new vocabulary Knows spelling rules	Understands direct objects	Reads for comprehension	Understands predicate nominative and predicate adjective and linking verbs	Same as Wednesday
Page: Procedure:	Page: 439-443 Procedure:	Page: Procedure:	Page: 446-450 Procedure:	Page: Procedure:
1) Quiz on vocabulary 2) Spelling Test 3) Notes and discussion of direct objects	1) Vocabulary Quiz 2) Diagram sentences with direct and indirect objects together on board 4) Guided practice identifying d. o. and i. o. 5) ex 1&2 in book 6) *check hw	1) Students will begin reading and discussing the novel <u>Holes</u> aloud 2) *Quiz over what we have read 3) Begin diary of character – a model for homework 4) *Check hw	1) Review of direct and indirect objects 2) Notes and discussion of predicate nominative and predicate adjective 3) Guided/Independent practice ex 3 and 4 in book	1) Take vocabulary test 2) Continue reading and discussing Holes 3) *Quiz over what i read 4) Journal entry to be completed in class

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JAN 27 2003

Teacher's Name:		Swerfenhuro		LESSON PLANS		Grade/Section		Lano Arts		Date	
										10-14-18-02	
Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday			
Text or Material:		Text or Material:		Text or Material:		Text or Material:		Text or Material:		Text or Material:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparency • English • Composition 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparency • Notes • Grammar & Writing • Assessment 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparency • English • Composition 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparency • English • Composition 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparency • English • Composition 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparency • English • Composition 	
Objective:		Objective:		Objective:		Objective:		Objective:		Objective:	
QCC.7-3,4,9, Student recognize usage of verbs, irregular verbs and adverbs.		QCC. 7-3,4,9, Student recognize usage of verbs, irregular, linking & action verbs		QCC. 7-9, Student recognize the use of Adverbs		QCC. 7.30, 32,33 Students will select best replacement for conjunctions and preposition		QCC. 7.30, 32,33 Students will select best replacement for conjunctions and preposition		QCC. 7.30, 32,33 Students will select best replacement for conjunctions and preposition	
Page: 307-309		Page: 500 – 525		Page:		Page:		Page:		Page:	
Procedure:		Procedure:		Procedure:		Procedure:		Procedure:		Procedure:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily Language Review • Diagnostic Test 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily Language Review • Discuss Notes • Assessment 29-45 (page 13) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily Language Review • Exercise 7 & 8 (pp.317-319) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily Language Review • Exercise 14 (pp.325-326) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily Language Review • Review Ecercise C & Posttest 1 (pp.331-333) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily Language Review • Review Ecercise C & Posttest 1 (pp.331-333) 	
Homework/Evaluation:		HOMEWORK		HOMEWORK		HOMEWORK		HOMEWORK			
Exercise 1, pages 444-445		Exercises 3 & 4		Exercises 15-16 (pp 461-464)		Study for Unit Test					

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TEACHER'S NAME		LESSON PLANS		GRADE/SECTION #		DATE	
MURPHY		14		15		16	
MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY	
17		18		19		20	
FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY	
21		22		23		24	
TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY	
25		26		27		28	
SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY		TUESDAY	
29		30		31		1	
WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
32		33		34		35	
MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY	
36		37		38		39	
TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY	
40		41		42		43	
WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
44		45		46		47	
THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY	
48		49		50		51	
FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY	
52		53		54		55	
SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY		TUESDAY	
56		57		58		59	
MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY	
60		61		62		63	
TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY	
64		65		66		67	
WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
68		69		70		71	
THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY	
72		73		74		75	
FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY	
76		77		78		79	
SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY		TUESDAY	
80		81		82		83	
MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY	
84		85		86		87	
TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY	
88		89		90		91	
WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
92		93		94		95	
THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY	
96		97		98		99	
FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY	
100		101		102		103	

TEXT OR MATERIAL

PROCEDURE

OBJECTIVE

HOMEWORK/EVALUATION

TEXT OR MATERIAL

PROCEDURE

OBJECTIVE

HOMEWORK/EVALUATION

TEXT OR MATERIAL

PROCEDURE

OBJECTIVE

HOMEWORK/EVALUATION

TEXT OR MATERIAL

PROCEDURE

OBJECTIVE

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PROCEDURE

OBJECTIVE

HOMEWORK/EVALUATION

TEXT OR MATERIAL

PROCEDURE

OBJECTIVE

HOMEWORK/EVALUATION

TEXT OR MATERIAL

PROCEDURE

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Complete Elements of literature

Bring in #2 pencil with eraser and coloring crayon or pencils

Forms and Element of literature
* Fiction/Nonfiction
* Types of fiction
* Novels/short stories (pp. 1-3)

* Poetry enters
* Oral readings of Shel Silverstein poetry

* Poetry project Spinner pg. 16
W.D.W Quatrains

* Student will present their Spinner orally in class.
W.D.W:

Happy Easter!
Spring Break!

Make an A/E

All language arts objectives relating to English are met through skills maintenance program Mountain Language™.

Scorptions (Update - revision)

Umbrella Theme – Who Am I?

Teacher's Name:		LESSON PLANS		Grade/Section #:	Date:
William L. Moore				7-1,2,3	10/21-25/02
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	
Text or Material: Elements of Literature(HRW) English(HM)	Text or Material: Elements of Literature(HRW) English(HM)	Text or Material: Elements of Literature(HRW) English(HM)	Text or Material: Elements of Literature(HRW) English(HM)	Text or Material: Elements of Literature(HRW) English(HM)	
Objective:	Objective:	Objective:	Objective:	Objective:	
Page:	Page:	Page:	Page:	Page:	
Procedure:	Procedure:	Procedure:	Procedure:	Procedure:	
Each day: Silent Sustained Reading 1. Agenda HW written----- 2. Journal Topic changes each day. 3. Mountain Language 1-8 (left-side) 4. HW Check 5. Oral reading	Each day: Silent Sustained Reading 1. Agenda HW written----- 2. Journal Topic changes each day. 3. Mountain Language 9 – 16 (left-side) 4. HW Check 5. Oral reading	Each day: Silent Sustained Reading 1. Agenda HW written----- 2. Journal Topic changes each day. 3. Mountain Language 17 – 20 (left-side) 4. Mountain Language 1 – 4 (right-side) Check ML 5. HW Check 6. Oral reading	Each day: Silent Sustained reading 1. Agenda HW written----- 2. Journal Topic changes each day 3. Mountain Language 5 – 12 (right-side) 4. HW Check 5. Assign spelling words for the next week. 6. Oral reading	Each day: Silent Sustained Reading 1. Agenda HW written----- 2. Journal Topic changes each day. 3. Mountain Language 13 – 20 (right-side) 4. Mountain Language check 5. HW Check 6. Oral reading 7. Spelling test	
Homework/Evaluation: Spelling words defined and syllabication.	Write each word in a sentence or a story with at words underlined. 5 sentences min.	Write words in two times each and ABC order.	Write words three times each. Spelling test Friday	Read for sixty minutes. Begin spelling HW	
Read each night for 15 min.	Read each night for 15 min	Read each night for 15 min	Read each night for 15 min		

All English mechanics objectives relating to English are met through skills maintenance program Mountain Language™.

Scorpions

Umbrella Theme – Changes
IEPs on file with team, and V.P,
SEARCH with Ms. Ashman

Teacher's Name:

William I. Moore

LESSON PLANS

Grade/Section #: 7-1.2.3

Date: 4/14-17/03

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Text or Material: Elements of Literature(HRW)/(READ) English(HM)/(ACTION)	Text or Material: Elements of Literature(HRW)/(READ) English(HM)/(READ)	Text or Material: Elements of Literature(HRW)/(READ) English(HM)/(ACTION)	Text or Material: Elements of Literature(HRW)/(READ) English(HM)/(ACTION)	Text or Material: Elements of Literature(HRW)/(READ) English(HM)/(ACTION)
Objective: 1- 12, 13, 14 16,	Objective: 17, 21- 25	Objective: 31- 45, 56, 63	Objective: 64, 65, 66, 67,	Objective:69, 70, 75, 74
Grammar and Usage Listening, Writing	Listening, Literature Writing	Reading, Speaking, Writing	Reading, Writing	Reading, Writing
Page :No one text a variety of sources	Page No one text a variety of sources	Page: No one text a variety of sources	Page: No one text a variety of sources	Page: No one text a variety of sources
Procedure: Each day: Silent Sustained Reading 1. Agenda HW written----- 2. Journal Topic changes each day. 3. Mountain Language 1 – 10 (left-side) 4. HW Check 5. Oral reading 6. Begin poetry Unit 7. Introduce different types of poetry to the students.	Procedure: Each day: Silent Sustained Reading 1. Agenda HW written----- 2. Journal Topic changes each day. 3. Mountain Language 1 – 10 (left-side) 4. HW Check 5. Oral reading 6. Continue unit with students working on poems	Procedure: Each day: Silent Sustained Reading 1. Agenda HW written----- 2. Journal Topic changes each day. *3. Mountain Language 11 – 20 (left-side) 4. Oral reading 5. Continue poetry unit	Procedure: Each day: Silent Sustained reading 1. Agenda HW written----- 2. Journal Topic changes each day 3. Mountain Language 1 – 10 (right-side) 4. HW Check 5. Assign spelling words for the next week. 6. Oral reading 7. Continue poetry unit	Procedure: Each day: Spring Break Begins. Today is Good Friday. Have a nice holiday!
Homework/Evaluation: SpHW	Review class work. Share with parents. Spelling HW	Review class work. Share with parents. Sp HW	Review class work. Share with parents. Sp HW	Read for sixty minutes. Review class work. Share with parents. Sp HW
Read each night for 15 min.	Read each night for 15 min	Read each night for 15 min	Read each night for 15 min	

TEACHER'S NAME

T. Ferndee

LESSON PLANS

GRADE/SECTION # 6-10

DATE: 9-30 to 10-4-0

LA

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<p>Text or Material Elements of Writing Outside Source.</p> <p>Objective 6.2, 6.5, 6.9 Spots of speech Verb usage</p> <p>Page Procedure</p>	<p>Text or Material Autobiographical Projects</p> <p>Objective 6.6, 6.5, 6.9 6.6, 6.9 body sentences 6.7 write cohesive para's</p> <p>Page Procedure</p>	<p>Text or Material Autobiographical Projects</p> <p>Objective 6.6, 6.5, 6.9 6.6, 6.7 body sentences 6.7 write cohesive para's</p> <p>Page Procedure</p>	<p>Text or Material Elements of Writing</p> <p>Objective 6.1 Types of sentences 6.7 Compound Sent.</p> <p>Page 357-359 Procedure</p>	<p>Text or Material Elements of Writing</p> <p>Objective 6.1 Types of sentences 6.7 6.8</p> <p>Page 360-361 Procedure</p>
<p>Administer Test on Compound Subjects & Verbs.</p>	<p>Presentation of Autobiographical Projects</p>	<p>Presentation of Autobiographical Projects (Continuation)</p>	<p>Introduce Types of sentences Simple & Compound Sentences Complete exercise 13,</p>	<p>Introduce Types of Sentences. Complete exercise 14.</p>
<p>Homework/Evaluation graded T.O.</p>	<p>Homework/Evaluation T.O. graded</p>	<p>Homework/Evaluation T.O. graded</p>	<p>Homework/Evaluation R.D. pp. 358-359</p>	<p>Homework/Evaluation P. 363 Ex. E 1-10 graded</p>

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-Teacher's Name:		T. Ferree - 1A		LESSON PLANS		Grade/Section #: 6-10		Date: 03/10-03/14	
Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday	
Text or Material: Elements of Writing Grammar IF		Text or Material: Elements of Writing Grammar IF		Text or Material: Elements of Writing Grammar IF		Text or Material: Elements of Writing Grammar IF		Text or Material:	
Objective:		Objective:		Objective:		Objective:		Objective:	
Parts of Speech Prepositions 6.2, 6.9		Parts of Speech Prepositions 6.2, 6.9		Parts of Speech Prepositions 6.2, 6.9		Parts of Speech Conjunctions 6.2, 6.9		Record's Day	
Page: 406-410 Procedure:		Page: 406-410 Procedure:		Page: 406-410 Procedure:		Page: 411-412 Procedure:		Page: 411-412 Procedure:	
Introduce Prepositions. Discuss and Model Part of Speech. Complete and discuss Exercise 11 on p. 409		Review Prepositions Practice identifying Prepositions. Complete Sheet		Administer Test on Prepositions Sheet 55 HR W Workbook.		Introduce Conjunctions. Discuss and Model Part of Speech Complete and discuss Exercise 13 on p. 411		Record's Day	
Homework/Evaluation:		Homework		Homework		Homework		Homework	
Study and Complete sheet for Review. TO Graded		Study and Complete sheet for Review. TO Graded		TO Evaluation Graded		TO Graded		Record's Day	

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APPENDIX A

TEACHER PARTICIPANT LESSON PLANS

TEACHER'S NAME		Hutchinson, T.		LANGUAGE ARTS		GRADE SECTION#		DATE: 10/07/02-10/11/02			
MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY			
TEXT OR MATERIAL Who am I?, by Aylette Jenness		TEXT OR MATERIAL Handouts		TEXT OR MATERIAL Elements of Writing		TEXT OR MATERIAL Handouts		TEXT OR MATERIAL Elements of Writing			
OBJECTIVES 8.10 Applies standards of English. 8.14 Follows oral directions and asks questions for clarification. 8.64 Uses the writing process. 8.33 Expands reading vocabulary 8.29 Responds creatively to literature		OBJECTIVES 8.10 Applies standards of English. 8.14 Follows oral directions and asks questions for clarification. 8.64 Uses the writing process. 8.33 Expands reading vocabulary 8.29 Responds creatively to literature		OBJECTIVES 8.2 Recognizes the function of the eight parts of speech 8.9 Recognizes and uses verbal phrases		OBJECTIVES		OBJECTIVES			
PAGE		PAGE		PAGE		PAGE		PAGE			
PROCEDURE Test (Sentence structure) Teacher will read, Who am I?, by Aylette Jenness Students will discuss the conflict, plot, setting of the book. Students will create an "I AM" poem for their "All About Me" portfolio. Students will compose an autobiographical essay: "The Me I See"		PROCEDURE Vocabulary test. Students will continue the writing process with their poem and essay.		PROCEDURE Students discuss chapter 5 Using Description. Students will begin their descriptive paragraph: "My Favorite Place"		PROCEDURE Language Lab: 3 sentences will be written on the board. Students will be asked to fill in each sentence with an appropriate word. Students will discuss Prepositions Students will complete/check exercise 12. Students will discuss prepositional phrases. Students will complete/check exercise 13		PROCEDURE		PROCEDURE	
HOMEWORK-study for vocabulary test EVALUATION-Observation		HOMEWORK -none EVALUATION-Observation and assessing of various tasks and assignments		HOMEWORK-none EVALUATION-SAME		HOMEWORK-copy commonly used prepositions from page 474 EVALUATION-Observation and assessing of various tasks and assignments		HOMEWORK -none EVALUATION-SAME			

Records Day
HOLIDAY

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- Special Education Modifications
1. Material will be given written as well as verbally.
 2. Work with partner
 3. Assignments are written on the board or given to the student on a typed sheet.
 4. Extra time will be given to complete tasks if needed
- SEARCH MODIFICATIONS
1. Acceleration of pacing
 2. Provide opportunities for self-directed practice involving research
 3. Provide a greater degree of complexity
 4. Encourage the development of challenging, creative products.

Administrator's Signature

TEACHER'S NAME	Hutchinson, T.		Reading/Language Arts		GRADE SECTION#	8-9	DATE:	03-21-03 Cont'd 3-23-03 Hru 2-26-03
MONDAY	TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY	
TEXT OR MATERIAL *Read* magazine Handouts of poems	TEXT OR MATERIAL *Read* magazine English Book	TEXT OR MATERIAL *Read* magazine English Book	TEXT OR MATERIAL *Read* magazine English Book	TEXT OR MATERIAL *Read* magazine English Book				
OBJECTIVES 8.35 Uses context clues to determine meanings of unknown words. 8.38 Adjusts reading speed according to purpose and rereads for comprehension. 8.39 Interprets written instructions. 8.42 Analyzes relevance of data. 8.44 Applies reading strategies	OBJECTIVES 8.35 Uses context clues to determine meanings of unknown words. 8.38 Adjusts reading speed according to purpose and rereads for comprehension. 8.39 Interprets written instructions. 8.42 Analyzes relevance of data. 8.44 Applies reading strategies	OBJECTIVES 8.35 Uses context clues to determine meanings of unknown words. 8.38 Adjusts reading speed according to purpose and rereads for comprehension. 8.39 Interprets written instructions. 8.42 Analyzes relevance of data. 8.44 Applies reading strategies	OBJECTIVES 8.35 Uses context clues to determine meanings of unknown words. 8.38 Adjusts reading speed according to purpose and rereads for comprehension. 8.39 Interprets written instructions. 8.42 Analyzes relevance of data. 8.44 Applies reading strategies	OBJECTIVES 8.35 Uses context clues to determine meanings of unknown words. 8.38 Adjusts reading speed according to purpose and rereads for comprehension. 8.39 Interprets written instructions. 8.42 Analyzes relevance of data. 8.44 Applies reading strategies				
PAGE	PAGE	PAGE	PAGE	PAGE	PAGE	PAGE	PAGE	PAGE
PROCEDURE	PROCEDURE	PROCEDURE	PROCEDURE	PROCEDURE	PROCEDURE	PROCEDURE	PROCEDURE	PROCEDURE
	*Vocabulary *Reading Lab - Students will complete and discuss reading practice test worksheets. *Students will continue with reading stations from last week.	*Check homework *Reading Lab - Students will complete and discuss reading practice test worksheets. *Students will continue with reading stations from last week.	*Check homework *Reading Lab - Students will complete and discuss reading practice test worksheets. *Students will continue with reading stations from last week.	*Check homework *Reading Lab - Students will complete and discuss reading practice test worksheets. *Students will continue with reading stations from last week.				*Reading Lab - Students will complete and discuss reading practice test worksheets. *Students will continue with reading stations from last week.
HOMework	HOMework	HOMework	HOMework	HOMework	HOMework	HOMework	HOMework	HOMework
EVALUATION-Graded language lab work. Graded assignments	EVALUATION-Graded language lab work. Graded assignments	EVALUATION-Graded language lab work. Graded assignments	EVALUATION-Graded language lab work. Graded assignments	EVALUATION-Graded language lab work. Graded assignments	EVALUATION-Graded language lab work. Graded assignments	EVALUATION-Graded language lab work. Graded assignments	EVALUATION-Graded language lab work. Graded assignments	EVALUATION-Graded language lab work. Graded assignments

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Special Education Modifications

1. Material will be given written as well as verbally.
2. Work with partner
3. Assignments are written on the board or given to the student on a typed sheet.
4. Extra time will be given to complete tasks if needed

SEARCH MODIFICATIONS

1. Acceleration of pacing
2. Provide opportunities for self-directed practice involving research
3. Provide a greater degree of complexity
4. Encourage the development of challenging, creative products.

Administrator's Signature

TEACHER'S NAME		Reading/Language Arts		DATE: 04/14/03-04/17/03	
Hutchinson, T.		Arts		8-9	
MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY	
TEXT OR MATERIAL		TEXT OR MATERIAL		TEXT OR MATERIAL	
Handout of story, "Walking the Road to Freedom" by Jeri Ferris	Handout of story, "Morning Girl" by Michael Dorris	Handout of story, "Where She Leads, I Will Follow"	Handout of story, "The Story of Sitting Bull, Great Sioux Chief, by Lisa Eisenberg		
<p>OBJECTIVES</p> <p>8.35 Uses context clues to determine meanings of unknown words.</p> <p>8.38 Adjusts reading speed according to purpose and rereads for comprehension.</p> <p>8.39 Interprets written instructions.</p> <p>8.42 Analyzes relevance of data.</p> <p>8.44 Applies reading strategies</p>	<p>OBJECTIVES</p> <p>8.35 Uses context clues to determine meanings of unknown words.</p> <p>8.38 Adjusts reading speed according to purpose and rereads for comprehension.</p> <p>8.39 Interprets written instructions.</p> <p>8.42 Analyzes relevance of data.</p> <p>8.44 Applies reading strategies</p>	<p>OBJECTIVES</p> <p>8.35 Uses context clues to determine meanings of unknown words.</p> <p>8.38 Adjusts reading speed according to purpose and rereads for comprehension.</p> <p>8.39 Interprets written instructions.</p> <p>8.42 Analyzes relevance of data.</p> <p>8.44 Applies reading strategies</p>	<p>OBJECTIVES</p> <p>8.35 Uses context clues to determine meanings of unknown words.</p> <p>8.38 Adjusts reading speed according to purpose and rereads for comprehension.</p> <p>8.39 Interprets written instructions.</p> <p>8.42 Analyzes relevance of data.</p> <p>8.44 Applies reading strategies</p>		
PAGE	PAGE	PAGE	PAGE	PAGE	PAGE
PROCEDURE	PROCEDURE	PROCEDURE	PROCEDURE	PROCEDURE	PROCEDURE
*Students will read the story, answering question as they read.	*Students will read the story, answering question as they read.	*Students will read the story, answering question as they read.	*Students will read the story, answering question as they read.	*Students will read the story, answering question as they read.	*Students will read the story, answering question as they read.
*Students will write an article about a person who tried to solve a problem. Students will share their articles	*Students will write a story about a special event that made them realize that they were no longer a child.	*Students will compare and contrast the two articles from the story.	*Students will compare and contrast the two articles from the story.	*Students will write an essay explaining and defending a Native American name that they would choose for themselves	
HOMEWORK-Vocabulary EVALUATION- Graded assignments	HOMEWORK- Vocabulary EVALUATION- Graded assignments	HOMEWORK- Vocabulary EVALUATION- Graded assignments	HOMEWORK- Vocabulary EVALUATION- Graded assignments	HOMEWORK- none EVALUATION- Graded assignments	HOMEWORK- NONE EVALUATION- Graded assignments

Special Education Modifications

1. Material will be given written as well as verbally.
2. Work with partner
3. Assignments are written on the board or given to the student on a typed sheet.
4. Extra time will be given to complete tasks if needed

SEARCH MODIFICATIONS

1. Acceleration of pacing
2. Provide opportunities for self-directed practice involving research
3. Provide a greater degree of complexity
4. Encourage the development of challenging, creative products.

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Administrator's Signature

Teacher's Name: Tracy Anderson		LESSON PLANS		Grade/Section #: 6-4	10/14-10/18
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	
<p>Text or Material: Vocabulary words Reading worksheet</p> <p>Objective: 11, 16, 37,14, 27, 28</p> <p>Increases vocabulary Uses synonyms Recognizes main idea, detail, sequence, cause-effect</p>	<p>Text or Material: Grammar Book Worksheet Newspaper</p> <p>Objective: 22,68,70</p> <p>Uses word order and sentence structure to read Identifies types of sentences Identifies parts of a sentence</p>	<p>Text or Material: Tuck Everlasting Novel set</p> <p>Objective: 29, 30,53</p> <p>Identifies story development Identifies characters actions, emotions, motives, traits, feelings Responds appropriately to questions</p>	<p>Text or Material: Symphony Field Trip Grade and review vocabulary</p> <p>Objective: 11,16</p> <p>Increases vocabulary Uses knowledge of synonyms Uses word order and sentence structure to read Identifies types of sentences Identifies parts of a sentence</p>	<p>Text or Material: Vocabulary Test Novel reading and exercises</p> <p>Objective: 11,16,29,30,53</p> <p>Increases vocabulary Uses knowledge of synonyms Identifies story development Identifies characters actions, emotions, motives, traits, feelings Responds appropriately to questions</p>	
<p>Page: Procedure:</p> <p>1) Students will make flashcards with new vocabulary words. 2) Students will finish the reading comprehension practice begun last week</p>	<p>Page: Procedure:</p> <p>1) Students will complete pretest 2) Students will complete exercises identifying sentences and fragments 3) Students will complete exercises identifying the four types of sentences 4) Students will cut words from newspapers and then make them into complete sentences, one for each type</p>	<p>Page: Procedure:</p> <p>1) Students will be introduced to novel 2) Students will begin reading the novel in class both aloud and with a tape</p>	<p>Page: Procedure:</p> <p>1) Students will grade and review vocabulary homework in preparation for vocabulary test Students will grade and review sentence homework</p>	<p>Page: Procedure:</p> <p>1) Students will complete vocabulary test 2) Students will continue reading and discussing Tuck Everlasting</p>	
<p>Homework/Evaluation: 1) Vocabulary: Completing the sentence, synonyms, writing prompt, vocabulary review (Due Thursday)</p>	<p>1) Sentence practice worksheet 2) Reading comp worksheet (Due Thursday)</p>	None	Study for vocabulary test		

Teacher's Anderson Name: LESSON PLANS Grade/Section #:6 Date: 1/27-1/31

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<p>Text or Material: Quiz Test Notes on board Objective: 11, 16, 37, 39, 30, 78, 72, 75 Understands direct objects Learns new vocabulary Knows spelling rules</p> <p>Page: Procedure:</p>	<p>Text or Material: Grammar book Worksheet Objective: 69, 72, 11, 16 Understands direct objects</p> <p>Page: 439-443 Procedure:</p>	<p>Text or Material: Novel-Holes Objective: 29, 30, 53 Reads for comprehension</p> <p>Page: Procedure:</p>	<p>Text or Material: Grammar book worksheet Objective: same as Tuesday Understands predicate nominative and predicate adjective and linking verbs</p> <p>Page: 446-450 Procedure:</p>	<p>Text or Material: Test Novel Objective: same as Wednesday Same as Wednesday</p> <p>Page: Procedure:</p>
<p>1) Quiz on vocabulary 2) Spelling Test 3) Notes and discussion of direct objects</p>	<p>1) Vocabulary Quiz 2) Diagram sentences with direct and indirect objects together on board 4) Guided practice identifying d.o. and i.o. 5) ex 1&2 in book 6) *check hw</p>	<p>1) Students will begin reading and discussing the novell <u>Holes</u> aloud 2) *Quiz over what we have read 3) Begin diary of character -- a model for homework 4) *Check hw</p>	<p>1) Review of direct and indirect objects 2) Notes and discussion of predicate nominative and predicate adjective 3) Guided/Independent practice ex 3 and 4 in book</p>	<p>1) Take vocabulary test 2) Continue reading and discussing Holes 3) *Quiz over what i read 4) Journal entry to be completed in class</p>

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JAN 27 2003

Teacher's Name: Anderson LESSON PLANS Grade/Section #6 Date: 3/10-3/14

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Text or Material: Vocabulary words Dictionary Paper, colored pencils	Text or Material: Grammar Book	Text or Material: Review material	Text or Material: Test	Text or Material: RECORDS DAY
Objective: 11,16 Understands vocabulary Uses context clues	Objective: 72 Understands confusing verbs	Objective: 72 Understands verb parts and forms	Objective: 72 Same as Tuesday and Wednesday	Objective:
Page:	Page: 492-496	Page:	Page:	Page:
1) Journal Entry 2) Distribute and discuss new vocabulary words 3) Students will make a vocabulary book illustrating each word and using it correctly in a sentence <i>good</i>	1) Journal Entry 2) Students will review and discuss the verbs: lie and lay, sit and set, rise and raise 3) Students will complete ex 6, 7, and 8 in grammar book HW: Review D and E	1) Journal Entry 2) Students will draw comic strips to show the difference between the confusing verbs 3) Review of verb parts HW: Study for test Vocabulary review	1) Journal Entry 2) Verb Test 3) Library	NO CLASS TODAY RECEIVED MAR 10 2003

*What was graded? Use * to indicate
graded material.*

TEACHER'S NAME <u>J. Ferber</u>		LESSON PLANS		GRADE/SECTION # <u>670</u>	DATE: <u>10/28/02</u>
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	
<p>TEXT OR MATERIAL <u>Di's Language Review</u></p> <p>OBJECTIVE 6.4 Nouns 6.77 mechanics 6.12 punctuation</p>	<p>TEXT OR MATERIAL <u>Daily Language Review</u></p> <p>OBJECTIVE 6.4 Nouns 6.10 Capitalization 6.12 Punctuation</p>	<p>TEXT OR MATERIAL <u>Elements of Writing</u></p> <p>OBJECTIVE 6.1, 6.2, 6.5, 6.7, 6.9</p>	<p>TEXT OR MATERIAL <u>Elements of Writing</u></p> <p>OBJECTIVE 6.1, 6.2, 6.5, 6.7, 6.9</p>	<p>TEXT OR MATERIAL <u>Elements of Writing</u></p> <p>OBJECTIVE 6.4. Nouns, 6.2 Parts of speech</p>	
<p>PAGE <u>Workshop</u></p> <p>PROCEDURE Complete Exercises for Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday Nouns ② Punctuation ③ Grammar ④ Parts of a letter</p>	<p>PAGE <u>Workshop</u></p> <p>PROCEDURE Complete Exercises for Thursday & Friday ① Analogy ② Grammar ③ Punctuation ④ Rhyming Words ⑤ Spelling Errors</p>	<p>PAGE <u>364-366</u></p> <p>PROCEDURE Review Types of Kinds of Sentences Complete Each Exercise A-D.</p>	<p>PAGE</p> <p>PROCEDURE Administer TEST (unit) on Kinds of Sentences</p>	<p>PAGE</p> <p>PROCEDURE Review Test on kinds of Sentences Introduce Nouns. Definitions Identify Noun in class.</p>	
<p>HOMWORK/EVALUATION <u>None graded</u> T.O.</p>	<p>HOMWORK/EVALUATION <u>None graded</u> T.O.</p>	<p>HOMWORK/EVALUATION <u>graded</u> T.O.</p>	<p>HOMWORK/EVALUATION <u>graded</u> T.O.</p>	<p>HOMWORK/EVALUATION <u>None graded</u> T.O.</p>	

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-Teacher's Name: T Ferrebee - I.A		LESSON PLANS		Grade/Section #: 6-10	Date: 03/03-03/07
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	
Text or Material: Elements of Writing Grammar IF	Text or Material: Elements of Writing Grammar IF	Text or Material: Elements of Writing Grammar IF	Text or Material: Elements of Writing Grammar IF	Text or Material: Elements of Writing Grammar IF	Text or Material: Elements of Writing Grammar IF
Objective: Parts of Speech Adverbs 6.2, 6.9	Objective: Parts of Speech Prepositions 6.2, 6.9	Objective: Parts of Speech Prepositions 6.2, 6.9	Objective: Parts of Speech Prepositions 6.2, 6.9	Objective: Parts of Speech Conjunctions 6.2, 6.9	Objective: Parts of Speech Conjunctions 6.2, 6.9
Page: 402-405 Procedure: Administer Re-Test on Adverbs	Page: 406-410 Procedure: Introduce Prepositions Discuss and Model Part of Speech. Complete and discuss Exercise 11 on p.409	Page: 406-410 Procedure: Review Prepositions Practice identifying Prepositions. Complete Sheet.	Page: 406-410 Procedure: Administer Test on Prepositions Sheet 55 HR W Workbook	Page: 411-412 Procedure: Introduce Conjunctions. Discuss and Model Part of Speech Complete and discuss Exercise 13 on p. 411	
Homework/Evaluation:	Homework	Homework	Homework	Homework	Homework
TO Evaluation Graded <i>need</i>	Study and Complete sheet for Review. TO Graded <i>2 to 3 graded</i>	TO Graded <i>HW. activities</i>	TO Evaluation Graded <i>week!</i>	TO Sheet Graded	TO Sheet Graded

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Wow?

-Teacher's Name: T Ferrebee - I.A		LESSON PLANS		Grade/Section #	Date:
				6-10	03/03-03/07
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	
Text or Material: Elements of Writing Grammar IF	Text or Material: Elements of Writing Grammar IF	Text or Material: Elements of Writing Grammar IF	Text or Material: Elements of Writing Grammar IF	Text or Material: Elements of Writing Grammar IF	
Objective: Parts of Speech Adverbs 6.2, 6.9	Objective: Parts of Speech Prepositions 6.2, 6.9	Objective: Parts of Speech Prepositions 6.2, 6.9	Objective: Parts of Speech Prepositions 6.2, 6.9	Objective: Parts of Speech Conjunctions 6.2, 6.9	
Page: 402-405 Procedure: Administer Re-Test on Adverbs	Page: 406-410 Procedure: Introduce Prepositions Discuss and Model Part of Speech. Complete and discuss Exercise 11 on p.409	Page:406-410 Procedure: Review Prepositions Practice identifying Prepositions. Complete Sheet.	Page:406-410 Procedure: Administer Test on Prepositions Sheet 55 HRW Workbook	Page:411-412 Procedure: Introduce Conjunctions. Discuss and Model Part of Speech Complete and discuss Exercise 13 on p. 411	
Homework/Evaluation:	Homework	Homework	Homework	Homework	
TO Evaluation Graded <i>need</i>	Study and Complete sheet for Review. TO Graded <i>2 to 3 graded</i>	TO Graded <i>HW. activities per week!</i>	TO Evaluation Graded	TO Sheet Graded	

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Wow?

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SEP 13 2002

TEACHER'S NAME T Ferber

DATE: 9/16 to 9/20/02

GRADE/SECTION # 6-10

LESSON PLANS

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<p>Text or Material Elements of Writing</p> <p>Objective 6.2, 6.3, 6.5, 6.9 id. eight parts of speech uses verbs, subject/verb agreement.</p> <p>Page 351, 352</p> <p>Procedure Review Finding A Verb. Complete Oral Assignment (Game) for finding a verb Have students cut out 11 verbs.</p>	<p>Text or Material Elements of Writing</p> <p>Objective 6.2, 6.3, 6.5, 6.9 identify parts of speech use of verb, subject/verb agreement.</p> <p>Page 351, 352</p> <p>Procedure Administer Test for Verb Identification</p>	<p>Text or Material Elements of Writing</p> <p>Objective 6.2, 6.5, 6.9 8 parts of speech, verb usage</p> <p>Page 353, 354</p> <p>Procedure Intro Compound Verbs. Review verbs identifying in verbs. Complete Oral Exercise. Complete Ex. 9 Review for Ex. 9 for understanding/comp.</p>	<p>Text or Material Elements of Writing</p> <p>Objective 6.2, 6.5, 6.9 8 parts of speech, verb usage</p> <p>Page 353, 354</p> <p>Procedure Intro Compound Verbs. Review verbs identifying in verbs. Complete Oral Exercise. Complete Ex. 10 Review Ex. 10 for understanding and comprehension</p>	<p>Text or Material Elements of Writing</p> <p>Objective 6.2, 6.5, 6.9 8 parts of speech, verb usage</p> <p>Page 353, 354</p> <p>Procedure Review Compound Subjects and Verbs Complete oral exercise from newspaper. Complete Ex. 11 and Review B.</p>
<p>Homework/Evaluation Practice finding verbs in new 3 article. news added but checked over for accuracy.</p>	<p>Homework/Evaluation graded assignment Aster for mastery</p>	<p>Homework/Evaluation non-graded T.O.</p>	<p>Homework/Evaluation non-graded T.O.</p>	<p>Homework/Evaluation Exercise 12 Compound subjects/verbs p. 355 graded.</p>

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SEP 13 2002

TEACHER'S NAME

Ford

LESSON PLANS

GRADE/SECTION #

6-10

DATE:

9-16 to 9-20

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<p>Text or Material Elements of Literature</p> <p>Objective Review Story Comprehension & Story Elements 6.2, 4</p> <p>Page T 45</p> <p>Procedure Students will complete the story elements for The All American Ship. Learn questions on P.45 and discuss questions and story elements. Review Vocabulary Words</p>	<p>Text or Material Elements of Literature</p> <p>Objective Subject Verb Agreement 6.2, 6.5, 6.9</p> <p>Page T 47</p> <p>Procedure Students will complete p.47. Students will orally work on sentences on the board. Work on Vocabulary & sentences. Review for test.</p>	<p>Text or Material Elements of Literature (Test)</p> <p>Objective Comprehension 6.17, 6.3, 6.29, 6.30, 6.24 vocabulary story elements</p> <p>Page</p> <p>Procedure Administer Test on "The All American Ship" comprehension and vocabulary</p>	<p>Text or Material Elements of Literature</p> <p>Objective Comprehension 6.17, 6.30, 6.29, 6.30 6.24 vocabulary, story elements</p> <p>Page</p> <p>Procedure Review Test for mystery. Finish p. 46 beyond the story "Dissas" practices of other countries & how they affect us in the U.S. Use internet to find other countries with articles.</p>	<p>Text or Material Elements of Literature</p> <p>Objective Subject Verb Agreement 6.2, 6.5, 6.9</p> <p>Page</p> <p>Procedure Review Subject Verb Agreement Administrative Quiz on Subject Verb Agreement. Review Quiz & Assess student mastery.</p>
<p>Homework/Evaluation P.45 - graded Hawk - Study Vocabulary Words</p>	<p>Homework/Evaluation Sheet 16 & 17 Teacher Observation non graded Study Vocabulary</p>	<p>Homework/Evaluation No homework graded tests & assessments for vocabulary</p>	<p>Homework/Evaluation no homework T.O.</p>	<p>Homework/Evaluation Teacher Ob. graded assignments Review for next</p>

Teacher's		Sweetenburo		Name: LESSON PLANS Grade/Section		Lano Arts		Date: Oct 7-10 02	
Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday	
Text or Material:		Text or Material:		Text or Material:		Text or Material:		Text or Material:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% Grammar workbook Safe School Essay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notes Timer Score keeper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit Test 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity worksheet 						
Objective:	Objective:	Objective:	Objective:	Objective:					
QCC. 7-14, 7-31 Faulty agreement of Subj./Verb. & connecting faulty verb tense	QCC 7-2, 7-5, Uses principle parts of speech to form tenses of regular and irregular verbs.	QCC 7-2, 7-5, Uses principle parts of speech to form tenses of regular and irregular verbs.	QCC 7.14, 7-15 Recognizing double negatives						
Page: 54-48	Page:	Page:	Page:	Page:					
Procedure:	Procedure:	Procedure:	Procedure:	Procedure:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire prevention essay 100% Grammar (Verbs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parts of Speech Game Review Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part I Unit Test Daily Language Review Worksheet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parts of Speech Activity 						
Homework/Evaluation:									
Complete pages 54-58		<p style="text-align: center;">RECEIVED OCT 08 2002</p>	Complete Daily Language Review						

TEACHER'S NAME		LESSON PLANS		GRADE/SECTION/DATE	
Sweetenburgh				4th Long Acks 3-31-4-40	
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	
<p>TEXT OR MATERIAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Study Tips * Poetry notes <p>OBJECTIVE</p> <p>Q&As Study Skills</p>	<p>TEXT OR MATERIAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Construction paper * Colored pencils or crayons <p>OBJECTIVE</p>	<p>TEXT OR MATERIAL</p>	<p>TEXT OR MATERIAL</p>	<p>TEXT OR MATERIAL</p>	
<p>PROCEDURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Daily long Review * Review discuss, Study Tips 	<p>PROCEDURE</p> <p>Testing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Notes on Couplets, Tripletts and Quatrains * Student began creating their own Poetry 	<p>PROCEDURE</p> <p>Testing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * recite Poetry orally in class * Student began writing 4 pattern Quatrain about Spring 	<p>PROCEDURE</p> <p>Testing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Notes on Haiku, Couquins and Limericks. 	<p>PROCEDURE</p> <p>Testing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * students will design their poetry as shaped poems to be displayed on the wall. 	
<p>HOMWORK/EVALUATION</p>	<p>HOMWORK/EVALUATION</p> <p>Couplet Triplet</p>	<p>HOMWORK/EVALUATION</p>	<p>HOMWORK/EVALUATION</p> <p>create a Haiku</p>	<p>HOMWORK/EVALUATION</p>	<p>RECEIVED MAR 31 2003</p>

TEACHER'S NAME		LESSON PLANS		GRADE/SECTION		DATE	
Sweetenbury		Lark Hops 7th		4/14-17/03			
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY			
14	15	16	17				
TEXT OR MATERIAL	TEXT OR MATERIAL	TEXT OR MATERIAL	TEXT OR MATERIAL	TEXT OR MATERIAL			
- Element of literature - Cloze practice	- Poetry worksheets	- Poetry projects					
OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVE			
QCCs 7:24 Interpret Elements of poetry 7:71 uses descriptive words and phrase							
PAGE	PAGE	PAGE	PAGE	PAGE			
9-11	13-15	16					
PROCEDURE	PROCEDURE	PROCEDURE	PROCEDURE	PROCEDURE			
* Cloze practice 1/2 → Forms and Element of literature * Fiction/Nonfiction * Types of fiction * Novels/short stories (pp. 1-3)	* Cloze Practice 3/4 * Poetry entries → oral readings of "Shel Silverstien's poetry"	* Cloze Practice 5/6 * Poetry project Spinner pg. 16 W.O.W. Quatrains	* Cloze Practice 7/8 * student will present their Spinner orally in class. W.O.W. Happy Easter! Spring Break!				
HOMWORK/EVALUATION	HOMWORK/EVALUATION	HOMWORK/EVALUATION	HOMWORK/EVALUATION	HOMWORK/EVALUATION			
Complete Elements of literature	Bring in #2 pencil with eraser and cuttings crayon or pencils		Made on site				

RECEIVED
APR 15 2003

All language arts objectives relating to English are met through skills maintenance program Mountain Language™. Scorpions Umbrella Theme – Who Am I? (Update - revision)

Teacher's Name: William L. Moore		LESSON PLANS		Grade/Section #: 7-1,2,3	Date: 10/21-25/02
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	
Text or Material: Elements of Literature(HRW) English(HM) Objective:	Text or Material: Elements of Literature(HRW) English(HM) Objective:	Text or Material: Elements of Literature(HRW) English(HM) Objective:	Text or Material: Elements of Literature(HRW) English(HM) Objective:	Text or Material: Elements of Literature(HRW) English(HM) Objective:	
Page: Procedure: Each day: Silent Sustained Reading 1. Agenda HW written----- 2. Journal Topic changes each day. 3. Mountain Language 1 - 8 (left-side) 4. HW Check 5. Oral reading	Page: Procedure: Each day: Silent Sustained Reading 1. Agenda HW written----- 2. Journal Topic changes each day. 3. Mountain Language 9 - 16 (left-side) 4. HW Check 5. Oral reading	Page: Procedure: Each day: Silent Sustained Reading 1. Agenda HW written----- 2. Journal Topic changes each day. 3. Mountain Language 17 - 20 (left-side) 4. Mountain Language 1 - 4 (right-side) Check ML 5. HW Check 6. Oral reading	Page: Procedure: Each day: Silent Sustained reading 1. Agenda HW written----- 2. Journal Topic changes each day 3. Mountain Language 5 - 12 (right-side) 4. HW Check 5. Assign spelling words for the next week. 6. Oral reading	Page: Procedure: Each day: Silent Sustained Reading 1. Agenda HW written----- 2. Journal Topic changes each day. 3. Mountain Language 13 - 20 (right-side) 4. Mountain Language check 5. HW Check 6. Oral reading 7. Spelling test	
Homework/Evaluation: Spelling words defined and syllabication. Read each night for 15 min.	Write each word in a sentence or a story with at words underlined. 5 sentences min. Read each night for 15 min	Write words in two times each and ABC order. Read each night for 15 min	Write words three times each. Spelling test Friday Read each night for 15 min	Read for sixty minutes. Begin spelling HW	

Umbrella Theme – Changes
IEPs on file with team, and V.P.
SEARCH with Ms. Ashman

Scorpions

All English mechanics objectives relating to English
are met through skills maintenance program Mountain Language™.

Teacher's Name: William L. Moore *William Moore* LESSON PLANS Grade/Section #: 7-1,2,3 Date: 1/6-10/03

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<p>Text or Material: Elements of Literature(HRW)/(READ) English(HM)/(ACTION) Objective: 1- 12, 13, 14 16, Grammar and Usage Listening, Writing</p> <p>Page: <i>Action Magazine</i> Procedure: Each day: Silent Sustained Reading 1. Agenda HW written----- 2. Journal Topic changes each day. 3. Mountain Language 1- 8 (left-side) 4. HW Check 5. Oral reading 6. Review policies and procedures 7. Go over new Syllabus 8. Review Rules and consequences</p> <p>Homework/Evaluation: Spelling words defined and syllabication.</p> <p>Read each night for 15 min.</p>	<p>Text or Material: Elements of Literature(HRW)/(READ) English(HM)/(READ) Objective: 17, 21- 25 Listening, Literature Writing</p> <p>Page: <i>Action Magazine</i> Procedure: Each day: Silent Sustained Reading 1. Agenda HW written----- 2. Journal Topic changes each day. 3. Mountain Language 9 – 16 (left-side) 4. HW Check 5. Oral reading 6. Read and respond from <i>Action Magazine</i>.</p> <p>Write each word in a sentence or a story with at words underlined. 5 sentences min.</p> <p>Read each night for 15 min.</p>	<p>Text or Material: Elements of Literature(HRW)/(READ) English(HM)/(ACTION) Objective: 31- 45, 56, 63 Reading, Speaking, Writing</p> <p>Page: <i>Action Magazine</i> Procedure: Each day: Silent Sustained Reading 1. Agenda HW written----- 2. Journal Topic changes each day. 3. Mountain Language 17 – 20 (left-side) 4. Mountain Language 1 – 4 (right-side) Check ML 5. HW Check 6. Oral reading 7. Spelling Bee per lass</p> <p>Write words in two times each and ABC order.</p> <p>Read each night for 15 min</p>	<p>Text or Material: Elements of Literature(HRW)/(READ) English(HM)/(ACTION) Objective: 64, 65, 66, 67, Reading, Writing</p> <p>Page: <i>Action Magazine</i> Procedure: Each day: Silent Sustained reading 1. Agenda HW written----- 2. Journal Topic changes each day 3. Mountain Language 5 – 12 (right-side) 4. HW Check 5. Assign spelling words for the next week. 6. Oral reading 7. Read and respond from <i>Action Magazine</i>.</p> <p>Write words three times each. Spelling test Friday</p> <p>Read each night for 15 min</p>	<p>Text or Material: Elements of Literature(HRW)/(READ) English(HM)/(ACTION) Objective: 69, 70, 75, 74 Reading, Writing</p> <p>Page: Procedure: Each day: Silent Sustained reading 1. Agenda HW written----- 2. Journal Topic changes each day 3. Mountain Language 5 – 12 (right-side) 4. HW Check 5. Oral Reading 6. Read and Respond from <i>Action Magazine</i> 7. Spelling Test</p> <p>Read for sixty minutes. Begin spelling HW</p>

All English mechanics objectives relating to English are met through skills maintenance program Mountain Language™.

Scorpions

Umbrella Theme – Changes IEPs on file with team, and V.P. SEARCH with Ms. Ashman

Teacher's Name: William I. Moore		LESSON PLANS		Grade/Section #: 7-1.2.3		Date: 4/14-17/03			
Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday	
Text or Material:		Text or Material:		Text or Material:		Text or Material:		Text or Material:	
Elements of Literature(HRW)(READ) English(HM)(ACTION) Objective: 1- 12, 13, 14 16, Grammar and Usage Listening, Writing		Elements of Literature(HRW)(READ) English(HM)(ACTION) Objective: 17, 21- 25 Listening, Literature Writing		Elements of Literature(HRW)(READ) English(HM)(ACTION) Objective: 31- 45, 56, 63 Reading, Speaking, Writing		Elements of Literature(HRW)(READ) English(HM)(ACTION) Objective: 64, 65, 66, 67, Reading, Writing		Elements of Literature(HRW)(READ) English(HM)(ACTION) Objective:69, 70, 75, 74 Reading, Writing	
Page :No one text a variety of sources Procedure: Each day: Silent Sustained Reading 1. Agenda HW written----- 2. Journal Topic changes each day. 3. Mountain Language 1 – 10 (left-side) 4. HW Check 5. Oral reading 6. Begin poetry Unit 7. Introduce different types of poetry to the students.		Page No one text a variety of sources Procedure: Each day: Silent Sustained Reading 1. Agenda HW written----- 2. Journal Topic changes each day. 3. Mountain Language 1 – 10 (left-side) 4. HW Check 5. Oral reading 6. Continue unit with students working on poems		Page: No one text a variety of sources Procedure: Each day: Silent Sustained Reading 1. Agenda HW written----- 2. Journal Topic changes each day. *3. Mountain Language 11 – 20 (left-side) 4. Oral reading 5. Continue poetry unit		Page: No one text a variety of sources Procedure: Each day: Silent Sustained Reading 1. Agenda HW written----- 2. Journal Topic changes each day 3. Mountain Language 1 – 10 (right-side) 4. HW Check 5. Assign spelling words for the next week. 6. Oral reading 7. Continue poetry unit		Page: No one text a variety of sources Procedure: Each day: Spring Break Begins. Today is Good Friday. Have a nice holiday!	
Homework/Evaluation: SpHW Read each night for 15 min.		Review class work. Share with parents. Spelling HW Read each night for 15 min		Review class work. Share with parents. SP Hw Read each night for 15 min		Review class work. Share with parents. Sp HW Read each night for 15 min		Read for sixty minutes. Review class work. Share with parents. Sp HW	

APPENDIX B

SHUMAN'S WRITING PLAN

SHUMAN MIDDLE SCHOOL'S TEST IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Shuman Middle School once again is striving for an increase in test scores for the 1997-98 school year. This will become a reality if everyone dedicates himself or herself to this cause. Outlined below is the procedure we will follow to achieve our goal. The plan is the same as last year with the exception of adding the Social Studies, Science, Map and Reference skills to your tracking chart.

1. Each homeroom teacher will be given a tracking chart with which to record their students' achievement above and below the 50%ile on last year's (1996-97) IOWA TEST OF BASIC SKILLS. This is to be done by looking at the National Percentile Rank (NPR) score at the top right of the student's INDIVIDUAL PROFILE SHEET for each major area. If a student has a rank of 50%ile or above, record a (+) sign on the track sheet. If the bar stops in mid-average or low area, place a (-) on the track sheet. Next, check the sub-skills for each category (these are listed below the test report). If the bar stops in the high average or high column, place a (+) sign on the track sheet. If the bar stops in the mid-average to low area, place a (-) sign on the track sheet. If you prefer, you may use the actual numbers rather than a (+) or (-) sign.
2. Homeroom teachers are to provide a copy of their track sheets to the other members of their team that serve the students. You are also to provide a copy for the counselor. Be sure that Exploratory and Physical Education teachers serving your students are aware of deficit areas. This can be done during your regular team planning meetings as you plan your interdisciplinary units. Exploratory teachers are also expected to teach reading and math skills in their content areas.
3. The tracking chart is to assist teachers in planning remediation and enrichment activities. It should also be utilized to plan peer groups for study and learning.
4. Use peer tutoring as often as possible. Students have a way of clarifying a concept for their peers in terms that other students understand.
5. All teachers are required to develop a list of remediation and enrichment activities that will be employed to improve test scores in their classrooms. The list along with a copy of your track sheet is due in the counselors' office by November 14, 1997.
6. The following resources are being made available to all teachers for use in improving academic skills:
 - . Test Reading
 - . Scoring High in Reading and Math
 - . Test Best on the ITBS
 - . Additional materials are on order

7. You are expected to use these materials frequently. Lessons Plans are to reflect a minimum of 15 minutes of test-taking skills activities/strategies, beginning immediately. Please highlight these activities in your lesson plans. Unannounced observations of remediation activities will be made by the administration periodically. Testing practice materials listed above may be obtained from the counselors' office. Students are not to write in these booklets. Scantron sheets or regular paper should be used for students to record their answers.
8. The counselors will be available to assist you with the development of strategies, peer- grouping, documentation, special students problems, etc.

WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM:

1. All students will write in all subject areas, exploratory and physical education classes.
2. Writing assignment should only be 10-15 minutes of the class period.
3. Lesson plans should reflect writing assignments.
4. Exploratory and physical education teachers will turn in all students' papers to the counselors' office at the end of each marking period.
5. The criteria used for the 8th Grade Writing Assessment is attached.
This should be used when evaluating student papers.
6. The following schedule is to be followed for weekly writing assignments:

Monday	Language Arts
Tuesday	Math
Wednesday	Science
Thursday	Social Studies
Friday	Exploratory /P. E.

Georgia Grade 8 Writing Test

Scoring Domains, Definitions, and Components

Content/Organization: The writer establishes the controlling idea through examples, illustrations, and facts or details. There is evidence of a sense of order which is clear and relevant. (Weight = 3)

- Clearly established controlling idea
- Clearly developed supporting ideas
- Sufficiently relevant supporting ideas
- Clearly discernible order of presentation
- Logical transitions and flow of ideas
- Sense of completeness

Style: The writer controls language to establish his/her individuality. (Weight = 2).

- Concrete images and descriptive language
- Easily readable
- Varied sentence patterns
- Appropriate tone for topic, audience, and purpose

Sentence Formations: The writer forms effective sentences. (Weight = 1)

- Appropriate end punctuation
- Complete sentences or functional fragments
- Appropriate coordination and/or subordination

Usage: The writer uses standard American English. (Weight = 1)

- Clear pronoun references
- Correct subject-verb agreement
- Standard form of verbs and nouns
- Correct word choice

Mechanics: The writer employs devices necessary in standard written American English. (Weight = 1)

- Appropriate capitalization
- Appropriate internal punctuation
- Appropriate format
- Correct spelling

* The weight which each domain scores contributes to the total score.

More information about the domains of effective writing and criteria for scoring papers is available in the publication entitled “Teacher’s Guide – Georgia Grade 8 Writing Test.” This document is available in each school or through the Georgia Department of Education.

APPENDIX C
IRB APPROVAL

Georgia Southern University
Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Phone: 912-681-5465
Fax: 912-681-0719

Ovrsight@gasou.edu

4 College Plaza, P.O. Box 8005
Statesboro, GA 30460-8005

To: Mr. William Moore
Curriculum, Foundations, and Research

Cc: Dr. Ming Fang He
Curriculum, Foundations, and Research

From: Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Administrative Support Office for Research Oversight Committees (IACUC/IBC/IRB)

Date: February 4, 2006

Subject: Status of Application for Approval to Utilize Human Subjects in Research

After an expedited review of your proposed research project titled "An Inquiry Into Writing Practices in a Middle School's Language Arts Classroom," it appears that (1) the research subjects are at minimal risk, (2) appropriate safeguards are planned, and (3) the research activities involve only procedures which are allowable under the following research category:

Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects (45 CFR §46.110), I am pleased to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has approved your proposed research.

This IRB approval is for one year. If you are sure of this project, it is the same as that time, there have been no changes to the expedited research protocol, you may request an extension of the approval period for an additional year. In the interim, please provide the IRB with any information concerning any significant adverse event, whether or not it is believed to be related to the study, within five working days of the event. In addition, if a change or modification of the approved methodology becomes necessary, you must notify the IRB Coordinator prior to initiating any such changes or modifications. At that time, an amended application for IRB approval may be submitted. Upon completion of your data collection, please notify the IRB Coordinator so that your file may be closed.

C: Dr. Tom Case, IRB Chairperson
Dr. Bryan Riemann, IRB Associate Chairperson
Ms. Melanie Reddick, IRB Administrative Assistant

Application for Approval to Utilize Human Subjects in Research

Instructions: Complete all sections of these forms (indicate any sections that do not apply with "N/A") and submit completed materials, including all data collection instruments, informed consent forms, and other relevant materials, to the address below. **Please type or print.**

Notification: All applications are reviewed on a first come – first served basis, and as quickly as possible. Depending upon the type of review necessary, turn-around time can range from less than a week (for certain types of exempt research protocols) to 6-8 weeks for a full Committee review. *Failure to follow instructions will delay the review process.*

Research Oversight Coordinator Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office of Research Services Box 8005 Savannah, GA 30460-8005	Submit Completed Application to:	Phone: 912-681-5465 Fax: 912-681-0719 E-Mail: ovrsight@GaSoU.edu http://www2.gasou.edu/research/Resources/
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Research Title: An Inquiry into Writing Practices in a Middle School's Language Arts Classrooms

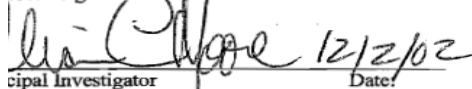
Principal Investigator: William L. Moore **Title:** Student

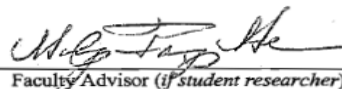
Department: Curriculum, Foundations, & Research

Mailing Address: 102 Settlement Way **Phone:** 912-897-2968

Savannah, GA 31410 **E-Mail:** wmoore3@bellsouth.net

Approval Signatures:

 12/2/02
 Principal Investigator **Date:**


 Faculty Advisor (if student researcher)


 Department Chair

Dr. Ming Fang He
 Print Name of Faculty Advisor

Do Not Write Below This Line – For Internal IRB Use Only

DETERMINATION OF INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)

Human Subjects: At Risk Not At Risk

Decision: Approved Conditional †

Returned for Revisions/Not Approved Extension of Approval Period

Attach Conditions of Approval

State Section of Federal Code that Applies _____

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
 Chair, Institutional Review Board

Research Protocol

For Research Utilizing Human Subjects

1. Statement of the problem to be studied:

The framework surrounding my study incorporates societal, theoretical, and methodological paradigms. Effective pedagogical strategies are of the utmost importance if schools are to enable students to become self-disciplined, productive learners. "Students are the direct recipients of teachers' instructional practices; therefore, instruction must be based on research and practical experience" (Moore, 2002, p. 170). The overall purpose of this study is to examine the perspectives and instructional practices of teachers in the discipline of writing. In general I am asking: To what extent is writing an integral component of a middle school's language arts program? Specifically, I am asking: What practices/strategies are utilized to assess writing in middle school classrooms? To what extent are these practices/strategies successful? What practices/strategies are utilized to assess writing in middle school classrooms?

Societal: To be effective, productive citizens in society, people must be able to communicate. Writing is a reflective and creative endeavor that does not come naturally. We all need to communicate in one form or another. Writing requires us not only to have a speaking vocabulary but also a written one. Writing tests are given at various grade levels to assess the ability of students to communicate their ideas clearly. Students unable to master the art of communication may be at risk of failing not only in school, but also in society in general. Writing is a convoluted cognitive-linguistic operation employing a spectrum of intellectual skills and communication aptitudes. Writing requires that the procedures to produce an end product be circular or intermingling within itself. Writing does not appear to be linear. The need to identify strategies that promote positive attitudes toward writing and that improve writing skills is paramount if students are to be successful in the future economy.

Theoretical: Delpit (1995) advocates teaching skills to students in meaningful contexts. These skills enable students to communicate effectively in standard, generally acceptable literary forms. At the same time, students are expected to apply their knowledge in authentic settings. Writing is one of the keys to unlocking a child's potential to grow holistically. Schools are to transmit values and knowledge that students need in order to be the "consolidated self" Mohanty (1997) mentions in "Dangerous Territory".

Methodological: Qualitative research houses a variety of methodologies. “No single method can grasp the subtle variations in ongoing human experience” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p.24). Moore (2002, pg. 171) states, “A new paradigm of research where the researcher and the participants are actively and jointly involved in experience is evolving.” The theoretical framework of this study is phenomenology and hermeneutics. The methodology of this study is a combination of narrative inquiry and classroom based action research. The purpose of my study is to identify the perceptions teachers have toward writing. For this to be effectively conveyed, the stories of the participants and myself will be told. Phenomenology “investigates the distinctly human perceptions of other people” (Willis 1991, p. 174). “Phenomenology also encourages a dialectic relationship between participants that will allow the various perspectives of the participants to be heard” (Moore, 2002, pg. 172). Hermeneutics will be used to interpret the lived experiences in order to make meaning. This method of inquiry has the ability to reveal perceptions that may be hidden. Narrative inquiry, an approach that focuses on “contextualized, historicized, placed experience” (Phillion & He, 2001) is being developed as a means of understanding experiences. Phillion and He (2001) relate that experience is explored by immersing one’s self in the lives of others and seeing research as an on-going part of life. The integration of various methodologies will enable the participants’ voices to be heard. Classroom-based action undertaken by practitioners will allow change to occur by exploring the lived experiences within classrooms.

- 2. Describe your research design. {As appropriate, you should include (1) your procedures for selecting, recruiting, or identifying the research participants (as well as the individuals in any “control” or “comparison” group); (2) any plans to do follow-up studies of the original participants (3) issues, questions, etc. to be studied; (4) data analysis plans with respect to the ability to identify individual study participants’ responses, and (5) any other information relevant for assessing possible risks to the study’s participants.}**

This study adopts a narrative method of inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988 & 1990) and a classroom-based action research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). Narrative, as research phenomena, as a form of inquiry, and as a method of representing understandings of inquiry, has an established history in the social sciences (Polkinghorne, 2001). In narrative inquiry researchers seek to develop an understanding of experience. In this study participants’ lived experiences and perceptions of writing will be explored. Classroom-based action research undertaken by practitioners will allow change to occur by exploring the lived experiences within classrooms.

- 1) The participants in this study will be six, middle school, language arts teachers and one assistant principal. Two teachers will be selected from the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. Only the researcher will keep a

reflective journal throughout the study. Strategies that focus on writing instruction and how this instruction impacts the eighth grade writing scores will be explored. The participants will be interviewed individually and in focus groups. Their philosophies of writing will be investigated as well as their own involvement in personal writing activities.

Data Collection & Time Frame: This study will be conducted in a middle school located in Chatham County. Permissions from the principal and teachers will be obtained. Data collection will be comprised of school portraiture, artifacts from the participants' lesson plans, classroom anecdotal records, the researcher's reflective journal, observations, and open-ended interviews. All participants will receive a cover letter explaining the research study and a consent form. A time to be interviewed will be established that is convenient for all parties. With their permission, interviewees will be audio taped. After taping, the interviews will be transcribed and submitted to the participants for review. All tapes will be catalogued and kept in a secure place.

Phase One (January '03 – February '03) Preparatory research involving selection of participants, collection of archives and documents, and scheduling of interviews will be conducted. Current information will be gathered to identify key social, cultural, and programmatic forces on the school. Observation of the participants and the researcher's own reflections will be recorded in a journal. One open-ended interview lasting 30-45 minutes will be conducted with each participant. All interviews will be audio taped and will focus on how the participants' writing pedagogy in their classrooms.

There is no control group for this study.

Phase Two (February '03 – May '03) Interview tapes will be transcribed. February and March will be devoted to data analysis, writing, and communication of results. This will include 1) focus group interviews; 2) participant observations; 3) feedback to participants; and 4) drawing educational implications.

- 2) There are no plans to do a follow-up study on the participants of this study.

Data Management: Data collected will be secured in a locked cabinet at my residence. My dissertation supervisor, Dr. Ming Fang He, and myself will be the only persons to have access to the data at any time. When this study is completed and the dissertation written, all data will be shredded and destroyed.

- 3) Copies of potential questions for each participant are included at the end of this document. The general research question to be addressed in this study is: What is the impact of teachers' writing pedagogy on the eighth grade students' writing tests? Specific questions to be explored are: What practices/strategies are utilized in two sixth, seventh, and eighth grade language arts classrooms to promote writing? How are middle school students encouraged/motivated to engage in writing? To what extent are these practices/strategies successful? My study is entitled *An Inquiry into Writing Practices in a Middle School's Language Arts Classrooms*.
- 4) Data Analysis/Interpretation Techniques: Preliminary data analysis will begin with a review of the documents, reflective journal, and notes on talks, observations, and interviews. Throughout the study, data will be transcribed, analyzed, and interpreted. Data analysis plans will be coded for the researcher's organizational purposes, but no individual's responses will be noted as such. Each participant's group responses will be absolutely confidential.
- 5) I see no risk to the participants of this study. Their names will not be revealed, but their thoughts and perspectives of this study will help identify goals and strategies for better instructional programs.
- 3. Description of possible risks to human subjects. (If there is a possibility of subjects or researchers being exposed to bodily fluids (drawing blood, etc...) please explain how the Centers for Disease Control "Universal Precautions" will be followed. Also be aware that it will be necessary for you to receive Institutional Biohazards Committee (IBC) approval in order to be in compliance. See the Research Oversight Coordinator for further information.)**

There is no possible risk to human participants in this research study.
"N/A"

4. Description of possible benefits to human subjects and society in general.

My study's significance lies in its contribution to: 1) providing valuable information about the writing instruction in a middle school's language arts program; 2) improving pedagogical goals and instruction for teachers of writing through reflection on their own practices; 3) adding to the body of research on writing; 4) the involvement of teachers in reflecting on instructional goals and strategies concerning writing in their classrooms; 5) provide implications for writing coordinators including policy and guideline specialists, media specialists, writing educators and instructors, etc.; and 6) provide teachers an active voice in the formulation of writing practices and strategies.

5. Identify information on study participants. (e.g., social security number, name, position, title, or relatively unique demographic characteristics.)

- 1) Names of the key people (e.g. teachers)
- 2) Gender – There will be 5 female teachers, 1 male teacher, and 1 male assistant principal in the study
- 3) A profile of the school (e.g. demographics of the students, physical layout and organization of the school, faculty data, programs, etc.)
- 4) Years of experience – teachers

6. List and attach a copy of all questionnaire instruments, informed consent documents, interview protocols, or any other materials to be used during the research project (i.e., newspaper advertisements, flyers, etc.)

Interviews will be conducted orally and taped if consent is given. Notes and/or tapes will later be transcribed and submitted to appropriate participants for their review.

See the following attachments:

- a) A cover letter will be given to all participants of the study
- b) Consent letter for teachers
- c) Consent letter from the principal of Shuman Middle School
- d) Possible interview questions for teachers and assistant principal

7. Describe the procedure(s) that will be used to secure informed consent. If deception is necessary, attach a copy of the debriefing plan.

A cover letter and an abstract of the research project will be given to participants with the consent document chosen for the study as described in the answer to question 6 above. (See attachments)

8. Will minors be included as part of the data set (Indicate the appropriate response)

Yes _____ No _____

If you indicated YES above, describe the procedure(s) to gain consent to utilize minors in the research.

**Research Protocol
For Research Utilizing Human Subjects
Informed Consent Cover Letter**

Dear _____,

My name is William L. Moore, a middle school language arts teacher.

I am conducting a study that will explore teachers' writing practices and strategies in middle school language arts classrooms to ascertain the impact of the writing instruction on the eighth grade writing test.

Attached you will find an abstract of the study. As a participant, you will be asked questions about strategies you use in your writing instruction and your personal writing history. The sessions will be taped (with your permission) for accuracy. A transcript of the tape will be made available to you for a review. Anything you wish to have changed or deleted will be done at a scheduled follow-up time. Research materials will be catalogued and kept in a secure place.

If you would like more information on this research study in order to make your decision, or if you simply want to discuss any questions or concerns you might have, please contact me [home: (912) 897-2968; work: (912) 201-7500-743] or Dr. Ming Fang He, Supervising Professor at Georgia Southern University [(912) 681-5091]. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant in this study, they should be directed to the IRB (Institutional Review Board) Coordinator at the Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at Georgia Southern University at (912) 681-5465.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Yours truly,

William L. Moore
Doctoral Candidate, Curriculum Studies/Literacy
Georgia Southern University

**Research Protocol
For Research Utilizing Human Subjects
Institutional Consent**

I, _____, give permission to William L. Moore to conduct his research with participants in Shuman Middle School. I have reviewed the proposed research plans of *An Inquiry into the Teaching of Writing in a Middle School's Language Arts Classrooms*, and I give William L. Moore my permission to solicit the teachers of Leiston T. Shuman Middle School for possible research participation.

Signature _____

Position _____

Date _____

**Research Protocol
For Research Utilizing Human Subjects
Individual Adult Consent Form**

I, _____ (participant), agree to participate in the qualitative research study entitled, *An Inquiry into the Teaching of Writing in a Middle School's Language Arts Classrooms*, conducted by William L. Moore (researcher) of Georgia Southern University. In this study, the researcher will examine the perceptions and strategies of teachers of writing in a middle school's language arts classrooms. I will be asked to share life experiences, personal views, and values during taped interviews. These tapes will be transcribed at a later date and presented to me for my review. I understand that only William L. Moore will know my identification. Estimates of the time required for my participation in this study are approximately 30 – 45 minutes for taped interviews.

I hereby give permission for my voice to be recorded. All materials will be held in strict confidence and will be kept in a secure location. I understand that tapes, transcripts, and observational notes are the property of the researcher and will not be released to a third party without my permission. Because this study involves my own interpretation of practices and events, I will have the opportunity to request that particular information not be used in the published report. I understand that I have the right to refuse to answer any questions and to withdraw from the study at any time. My name will not be used in the published report unless I give my written permission. Upon completion of the research, if I desire a copy of the report, I will receive one. There is no anticipated risk to me due to my participation in this study.

Completion of this consent form and its return will indicate permission to use the data obtained in the subsequent interview in the study.

Participant Signature _____ Date: _____

Position _____

Researcher's Signature _____ Date: _____

Use of Actual name or Pseudonym:

_____ I give permission for my actual name to be used in the dissertation and publications related to it.

_____ I do not give permission for my actual name to be used in the dissertation and publications related to it.

_____ I wish to be called by the pseudonym, _____.

_____ I choose to have the researcher select a pseudonym for me.

If you have any questions about this research, please call the researcher, William L. Moore at (912) 897-2968, or the Supervising Professor, Dr. Ming Fang He at Georgia Southern University, (912) 681-5091. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant in this study, please direct them to IRB Coordinator at the Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at (912) 681-5465.

**Research Protocol
For Research Utilizing Human Subjects
Potential Questions for Teachers**

1. What was your attitude toward writing as an elementary student? As secondary student? As an adult? Or as a teacher/professional?
2. What kinds of personal writing do you do now?
3. What training have you received in teaching writing?
4. What practices/strategies do you utilize to teach writing in your classroom?
5. What forms of writing assessment do you use in your classroom?
6. In what ways do you encourage students to write? (motivated as well as reluctant students)
7. In what ways do you feel writing supports reading?
8. What practices/strategies do you use that connect reading and writing?

**Research Protocol
For Utilizing Human Subjects
Potential Questions for Administrator:**

- 1) What was your attitude toward writing as an elementary student? As a secondary student? As an adult? As a teacher/professional?
- 2) What training have you received in teaching writing?
- 3) How do you feel about yourself as a writer?
- 4) Can you identify your strengths and weaknesses as a writer?
- 5) How much importance do you attach to writing?
- 6) What kinds of writing do you do on your own? (i.e. personal writings)
- 7) What practices/strategies that promote writing do you look for in teachers' lesson plans/classrooms?
- 8) What staff development is provided to improve writing instruction?
- 9) To what do you attribute the success/failure of your school to develop effective writers?
- 10) What changes would you make to improve writing in your school?

School Portraiture

School portraiture is included to position the study and to provide a sense of context for the reader. Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis (1997) declare a school portraiture reveals the "...dynamic interaction of values, personality, structure, and history" (p. 11). Demographics of the community, school, the faculty, students, and parents are included. The reader may become interested in the lives of the participants and see research as an on-going part of life (Phillion, 2001). School portraiture is developed with a purpose of providing a sense of context for the study. A picture of the physical, intellectual and social make-up of the school helps readers understand why the study takes place in a particular location. The information contained in this portraiture comes from the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) that has replaced the traditional Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) report and the school's yearly Title I report.

The school in which this study takes place is Leiston T. Shuman Middle School, located in Savannah, Georgia. Shuman Middle School was originally built as a junior high in 1963. It was named in honor of a former businessman, civic leader, and Board of Education member. Initially it was a neighborhood school serving five hundred white American seventh, eighth, and ninth graders. The move was made in 1983 to serve as a model for sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. Shuman also began the only English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) laboratory in Chatham County middle schools, and it continues to serve a multicultural student body.

The first level of integration in the late 1960's brought the first African-American teachers, followed in the early 1970's by a court ordered desegregation plan, resulting in

a more racially balanced student population. White flight or changing demographics of East Side Savannah resulted in a flip of racial balance leading to a higher than countywide balance of black to white at Shuman.

Shuman Middle School is located in East Savannah about one mile south of the Savannah River. To its immediate north is a private golf and country club, to its east and south are residential districts, and to the west is a historic Catholic cemetery. Within walking distance are three housing projects in which many students reside. The population includes students from the entire school district whose first language is not English, Magnet students drawn from all of Chatham County, with the remaining students from the residential neighborhoods near the school. The population is diverse and reflective of the community.

The Magnet Programs for the Performing and Visual Arts and Communications Technology were in place by 1991. Since then a French component has been added as part of the widening curriculum for the 2002-2003 school year. The middle school concept was implemented and enhanced by building renovations, which provided additional capacity to serve the diverse population of Shuman students.

Prior to the 1997-98 school year, the school boundaries had not changed since 1987-90. Even though the school system realigned the districts in the summer of 1997, for most of the schools, including Shuman, the demographics of the student population changed very little. In the fall of 1997, Shuman implemented a Schoolwide Title I Project to better serve its at-risk population.

In 1991, Shuman Middle School became the Performing and Visual Arts/Communications Technology Academy. This curricular addition brought about

significant changes in the student population and ethnic composition of the school. The percentage of white students increased to meet the federal desegregation guidelines for the school system, and the overall student population grew significantly. Magnet students came from all areas of Savannah and Chatham County. Students become a part of the Magnet Program through an audition and screening process that includes identification of a particular talent, personal recommendations from teachers, academic recommendations, and availability of space in the program.

While Shuman is a Magnet school drawing its population from the whole of Savannah and Chatham County, it does have two feeder schools, Eli Whitney Elementary (the elementary ESOL provider) and Thunderbolt Elementary Schools. Thunderbolt's students are split between those living north and south of Victory Drive in Savannah. Those living north of Victory Drive go to Shuman while those living south of it go to Myers Middle School. The two elementary schools provide over two-thirds of Shuman's student population.

Shuman Middle School currently has two administrators: an African-American woman as principal, and one assistant principal. Supporting the administrators are two guidance counselors. Shuman's two guidance counselors meet the needs of Shuman's student population and also conform to Roy Barnes's, the former governor, educational bill. The administrative support staff consists of two secretaries, two clerks (data and counselor), a school nurse, social worker, and a School Resource Officer (SRO). The nurse is full time, as is the School Resource Officer, but the social worker is divided among a team of schools and is at Shuman once a week.

The School Resource Officer's job is varied. He helps with security of the school and provides a sense of safety as well as a means of conflict resolution and mediation for our students. The SRO is also a role model for our young black males.

The nurse and social worker help us with a wide range of issues that confront us at Shuman. The social worker deals with problems of repeated tardiness and absences. She provides another way to check on attendance problems or other areas of educational neglect or abuse. The nurse does initial vision and hearing screening as a first step in a Student Support Team's efforts to meet the needs of the students.

Shuman's student population is 763. The Magnet department has approximately 320 students. 67.6% percent of Shuman's students participate in the free/reduced lunch program. The demographics of Shuman are: African-American – 68%, White – 24.7%, Asian – 4.6%, Hispanic – 1.4%, and Other –1.3%. Gender composition consists of: eighth grade – 111 males, 117 females; seventh grade – 123 males, 166 females; and sixth grade – 132 males, 138 females.

Shuman offers many programs to support its students. In addition to the ESOL, special populations at Shuman include at-risk, gifted, Magnet, and Special Education. Shuman has teachers who serve each of these populations with such programs as ESOL, Technology Preparation, Schoolwide Enrichment, Specific Learning Disabilities, Emotional Disorders, Speech/Hearing Disorders, SEARCH, and specialized Performing Arts, Visual Arts, and Communications Technology classes.

Shuman's staff is as varied as its student population. In the sixth grade the student/teacher ratio is 23:1; in the seventh grade, it is 26:1; and in the eighth grade, it is 27:1. The teacher/staff ratio is 2.2 teachers for each staff person. The sixth grade has four

academic teams of three teachers each. The seventh grade has three academic teams of three teachers each, and the eighth grade has three teams, with two consisting of three members and one consisting of four members. There are six special education teachers and two paraprofessionals serving our students with special needs. Three of the special education teachers are in self-contained classrooms with two of the teachers addressing specific learning disabilities, one addressing emotional behavior disorders and one serving our gifted population (SEARCH). Currently our gifted facilitator is part-time even though we now have over fifty identified gifted students (budgets are based on the previous year). The magnet program has full time teachers of Visual Arts, Dance, Chorus, Strings, Band, Drama, French, and Communications Technology. Connections courses include: enrichment reading, computer keyboarding, physical education, health, general music, guitar, art, remedial reading and math, video production, photography, and introduction to technology.

Each teacher extends the guidance counselor's reach through an Advisor-Advisee program. A part of our guidance activities is a program called "Writing Across the Curriculum". The students respond to a series of writing prompts to provide reflection on a variety of topics. Teachers also support the guidance program by initiating the Student Support Team process. These provide vital assistance to the guidance department.

Interscholastic and intramural athletic events are a part of the physical, social, and emotional education of our students. Seventh and eighth graders can compete against other local middle schools in sports such as football, softball, cheerleading, volleyball, soccer, and basketball. Sixth graders can participate in track in the spring. An intramural program lead by our Athletic Director allows our students to not only compete but also

develop physical skills such as hand to eye coordination and social skills such as team building. Shuman is a model middle school in many ways and yet is a typical one in that it applies the concept of the middle school to fit its own unique circumstances.