

Student Work

8-1-1984

A Comparative Study of Elementary School Students with Respect to their Creative and Technical Writing Skills

Karen Sweeney
University of Nebraska at Omaha

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/studentwork>

Recommended Citation

Sweeney, Karen, "A Comparative Study of Elementary School Students with Respect to their Creative and Technical Writing Skills" (1984). *Student Work*. 2461.
<https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/studentwork/2461>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in Student Work by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UNO. For more information, please contact unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu.



A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS
WITH RESPECT TO THEIR CREATIVE
AND TECHNICAL WRITING SKILLS

Presented to the

Graduate Faculty

University of Nebraska

at Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Specialist in Education

University of Nebraska

by

Karen Sweeney

August 1984

UMI Number: EP74006

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI EP74006

Published by ProQuest LLC (2015). Copyright in the Dissertation held by the Author.

Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code



ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

FIELD PROJECT PROPOSAL ACCEPTANCE

Accepted for the Graduate Faculty, University of
Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Specialist in Education, University of
Nebraska at Omaha.

Supervisory Committee

Name	Department
<u><i>Harold Petre</i></u>	<u><i>Ed Ed</i></u>
<u><i>John J Langan</i></u>	<u>T.E.D.</u>

Darrell Kellams
Chairman

7-19-84
Date

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
1.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
	STATEMENT OF PURPOSE.....	3
	METHOD.....	3
	PROCEDURE.....	3
	SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.....	4
	ASSUMPTIONS.....	4
	DELIMITATIONS.....	4
	DEFINITIONS.....	4
	ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY.....	5
	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	6
2.	REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....	7
	HOW TO MOTIVATE CREATIVE WRITING.....	10
	WHY TEACHERS SHOULD MOTIVATE CHILDREN TO WRITE.....	14
	SUMMARY.....	16
	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	17
3.	METHODOLOGY/GENERAL BACKGROUND.....	19
	SPECIFIC METHODOLOGY.....	21
4.	DISPLAY OF DATA.....	22
	TABLE I.....	23
	TABLE II.....	24
	TABLE III.....	25

Chapter

4.	SUMMARY.....	25
5.	SUMMARY.....	27
	CONCLUSIONS.....	28
	RECOMMENDATIONS.....	29
	LIST OF APPENDIXES.....	31
	APPENDIX <u>A</u>	32
	APPENDIX <u>B</u>	34
	APPENDIX <u>C</u>	37

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Nation at Risk challenges educators in all areas of curriculum. We have heard of apparent deficiency in our reading and writing curriculum through such reports as "Why Johnny Can't Read" and "Why Johnny Can't Write". These items were brought to our attention in the book by Rudolph Flesh called Why Johnny Can't Read in 1955. (1) The concepts still get attention today. A further indictment was that of former Creighton University student and basketball player, Kevin Ross, who claimed that he went through four years of college without the ability to read and write at a level where he should have been able to perform those tasks. He and the school gained national recognition with his "plight". Public Education and Creighton were held accountable for Kevin's problems.

In the September, 1983, issue of "Educational Leadership," an article called "Action for Excellence" pointed out the need to work on these skills:

1. The ability to comprehend literally a simple written passage.
2. The ability to compute with whole numbers
3. The mastery of writing mechanics (2)

A program to improve teaching of writing has been supported by the State of Nebraska through the Nebraska Writing Project. During the past five years, numerous teachers have worked on techniques to motivate students to write creatively through this project. Millard elementary teachers have participated in the Nebraska Writing Project since the program began. Millard Schools have increased their emphasis on creative writing and a new curricula was developed to increase opportunities for teachers to stimulate students to write. There was a need to develop a creative writing program in Millard. Teachers who had developed expertise

through the Nebraska Writing Project worked to develop such a program.

The creative writing program in Millard for children in grades 1-6 focuses on writing experiences and writing techniques. Since writing begins with verbal expression, scribes are used to write the creative thoughts for students in the first grade. Older students or volunteer mothers are the scribes.

A program for Grades 4-6 was needed for Millard students. Based on current information about the language development of children, the Advancing Composition Experiences and Skills (ACES) Program is comprehensive and sequential. The results of the Millard Elementary Composition Assessment, which was conducted in the spring of 1980, furnished the information used to design the ACES program so that it will complement existing composition practices.

Creative writing is a continuing, valued strand of the Elementary Language Arts Program. The program begins with the writing of experience stories in first grade and continued in conjunction with varied composition activities through sixth grade. Examples include personal experiences, stories, autobiographies, jokes, riddles, tall tales, biographies, essays, poems, descriptions, plays, skits, fables, reports, and editorials.

Teachers collect samples of their students' creative writing work throughout the school year. A committee is formed to select the best creative writing. The best selections are made into a booklet during the summer. Each student who makes a contribution to this booklet, receives a copy of the booklet when he/she returns to school the following August.

Each spring for the past four years, Millard students have gathered for a "Young Authors' Conference". Students are invited to represent their schools when the books they write are selected. Approximately one student

for every thirty students attended the conference last March 5th at Millard North High School. A published author, Marion Marsh Brown, was the honored guest and speaker. Students shared the books they wrote. In groups with Inspirational Leaders, they wrote creative stories. A luncheon and program concluded their experience.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not the creative writing program is fulfilling the following goals and objectives of the Millard Schools.

1. To demonstrate proficiency with creative aspects of writing
2. To demonstrate proficiency with technical aspects of writing
3. To be proficient in the creative and technical aspects of writing
4. To possess positive attitudes through written communication

METHOD

Samples of students' work from the elementary schools were collected in September, 1983. The same students provided samples of their work in February, 1984. A committee was formed to assess the progress these students made in the five month period. The teachers who students contributed writing for this study used the creative writing program designed in the Language Arts Curriculum. Every grade level was represented.

PROCEDURE

1. There was a review of the creative writing alternatives to identify criteria for each objective.
2. During the 1983-84 school year, a random sample of 90 students was identified.

3. A presample of September and post sample of February writing was collected.
4. Each sample of writing was evaluated by two teachers.
5. Writing outcomes were compared with the criteria of success.
6. Recommendations were made.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

During the 1984-85 school year, the Language Arts Program will be up for review. The information collected in this study will enable the Language Arts Committee to determine changes and improvements necessary when the program is updated.

ASSUMPTIONS

The sample of material used in the study is a representative sample.

DELIMITATIONS

Samples were taken from Millard Public Schools and applied strictly to the Millard Public Schools.

DEFINITIONS

1. Creative Writing is an activity that involves the writer with formulation of ideas, organized in a meaningful way. This activity is integrated with pre-writing experiences, listening, speaking, and reading in such a way that imagination and writing techniques are developed.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One is a general introduction. Chapter Two will offer a review of related literature. Chapter Three will present the methodology used in conducting this study. Chapter Four will report the findings of the study. Summary, conclusions, and recommendations will be presented in Chapter Five.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Flesh, Rudolph, Why Johnny Can't Read, Harper Publishing Company, New York, N. Y., 1955.
2. Hunt, James B., "Action for Excellence," Educational Leadership, ASCD Publications, September, 1983, Volume 41, Number 1, p. 15.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Creative writing has received a great deal of attention in the 1980's. The need to express ideas in writing has finally become a priority in education. Numerous publications support the importance of writing. Examination of these publications has been completed in order to justify the priority for writing. The articles include methods to stimulate creative writing. Information from this research is presented in this chapter.

On January 17, 1984, an article in the Wall Street Journal caught my attention. It was reported in this article that numerous people who cannot read or write work in the labor forces of this country. The inability of these people to compute necessary forms at work has cost many of them their lifetime jobs or limited their career potential. For a time period, some of these semi-illiterate people could cover up their limitations when they brought their work home for family members to complete. Eventually, their secrets are revealed and family members can no longer help them with their work. (12)

Writing needs to begin at an early age. Educators need to open the door to permit students to write. When children hear stories by A. A. Milne or Carl Sandburg's "Rootabaga Stories", their interests are stimulated. These personal experiences with literature become the basis for their writing when children are young. (10)

Language Arts activities should spin from reading to writing to listening to speaking, in any order. When these activities build on one another, they have a way of strengthening each of the skill areas. Uniting and integrating the four areas of Language Arts gives students an

opportunity to perceive, experience, and understand information in new and interesting ways.

Language Arts is a unique part of the curriculum because all of its skill areas permeate every aspect of human experience. Writing can become a vital part of that experience. (1)

Reading and listening are both receptive skills through which information comes to the person. Speaking and writing are expressive skills through which information goes out from the person.

Reading aloud to children is valuable for a number of reasons. Some of the reasons include:

1. Hearing words in context increases listener's receptive vocabularies.
2. Reading aloud introduces children to alternative ways to express themselves.
3. Listening skills are developed.
4. Listening attention span is increased.
5. Listeners are motivated so they will want to read.

Expressive skills help in the following ways:

1. They allow time to search for the best way to say what is meant.
2. The writer is allowed to take on a role and explore situations from another person's point of view.
3. It allows greater development of language for artistic purposes than does speech.
4. Writing produces some benefit for the writer.

Those children who are superior in oral language in kindergarten or grade one before they learn to read or write are the very ones who excel in reading and writing by the time they are in grade six. Data shows a

positive relationship of success among the language arts when superior oral language precedes reading and writing. (10)

An approach used with younger children is to form animals with clay followed by students writing about their creations. This motivates children to write because it is fun. It is a concrete activity that illustrates the concept of writing as a process. Clay has limitless possibilities. It can be shaped and reshaped, formed and reformed. There is little fear of making a mistake.

Working and writing is like working with clay. Students can be made to understand the limitless creative possibilities in the beginning stages of the writing process.

Children need to "play with" many different words and forms of language in order to best express their ideas and feelings. With the experience clay offers, students can play to achieve their goal in writing. (3)

Effective use of written language is a fundamental development for individuals. Students must develop written language skills in order to recognize correct written prose.

In the study "Project Right to Write", students improved ability and knowledge in correct written language and improved in written composition of the English language. This program was centered on the teaching of writing skills by regular classroom teachers using the material in their regular school studies in reading, science, and social studies. (8)

When integrating reading and writing, teachers facilitate children's learning experiences and provide the motivation and preparation for the creative process.

When children read, the author communicates. When children write, they communicate to the world.

The following is a process of using reading and writing as stimuli and extension for one another:

1. Read about topic before and after writing
2. Talk about topic
3. Exchange numerous ideas
4. Do something with the topic

Imagination creates playthings for children just as clay did in a previous example. It provides them with an enjoyable connection between them and the real world.

HOW CAN A TEACHER MOTIVATE CREATIVE WRITING?

Read "Goldilocks and the Three Bears".

Leave the story open ended and ask the children to make up the ending. Have the children write their own versions of the story. Display pictures of different kinds of bears, little girls, a woodsy picture etc. Spark a discussion of the pictures displayed. Direct students to read aloud their versions of the story.

Most of all, give a purpose to students' writing and give limits. (2)

These ideas can spark creativity for children who want to write:

1. Use a home-rooted knowledge to develop a color-full poetry unit for children.
2. Ask children to bring artifacts such as bottles, fabric scraps, toys, flowers, dishes, vases etc. Discuss the color of each and the value.
3. Prepare lists of rhyming words. Then work out single rhyming couplets. Add couplets to original or triplet poem.

Ex. What is blue?
 My foot is blue
 In my tennis shoe.

4. Mount poems: red poems on red paper, blue poems on blue paper, etc. to create a rainbow affect. Use the book: Hailstones and Halibut Bones to complement this lesson.

5. Use senses: Sight, feeling, smell, sound, and touch.
6. Capture mood and emotion while reading poems together.
7. Use words in new and special ways.
8. Use Mother Goose to teach the writing of poetry as well as creative dramatics. (15)

Children need to develop a base for their writing. Realism in fiction can be very useful in helping children get in touch with feelings and attitudes.

Skills can be nourished and attitudes can be refined when creative writing activities are based on children's favorite books.

Some objectives to consider with utilization of storybooks are: specify details, refine vocabulary, clarify concepts, and utilize images. Encourage recognition of how a writer can influence feelings of a reader. Encourage selectivity in choice of incidents. Encourage an exercise of imagination. Stimulate thinking and verbal descriptions. (14)

Comedians and poets allow us to see reality from a different perspective because they have a wider range of vision. The process of creativity development is enhanced through seeing, hearing, feeling, and thinking. Through the comedian or poets approach of increasing vision, the creative writing teacher is better able to stimulate creativity in stories, poems, and jokes that students write.

The ability to produce a large number of responses to a given situation is evident in a creative thinking. In order to think creatively, people need to disrupt the patterns which have formed around their set patterns of thinking.

Students can be encouraged to think creatively through a game called "Change of Opinion". This game helps students suspend their beliefs enough

to deal with their own prejudices. Next, students are encouraged to write responses to defend positions the exact opposite of their own. Hallman states, "A Gestalt psychologist would say that students who have had perceptions of an issue altered after playing "Change of Opinion" have simply found and "re-owned" a part of themselves which has been buried. "Change of Opinion" gives the student a wider view of the issue, and with that vision comes identification and understanding. The strategy does not work for everybody, but for some it becomes an exercise in compassion."

Students can be encouraged to write about their dreams. Hallman hopes to improve student's lives along with their writing through this approach to creative writing. (6)

Creative writing should develop influence, flexibility, elaboration, and originality.

"Open-ended assignments encourage students to take risks and tolerate ambiguities," stated Mary Bigler. "They stimulate imagination, enhance curiosity, and increase awareness of the world."

Writers develop confidence and positive attitudes about themselves and about writing when they see their end products.

Some ideas like the following can provide an opportunity for fluence, flexibility, elaboration, and originality of a writer:

1. I'm like---a lock. If you don't have the right key, I won't open up.
2. Use fairy tales--write imaginary headlines: "Cottage Vandalized by Little Blonde Girl", Goldilocks and the Three Bears.
3. Give an adage and have students finish it:
 - a. too many cooks, make the kitchen crowded
 - b. if at first you don't succeed, blame your teacher
4. Use want ads such as: People for Rent (4)

One method used by Connie Russell in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, to permit sixth grade students to write, is a discussion approach where two students work together. The students sit down together to discuss a writing assignment. During the conference, each author critiques the other student's work. Questions are used in these conferences in order to draw out the personal experiences. The conferences include large groups before the students break into the groups of two. (15)

The use of riddles to stimulate creative experiences for writing helps students learn to love language. This gives students practice with language skills namely syllabication, punctuation, spelling, and syntax. Besides a love of language, students receive excitement for language through riddles. (19)

Creative writing should be extended to curricular areas besides language. When students write creatively in Social Studies, they can learn facts and spark their curiosity about history. This approach enables students to step beyond concerns for themselves. They are motivated to write about socially focused concerns. This experience provides an opportunity for students to express their knowledge, opinions, and judgements. Writers must know why they write, who their audience is going to be, and the correct mechanics for writing before they attempt creative writing in Social Studies. (17)

An expedition into nostalgia motivates creative writing is used in the upper grades by Mary Strekel. Students are asked to check out old favorite books from early grade years, reread them, and create a list of present-day situations that might appeal to the adventurous spirits of their favorite storybook stars. Curious George or Clifford are examples of such stars.

Students each choose one situation to write about. They are guided to

consider the elements of plot building, sequence and main ideas, versus details, as well as clarity and colorful use of words. The students will share their masterpieces with younger grade students. (18)

High school students prepare to write stories for children by immersing themselves in published works of children's literature. This experience enables them to identify and appreciate story devices used by professional writers.

Peers communicate with each other about their stories as they create them. After the stories are written, the high school students read or tell their stories to elementary students in their school district.

If the high schoolers chose to tell their stories, they practice techniques to be effective with delivery. They memorize parts that should be memorized. Fluency is developed through many practices. During practice sessions, the storyteller blends sequential units of action with memorized sections. This provides for fluency in delivery.

Most of all, the process and final delivery of stories links the high school students with youngsters and this becomes a valuable communicative interaction. (9)

WHY SHOULD TEACHERS ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO WRITE STORIES?

Gail Tompkins asked several Language Arts educators this question.

The responses are as follows:

1. To entertain
2. To foster artistic expression
3. To explore the functions and values of writing
4. To stimulate imagination
5. To clarify thinking
6. To search for identity
7. To learn to read and write

Now, let us explore the question, "WHY DOES WRITING ENCOURAGE LEARNING?"

1. Writing focuses thought. To write a person must have something to say. Figuring out what one has to say involves thinking, recollecting information, and relating it to one's writing purpose. Recollecting and relating what is known leads to recovery of information and discovery of meaning.

Focuses thought, which is what writing encourages, is the key to learning!

2. Writing makes thought available for inspection. Recording and evaluating thought leads a writer to reconsider, reorganize the content and the language that represents it. Writing encourages learning because the written thought permits a writer to see more easily the core of his or her ideas.

3. Writing allows more complex thought. Thoughts made visible through writing can allow one's mind to hold onto and act upon the content of a complex thought. Comparing and contrasting allows a synthesizing process to take place in the thoughts.

4. Writing translates mental images.

5. Writing is multisensory. Sight, sound of typewriters or pencils, and touch, all play a part in generating and refining ideas in writing. The more senses we use, the greater we concentrate. Use of several senses contributes to learning as a result.

6. Writing motivates communication. Writing conveys an experience to someone who is not present. The force to communicate with people who are not present spurs recollection and inspection of thought, and these enhance learning.

Writing encourages learning when:

1. Students decide what to write about.

2. Students talk as part of their writing.
3. Students view writing as a process.
4. Students have own reasons to write.

Teachers link writing to learning subject matter by promoting writing to gain access to what is known, writing to preserve and express ideas and experiences, writing to inform others, writing to persuade others, writing to transact business, and writing to entertain. (6)

Writing for contests have some benefits. Students are more serious about assignments because someone important will read it. A willingness to revise increases. Specifics such as audience, purpose, and introductions are taught. Neatness and proofreading are more accurate and satisfying for students when they know their work will be displayed in competition. (5)

Robert Liftig warns in his article, "After Basics" that the back to basics movement has stiffened teaching of writing to the point where stories become outlines and language simply code. Tranquility and fluency diminished and students produced more plot summaries and skeletons of what should have been imaginative and entertaining stories. While Liftig may have overreacted, his point needs to be considered. When educators seek to please the public, they need to maintain common sense enough to allow and encourage creative spontaneity in writing. (11)

Kids have a lot to say and we need to provide an opportunity for them to say it. We must remember to keep in mind the other half of communication---listening. (4)

Creative writing is most important in the curriculum of other schools today. Educators must provide opportunities for students to explore life through writing. This will help illiminate encounters with people like Rudolph Flesh and others who accuse educators of neglecting this important part of communication in education.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Bigler, Mary, "Creative Writing Ideas," English Journal, National Council of English, Urbana, Ill., December, 1980, Volume 69, Number 9, p. 91-92.
2. Broker, Marsha, "Reading is 90% Inspiration," Early Years, Allen Raymond, Inc. Darien, Conn., p. 41 and 67-6.
3. Catropps, Barbara, "Working With Writing Is Like Working With Clay," Learning Magazine, National Council of Teachers of English, Washington, D. C., Column 59, Number 7, October, 1982, p. 687-695.
4. Cramer, Gene, "Teacher Plus-Gene Listens to Children," The Instructor, Instructor Publications, Inc., New York, N. Y., September 1982, Volume 92, Number 2.
5. Gnagy, Susan, "Contest Writing for Composition Classes," English Journal, National Council of Teachers of English, Urbana, Ill., May, 1980, Volume 69, Number 5, p. 64.
6. Halye-James, Shirley, "Helping Students Learn Through Writing," Learning Magazine, National Council of Teachers of English, Washington, D. C., Volume 59, Number 7, p. 726-731.
7. Hollman, Jeffrey, "Games to Promote Creativity," English Journal, National Council of Teachers of English, Volume 70, January 1, 1981, p. 83-85.
8. Jolly, Thomas, "Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking," Language Arts, National Council of Teachers of English, Washington, D. C., ERIC/RCS Report, Volume 57, Number 6, September, 1980.
9. Kappan, "Creative Writing and Storytelling: A Bridge from High School to Preschool," Phi Delta Kappa, Inc., March, 1983, Volume 64, Number 7, p. 509-510.
10. Language Arts, National Council of Teachers for English, Progressive Ed. Assn., Washington, D. C. Volume 60, Number 1, p. 18-19.
11. Liftig, Robert, "After Basics," English journal, National Council of Teachers of English, Washington, D. C., Volume 71, Number 6, October, 1982, p. 47-50.
12. Macholaba, Daniel, "Hidden Handicap," Wall Street Journal, Dow Jones and Company, January 17, 1984, Volume LXIV, Number 65.
13. Manning, Drs. Maryann and Gary, "The Language Arts: United They Stand," Early Years, Allen Raymond, Inc., Darien, Conn., May, 1982, Volume 12, Number 9, p. 56-58.
14. McClinathan, Dr. Day Ann, "Try a New Creative Writing Campaign," Early Years, Allen Raymond, Inc., Darien, Conn., Volume 12, Number 6, February, 1982, p. 88-89.

15. Palmer, Gerry, "Write a Rainbow," Early Years, Allen Raymond, Inc., Darien, Conn., Volume 12, Number 3, November, 1981, p. 33-54.
16. Strand, P. J., (pseudonym), "Little Red Writing Hood," English Journal, National Council of Teachers of English, Urbana, Ill., September, 1982, Volume 71, Number 5, p. 48-49.
17. Stein, Harry and Berer, Barry, "Ivan the Terrible Writes His Resume," Instructor, Instructor Publishers, New York, N. Y., October 1982, p. 46-50.
18. Strekel, Mary, "Adventures of An Old Friend," Learning, Pitman Learning, Inc., Palo Alto, CA., April/May, 1981, Volume 9, Number 9, p. 101.
19. Thaler, Mike, "Reading, Writing and Riddling," Learning Magazine, Pitman Learning, Inc., Belmont, CA., p. 58-59.
20. Tompkins, Gail E., "Seven Reasons Why Children Should Write Stories," Learning Magazine, National Council of Teachers of English, Washington, D. C., Volume 59, Number 7, p. 718-721.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

General Background

Millard Elementary students in grades one through six were selected for this study. Data representing ninety students from all six grade levels and from each of the sixteen elementary schools in Millard are included.

The project was introduced to all teachers at the September Grade Level Meetings. Teachers were asked to sign a form to indicate an interest in the project. The teachers, who were chosen from this list, were asked to select the creative writing of five students. These samples were to be due on October 10, 1983. Instructions to the teachers are shown in Appendix A.

The same teachers were asked to present a second sample of creative writing from the same students whose work was selected for the September sample. The due date for the second sample was set for March 1, 1984.

The purpose of the study was to determine whether or not these students showed improvement on creative writing skills in the five month period.

The procedure for the study was followed as planned. First samples, with the exception of two creative writing papers, were delivered by October 10, 1983. A reminder for the second sample was sent in mid February. (See Appendix A.) By March 1, 1984, ninety second samples of creative writing were delivered.

Students were numbered 1-90. Each student's first and second samples of creative writing were stapled together with the evaluation forms. This was done for all 90 students.

A team of three teachers evaluated the creative writing samples of each of the 90 students. Both samples of a given student were evaluated

by the same teacher for the sake of consistency. The same form was used for the pre and post tests. A sample of this instrument shows the areas that were evaluated and the number system that was used. (See Appendix B.)

SPECIFIC METHODOLOGY

After the evaluation was complete and the pre and post test scores were recorded, a computer person was contacted. This person set up a program that would show progress or regression of the scores. This program offered the information in terms of the percentage of progress for the total composite group. If one student progressed two points (from fair to strong), two students who regressed one point each were negated. This example shows how the percentages were reached in the computer process. The final percentages revealed a composite of progress in each of the ten areas that were evaluated. Since this program did not reveal the number of specific students who progressed, regressed, or remained the same, the scores were tabulated manually in order to determine that information. The results of that information will be found in Chapter IV of this report.

CHAPTER IV
DISPLAY OF DATA
INTRODUCTION

This study was undertaken in order to determine the degree of progress of students who worked in the Creative Writing Program in the Millard Schools. Ninety students from grades one through six participated in the study. All sixteen elementary schools in Millard were represented.

The students' creative writing was evaluated in three categories. Criteria was established to evaluate how well these students displayed proficiency with creative aspects of writing. The second category focused on how well the students demonstrated proficiency with technical aspects of writing. The final category was designed to determine how well the students were able to show positive attitudes through written communication.

Each of these categories included specific skills to be tested. Four ratings were used. They were: 4-strong, 3-moderately strong, 2-fair, and 1-poor.

To demonstrate proficiency with creative aspects of writing, the following criteria were used:

- A. The students demonstrate the ability to form ideas from sensory experiences.
- B. The students demonstrate the ability to sequence ideas.
- C. The students demonstrate the ability to use personal vocabulary to describe activities.
- D. The students displayed pride in their creations.
- E. The students build their creative writing around personal experiences.

TABLE I

Grades 1-6 Progress in
Creative Skills of Writing

Sub Test	Pre Test	Post Test		Difference
	Numbers	Progressed	Regressed	
Form Ideas	90	37	10	+27
Sequence Ideas	90	29	16	+13
Use Personal Vocabulary	90	36	9	+27
Displays Pride	90	30	9	+21
Build Around Personal Experience	90	32	7	+25

Table I shows how many students progressed or regressed, with creative aspects of writing. Each of these students progressed or regressed by one level with the following exceptions:

- A. Five students progressed two levels.
One student regressed two levels.
- B. Twelve students progressed two levels.
One student regressed two levels.
- C. Six students progressed two levels.
One student regressed three levels.
- D. Three students progressed two levels

To demonstrate proficiency with technical aspects of writing, the following criteria was used:

- A. The students demonstrate appropriate language usage for their ages.
- B. The students can recognize correctness of expression in their own and others papers.
- C. The students handwriting is properly formed.

TABLE II
Technical Skills of Creative Writing

Sub Test	Pre Test	Post Test		Difference
	Numbers	Progressed	Regressed	
Appropriate Language Use	90	37	9	+28
Correctness of Expression	90	33	7	+26
Proper Formation of Handwriting	90	24	18	+8

Table II shows how many students progressed or regressed with technical skills of writing.

Each student progressed or regressed by one level with the following exceptions:

- A. Seven students progressed two levels.
- B. Nine students progressed two levels.
- C. Eleven students progressed two levels.

Four students regressed two levels.

To demonstrate positive attitudes through written communication, the following criteria were used:

- A. The students completed the work on or before the deadline.
- B. The students' papers were neatly done.

TABLE III

Positive Attitudes Displayed
in Promptness and Neatness

Sub Test	Pre Test	Post Test		Difference
	Number	Progressed	Regressed	
Completed Work on Time	90	2	0	+2
Work Was Neatly Done	90	29	17	+8

Table III shows how many students progressed, regressed or remained the same with positive attitudes toward written communication.

Each student progressed one level with the following exceptions:

- B. Nine progressed two levels.

Two regressed two levels.

Ten specific areas were evaluated under the three categories.

The following skills were tested with the rate of progress shown below:

SKILL TESTED	RATE OF PROGRESS
1. Form ideas from sensory experiences	37%
2. Sequence ideas	28%

3. Use personal vocabulary to describe activities	39%
4. Displayed pride in creations	26%
5. Build writing around personal experiences	42%
6. Appropriate use of language	41%
7. Recognize correctness of expression	39%
8. Proper formation of handwriting	16%
9. Completed work on time	2%
10. Neat work	19%

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

This study was undertaken in order to measure the progress of the creative writing of students in the Millard Schools. Ninety students participated in the study. Each student presented a written assignment for a pre sample in September and another assignment for a post sample in February. The purpose was to determine how much growth was developed in a five month period. Teachers of these students used the program designed by the Millard Schools Language Arts Committee.

Three teachers rated ten specific concepts related to creative writing. A number system that showed 4 as strong, 3 as moderately strong, 2 as fair, and 1 as poor was used. All scores were tabulated and fed into a computer to determine a composite percentage of growth. The results from this computer input is shown in Appendix C.

The following information shows the areas of progress from the most progress shown to the least progress shown in the study:

1. 42% progress was shown where students build their creative writing around personal experiences.
2. 41% progress was shown where students demonstrated appropriate language use for their ages.
3. There was a 39% tie between students that demonstrated the ability to use personal vocabulary to describe activities and the students that recognize correctness of expression in their papers.
4. 37% progress was shown where students demonstrate the ability to form ideas from sensory experiences.
5. 28% progress was shown for the ability to sequence ideas.

6. 26% progress was shown for student's display of pride in their creations.
7. 19% progress was shown for work that was neatly done.
8. 16% progress was shown for proper formation in handwriting.
9. 2% progress was shown for work completed on time.

CONCLUSIONS

Progress was shown in all three categories of creative writing. To form ideas from sensory experiences, use of personal vocabulary to describe activities, ability to build writing around personal experience, appropriate use of language, and recognition of correctness of expression were specific conceptual areas that showed the most progress. The ability to sequence ideas and a display of pride in creations rated the next greatest amount of progress.

The least amount of progress was shown in formation of handwriting and neatness of final products. In many cases the work was very neatly done and the handwriting was properly formed in the pre sample. Consequently, the post sample indicated small change. These are not top priority items to satisfy in creative writing.

The only item that showed minimal progress dealt with the completion of work on time. Two students were late to turn in the assignments on time for the pre sample. The students turned in post samples on time.

The study displayed progress in all areas of creative writing that were evaluated in the study.

The writer is encouraged to see the areas of creative writing where progress was shown. Students progressed when they used personal experience base of knowledge. This indicates writing has been preceded by instruction

and the providing of experiences. Formation of ideas has been taught. Use of appropriate language indicates that students are writing at a level where they should be for their ages.

The process to determine how many students progressed, regressed, or remained the same was tabulated and figured manually. The results from that process are reported in Chapter IV.

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not the creative writing program in the Millard Schools is effective, whether or not the students are writing, and at what level of progress did students make in a five month period.

The writer finds the results to show that students are writing, the program is effective and has room for more growth, and progress was made in a five month period of time.

The Language Arts Committee will soon begin a review of the program. The data from this study will serve as a reference toward upgrading and improving the creative writing portion of the Language Arts Program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study was possible because students in Millard are writing! Progress was shown in all areas of the evaluation.

Writing has become a big issue in the news in our present day. This need to inspire writing for students makes it necessary to make some recommendations to strengthen the program in Millard.

1. There should be a system to monitor the program more closely. It is recommended to allow more time to the Language Arts Department Head working in the sixteen elementary schools in order to provide guidance and motivation for creative writing development. That person would also work

toward the development of positive attitudes toward teaching creative writing.

Students who participated in the study showed the most progress where they could use personal experience in written communication.

2. The second recommendation is to provide increased experiences for students to communicate in written form.

3. Finally, it is recommended that new ways and means to teach creative writing be developed by the committee. It is strongly recommended that computer software be carefully examined for use in the Language Arts Program. There are numerous programs available in the areas of dictionary skill development, simple story writing, and word processing. This kind of material would complement the present program. This careful choice of materials will make a presently good program a better program for the future.

APPENDIX A

To: Creative Writing Teachers
From: Karen Sweeney, Disney
Re: Creative Writing Study
Date: September 15, 1983

The Language Arts Department wishes to evaluate the creative writing program. You have been selected to participate in the project. Only people who use the program implemented under the direction of Thelma Erftmier will contribute to the study.

The following items are requested: Please submit the creative writing of five of your students. This work should be done within the next two weeks. Randomly select the students.

The creative writing assignments must include the following items:
Student's name, grade, school, date, and teacher.

Your contribution will help determine the effectiveness of our program. This is not an evaluation of your work. It is simply a study of student progress.

The students whose work is entered now will be asked to contribute one creative writing sample again in February.

Thank you for your contribution!

To: Creative Writing Teachers
From: Karen Sweeney, Disney
RE: Creative Writing Study

The second sample of your creative writing is due on March 1, 1984.

A list of students who contributed to the study in September is enclosed. Please send a sample of work from each of the same students. This will serve as a post sample.

Be sure to include the following items with each sample: student's name, grade, school, teacher, and the date when the work was completed.

Thank you for cooperating to make this project a success!

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

MILLARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

OMAHA, NEBRASKA

CREATIVE WRITING EVALUATION FORM

1. To demonstrate proficiency with creative aspects of writing, the following criteria will be used:
 - A. The student demonstrates the ability to form ideas from sensory experiences.
4. strong 3. moderately strong 2. fair 1. weak
 - B. The student displays the ability to sequence ideas.
4. strong 3. moderately strong 2. fair 1. weak
 - C. The student demonstrates the ability to use personal vocabulary to describe activities.
4. strong 3. moderately strong 2. fair 1. weak
 - D. The student displayed pride in his or her creations.
4. strong 3. moderately strong 2. fair 1. weak
 - E. The student builds the creative writing around personal experiences.
4. strong 3. moderately strong 2. fair 1. weak
2. To demonstrate proficiency with technical aspects of writing, the following criteria will be used:
 - A. The student demonstrates appropriate language usage for his or her age.
4. strong 3. moderately strong 2. fair 1. weak
 - B. The student can recognize correctness of expression in his or her own and others papers.
4. strong 3. moderately strong 2. fair 1. weak
 - C. The student's handwriting is properly formed.
4. strong 3. moderately strong 2. fair 1. weak

3. To demonstrate positive attitudes through written communication, the following criteria will be used:
 - A. The student completed the work on or before the deadline.
 4. strong 3. moderately strong 2. fair 1. weak
 - B. The student's papers are neatly done.
 4. strong 3. moderately strong 2. fair 1. weak

APPENDIX C

REPORT ON FILE: KAREN
 SORTS: NONE.
 SEARCH FORMULA: NONE.

F2-F1	F4-F3	F6-F5	F8-F7	F10-F9	F12-F11	F14-F13	F16-F15	F18-F17	F20-F19
1.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	- 1.00	0.00	- 1.00
1.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	0.00	0.00
0.00	0.00	0.00	- 1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	- 1.00	0.00	0.00
2.00	0.00	- 1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0.00	- 1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	- 1.00	0.00	0.00
1.00	- 1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1.00	- 1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0.00	- 2.00	- 1.00	- 1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
0.00	- 1.00	1.00	- 1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	- 1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	2.00
2.00	2.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	0.00	1.00
2.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
0.00	- 1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	- 1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
0.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	0.00	1.00
0.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	0.00	1.00
1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
1.00	2.00	3.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	0.00	1.00
1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	0.00	- 1.00
1.00	2.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00
1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	- 1.00	0.00	- 1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1.00	0.00	- 1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00
1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1.00	1.00	2.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00
0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	0.00	2.00
2.00	2.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	0.00	2.00
0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	2.00	0.00	2.00
1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	2.00
0.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	0.00	2.00
COLUMN TOTALS:									
33.00	25.00	35.00	23.00	38.00	37.00	35.00	14.00	2.00	17.00
COLUMN AVERAGES:									
.37	.28	.39	.26	.42	.41	.39	.16	.02	.19