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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE AVID READER/POOR WRITER

BY

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled THE AVID READER/POOR WRITER

submitted by Sylvia Marguerite Jackson

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

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Date June 6, 1988

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mother and to the memory of my father, in profound appreciation for the love of learning which they have instilled in me.

ABSTRACT

The study is a case study of three avid,effective readers/poor writers. The purpose of the study was to describe what "writing" is to children who have been labelled avid, effective readers/poor writers by their teachers.

Three elementary school children, one from grade three, one from grade four, and one from grade six, were identified as avid,effective readers/poor writers by their teachers. The three children were interviewed to elicit their attitudes toward writing. The children were interviewed twice a week, for approximately six weeks. The interviews were audio recorded, and transcribed.

The children were also observed while they wrote in their respective language arts classrooms. The researcher recorded the classroom observations in the form of field notes.

The interview transcripts and the field notes of classroom observation were analyzed with reference to the research questions. The data was used to build and present profiles of the three children. Themes emerged from the data and were also presented.

A link was discovered between the reading and writing of these avid readers: the material they read influenced what they preferred to write and it also gave them expectations of good writing.

All three children in this study expressed a strong sense of authorship -- they preferred writing pieces which they considered their own. Being able to choose their own topics was important to all three children, and resulted in a writing behavior which exhibited an "on-task" and "committed" attitude towards writing.

It was observed that writing was positively affected when these children had an audience, other than their own teachers, for their writing.

Implications for pedagogical practices emerged and centered on placing avid, effective readers/poor writers in a position of "authorship", whereby they can feel a sense of "ownership". It was therefore suggested that teachers allow avid,effective readers/poor writers to choose their own topics, and that teachers provide the opportunity for these children to share their writing with various audiences. Teachers were also encouraged to explicitly teach the value of personal, expressive writing to these children.

Some recommendations for further research were made.

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A special thank you to the participants, Tim, Fred, and Laura, their parents and teachers. I am indebted to them for their kind cooperation.

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NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Children who are voracious and effective readers tend to be able writers (Loban, 1963; Stotsky, 1983). However, for a few avid readers there is no evidence of this reading-writing relationship; although they read widely for their own pleasure, and score quite well on standardized reading tests, their writing is weak.

Having experienced avid, effective readers/poor writers in my classroom over the years, I had wondered what was not "clicking" for them. Why did their writing not reflect the vocabulary, nor the ideas that they had encountered in their reading? The answer to this question can only be surmised by reviewing the research literature because, as Stotsky explained in 1983, studies have not examined this good reader/poor writer population.

Nevertheless, in reviewing some of the literature dealing with language, and underachievement, I wondered if the school curriculum was to blame. Was the curriculum not meeting the needs of these avid, effective readers/poor writers? Was it too restrictive or inadequate, thus stifling their ability to write? Indeed, many researchers (Davis & Rimm, 1985; Gallagher, 1985; Juliebo, 1985; Sellin & Birch 1981; Whitmore,

1980) have mentioned inflexible, inadequate curricula in their studies. Graves (1983), an acclaimed researcher in children's writing, corroborates this view of the school curriculum when he states that "the school experience can cut down egos or remove voice from the writing, and the person from the print, until there is no driving force left in the selection." (p. 244.) Adler (1985) also refers to the school curriculum and its possible effects on writing when he says the following:

> For too long, writing as a school subject has been characterized by distance which leads to alienation, and by mysteries which lead to confusion. Both keep the artist removed from full involvement and commitment to his or her art. Distance is created in the classroom in the following way: Teacher gives students a writing assignment. Students go away and write the assignment. They return to class and hand in to teacher the finished product. The teacher goes away and marks the papers. Teacher returns to class and hands out the papers. Students look at the marks, and they go away, sometimes quite confused. (p. 65)

As well as looking to the school curriculum as a possible reason for the poor writing performance of these avid, effective readers, perhaps we should also consider the possibility that some of these children truly have difficulty writing. Indeed, researchers (Collins & Gentner, 1980; Flower & Hayes, 1980; Vygotsky, 1962) have told us that writing is a difficult task, and that writing is not simply speech or thought written down. These researchers have put speech in the

realm of implicit knowledge and writing in the realm of explicit knowledge. When writing, they say, we must consciously exhibit what we know about language and, as well, we must deal with many constraints of written language at once, for example phonetics, semantics, connective flow, absence of interlocutor, etc.. But do these avid, effective readers/poor writers truly have difficulty writing? Should we actually be looking at these factors? Graves (1983) states that there are indeed children who have such difficulties but that they are rare. He contends that educators are much too quick to say that a child has difficulty writing, and also much to quick to label a child "neurologically impaired" or "learning disabled".

Smith (1983), like Graves, also finds fault with teachers who dwell on the complexity of language. Writing, they say, should be treated as a natural process.

If we exclude the idea that writing is a difficult task for these children, or that these children may have motor skill problems, or neurological problems, then perhaps we should ask ourselves if it is their view , or "world representation" (Kelly, 1963), of writing which inhibits their writing performance. Do they view writing solely as a school activity which has the teacher as its only audience: the teacher acting as evaluator (Goodman & Goodman, 1983)? If viewed in this

manner, then writing could be of little interest to these children. If they view writing as solely teacher assigned and teacher evaluated, and not as an expression of self as described by such researchers as Britton (1970), and Rosen (1969), then it is possible that they have not recognized that their own lives offer a wealth of knowledge which can be used in their writing (Graves, 1983).

As well as looking to Graves (1983) who states that educators must help children recognize that they have a wealth of knowledge which can be used in their writing, perhaps we should look to researchers such as Brown (1986), Clay (1986), Gordon & Braun (1983) and Westphall (1986) who say that there are certain children who are not always aware of the knowledge they have acquired from reading, and that these children do not spontaneously make connections with their reading and writing. These researchers say that teachers must help children make that link between their reading and writing.

In the end, regardless of the reasons, if the quality of writing remains poor for these avid, effective readers/poor writers, it becomes very difficult for them to succeed in school because so much of our school evaluation is based on a child's ability to produce quality transactional and expressive writing. Moreover, it has been documented by many researchers

(Davis & Rimm, 1985; Gallagher, 1985; Sellin & Birch, 1981; Whitmore, 1980; Ziv, 1977) that an inability to do well in school usually leads to "low self-esteem" which in turn tends to lead to further poor school performance.

This study is an attempt to better understand what "writing" is to three of these avid,effective readers/poor writers. How do these children view writing? It is hoped that this better understanding will assist teachers in devising instructional practices which will improve the writing performance of some of these avid,effective readers/poor writers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to describe what writing is to children who have been labelled avid,effective readers/poor writers by their teachers.

Research Questions

Based upon the purpose of the study which is to describe what writing means to avid,effective readers/poor writers, the following research questions are posed:

1. Do these children value writing?
2. Where do these children get their ideas for their writing?
3. What kind of writing do these children like and

dislike?

4. What is their perception of audience?
5. What strategies do these writers use in the writing process?
6. What is "writing" to these children?

Definitions of Terms for the Purpose of This Study

Poor writers: Children whose writing is weak in one or more of the following areas: ideas, organization, wording, flavor, mechanics, spelling. (Diederich, 1974, p.p. 55-58)

Avid readers: Children who read a great deal of their own volition.

Effective Readers: Children who score six months (or more) beyond their grade level on a standardized reading test such as "The Canadian Test of Basic Skills" and the "Metropolitan Reading Test".

Design of the Study

To date the need for developmental studies related to children's writing has been virtually ignored. Direct contact and extended observation of the children themselves are necessary to reach conclusions relating to developmental variables involving the behaviors of children. In fields such as psychiatry, child development, or anthropology, the investigation of behaviors would be unthinkable without the direct observation of the persons to be studied.

In order to improve both procedures and study scope, future research in writing should continue to explore the feasibility of the case study method. Further studies are needed to investigate the developmental histories of different types of

> children in relation to writing and the writing process. In a profession where there is a basic commitment to the teaching and understanding of the individual child, it is ironic that research devoted to the full study of single individuals is so rare. (Graves, 1975, p. 241)

The Case Study

Researchers such as Borg and Gall (1983), Miles & Huberman (1984), Skinner (1956), and Stake (1978-1979) agree with Graves (1975) when he calls for research based on case studies. The case study, say these researchers, has several strengths. For instance, Stake (1978-79) mentions that the case study adds to our understanding of human nature: it is a useful means of acquainting man with himself. Borg and Gall (1983) mention the following strengths of the case study: it provides for a very complete picture, it leads to new insights and hypotheses, and since the observer does not start with specific hypotheses, he is less likely than the conventional observer to overlook phenomena that do not fit his expectations. This latter point is also made by Skinner (1956) who says that the case study provides for flexibility, inasmuch as the researcher is not tied to his design.

Definition of "Case Study"

To Smith (1978) the term "case study" is synonymous with other terms such as educational ethnography, participant observation, qualitative observation and

field study. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) explain that the exact use and definition of these terms varies from user to user. They, then, proceed to tell us how they tend to define the term "case study". They say that a case study is a detailed examination of one setting, or one single subject, or one single depository of documents, or one particular event.

The Nature of this Study

This study is a case study of three children, and it is descriptive in nature. The descriptions are based on information gleaned from transcripts of interviews with the three children. Information was also obtained from the writing of these three children, and as well from interviews with their teachers and parents. Field notes of classroom observations were also used as a source of information. It was felt that the use of transcripts of interviews, the children's writing, and the notes of classroom observation provided triangulation of data, as mentioned by Hammersley & Atkinson (1983) and Miles & Huberman (1984).

The three students taking part in this study were in three different schools. Two of the students were boys, one in grade three and one in grade six. The other student was a grade four girl.

Each student was observed in the classroom on a bi-weekly basis, for approximately six weeks. Usually the

observations took place during a language arts period, except for the grade three boy who was also observed for two math periods and one science period. During these classroom observations, I took hand recorded notes. The emphasis of these hand recorded notes was the writing process: therefore, note taking usually began just before the students were ready to compose, and ended when they had stopped writing or when they had shared their writing with someone else.

As well as being observed during class time, the three participants were also interviewed on a bi-weekly basis. Before interviews began, however, I familiarized myself with the interview techniques mentioned by Spradley (1979) in his book, The Ethnographic Interview.

Most interviews for this study were approximately half an hour in duration. These interviews focussed on such topics as the children's writing, their observed classroom writing behavior and their concept of good writing, etc..

In addition to these student interviews, a formal interview of the participants' teachers and parents took place at the end of the study.

All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed.

Analysis of Data

In analyzing the data for this study, guidelines outlined by Smith et al. (1985), Mills (1959), and

Spradley (1980) were considered.

Smith et al. (1985), in their fifteen year study, Kensington Revisited, advise researchers to adopt the ideas outlined by Mills (1959) in his book, The Sociological Imagination. In this book, Mills advocates that researchers specialize their work according to topic, and above all according to significant problems. Thus Mills suggests that researchers should set up a taxonomy file to facilitate data analysis. Spradley (1980), also recommends this type of taxonomy analysis.

In this study, the interview transcripts and the field notes of classroom observations were analyzed in relation to the six research questions, thus setting up categories as recommended by Smith (1985), Mills (1959), and Spradley (1980).

The categorized data was then synthesized, and presented in Chapter Four and Chapter Five. Chapter Four introduces the three participants and their respective classrooms. Chapter Five presents the synthesized data in relation to the six research questions.

Lastly, the synthesized data of Chapter Five was then analyzed. This final analysis was, in fact, "a search for patterns" (Spradley, 1980, p.85). The patterns or themes which emerged from this synthesized data are reported in Chapter Six.

Limitations of the Study

1. The small sample of students constrained the ability to generalize the findings.
2. The presence of the researcher may have altered the normal writing attitude and performance of the subjects.
3. The validity and reliability of the study was limited by possible researcher bias, and by the researcher's ability to interpret the data.

Overview of the Organization of the Chapters

In this first chapter, the purpose of the study, the research questions, the definitions of terms, the limitations of the study and a brief outline of the procedures for gathering and analyzing the data were presented. In Chapter Two, a review of the related literature is presented. Chapter Three describes the design of the study. Chapter Four introduces the children who participated in the study, and briefly describes their respective classrooms. In Chapter Five, the data is reviewed as it applies to each child, in relation to each of the six research questions. Emerging themes, conclusions, and implications for educational practice and research are presented in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER TWO

SURVEY OF RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

Introduction

Many researchers (Calkins, 1986; Clay, 1986; Graves, 1984; Squire, 1983; Tierney, 1985) have stated that the writing process is similar to the reading process and that when doing one we are doing the other. Other researchers such as Loban (1963) have found a high correlation between reading scores and ratings of writing quality in the upper elementary grades and concluded that "those who read well also write well" (p. 75). It would appear, then, that reading should help writing and vice versa. Why, then, are some avid readers not performing well in writing? Research addressing this question is difficult to find; indeed, Stotsky (1983) states that studies have not examined this good reader/poor writer population, and that research is needed in this area.

Underachievement

Although there is little research on the good reader/poor writer population, various studies do exist which deal with the underachiever population. Indeed, it is quite possible that these good readers/poor writers are, at times, labelled "underachievers". They are probably labelled in this manner because of

discrepancies that frequently exist between their standardized reading scores and their composition scores. These children are viewed as children with potential: they read well and they read a lot, and consequently are believed to have many ideas for their writing. It is also expected that they will have a rich vocabulary and a good general knowledge of written language, allowing them to write well. But, in fact, they do not write well. Their writing falls short of what is expected of people who read so well and so much: hence, the label "underachievers" Labeling them as "underachievers", however, could be an amorphous exercise since Ziv (1977) states that even educationa psychologists are unable to agree upon how to work with underachievers, or how to facilitate greater school achievement in these children. Nor are they able, he says, to agree upon a definition of underachievement. Nevertheless, Davis and Rimm (1985) do provide us with a fairly concise definition of "underachievement". They define it as a discrepancy between the child's school performance and some index of his or her actual ability, such as intelligence, achievement, or creativity scores, or observational data. This definition certainly seems to apply to the good reader/poor writer population who usually scores well in standardized reading tests and yet performs poorly in writing.

Much of the research on underachievement (Davis and

Rimm, 1985; Gallagher, 1985; Sellin & Birch, 1981; Whitmore, 1980; Ziv, 1977) states that one of the prime reasons for underachievement is low self-esteem, usually caused by poor school performance. This research, however, does not specify how school performance is measured. Certainly, the ability to express ideas well in writing plays an important role in assessing school performance; therefore, improving the writing performance of these children would seem to be one of the solutions to improving their school performance and, hence, their self-esteem.

Nevertheless, the question remains: Why do these good readers/poor writers not perform well in writing? After all, it appears that children do come to school with considerable knowledge of written language, as concluded by Juliebo (1985), Harste (1984), and Clay (1975). If this is, indeed, the case for good readers/poor writers, what happens to negatively affect the writing of these children? Indeed, many researchers (Adler, 1985; Davis and Rimm, 1985; Gallagher, 1985; Juliebo, 1985; Sellin & Birch, 1981; Whitmore, 1980) say that the school environment can have a negative effect on children. They say that the school curriculum is restrictive, inflexible and inadequate; and, hence, possibly at the root of poor school performance.

The Child's Concept of Writing

As well as looking to such factors as the school curriculum for possible reasons for the poor writing performance of good readers/poor writers, perhaps we should look at the way in which these children view writing. ps it is their view of writing which inhibits their writing performance. It is possible that writing has become a "package" devoid of the essence within that package. That is, perhaps, they equate writing with spelling, punctuation or grammar, and therefore view these aspects as the most important aspects of writing. If so, then they fail to realize that the mechanics and conventions of writing are simply a packaging that envelops a treasure: themselves, their worlds, their ideas. Thus the "packaging" is most important to them; they do not seem to see beyond the spelling, the punctuation, or the grammar.

As well, perhaps, writing is not viewed as a social act, an intent to communicate with self and others. Indeed, it is possible that these children have constructed a view of writing for themselves that is far removed from the idea that writing is a tool used to express themselves, or to convey a message, or to create literature (Britton, 1970); and far removed from the idea that writing is meant to be shared with self and others. It is also possible that these children view writing as difficult and, as well, it is possible that

they view writing solely as a school activity.

Indeed, Kelly's (1963) theory of personal constructs explains how these children could have constructed their view of writing. According to Kelly (1963) human beings create their own representations of the world and they test these representations against the real world. If their representations match those of the cultural group or world, their representations become solidified or internalized. If their world representations do not fit those of their environment then they will usually adjust their world representations. Man uses these world representations to determine or predict how he should behave. Kelly says it this way: "To our way of thinking, there is continuing movement toward the anticipation of events, rather than a series of barters for temporal satisfactions, and this movement is the essence of human life itself" (p. 68).

Thus the cultural environment influences a person's world representations, either by confirming these world representations or negating them for that person.

It would appear, then, that these children may have constructed a personal view of writing that is validated by their cultural surroundings.

Writing: An Expression of Oneself and of One's Experiences

Perhaps avid readers/poor writers' cultural surroundings have indeed not allowed them to realize what writing is all about; and indeed, this might have even happened to educators -- educators who feel they must teach to tests, who get caught up in teaching form and conventions of writing perhaps because of their own educational background or because of external demands from parents or administrators. Form and conventions have perhaps become most important to these educators. Perhaps these educators have forgotten that writing must, firstly, be an expression of oneself and of ones experiences. Many sources, however, are available to educators to remind them of what is important in writing: the self. There are curriculum guides, encyclopedias, professional papers, and research articles in children's writing which remind educators that writing is a means or a tool used to express the ideas of the individual. For instance, the Alberta Elementary Language Arts Curriculum (1982) states that "Through writing the student can learn to clarify thought , emotion, and experience....." (p. 3)

The World Book Encyclopedia (1981) states that "An author must write from within his own experiences, both real and imagined" (p. 312)

Authors such as Eudora Welty (1983'84), reiterate

the importance of maintaining that focus on the individual and his experiences. In her autobiography One Writer's Beginnings, she says, ".... what I do make my stories out of is the whole fund of my feelings, my responses to the real experiences of my own life, to the relationships that formed and changed it, that I have given most of myself to, and so learned my way toward a dramatic counterpart." (p. 109) She expounds on this point when referring to Miss Eckhart, a character in one of her novels, "Not in Miss Eckhart as she stands solidly and almost opaquely in the surround of her story, but in the making of her character out of my most inward and most deeply feeling self, I would say I have found my voice in my fiction." (p. 111)

Researchers in the field of children's writing have strongly expressed the importance of sustaining and promoting the personal ideas, the experiences and the emotions of the writer: his voice. These researchers have not lost sight of what is within the writing "packaging": the child. Rosen (1969), for instance, states that "the written language used by children must be their own expression of observations, ideas, conclusion" (p. 123), and Britton (1970) says that language is a means by which we organize our own representation of the world.

As well, Graves (1975), in his analysis of ninety four writing folders, found that if children are allowed

the freedom to express their own ideas (that is, if topics are unassigned), writing is longer than if topics are assigned. Based on these research findings Graves (1983) recommends that children choose their own topics based on their own life experiences. Children, he says, should be made to realize that they have a wealth of knowledge which should be used in their writing. Perhaps the avid reader/poor writer does not understand this. Graves suggests that schools themselves, sometimes forget the source of power in children's writing. "The school experience" he says, "can cut down egos or remove voice from the writing, and the person from the print, until there is no driving force left in the selection" (Graves, 1983, p. 244).

Calkins (1986), based on a two year study of the writing process of one child, states that her first priority in teaching writing would be to help children write from feelings and insights that matter to them: "a topic that burns" (p. 324).

Britton (1969, 1970, 1971-72, 1977), also, advocates personal writing which he classifies as "expressive writing". Expressive writing is language which is close to the speaker; it is relaxed, addressed to a few intimate companions, and the comments of the speaker do not aim at accurate, explicit reference (as in an argument or sociological report). It is not a polished performance (as a raconteur or a novelist).

The speaker or writer is presenting and revealing himself. Letters to friends or journal entries are examples of expressive writing. Most of the writing done in elementary school, says Britton (1970), is in the expressive mode or in the transitional mode moving between the two poles of the transactional or poetic. Often a young child's writing will be in the transitional poetic mode because, as Britton explains, the young child has a natural affinity to the rhymes and rhyming utterances of poetry, and to the narrative structures of stories. Britton (1970) classifies poems and stories as "poetic writing". It is writing which demands an audience that does not interrupt; and it is to be contemplated as an object in itself and for itself. The reader contextualizes it not by segments (as in transactional writing) but as a whole. Poetic writing, if it survives, says Britton, survives as itself, in and for itself. Transactional writing which is at the opposite end of Britton's writing continuum, is writing which is informative, such as a scientific report or a shopping list. This is writing that may elicit the statement of other views, of counter-arguments or corroborations or modifications, and it is thus part of a chain of interactions between people. A response is always a potential to this kind of writing; it can be added on to. It survives, says Britton, not as writing but as ideas. A reader contextualizes

transactional writing in the course of reading it by segments.

Britton (1970) explains the importance of maintaining the 'self' in transactional writing; and, he uses the following composition of a ten year-old boy to make his point:

> How I filtered my Water Specimens
>
> When we were down at Mr. Haris's farm I brought some water from the brook back with me. I took some from a shallow place by the oak tree, and some from a deep place by the walnut tree. I got the specimens by placing a jar in the brook and let the water run into it. Then I brought them back to school to filter.... The experiment that I did shows that where the water was deeper and was not running as fast there was a lot more silt suspended as little particles in the water. You could see this by looking at the filter paper, where the water was shallow and fast there was less dirt suspended in it. (Britton, 1970, p. 178)

Britton comments on this composition in the following way: This (the composition), I suggest, has moved a good way out of the expressive in the direction of the transactional. But is still transitional: there are expressive features-things that tell us about the writer rather than form part of what he is intending to communicate..... This is the way

> it should be, for a writer of this age. Expressive language provides an essential starting point because it is language close to the self of the writer: and progress towards the transactional should be gradual enough to ensure that `the self' is not lost on the way: that on arrival `the self', though hidden, is still there. It is the self that provides the unseen point from which all is viewed: there can be no other way of writing quite impersonally and yet with coherence and vitality" (p. 179).

Writing: A Social Behavior

The same sources that remind us that writing should be considered an expression of self, also remind us that language is a social behavior. For instance, the Alberta Elementary Language Arts Curriculum (1982) states that "Language is social. Both in origin and in purpose, language is a social behavior. It was created by people and is maintained by them" (p. 2).

This social aspect of language is also mentioned by researchers such as Burkland & Petersen (1986), Graves (1983), Halliday (1971-72), and Vygotsky (1962). For instance, Vygotsky (1962) says, "The primary function of speech, in both children and adults, is communication, social contact, and writing helps the child rise to a higher level of speech development" (p. 19). Graves

(1983) reiterates this when he states that "Writing is a public act, meant to be shared with many audiences" (p. 54). Burkland and Petersen (1986) call writing a social act and Halliday (1971-72) says that "The investigation of language as social behavior is not only relevant to the understanding of social structure; it is also relevant to the understanding of language" (p. 182).

In conclusion, Britton (1970) states, "A large part of the incentive for the writer lies in the sharing" (p. 253).

Writing: A Difficult Activity, A School Activity

It is possible that avid readers/poor writers view writing as a difficult activity. Indeed, it is, perhaps, possible that some of them have, in fact, been diagnosed as having a severe handwriting disability, or dysgraphia. However, Graves (1983) states that the neurologically impaired child who struggles to write does exist, but the actual incidence of such children is extremely rare. Graves contends that educators are too quick to blame motor skills as a reason for a child's dislike or difficulty with writing. He says that once children become interested in their subjects and are permitted to share what they know with others, they forget about their handwriting.

Even if children have been truly diagnosed as having learning disabilities, Graves (1985) says that the

writing process approach seems to be particularly successful with these children who often see themselves as disenfranchised from literacy. Once these children understand that writing is for communication with oneself and others, they begin to view themselves as thinkers -- thinkers with a message to convey to the world.

Thus Graves (1983, 1985) as well as Smith (1983) do not want children and teachers to dwell on the difficult aspects of writing. They want teachers to help make literacy interesting and attainable. To this end, Graves and Smith advocate that writing should be treated as a natural process, a process which children will strive to make sense of, just as they strive to make sense of any activity.

Treating writing as a playful, experimental activity is sound advice but teachers should perhaps be cognizant of what is required of a writer as he attempts to put his thoughts in writing. This knowledge could serve, not as a focus of the arduousness of writing, but as a heralding of the achievements of the writer. For to write is very different than to think or to speak. Vygotsky (1962) compares learning to write with learning grammar rules. Both are conscious acts. When children write, they learn to do consciously what they have been doing unconsciously in speaking. He says that inner speech is, to a large extent, thinking in pure meanings.

Thought has its own structure and the transition from it to speech is no easy matter. Just as the structure of speech does not simply mirror the structure of thought, nor does the structure of writing simply mirror the structure of speech. Vygotsky explains it in the following way:

> Written speech is a separate linguistic function, differing from oral speech in both structure and mode of functioning. Even its minimal development requires a high level of abstraction. It is speech in thought and image only, lacking the musical, expressive, intonational qualities of oral speech. In learning to write, the child must disengage himself from the sensory aspect of speech and replace words by images of words. Speech that is merely imagined and that requires symbolization of the sound image in written signs (i.e., a second degree of symbolization) naturally must be as much harder than oral speech for the child as algebra is harder than arithmetic. Our studies show that it is the abstract quality of written language that is the main stumbling block, not the underdevelopment of small muscles or any other mechanical obstacles. Writing is also speech without an interlocutor, addressed to an absent, or an imaginary person or to no one in particular -- a situation new and strange to the child. (Vygotsky, 1962, p. 98-99)

Other researchers (Bereiter, 1980; Collins & Gentner, 1980; Flower & Hayes, 1980), like Vygotsky (1962), speak about the difference between knowing something and turning it into a piece of writing. Writers must address a large number of constraints at the same time. In expressing an idea, they must deal with many structural levels (that is, spelling, syntax, connective flow, semantics, etc.). Writing is, indeed, a high level human behavior.

Do avid readers/poor writers view writing solely as a school activity? Barnes (1976), Dyson & Geneshi (1983), and Goodman & Goodman (1983), posit that this is, indeed, possible. They suggest that even though children are surrounded by print in and out of school, they probably see very little of the kind of writing being done in the school, being done out of the school. Therefore, writing, for many children, is a school activity which has as its only audience -- the teacher acting as evaluator.

THE TEACHER AS MEDIATOR

> What the child can do in cooperation today he can do alone tomorrow. Therefore the only good kind of instruction is that which marches ahead of development and leads it; it must be aimed not so much at the ripe as at the ripening functions. (Vygotsky, 1962, p. 104.)

Authorship

Experiential learning

Researchers such as Calkins (1986), Goodman (1983), Graves (1984), and Smith (1983) suggest that the teacher's role in promoting effective learning is to act as a mediator. They advocate that the teacher mediate by placing children in a position whereby they can behave as authors. Authorship, these researchers suggest, not only addresses the concept of writing as an expression of self, and the concept of writing as a social behavior, it also puts writing in the realm of experiential learning: the foundation of future skills. Indeed, cognitive psychology (Vygotsky, 1962) has explained that children learn from their experiences: children develop new ideas by elaborating on previous knowledge. Therefore, when children view themselves as authors they connect their personal abilities as writers to those of other authors. They read other authors with a gleaning, critical eye, selecting what they need for their own writing. Calkins (1986) explains that after publishing Lessons from a Child, she began reading with new insights, and finding new layers of meaning in the

work of other authors. She was reading as an insider. Children who view themselves as authors, she says, also read like insiders. Smith (1983), and Goodman & Goodman (1983) refer to this as reading like a writer.

To apply authorship to Kelly's (1963) theory of personal constructs means that children will be able to behave like authors and view themselves as authors if they have had the experience of writing like authors, if they have seen their peers writing as authors, and if they have been exposed to professional authors. That is, children must have a model against which to test their anticipated behavior. As an example of this anticipation, Kelly (1963) describes how we unconsciously cut a pie based on our anticipations or world representations of how a pie should be cut. There are undoubtedly many ways to cut a pie, he says; however, we tend to cut it into triangular pieces, because this is the way we have seen it done. Kelly elaborates on this pie cutting metaphor by saying that, because of our cultural surroundings, we know that the triangular piece should be placed in front of the person with the wide edge of the pie furthest away from him. Britton (1970) says it this way:

> Every encounter with the actual is an experimental committal of all I have learned from experience. If what takes place lies entirely outside my expectations, so that nothing in my past experience

> provides the bases for modification, then I shall be able to make nothing of it: it might constitute 'an experience' for somebody else, but for me it cannot. (p. 15)

Expression of Oneself

If children know what authors do, that is, if they know that an author, by definition, is a person who begins or originates, then they will hopefully look to themselves for the spark of creativity. Indeed, researchers such as Graves (1983) and Calkins (1983, 1986) recommend that children choose their own topics based on their own life experiences.

Burkland and Petersen (1986) also advocate that students choose their own topics. Burkland and Petersen's technique is, however, based not on having students list personal life experiences as suggested by Calkins (1983, 1986) and Graves (1983), but on having students respond to their reading by writing down personal associations, reactions or questions. From these personal responses, (which parallels Rosenblatt's (1981) process of promoting aesthetic readers) Burkland and Petersen introduce their students to the process of research. They describes research as questions that are derived from the students themselves, and it represents something that learners want to know. "On one hand it is a search within oneself, but also a search outside of

oneself. It is not done only in the service of a research paper but is rather a way of thinking about reading and existential experience."
(p. 190). This method of generating topics is put forth by Burkland and Petersen as a possible solution for those students who find little interest in writing narratives based solely on recall of personal experiences.

Publishing: A Social Act

To do as authors do, often involves publishing. Publishing is defined as "to make known or announce publicly" (Funk & Wagnalls, 1963).

Graves (1983) explains that children should publish because writing is a public act, meant to be shared with many audiences, and publishing helps a child develop a sense of audience. This sense of audience (Calkins, 1983), then becomes an influence on the child's writing: he adjusts his writing, for his audience and he becomes more involved in writing for meaning. The child is, therefore, adjusting his thought processes in order to communicate effectively to his audience. This is an example of thought and language, or thought and culture interaction as described by Vygotsky (1962) and Kelly (1963).

Further to this, Britton (1970) explains that a large part of the incentive for writing is in the

sharing.

Conferencing: The Ultimate Social Act

Conferencing, as advocated by Burkland & Petersen (1986), Britton (1969, 1970), Graves (1983), Kelly (1963), and Vygotsky (1962), is of ultimate importance. "We must," says Britton, "spin in the class-room the web of human relation" (Britton, 1970, p. 141). When the child talks to peers or adults he is learning. As Vygotsky (1962) explains words do not merely mirror thought, words influence thought. Words help the child test his thoughts against other people's thoughts, thus enabling him to adjust his thoughts accordingly, if he so wishes. Kelly (1969) characterizes this testing and adjusting as a fundamental human behavior, as man acting inherently as a scientist. He says that "when constructs are used to predict immediate happenings, they become more susceptible to change or revision. The validational evidence is quickly available.....A good scientist tries to bring his constructs up for test as soon as possible" (p. 13). Peer and teacher conferencing allow for this immediate testing and feedback.

When children talk to each other, or read their writing to each other, they acquire ideas from each other. The classroom becomes a community wherein knowledge is shared, ideas are tested, and problems are

solved.

Burkland and Petersen (1986) identify the importance of conferencing when they state that learning from peers is a first step in research. Kirby & Liner (1981) and Rosenblatt (1982) have also outlined the value of this learning from peers.

For Britton (1977) peer discussion or pupil talk helps make individual learning overt; it is our principal means of exchanging opinions, attitudes, beliefs.

Books: The Mediation of Secondary Experiences

Teachers can help advance children's development by using books for mediation. For Britton (1970), Calkins (1983), Graves (1983), and Smith (1983), books serve as important secondary experiences which contribute to writing development. And this is especially so, these researchers say, if the children consider themselves as authors: children who view themselves as authors tend to apply various techniques from their reading to their own writing; and, most importantly, the books that they read add to their storehouse of personal schemata.

There are, however, those researchers (Brown, 1986; Clay, 1986; Gordon & Braun, 1983; Westphall, 1986) who say that there are certain children who are not always aware of the knowledge they have acquired from reading, and that they do not spontaneously make connections with

their reading and writing. Teachers, they say, must help children make that link. For instance, Gordon & Braun (1983) and Westphall (1986) suggest that explicit teaching of story structure can assist children with their story writing.

Conclusion

The reviewed literature seems to indicate that educators should look to the way in which writing is treated in the school curriculum (Adler, 1985; Graves, 1983). That is to say, educators should remember that it is the self, or the child and her ideas, which are the important aspects of writing. (Britton, 1969, 1970, 1971-72, 1977; Calkins, 1986; Graves, 1975, 1983, 1985; Rosen, 1969)

It should also be remembered that writing is a social behavior. (Burkland & Petersen, 1986; Graves, 1983; Halliday, 1971-72; Vygotsky, 1962)

It is implied by Britton (1970) and Kelly (1963) that children's "world representations" or views are usually supported by the milieu in which they find themselves. That is to say, if most of the writing done by the child is teacher assigned, (Adler, 1985; Graves 1983, 1985), then writing begins to be viewed solely as a school activity. (Goodman & Goodman, 1983)

Although certain researchers such as Bereiter (1980), Collins & Gentner (1980), Flower & Hayes (1980),

and Vygotsky (1962) explain that writing is difficult, others such as Graves (1983) and Smith (1983) take the stand that writing is not that difficult. Perhaps this stance is best summarized in the title of an article by Graves (1985): "All Children Can Write".

Regardless of whether writing is difficult or easy, the research strongly suggests that the role of the teacher is one of "mediator". Calkins (1986), Goodman (1983), Graves (1984), and Smith (1983) state that teachers should place children in environments whereby they can behave as authors. Just as authors do, children should choose their own topics, use writing to express themselves, and share their writing with varied audiences. By so doing, teachers are, in fact, influencing their students' views of writing. Children begin to think of themselves as authors and their writing becomes their "own".

As well, there are those researchers who say that teachers must mediate by helping certain children make the connections between their reading and writing. (Brown, 1986; Clay, 1986; Gordon & Braun, 1983; Westphall, 1986) As a means of doing this, Gordon & Braun (1983), and Westphall (1986) suggest that explicit teaching of story structure can enhance children's ability to write stories.

By mediating the writing environment in this manner, it is expected that teachers and students will

realize that writing is a tool which allows people to express themselves, to convey a message, or to create literature (Britton, 1970). Hopefully, with this realization, will come not only an improvement in writing but a joy of writing.

CHAPTER THREE

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Overview

The nature of the study, the method of selection and description of the sample and the techniques and procedures for gathering and analyzing data are reported in this chapter.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe what writing was to children who had been labelled avid, effective readers/poor writers by their teachers.

Research Questions

Based upon the purpose of the study which was to describe what writing meant to avid, effective readers/poor writers, the following research questions were posed.

1. Do these children value writing?
2. Where do these children get their ideas for their writing?
3. What kind of writing do these children like and dislike?
4. What is their perception of audience?
5. What strategies do these writers use in the writing process?

6. What is "writing" to these children?

Nature of the Study

The study is descriptive in nature. The descriptions are based on information gleaned from transcripts of interviews with three children. Information was also obtained from the writing of these three children, and as well from interviews with their teachers and parents. This researcher's field notes of classroom observations were also used as a source of information.

It was felt that the above sources of information provided triangulation of data which assisted in validating the analysis of the data. (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Miles & Huberman, 1984)

Method of Selection

Four school principals were contacted and given a summary of the thesis proposal (Appendix A). This summary briefly outlined the purpose of the study and the methodology. A check list describing avid, effective readers/poor writers was devised by me and this check list was attached to the summary in order to assist teachers in the selection of children for the study (Appendix A).

As well as contacting these four principals, I also contacted approximately six teachers by telephone.

These teachers were personal acquaintances. I explained the study to them over the telephone and asked them if they had any students who would be suitable for this study. I also offered to send them a summary of the thesis proposal and a copy of the check list for detecting avid, effective readers/poor writers.

Through these contacts with principals and teachers, three possible subjects were identified by their classroom teachers. Two subjects were located through the principals, and one through a classroom teacher/acquaintance. I, then, met with the classroom teachers of these prospective participants; at which time, we discussed the participants' reading scores on standardized tests such as "The Canadian Test of Basic Skills" and "The Metropolitan Reading Test". Teachers also showed me samples of the children's writing and they reviewed the marks these children had been receiving on classroom writing assignments. I also observed the participants in the classroom at this time, and briefly talked to them as well. During this initial visit, I was also able to collect writing samples of the prospective participants. These samples were later analyzed by myself and by my research supervisor, and we agreed with the classroom teachers that these children were, indeed, writing below what one would expect of children who read avidly and who scored six months beyond their respective grades on standardized reading

tests.

Based on the writing samples, on the reading and writing test scores, and on the classroom teachers' assessments, three children were identified as definite candidates for this study: a nine year old grade three boy, in a special adaptation classroom; a nine year old grade four girl; and an eleven year old grade six boy. The three participants were in different classrooms and also in different schools.

The three participants and their classroom settings are presented in chapter four.

After identifying the participants, I telephoned the three homeroom teachers in order to confirm that I was, indeed, interested in working with these children. At this time, I also asked the teachers if I could observe the children twice a week in writing situations. I asked the teachers to specify convenient times for these classroom observations. As well, I asked the teachers to specify a convenient time for interviewing the participants about their writing.

All three teachers were willing to have me observe the participants in their classroom and they indicated which times were most convenient for these bi-weekly visits. All three teachers specified Language Arts periods as convenient times.

The teacher of the grade three boy and the teacher of the grade four girl indicated that I could interview

the participants immediately after the observed writing session, thus pulling them out of class time. The teacher of the grade six boy, however, indicated that a convenient time for interviewing would be prior to morning classes because the prospective participant generally arrived at school at least half an hour before the commencement of classes. I, therefore, interviewed him at this time. After the interview, I entered the classroom with him and observed the forty-five minute language arts period. This latter arrangement of interviewing and then observing, sometimes proved to be inefficient because three days had elapsed between the observed writing and the interview. Consequently, the participant occasionally seemed uninterested, confused or forgetful of the writing behavior I was trying to focus on. It was, therefore, often necessary to refresh his memory by reading his writing out loud and by reviewing, with him, my classroom observation notes which described the context of the writing in question.

Voluntary Consent

All three teachers offered to call the parents and briefly outline the purpose of the study to them.

The teachers told the parents that if they were willing to consider having their children participate in the study then I would be contacting them by telephone in order to schedule a time to visit them in their

homes.

Two of the teachers, the grade three teacher and the grade four teacher, decided not to mention the study to the prospective participants until I had spoken to their parents. The grade six teacher, however, decided to ask the prospective participant if he was interested in participating in the study before he called the parents.

During the home visit, the study was explained, parent questions answered, and written permission was requested for child participation. (Appendix B)

The following points were also mentioned during the home visit:

1. The importance of not discussing involvement in the study with their children, so that the children would not change their writing behavior.
2. Voluntary participation and freedom to withdraw from the study at any time.

As well, during this visit, children were given a scribbler or a note pad, and a folder. They were asked to keep writing done at home in the writing folder.

Research Schedule

The three participants were observed and interviewed during a period of approximately six weeks.

Each child was observed and interviewed twice per

week, on alternate days. For instance, the grade three boy and the grade four girl were interviewed and observed on Monday and Thursday, and the grade six boy was usually observed on Tuesday and Friday, thus resulting in six school visits per week.

Observation of the writing process took place during the Language Arts period for all three participants. The grade three boy was also observed during two math classes and one science class.

The children were observed throughout the writing process; that is, they were observed immediately before, during, and after they wrote.

Data Collection

Data were obtained from field notes of classroom observations, from interviews with three student participants and from interviews with teachers and parents. Data was also obtained from the writing of the participants. It was felt that these data sources provided triangulation of data, as mentioned by Hammersley & Atkinson (1983), and Miles & Huberman (1984).

Field notes

The classroom visits began, and with the permission of the teachers, I was able to sit in the classroom and observe the participants. For the first three or four

observations, I sat or stood approximately three meters away from the participants while taking notes. Then I gradually sat closer and closer to the participants until, finally, I was sitting very close to them. Notes were taken just before the participants were ready to compose, and culminated at closure of the writing activity which sometimes involved sharing of the writing with classmates or teacher. The notes were written in a coiled (22.8 cm x 15.2 cm) note book. Each page of the note book was divided in two: a vertical line was drawn at approximately the three quarter mark, somewhat as shown in figure 1.

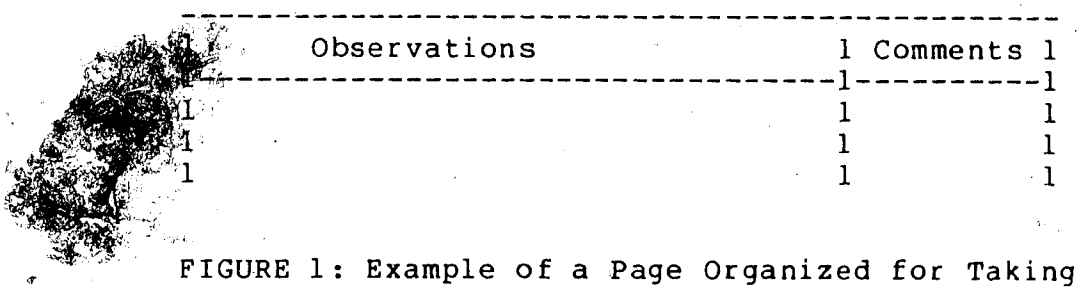


FIGURE 1: Example of a Page Organized for Taking Field Notes of Classroom Observations

The "Observation" column was reserved for the actual observed writing behaviour of the participants. The "Comments" column was reserved for my comments or interpretations of the observed behavior.

Interviews

Immediately after each classroom observation the

grade three boy and the grade four girl were taken out of their respective classrooms and interviewed. The grade six boy, on the other hand, was observed and then interviewed two or three days after the observation.

The participants were interviewed about their writing behavior, about their written product, and also about their attitude towards writing. They were also asked to give their concept of good writing.

At times, pre-planned questions were asked of all three participants. At other times questions were asked in an impromptu fashion.

The interviews were recorded and later transcribed. It was impossible to keep up-to-date with the transcribing because six interviews were recorded each week. However, I listened to the tapes and made notes. This sometimes gave a focus to the next interview. Spradley (1979) suggests that interviewers should listen to participants and ask them to give examples of terms or domains that appear in their vocabulary or culture. For instance in discussions with the grade four girl, the word "choice" appeared with regard to topic selection. Therefore, I asked her to give me examples of "choice" and I asked her if her report on "Chief Maskepetoon" (Appendix K) was an example of what she meant when she referred to "choice" of topic.

Information was also gathered through informal and formal interviews with teachers and parents. For

instance, although the initial visits with teachers and parents were not recorded, I immediately wrote down what they had said after I had left their presence. In addition to these informal interviews, I requested a formal interview of teachers and parents at the end of the study. These interviews were recorded and parents and teachers were asked to comment on the participants' reading and writing background. They were also asked to comment on the attitudes held by the participants towards reading and writing.

Participants' writing

During most interviews with participants, I used their writing as a basis for gathering information. For instance, I sometimes asked them where they got the ideas for their pieces of writing or how they felt about their pieces of writing. I also asked them questions such as "Which part of this piece of writing do you like? Did you make any changes in this piece of writing? Whom did you have in mind as audience for this piece of writing?" Used in this manner, the children's writing proved to be a stimulus for eliciting information.

Data Analysis

Before the data could be formally analyzed, recordings of interviews had to be transcribed. In

order to do this I used pages which I had divided into two columns as in figure 2:

Transcript	Comments
Tim: I think...	
Me: Do you...	

Figure 2: Example of a Page Organized for Transcribing Interviews

The "Transcript" column was reserved for verbatim discourse and the "Comments" column was reserved for classification or interpretation of verbatim discourse.

After all the tapes were transcribed, I began analyzing the transcripts and the field notes. Firstly, this material was read several times with the six research questions in mind and, as I read, I wrote comments in the "Comments" column. At times, these comments consisted of questions which I later clarified with the participant. At other times, the comments consisted of categorizations of the classroom observation or the verbatim discourse. For instance, if the verbatim discourse or the classroom observation referred to audience, I wrote "audience" in the right hand "Comments" column.

The next step in the data analysis [illegible]ved writing the six research question and the names [illegible] three participants on chart paper which measured [illegible]cm by 83 cm. (see Figure 3).

	Do these children value writing?	Sources of ideas?	Kind of wrtg. liked and disliked?	Audience?	Strategy?	What is writing to them?
Tim	pg. 4, Jan. 8 pg. 10, Feb. 2					
Laura						
Fred						

FIGURE 3: Chart Used to Categorize Data

This chart was completed by reviewing the "Comments" columns of the classroom field notes and the interview transcripts. Whenever reference was made to the research questions, the page and date of the reference was written on the chart.

After the chart had been completed with all the pages and dates of the categorized references, I then dealt with one research question at a time for each child. For instance, for the research question, "Do these children value writing?", I used the chart to direct me to the proper references and then I rewrote all these references on new pages for each child. This

rewriting allowed for easier reading of the data and prepared it for further interpretation and synthesis. A portion of this synthesized data is reported first in Chapter Four to describe the three children and their classrooms. The data, as it applies to each child, is then presented in relation to each of the six research questions.

From the synthesized data, emerged what Spradley (1980) terms "cultural patterns" or "universal themes". Four themes emerged from the data: expectations of good writing, authorship, choice, and audience. These themes, as well as the conclusions of the study, are presented in chapter six.

CHAPTER FOUR

INTRODUCTION OF THE CHILDREN

AND

THEIR LANGUAGE ARTS ENVIRONMENTS

Overview

In this chapter data is used to introduce the three children who participated in the study, and to describe the context of the three language arts classrooms.

Tim

Tim's present school is his fourth school since kindergarten. He repeated grade one and was in grade three at the time of this study. This year, he was receiving special attention for math and language arts. For these subjects, he and eight other children, from his own class and another class, left their homerooms and went to an adjacent classroom where Mrs. Piquard, because there were only nine children, was able to give them individual assistance. Tim spent approximately two hours per day in this classroom. It was in this classroom of nine children that I observed all of Tim's writing -- all, that is, except for one science class which took place in his homeroom.

According to Tim's teacher, Mrs. Piquard, Tim was a good reader. He was reading at a grade 6.1 level, as indicated by a Metropolitan Reading Test which had been

completed two months before the beginning of this study. This ability to read well was also mentioned by Tim's mother who explained that he was able to read before entering kindergarten. She also said that he had always been able to read better than many of the children in his Sunday school class, and consequently he was often asked to do the weekly readings.

With regard to being an able reader, Tim, on several occasions, did not hesitate to mention that he considered himself to be a good reader. One of these occasions occurred when he was talking about kindergarten being one of his most enjoyable school years for reading. "In kindergarten," he said, "they would ask me to read because I was a good reader, most than every person .... They were surprised at me, that I could, um, read."

As well as being described as an "able" reader, Tim was also described by his teacher and his mother as being an "avid" reader. As an example of this avid reading, Tim's mother talked about how he had won the "Red Hot Reader" award in the last semester of his previous school year. This "Red Hot Reader" award was an award given to the child who had read the most books in a semester. Tim had read sixty four books that semester.

When I asked Tim's mother if she could explain why Tim was such an avid reader, she replied, "I don't know,

because we're not a reading family. I have dyslexia and so it's extremely difficult for me to read. So him reading is a real treasure for me." (A beautiful smile appeared on her face at this time.)

Although Tim was, indeed, an "able" reader and an "avid" reader, Mrs. Piquard pointed out that Tim's writing was difficult to read because of his penmanship, and because his writing lacked coherence and development of ideas. "Writing is a bit of a job for Tim, even in a physical sense. He might have lots of ideas," she explained, "but it's a job getting them down on paper and sorting them out in any way that is readable ...

Mrs. Piquard added that she had, however, noticed an improvement in Tim's writing in the past few months. She thought that Tim's writing fluency had improved, as well as "some of his organizational skills." She went on to say that "his writing was also a bit more legible than it was."

Tim's mother also referred to Tim's fine motor skills and his penmanship,

> He has a little bit of trouble with his motor skills so it's (writing) really helped with that. Like his writing is quite sloppy compared to the other kids. Ever since kindergarten .... His kindergarten teacher noticed that his hands got very tired just using scissors, so um, um, writing is strengthening his hands a bit better.

In spite of this difficulty with penmanship, and with getting his ideas down on paper, Tim professed to "love" writing. Indeed, he often talked about liking it so much that he intended to, eventually, become an author of children's books.

I wondered if Tim's love of writing had been somewhat influenced by his family background: there was some evidence that he could have modelled this writing behavior from relatives because some of his close relatives actually engaged in writing professionally and personally, and it appeared as though some of these relatives had actively encouraged Tim to write. Tim's uncle (whom Tim idealized) had, as a child, maintained an ongoing correspondence with Charles Schultz, the cartoonist. As well, Tim's maternal grandmother had written survival manuals and short stories; and his great grandfather had written engineering and flying textbooks, poetry, and short stories.

It seemed to me that Tim's father had also played a role in encouraging Tim's writing. For instance, Tim told me that he remembered how, before he was able to write, his father had asked him if he would like to write a book. Tim explained that he dictated the words to his father, and his father wrote them down. Then Tim did the illustrations for the story.

There was also evidence that Tim's mother encouraged or valued writing because she mentioned that,

every year, she saved three or four of Tim's good pieces of writing, and that she had "a whole file drawer full of all the silly things he's done since he started learning how."

Regardless of "where" Tim's love of writing originated, I decided to ask Tim's mother if she could tell me "when" Tim had begun to enjoy writing. She replied that he seemed to have begun enjoying it in the last couple of years, and most particularly this year. Tim had also said the same thing in a previous interview.

I: How about writing? Is there one year in school that you enjoyed it more than other years?

Tim: Well, this year I like it. Grade 3.

I: How come?

Tim: Well, we do it a lot. Every day.

I: That makes you like it more?

Tim: Yeah!! (emphatic voice)

As far as remembering when he actually began to like [illegible]ting, Tim said that it was in kindergarten:

> In kindergarten, I used to draw pictures for stories and the teacher would make them into books, and kids used to like them...That's how I got into writing, but I forgot about it a lot. Then when I got into this grade, I said, "Oh no! This is dull stuff!" But now I like it.

In spite of professing to like writing, Tim did not appear to do much writing at home. Indeed, his mother explained that she "really didn't see Tim write very much at home. If he did write, it would probably be at bedtime, in his bed."

In the end, I found Tim to be a fascinating nine year old boy who loved to talk. He would talk about many things: his brother's birthday, riding his bike, or about other more sophisticated things such as the copyright sign which appears in books. One minute, he would be reading one of his stories to me, and the next minute, without any shift in tone of voice, or any other noticeable sign which indicated that he had stopped reading his story, he would begin to tell me how he was going to continue his story.

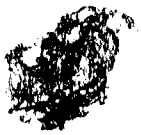
Sometimes Tim's mind seemed to jump inexplicably from one topic to another. With one breath he would talk about transformers or about gory visual scenes he had seen in movies, and with the next breath he would recite poetry, such as the following poem by A. A. Milne (1961) that he had memorized in grade two.

Now I Am Six

When I was one
I just begun.
When I was two
I was barely new.
When I was three

I was hardly me.
When I was four
I wanted no more.
When I was five
I felt just alive.
Now I am six
I am clever as clever.
Now I think I'll stay six
Forever and ever.

(from Tim's verbatim transcripts)



Tim's Language Arts Environment

Tim's language arts teacher, Mrs. Piquard, had provided the nine children in her grade three classroom with the opportunity to write on a daily basis. Initially, at the beginning of the year, as Donald Graves (1983) suggests, Mrs. Piquard had asked the children to list personal topics and to write about those topics. However, because the children did not seem very stimulated by this method of topic selection, she decided to provide them with ideas to write about on a daily basis. The children usually had to restrict their writing to these assigned topics, except for, approximately once a week, at which time they were allowed to write whatever they wished. This latter writing was called "free writing" and during this "free writing" time they could work on one of their old pieces

or begin a new one. Writing was kept in folders in one corner of the room. Every completed piece of writing was "revised", which meant that children circled such things as spelling, capitalization, and punctuation errors; and, occasionally, they added more detail to their stories, using arrows to indicate where the addition belonged. A good copy was then written.

Approximately once a week, Mrs. Piquard gathered her nine students in a corner of the classroom for "sharing time". During this time, the children shared their writing by reading it out loud to the entire class. At times, they read the entire piece of writing, while at other times they simply read a few parts of a piece of writing. After reading their writing, the children in the class made comments as to what they liked about that particular piece of writing. The children seemed to look forward to this sharing time, and they eagerly volunteered to read their writing. If the children wished, they could make their stories into books by using construction paper and staples, however few children seemed to be doing so.

Mrs. Piquard told me that she tried to have the children do journal writing once a week, on Fridays. Tim explained that in his journal he could write about "what happened at home or at school". Since classroom visits occurred on Mondays and Thursdays, journal writing was not observed.

As I entered the room, children were sometimes completing workbook pages; or, occasionally, they were reading basal reader selections. This reading was often done orally, in "round robin" fashion, with children taking turns. Discussions led by Mrs. Piquard usually followed this reading, and it was at this point that I normally entered the room. After the discussion of the reading selection, the children, frequently, mimed ideas that they intended to write about. All nine children mimed their ideas at once, with each child acting his/her own idea. For example, for one story, the children were told to decide which winter activity they enjoyed, to mime it, and then to write about it.

The writing session itself usually lasted about twenty minutes: children were seated in their own desks and Mrs. Piquard discouraged any interaction.

Fred

Fred could be described as an eleven year old boy who often used such words as "boring", "not very exciting" or pretty dull". He used these words frequently when talking about his week-ends, his journal entries, his week at school, his extra curricular gymnastics classes, and his autobiography (see Appendix D).

When asked what kinds of hobbies he had, Fred named the following: remote control airplanes, dirt bikes,

T.V. and comics. His favorite T.V. programs were, "W.K.R.P. in Cincinnati", "Taxi", "A. Team", and "Facts of Life".

Fred mentioned having been to Hawaii once, Disneyland twice, and to British Columbia every year in order to visit grandparents.

Mr. Cassidy, Fred's homeroom teacher, identified Fred as an avid reader, and indeed, he did read a great deal at school: invariably, Fred could be found reading a novel in his classroom every morning, an hour before classes began. As fellow classmates entered, approximately half an hour later, Fred continued to read his book even though there was a great deal of activity around him. Indeed, he often continued to read as Mr. Cassidy addressed the class explaining the activities that were to follow. Fred explained this behavior by saying "it was hard to put it (the book) down". As to the amount read, Fred stated that he read about one novel per week at school -- the novels were usually novels of approximately, one hundred and fifty pages.

I asked Fred what kinds of reading materials he would probably select if he had at least two hours a day to devote to free reading, and he replied, "comics because they're funny and Science Fiction because it's kinda weird and you can travel to other places in your mind through time." When asked if he could tell me who his favorite authors were, Fred chuckled and explained

that he did not pay much attention to who wrote the books that he read.

I found it very interesting that Fred did not usually take his novels home to read. On several occasions, he told me that he didn't "usually read at home except comics." Comics, Fred explained, were not allowed in the classroom. So Fred generally reserved his novels for the classroom and his comics for the home.

Finally, I asked Fred to tell me when reading was fun and when reading was not fun. "Reading is fun," said Fred, "when there's nothing on T.V.. That's the only time I read, and during free time at school.... Reading is not fun when it's boring, it has no plot, you're supposed to read it."

These same questions were posed regarding writing, and Fred immediately said, "Writing is not all that much fun."

Later, during an interview at Fred's house, his mother confirmed his attitude towards writing when she said, "He hates writing. Period." At this point she laughed and continued, "He hates writing any kind of story. He hates doing homework." At this point, Fred interjected, "No. I like writing stories at school but not at home."

I then asked Fred's mother a hypothetical question,

I: If I were Fred's teacher, what would you

like to see me do regarding Fred's writing?

Mother: I don't know how, as his teacher, you could encourage him, because he, like Mr. Cassidy says, he's got lots of ideas but it's just writing them on paper. He's a poor speller, he's got poor handwriting....

A month prior to the above statement made by Fred's mother, Fred had said precisely the same thing while answering my question which asked him to compare reading and writing.

Fred: Reading's a lot more fun (than writing). And writing is kinda boring. Anyways, I have a lot of spelling mistakes, and messy handwriting.

I: So it's the spelling and the handwriting.

Fred: Uh huh, like I had a really bad spelling score (referring to his grade six CTBS spelling score). My spelling level is at a grade three and a half level. Last time. at the beginning of the year test, I was at grade three and a half.

Even though Fred stated that writing is "kinda boring" he did profess to like certain kinds of writing, such as creative writing, especially Halloween creative writing, and journal writing.

Writing that he did not care for included taking notes in Science or Social Studies because it was "boring copying". Fred said he also disliked Language Arts question and answer sheets. These question and answer sheets, to which Fred referred, were used as a study guide to the class novel.

Mr. Cassidy explained that, often, Fred's writing on these question and answer sheets was very short or, at times, not complete.

Fred's Language Arts Writing Environment

Fred's Language Arts classes were structured in the following manner. The period began with Mr. Cassidy asking his grade six students to write in their journals for five or ten minutes. The students could write whatever they wished in their journals.

Quite a few students addressed their journal entries to fictitious characters such as "Heathcliff" and "McGivor", or to "Dear Journal". One girl said she had started to use a fictitious name then stopped. Fred did not address his journal to anyone until early April. At this time, he began addressing his journal to Spyhunter. He started doing so, he said, because he "was just getting bored" with always using the date as the opener to his entries.

Approximately once a week, Mr. Cassidy responded to these journals by writing comments or questions in them.

Mistakes in spelling, and other writing conventions were ignored.

After, or sometimes during, journal writing, Mr. Cassidy would read part of a novel to his students for approximately ten or fifteen minutes: this novel was not one that the students used for their regular class novel study but Fred explained that Mr. Cassidy sometimes used these novels as listening tests.

After this fifteen minute oral reading session, Mr. Cassidy directed the entire class in the correction of their class novel study questions. The entire class was reading, Call It Courage by Armstrong Sperry at the time of this study. The students corrected their own work as Mr. Cassidy solicited the correct answer from various students.

Finally, students used the time remaining in the period to complete more novel study questions. They did this work individually, and without talking to each other.

As well as journal writing and class novel study questions, the students in Mr. Cassidy's classroom had completed two creative writing assignments in the time frame of this study. Both of these assignments were spin-offs from prescribed reading they had done as an entire class. In the first assignment, the students were to write about a "Future City". When this assignment was complete, the students took turns reading

their stories in front of the class, after which their classmates were to tell them what they had done well, and what they could have done better.

Later on Fred told me that he thought that Mr. Cassidy was assigning marks to stories as they were read: that Mr. Cassidy was noting such things as good words or good ideas and entering marks in his plan book.

For the second creative writing assignment the students were to write a story in which the main characters got into trouble. Before his students began to write, Mr. Cassidy instructed them in the following way:,

> Start by writing down your five W's. I'll give you three minutes to discuss it with other people. If you want to write another episode of your Future City, you can do that instead of this idea.

The students were given half an hour to write and they were told that they were expected to have the "rough draft finished by Monday". It was Friday, at the time.

The following Wednesday, stories were finished and groups of four or five students were formed in order to evaluate each other's stories. They proceeded in this manner: each student read his/her story to the group while members of the group listened and assigned marks for good words and phrases, interest and unity,

and expression. Fifteen marks were allotted to good words and phrases, five marks for interest and unity, and five for expression.

As I observed one of these groups function, I noticed that the students took turns reading their stories and their classmates listened and assigned marks, but there was no discussion of the writing. Mr. Cassidy joined our group near the end of the session and reminded the students that they were supposed to ask each other questions about their writing. They, however, did not change their behavior when Mr. Cassidy left.

Later when the class was reunited Mr. Cassidy informed the class that it was important to listen well and to make checks as they listened. He also talked about the weighting given to various categories: "At the beginning of the year," he said to the students, "we didn't give that many marks for good words but as we go along we are giving more marks. We expect more now."

Laura

"I like school but workbook pages are boring, plain boring." One, actually, had to hear this remark made by Laura to fully appreciate the character behind this statement: her tone of voice reflected an impish, candidly honest personality.

This remark regarding workbook pages was made

during the second interview and numerous similar remarks were to follow: it took very little prodding to find out what was on Laura's mind. She was always willing to tell you what she liked and disliked, and she even placed these likes and dislikes on her own rating scale: top, middle, bottom.

Within one interview the following points arose regarding her likes and dislikes. She said she liked chemistry and science because it was fun to experiment, and she loved tests, except for Social Studies tests. Laura's mother also mentioned tests, "She loves for me to give her tests at home," she said, "and she loves to take any of her younger brother's tests and do them."

Laura explained that she loved tests because "they're a bit, not too challenging, but they are challenging." She went on to explain that this idea of a challenge was an important factor in her selection of books, "Like, I like challenging books. I don't like baby dumb books that say: This cat is mine. This is the cat." (very staccato, infantile voice.)

She then continued. in her naturally playful, yet sincere mood, to mention other dislikes.

Laura: I hate looking up words in the dictionary, but I don't mind looking them up at home. I say, "Mom, give me a word that's easy enough for me to understand.

I: Oh, so you don't mind looking them up at

home?

Laura laughed at this, as she tended to laugh at a lot of things.

I: You don't like looking them up here, at school?

Laura: Yeah, because you have to write down the meaning.

And, again, she laughed, almost as if to say she knew that she was being somewhat precocious.

Reading was one of the activities that Laura placed on the top of her rating scale. "People are weird if they don't like reading books!" said Laura. Laura stated that she went to her city library with her parents and that she borrowed about six books per month; if she were to go to the library by herself, she explained, she would probably borrow twelve a month. Of their visits to the library, Laura's mother said, "Laura has an intimate relationship with the librarian."

Not only did Laura borrow books from her school library and her local city library, she also borrowed books from an adjacent city library.

When this study began, Laura was reading a novel called, The Hot Fudge Sunday Affair, by Cynthia Blair, of which she said, "I always want to read it. I'm going to get the next one."

A month later, she showed me a book she had bought at the Space Sciences Center. This book had the format

of an encyclopedia, and was at a very advanced reading level. She insisted on reading me quite a complex section on the human eye, and when asked if she liked that type of book she replied, "I do! Because I learn lots. Like I didn't know what half of these things are. My mom didn't even know."

Laura did, indeed, seem to like quite a variety of books. She said she enjoyed fiction, science fiction, and books on skiing, ballet, skating and swimming. She, specially, liked mystery books. To this list, Laura's mother added, the Home and Garden magazines, the Owl magazines, and her brother's hockey books.

When I asked Laura to tell me when reading was fun, she said,

> Reading is fun anytime -- three in the afternoon, before bed, in the morning, in U.S.S.R., in the library, in the bedroom, when I read to my parents, when I read to grade ones, when I'm gonna talk to God, when I get a tape ...

Laura did not, however, think that reading was much fun when she was reading orally and her audience was not attentive. For instance, she mentioned that she did not like to read to her cat because he always walked away. She also mentioned an incident when her grade one "across grade" buddy did not listen well to the story she was reading to her. Not only did Laura think this was not much fun, she also seemed baffled by her buddy's

behavior: Laura had even given her the opportunity to select the book that Laura read to her. Consequently, Laura expected her buddy to be interested and to listen attentively. But her buddy was not at all interested in listening that day and Laura, though she usually enjoyed reading to grade one students, did not enjoy reading that particular day.

Nor was reading any fun, Laura said, when she had to listen to her classmates "stumble over words".

I found Laura's response to the following question about reading quite interesting, since it seemed to reflect the wisdom I had noticed in her character.

I: What would be the best way to teach reading in school?

Laura: To talk them into reading y[illegible]ean?

I: Yeah, or just teaching reading?

Laura: What I'd to is tell them, Read! Try to read as much as possible. Um, read to your parents so you get better. Read to anybody so you get better.

She went on to say that, if she were a teacher, she would "quite often read to them so they know. I'd read the whole book to them, and they'd read the whole book to me, so they'd know the words."

Although reading was usually an enjoyable activity for Laura, writing was sometimes not very interesting to her. When it came to school writing, Laura placed it in

the middle of her rating scale. Indeed, she found a lot of the writing "boring", especially in social studies, and the workbook pages in language arts. Her writing in these areas was very short and, sometimes, not done at all. At times, she professed to have simply forgotten, "I left it in my bag and plain forgot." Consequently, four weeks into the study, after receiving her report card, she talked about some of the unfavorable marks she had received, "I don't really care about my report cards anymore. I don't care if it's good or bad."

Laura's teacher, Mrs. Cadman had posted a few envelopes on one of the walls in the classroom. In one of the envelopes, she placed creative writing activity cards. The other envelope was where the children put their finished piece of writing. The children could choose to do any of the writing activities during their free time. Occasionally, Mrs. Cadman said she set time aside and asked every student to select a writing activity.

Thinking, perhaps, that Laura would have enjoyed choosing from these writing activities on the wall, I asked her if she, sometimes, did any of that writing. She replied, "Yeah. Not very often though. I like doing other things, like reading."

A week later, she gave me another reason why she did not select these writing activities: all the writing activity cards pertained to potatoes and she did not

find this very interesting. "It's all on potatoes!" she had explained quite emphatically. Although I laughed whole heartily at this statement, Laura did not. She was most serious. She was not interested in writing about potatoes. However, a short time after this proclamation, Laura told me that she had selected one of the cards to do. The card directed the writer to conduct a survey of the number of people who liked sweet potatoes and netted gem potatoes.

The interesting thing about Laura's writing behavior is that she seemed to do a lot of writing on her own. "Quite often," she said, "I write stories by myself. I write a lot of long stories." As soon as Laura found out that I had left a notebook at her home for any writing that she might want to do, she wrote a story in it, as well as a poem using a patterning model she had learned in grade two. As well as writing stories on her own, Laura often had little notebooks with lists of favorite things, or messages to friends.

When I interviewed Laura's mother, she talked about the kind of writing that Laura enjoyed,

> She likes to just make up stories of any kind and write them. She loves to do business things. You know, she loves to go up and play secretary, she cleans out her dad's garbage and will write anything. She loves to make lists because I'm a list maker, and she really, really

copies. If she sees me making lists, she'll do the same. As well, she likes writing recipes, I've noticed she's written out all her own recipes and added them to my recipe box.

I asked Laura where she had found these recipes and she explained that she had found them in the school library. At this point, Laura disappeared, and then reappeared with a large piece of railroad paper on which she had drawn and written information about eclipses. Laura and her mother explained that this was not a required school project, but that they had simply gone to the library to find information on eclipses because Laura was very interested in the topic.

So Laura did enjoy certain kinds of writing; in fact, at one point, she said, "It makes me upset if I don't write sometimes, if I don't write at least once in the day." Writing plays was also one of her favorite kinds of writing. She had written an eight page play at school as part of a contest, the theme of the contest being, "The Olympics". When asked why she chose to write a play for the contest, she said the following.

Laura: Well, I've been writing plays for a couple of years. They're easy to write.

I: Hum. Do you have any at home?

Laura: No. I don't but I will be working on one pretty soon.

I: They're easy to write?

Laura: Yes, very easy. I get it all in my head and I just write it all down.

Just as Laura had a wise suggestion for teaching reading, she, also, had an equally wise suggestion for making writing interesting for children in school. She said, "A lot of kids hate writing stories." Then, she went on to explain what she meant by that statement, "Most kids hate writing stories, like on a special subject. But when they have their choice, they have all the things in their mind, so they can just write it out quickly and [illegible] a good copy."

In the end I found Laura to be a very sincere person: she never hesitated to tell me exactly what was on her mind. She was also an interesting person to talk to because she had travelled widely with her family. She had been to Australia and New Zealand, Raratonga, Tahiti, South East Asia, the United States, Mexico, Japan, and Thailand.

As hobbies, Laura enjoyed dancing, collecting dolls, reading, skiing, and skating. She took piano and ballet lessons and attended Guides.

Laura's Language Arts Environment

Half way through this study, Mrs. Tremblay, a substitute teacher, replaced Laura's fourth grade homeroom teacher, Mrs. Cadman who had to take sick leave.

The first language arts class I observed was one in which the children had read the autobiography of R.S. McLauglin, founder of General Motors Canada, in their readers. Then, Mrs. Cadman and the students discussed this reading selection, as well as the nature of autobiographies, after which, the children wrote their own autobiographies.

Thereafter, classes that I observed usually took on the following pattern. Selections were read from basal readers and the class, as a whole, discussed such things as the personalities of the main characters or the meanings of certain words. As well, before reading a selection, Mrs. Cadman sometimes asked the children to relate their personal knowledge to the story; for instance, before reading a story set in Mexico, she asked them, "Who knows anything about Mexico?" Several of the children had facts to share about Mexico. Then Mrs. Cadman asked the children to tell which part of the story they liked or disliked.

Story selections were sometimes read orally, with Mrs. Cadman and individual children taking turns. At times, half the story was read in this manner and then Mrs. Cadman asked the children to finish the story through silent reading.

Writing in these observed language arts classes usually consisted of writing in various workbooks, writing unit tests, and writing sentences using words

from a story selection. As well, if the children had any free time, they were able to select from various writing activities that Mrs. Cadman had put on the wall.

When Mrs. Tremblay arrived to replace Mrs. Cadman, she carried on with the workbook exercises and the unit tests; but, as well, she introduced journal writing. Laura explained that they were doing a journal "because Mrs. Tremblay wants to know more about us .... She writes to me, I write back, she writes back, I write back."

Initially, Mrs. Tremblay collected and responded to the messages in these journals every day; then, finding this very time consuming, she began to collect them every second or third day. Most of the time, the children were asked to do their journal writing in their spare time. A month later, which was a week after spring break, Laura stated that "the kids haven't been writing to Mrs. Tremblay very much, anymore."

During my last visit to Laura's classroom the children were writing responses to a listening test that Mrs. Tremblay was administering. Laura indicated that she enjoyed this kind of test because she was good at it.

CHAPTER FIVE

CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES TOWARD WRITING

Overview

In this chapter the data collected from three children, their parents, and their teachers is presented in relation to the six research questions.

1. Do these avid, effective readers/poor writers value writing?

Tim

Within the daily writing atmosphere of his language arts classroom, writing seemed to be highly valued by Tim. Indeed, Tim saw himself as a potential author of children's books; and he referred to this life's ambition often, the first time during the second interview when he said, "You know what I want to be when I grow up? A person who writes books for children."

Tim said he had acquired this interest in writing books for children in his previous school year. At that time, he had written and read a story to his classmates, and he managed to scare his classmates with his story ending in which a ghost said, "Boo!" Tim said he had enjoyed entertaining his peers with this story.

One day, during my observations, Tim's teacher asked the students to draw pictures of occupations they hoped to realize as adults. Since Tim was drawing a

picture of a cartoonist, I assumed that he had, perhaps, changed his mind about being an author of children's books. This was, however, not the case; he explained that when writing books, "you have to draw pictures too. Kids don't like books without any pictures."

Writing did, indeed, seem to be valued by Tim, as indicated in his following words, "When I'm very old. I'll just keep on writing and writing. My last story'll be history, like it'll be in a museum, all my stories. I might make em famous...."

As well, Tim said that he thought it would be a great deal of fun to be an author because of what an author does: "type, type, all day!"

So Tim valued writing: he realized it could become a career and he also viewed writing as a means of entertaining his peers.

Fred

Generally, Fred did not seem to value writing. When asked to compare reading and writing, Fred said, "Reading is a lot more fun and writing's kinda boring." Nor did Fred think that an author's life would be any fun "because he would have to sell his books and he might have trouble" doing so. At the time of this study, Fred's school was running a writing contest in which the winner received a book and got to meet the

author. Fred explained that he was not interested in meeting the author but that he would like to have the book. Fred's mother added that he did not like to write at all.

Fred felt that he did not need, nor want to spend anymore time on his creative writing. Mr. Cassidy gave his students about four days to complete a story and Fred said that was quite sufficient, also mentioning that he did not want to spend more time on these stories at home because it would interfere with his television viewing.

Wanting to know if Fred valued his own writing I asked him what he thought of his stories. At this time, Fred said that he thought his writing was "pretty good, not the greatest." When asked if he thought his writing was as good as the other kids, he said, "yes", yet when asked why he seemed reluctant to read his limerick to his friend who had asked him to do so, he said, "because his was a little better." On another occasion, after reading his story called "The Mud Pit" (see Appendix I), he said to his group of four classmates, "See, I told you mine was dumb."

He thought the good points of his writing were that it was "funny sometimes" and that he had "lots of conversation" in it. He went on to talk about what he considered to be the bad aspects of his writing.

Fred: Not very good spelling, though.

I: Is that important?

Fred: Not really, I kind of use words over and over again, like "said" and "answer" and "replied".

I: Does that make a difference?

Fred: Yeah, because it kinda gets boring.

Fred said he thought Mr. Cassidy thought his writing was "half-way .... It's not great but it's not the pits." Indeed, Mr. Cassidy had commented on Fred's writing at the beginning of this study saying he thought that Fred's writing was somewhat satisfactory but that it didn't reflect Fred's avid reading, nor his reading ability.

Fred did not give the impression that writing was to be valued, either by giving it to someone to read, or by saving it. On different occasions, he mentioned that he "usually just chucked it out." He did not, he said, give it away to people like his grandparents. His journal would "probably get thrown out," as well. When I told him how my children's grandmother had saved all of their letters, doodles and drawings, he said that if he were a grandparent he "probably would have thrown them out."

Writing was not considered fu by Fred because of his spelling and handwriting, and Fred did not seem to value writing enough to improve his spelling and penmanship. His mother said that he knew the words,

"It's just that he's sloppy. He scribbles it all down and leaves it. He doesn't bother going over it again .... He's just writing as fast as he can and getting it all down and getting it done ... " Fred agreed that sometimes he recognized that a word was wrongly spelled but he did not correct it.

Fred did perceive some value in writing: he thought writing was helpful to him when it served the function of holding down his thoughts in a concrete way. He referred to this in the following discussion:

I: Somebody once said to me that you can tell a story, draw a story or write a story. Which do you think would be the best way for you?

Fred: Writing ... because, well if it was a long story you might get mixed up in it, tell a different line, and if you recite by memory you might go [illegible].

Even though Fred considered writing the best mode of communicating a story for himself, he thought telling a story would best suit an experienced author who knew his stories; and, as well, he thought telling a story would be more enjoyable for the audience.

Laura

Laura, like Fred, did not seem to keep much of her writing: neither of them seemed to think of themselves

as an audience for their own writing. One day, I asked Laura what she had done with the plays she had written last year. She replied, "Who knows, I think my teacher kept them or something." Further on in the study, I asked what had become of an eight page play she had written this year, on the Olympics. She explained that she had thrown it away because Mrs. Cadman could not accept it due to the fact that she had combined cursive writing and printing, and pen and pencil. She threw it away "because there was no use keeping it if no one would look at it anymore and cause I didn't know you were coming."

I asked Laura to write down possible answers to the question, "Why write?" She wrote, "For exercise and for fun". Strangely enough, Laura mentioned this exercise aspect of writing a few times during the study. The fun aspect of writing was usually mentioned in relation to writing that she considered her "own".

Another question I asked Laura was, "Do you think it would be fun to be an author?" To this she replied, "Sometimes it would be fun to be an author because an author might do research"; moreover, "an author could write stories for his children, so they wouldn't have to buy books." I found it interesting that in this reply to a hypothetical question, Laura mentioned research. This definitely added to the emerging pattern that seemed to indicate that she loved learning; however,

Laura did not seem to relate learning to her own writing: at one point, she said that writing was "O.K." but that she preferred "reading because you learn more when you read." Laura's comment regarding an author writing books for his children seemed to fit in with her enjoyment of writing when she was writing her "own" stories: writing was fun when it was creative and entertaining.

Laura did not put a great deal of value on the writing that she did at school. After reading various pieces of her writing to me, she would often volunteer evaluative comments. A few times, she said that the piece was too short, and, at other times, she said she didn't like any part of it. Generally, though, she considered her writing to be "sometimes good, sometimes awful .... I'm too lazy to do good work." Laura thought that Mrs. Cadman would evaluate her writing in a similar way.

Synthesis

Of the three children, Tim seemed to value his own writing the most. He viewed writing as a worthwhile activity: an activity that could, eventually, lead to a profession for himself. Writing was definitely fun for Tim. He thought of his writing as a possible museum item: it was worth preserving.

Fred and Laura both seemed to think that their own

writing was "sometimes good" but sometimes "not the greatest".

And why do people write? Tim thought that people wrote to express themselves. Laura said people wrote because it was fun sometimes (but reading was more fun because you learn when you read). Laura also mentioned that people wrote because it was good exercise. Fred was unsure of the purpose of certain kinds of writing, such as journal writing. One reason the class was doing a journal, he said, was that "Mr. Cassidy wants us to, and another one is, I think it helps us to write.... I really don't know why we are writing it." For Fred, writing was rather boring, and being an author seemed to have no appeal. However, he did view writing as a means of holding down his ideas.

2. Where do these children get their ideas for their writing?

Tim

Tim picked up his ideas for his stories from many sources: peers, books, his own writing, television, and movies.

Often, Tim was conscious of his sources of ideas as indicated in the following discussions:

I: You were writing (in class) and there were a few kids walking around whispering. Did that interrupt your

thinking? Or do you already know what you're going to write.

Tim: Usually, when someone's talking they usually give me ideas for my story.

I: Really! You mean when they're just up whispering?

Tim: I can sometimes hear them. Ryan sits right beside me and if they're talking about a story I hear them, and it was it yesterday, I got a story. The same thing happened. They were talking about, I heard them. They were talking about a race so I put "The Last Race" (a title of one of his stories). That was the idea I got from them.

On another occasion he said:

> Well, I would read before I write because books give me ideas. And I might watch T.V. I'm going to watch the "Boy Who Could Fly". I'm going to w ite a story about um, I'm going to finish a story about, um, me who could fly. And um, that'll give me ideas.

At other times, Tim explained how he incorporated his life experiences into his writing. In this excerpt Tim told why he decided to portray himself as a turtle in his story called "Attack," a story about an animal who was defending a castle:

I decided to be a turtle because when I was little I went to this zoo that I could ride on this big humungus turtle's back and .... I think the turtle's named ... I think its name was Fozzy. I think that he doesn't exist anymore.

Approximately two weeks later, Tim told me where he got the ideas for "The Voice" (see Appendix E), a story with himself as the main character. This story began with him walking past a spooky looking house. As he walked by the house he noticed that a curtain was being closed. In this house, ghosts had trapped his friend in a cage, so Tim called the ghost busters for help, and the story continued. Tim told me how the idea of the curtain closing came from the following experience:

Well, when I usually went to school at Chippewa (a school that he had previously attended), I usually used to pass by there and this painter was in there and he used to close the curtain because I always looked up because he was taking down, he was wiping all the finger prints off and I liked it, what he was doing and he closed the curtains .... So that's where I got the idea for the story.

The following conversation gives examples of how Tim used movies such "Ghost Busters", and the writing of other children in the class, as sources of ideas:

I: Do you remember what your classmates said they liked about your story?

Tim: Um, um they liked the name of my dragon because I got it from Ghost Busters.

I: Yes, and Ryan said that he liked how you said your own name in the story. You said your name didn't you?

At this point, Tim found his story and began to read part of it:

"Hi. I'm Tim. I'm going to tell you a story called, "The Last Race". It's about a dragon and me. The dragon's name is Zool. This is a pretend story. Let's get on with the story. Once a hundred year old dragon ... "

Then Tim explained, "The idea for beginning with my name is from, Ryan usually does it. Ryan is my friend and he usually does it and he says: Let's get on with the story."

So Tim "collected" ideas for his writing from many sources and he seemed to be consciously aware of this collecting process.

Fred

Fred rarely volunteered information regarding where he got his ideas for his stories. The first time I asked him where he got his ideas was in relation to a story called "Marooned on an Island in the South Pacific". Fred seemed somewhat surprised by this question and replied, "I don't know, from my own

thoughts, and from T.V. shows." The second time I received information about the source of his ideas, an indirect question had been asked and Fred appeared to be more comfortable with this.

I: Can you sort of recall what you were thinking before you started to write?

Fred: At first, I was going to write about me skiing and make something up but I decided not to because I remembered this (an incident in his own life when he and his friend fell into a mud pit). This was funnier, and it really happened.

Once when discussing a limerick he had written, he explained that he had thought of the last line first; the last line being, "But mother it's only Sunday". I then asked Fred how he came up with that last line, after which there was a long pause. Finally, he said, "I don't know."

Two weeks later, Fred's replies on this topic were still just as short. Having said that he read approximately one novel per week, I showed interest and said, "That's quite a bit of reading, Fred. When it comes to writing stories, you must have a lot of good ideas in your head." After a lengthy pause, he replied, "I guess." It seemed as if Fred had not thought about using some of the story patterns. or ideas from his reading as ideas for his own writing. He was not

consciously collecting ideas for his writing. (Murray, 1968)

Laura

Regardless of whether Laura's ideas originated from a personal observation, last year's teacher or a family friend, she seemed to consider the ideas as truly originating from her head: these ideas were part of her own schema. For example, she had written a poem about snowflakes, and a story about a family of snowflakes whose children went to play on a star (see Appendix F). Laura explained where she got her ideas for these two pieces of writing. She said the snowflake idea came from observing the snowflakes that had accumulated on her bedroom window, and the star idea came from a family friend. This friend of the family told Laura how, before going to bed, her own mother would cut an apple in half revealing a star shape in the middle.

A week later, Laura described this snowflake story as being in her head, and that she simply had to write it down. A similar response was given to the following question, "Where did you get the idea for your eight page Olympic play?" Laura replied, "Nowhere. Out of my head. Where else would it come from?"

Laura said she enjoyed writing stories when they were all in her head. It was easy for her then. She did not have to ponder about what to write. This seemed

to be a time when her writing flowed. It was a time when she knew exactly what she wanted to write. Laura explained that there were times, however, when she did not have the stories exactly in her head. Such was the case with the autobiography she had to write. She was not certain what she should write. She was concerned that writing certain facts about herself might be construed as a form of bragging. Moreover she was concerned that some of her autobiography might be boring to read. For these reasons she did not enjoy writing it.

Synthesis

Tim's ideas came from many sources: television, classmates' oral and written speech, books, movies, and personal experiences. He seemed to be highly aware of where his ideas came from, and ultimately gave the impression that he was on the look out for new ideas to incorporate into his stories -- a "searching" phase mentioned by Donald Murray (1968).

Fred, on the other hand, seemed unsure and uninterested in where his ideas came from; however, for one of his stories, he did state that his ideas were "perhaps" from his own thoughts and from T.V. shows. The most interest shown by Fred in discussing the source of his ideas occurred when discussing his story, "The Mud Pit" (Appendix I), which was based on events which

had actually happened in his life. It was quite common for Fred to reply, "I don't know", or "I guess", to questions regarding the sources of his story ideas.

Laura seemed quite proud of the fact that her story ideas came from her head. "Where else would they come from?" she said. Laura gave the impression that she consciously stored physical and verbal observations in her head for future stories: "Everyday I have a story in my head, just about. Right now I'm thinking of a story pretty well.

3. What kinds of writing do these children like or dislike?

Tim

Several times during the study Tim indicated that he enjoyed writing. At one point he said, "Well, yeah, some kids don't even like it but I ~~love it~~!" Tim, particularly, liked to write stories -- stories that told about "adventures and racing and mysteries and a bit of horror." Indeed, later on Tim's mother reiterated that he enjoyed writing adventure stories.

It seemed important to Tim that he have a choice of writing stories on topics that appealed to him. Some of the topics introduced by his teacher were enjoyed by Tim, whereas others were not. For instance, he quite liked his teacher's idea of choosing a book he had read and rewriting part of that story with himself as one of

the characters in the story. "Yippee!" he said, "I wanted to write it. She must have read my mind...."

Tim's preference for writing stories on topics of his own choice was evident when we discussed his "I Can Fly" story (Appendix G). In this case, his response to his teacher's suggested topic was, unlike the previous example, quite negative.

I: Do you remember what you did before you wrote this "I Can Fly" story?

Tim: Yeah. I was working on "The "Voice". (one of his favorite stories).

I: Oh, O.K. Do you remember what you thought about before you wrote that?

Tim: I hated the idea.

I: Uh, hum, (pause).

Tim: Of me flying.

I: O.K. (pause) Why?

Tim: Well,

I: I thought every kid liked the idea of flying.

Tim: Well, I don't. I like staying on the ground because if we go in the air we might not ever come back down.

And, a little further on in the same interview,

I: Do you really feel your story is finished here, or do you feel you could do more with it?

Tim: No, not anymore. Not more. Not no more. I don't want to do anymore flying stories. I just want to write stories about stuff (pause) on my own.

I: Yeah.

Tim: Because whenever we have an idea in our head and the teacher gives us another idea, I really get mad.

I: O.K. Did you have any questions or doubts when the teacher asked the class to write a story about yourselves flying?

Tim: Yeah. Do I have to? Can't I work on my "Voice" story? She said, "No. You have to work on this."

I: O.K. How about any doubts? You know what a doubt is?

Tim: No.

I: Sort of wondering about something.

Tim: I keep on wondering about my "Voice" story and when I'm going to be able to work on it.

A week later Tim and I reviewed some of his stories, and again he mentioned that other assigned stories were intruding on his desire to finish "The Voice" (Appendix E).

Tim: Here's my "Shrink Machine" story if you want it. I hate it.

I: Why do you hate this?

Tim: I didn't want to do it. I wanted to, I asked the teacher if I could, um, finish up my "Voice" story. She said, "No." That's why I hate it.

Another example of Tim's need to write on topics of his choice occurred while sorting his collection of writing into pieces that he liked and pieces that he disliked. He identified several pieces that he liked but of a blank page which had been merely date stamped, he said, "I didn't like this idea so I never done anything."

At one point in the study, Tim talked about two kinds of writing done in his classroom: "free writing" and "personal writing". Free writing occurred about once a week; during this time children were allowed to write whatever they wished, that is, they could use the teacher's idea presented on that day or they could work on any uncompleted story. Tim thoroughly enjoyed this "free writing".

Personal writing was no longer done in Tim's classroom. Personal writing had occurred at the beginning of the school year, at which time Mrs. Piquard asked the children to list all the things that happened in their lives and, then, they were asked to select some of these as topics to write about. "That's what I hate", Tim said, referring to this personal writing. He

later explained that one of the reasons he didn't like personal writing was because "it just takes up most of your time. You don't get much done because you're trying so hard to think of what you can write."

Another reason for not liking personal writing was that Tim viewed this kind of writing as uninteresting to his audience. He explained that a story such as "The Voice" (Appendix E) was good for many years, whereas a piece of writing about his BMX bicycle (Appendix E) would not, he thought, withstand the test of time: it did not seem to fit into his concept of good literature. Personal writing was unlike the books he had read. Consequently, what Tim really wanted to do was to write "stories" using his "own ideas".

As well as not caring for personal writing, Tim stated that writing was not fun when writing in math; nor did he enjoy report writing as explained in the following conversation.

I: What it says right here is, "I don't like writing reports". (referring to what Tim said in a previous interview.)

Tim: Science projects, like if we were doing experiments, and to see what keeps, um, heat in. Then after the report we had to take it in and we had to revise it. I don't like doing that, paragraph, another and another, and we had to do on the

back.

I: And yet, if you write a long story, you don't seem to mind that?

Tim: I like stories but not reports.

I: I wonder why you like stories and not reports?

Tim: Well, if I turn this (his story) into a book, I'll be able to write more and I'll get money, money, money by the pound.

I: Yeah, but some people write scientific reports and make money, and make books out of those.

Tim: I know. I don't like making science reports. Maybe when I'm ten or eleven, maybe.

Journal writing was another kind of writing done by Tim's language arts class. Journal writing occurred once a week and this kind of writing was not always enjoyable for Tim. He explained that, in his journal, he wrote about things that happened in his life. This writing task became tedious for him when he had spent what he considered to be a boring week. "I have to think, and think, and think," he said, "until I get all confused."

Fred

"Writing's kinda boring." In spite of comments

such as this, Fred did enjoy certain kinds of writing; for instance, he said that he enjoyed creative writing. Fred defined creative writing as "your own" or "the part you make up". This, to Fred was interesting. "I like that!" he said, referring to story writing. "You can write whatever you want."

When Fred wrote stories, he particularly liked writing Halloween stories and humorous stories. The preference for comedy writing appeared in many conversations and, invariably, Fred selected the humor in his stories as being a positive aspect of his writing ability. One of the times humor was introduced into the conversation occurred when I asked Fred why one of his stories was longer than most of his other stories. He replied, "Because I had fun with it, because I got to put humor into it."

Even though Fred stated that he enjoyed creative writing because it was his "own", and because he could make up whatever he wished, he was nevertheless willing to accept a certain amount of input from Mr. Cassidy. Fred explained that he quite liked the way Mr. Cassidy gave the class a "little background" when they wrote stories; for instance, before asking his students to write a story called, "The Trouble With Trouble", Mr. Cassidy read them a story about two boys who got into trouble. As well as reading this story, he also gave them further examples of other kinds of trouble they

could write about.

I asked Fred if he would prefer Mr. Cassidy to omit this background assistance and give them the choice of writing on anything. "No, he said, "because all the stories would be different and it would be hard to judge them, to give people marks." Here, Fred seemed to have viewed writing as an object to be marked. This concern with marks was evident on other occasions, such as when he indicated that he did not like fellow students to correct his work because "they got to know your marks". It was also evident when he commented on his belief that Mr. Cassidy probably marked their stories as they read them to the class. Fred did not seem to think that Mr. Cassidy was simply listening to the stories for their entertainment or poetic value. He felt that Mr. Cassidy's purpose for listening was to assign a mark to the stories. He viewed Mr. Cassidy as "teacher as examiner". (Britton, 1970)

In addition to creative writing, Fred said that he liked journal writing. In one of the first interviews, he said he thought that journals were "kinda a good idea", even though he was sometimes "desperate" for ideas to write about. A week later, he said writing was fun when he wrote in his journal because "you can write whatever you want". However, two weeks later, he qualified this enjoyment of journal writing by saying, "I always say it's better than doing work, but it's not

the greatest." By work Fred meant social studies, science and language arts. Many times Fred expressed his dislike for writing in these areas. "I don't like social or science," he said, "because you always have to copy notes, and it's boring, copying." And in language arts, he stated that he did not like the "sheets and listening tests. Indeed, Mr. Cassidy and Fred, himself, explained that, often, he did a poor job on these sheets; or, at times, he did not complete the work.

As well as liking journal writing because he could "write whatever" he wanted, Fred also enjoyed journal writing because Mr. Cassidy sometimes made comments in his journal. As an example of this, Fred told me how he had written a journal entry stating that he might not be able to play volleyball after school. Mr. Cassidy responded to the journal entry by writing that it was too bad that Fred might not be able to play volleyball because he was good at it.

Fred's favorite entry involved an incident in which he was babysitting his brother. Fred tricked his brother into going to bed by faking a phone call from his mother. When asked why this was his favorite entry, Fred said, "I like putting things over on my brother and writing about it. And I like money." This was one of the few entries that appealed to Fred. There were numerous times where Fred felt he had nothing of interest to write about. Some of his entries he

considered "boring". Even writing about a fire that had occurred in the school, did not seem to appeal to him. Normally Mr. Cassidy did not assign topics for his students' journal writing but this particular time he had asked them to write about the fire which had recently occurred in the school. When I asked Fred how he felt about this assigned journal topic, he said,

> It's O.K. Better than arcades, that I usually write about. But I didn't really care about it that much because it was no big deal. It was just a little fire, so I didn't write much.

While writing about this school fire in his journal, Fred crossed out part of his writing which told about his missing shoe because he found this to be rather a "silly" thing to be writing. "If there's a fire", he said, "people aren't interested in your shoe."

In the end, story writing seemed to be, by far, Fred's favorite kind of writing, with journal writing ranking second after story writing. Fred, nevertheless, stipulated that he liked writing stories at school, but not at home.

Laura

Laura's favorite kind of writing was research projects or reports. Interestingly enough, however, she did not seem to consider this as writing. She seemed to view research projects or reports as acquiring facts on

subjects that interested her; or, in her own words, "finding out something". Many topics interested Laura: eclipses, koala bears, dinosaurs, gardening, skiing, etc..

Research projects were rated as "top plus" on Laura's rating scale, whereas stories and journal writing were both placed on the middle of her scale. She also enjoyed writing plays and patterned poems.

Whether Laura was writing research projects or stories, she required a great deal of choice, and she constantly referred to this need. For instance, with regard to reports, it was not enough for her to get a limited choice, especially if the topic was of little interest to her, as indicated in the following discussion,

I: So reports are okay if you have your own choice. Well, wasn't that Indian report

Laura: Chief Maskepetoon?

I: Yes, that was your own choice wasn't it?

Laura: She (teacher) put things on the board. All about Indians! (disgruntled voice) And, then, we had to do a report on one of those Indians.

Another example of this need for a great deal of choice occurred when I asked her why she did not choose to write on things in the writing center provided by Mrs. Cadman. "It's all on potatoes!" she replied in a

frustrated voice. Laura explained that all of the writing activities in the writing center were somehow related to potatoes and she was not the least interested in potatoes. Yet a few weeks later, Laura was doing one of these writing activities. She explained she had overlooked this particular one until she noticed other students in the class doing it. This activity involved conducting a survey in order to find out how many people enjoyed sweet potatoes and how many enjoyed regular potatoes. This survey was rated as "top plus" by Laura. Although she clearly enjoyed this activity, she, nevertheless, concluded that a much better way for her to conduct a survey or a research project, would be to utilize books as a source of information rather than people because people, sometimes, possessed incorrect or a limited amount of information.

The situation was much the same when it came to story writing: Laura needed a lot of choice. "I love writing stories on my own", Laura said. Laura's mother also cited story writing as one of Laura's favorite kinds of writing, and one that she often did on her own. Further to this, Laura explained that she and other children in the class did not like to write stories on assigned objects because they already had stories in their minds; and when they wrote on topics of their choice, they knew what they were writing, therefore, writing became more enjoyable. She also cited this as

one of the reasons why she disliked writing her autobiography (Appendix J), "I didn't know exactly what I was going to write because it wasn't exactly in my head." In other words, Laura did not seem to have a purpose of her own for this piece of writing, nor did she seem to know what was expected. Consequently, when asked if there was a part of her autobiography that she found interesting, she replied, "No." However, she said that if she had to choose a best part she would choose the last sentence which stated who her best friend was. Laura concluded that writing her autobiography was "boring". Even though she considered it boring to write about her life, Laura said this of her life, "My life isn't boring, I love my life!"

Journal writing was not particularly interesting to Laura. She had never written one before Mrs. Tremblay, the substitute teacher, introduced it to the classroom. When I asked Laura how she felt about journal writing, she responded with one word, "Duhh!" -- a word currently used by certain children to express dissatisfaction. Laura classed journal writing with assigned story writing, and she did not miss writing in it when it gradually ended after spring vacation.

Writing in social studies was "boring" to Laura. She explained that writing in social studies meant answering questions after the teacher had read them a passage. As well as disliking writing in social

studies, Laura also disliked writing word definitions, and workbook pages.

Synthesis

Generally speaking, all three participants had difficulty perceiving that their lives offered possibilities for writing. This was evident in Tim's dislike for personal writing and his lack of ideas for journal writing. He thought that topics dealing with his bicycle or his weekends did not qualify as topics which would interest present and future generations of readers.

Fred, like Tim, also seemed to think that the events in his life were generally not very interesting topics to write about. This was evident when he explained that he was often "desperate for ideas" to write about in his journal. Fred seemed to think that writing should be exciting to read.

Laura also seemed to dislike personal writing. She considered her autobiography "a boring thing to write", and she explained that many students in the classroom felt the way she did about writing it.

Tim, Fred and Laura seemed to moderately like journal writing; perhaps this is best epitomized by Fred who said, "It's not the greatest."

All three informants liked story writing, with Fred and Tim verbalizing that they liked the teacher to have

an input in the story writing either by providing ideas as in Tim's case, or by providing background to stories as in Fred's case. Laura, on the other hand seemed to prefer no input by the teacher.

While stating a preference for story writing, Fred and Laura both mentioned disliking writing in social studies. Fred disliked it because it involved copying notes and Laura disliked it because it involved answering questions on passages read by the teacher. As well, both Laura and Fred stated that they disliked the sheets or workbook pages in language arts.

Tim disliked writing science reports. However Laura pointed out that she quite enjoyed reports, or research projects when she had a choice of topics.

Choice seemed to be a predominant factor which controlled all three participants' writing enjoyment. Tim referred to this when he said that he wanted to write his own stories with his own ideas, and Fred said that he enjoyed creative writing because he was able to "make up things". Finally, Laura said, "I love writing stories when we get a choice of what we want to write."

4. What is their perception of audience?

Tim

It was interesting to note that Tim's intended audience seemed to depend on how he felt about his stories; or it depended on whom he thought the stories

would appeal to. The following discussion indicated who Tim had in mind as audience for his story, "The Voice" (Appendix E), which was one of his favorite stories.

I: Um, and who will this book be for?

Tim: Everyone! I guess. Every kid.

I: Every kid.

Tim: Yeah.

I: Have anybody in mind? There's kids here. There's kids on your street. There's kids

Tim: I'm going to try to find somebody who can translate it into all kinds of languages.

I: So you intend to have this read by mainly kids, do you think?

Tim: Maybe parents, to see what it's like. I might even get this in video, ha, ha!

A week later Tim reiterated the above comments,

I: How about your "Voice" story

Tim: I love it! (emphatic voice)

I: Who did you feel you were writing that one for?

Tim spelled his reply, "E - V - E - R - Y - O - N - E"

Previously Tim had talked about the intended audience of his "I Can Fly" story, a topic he did not care for.

I: As you wrote this story about flying, whom did you feel you were writing it

for?

Tim: Just the teacher. (baby, pouting voice) I wish I could use my own ideas. The teacher has a hundred ideas....

Four days later, I asked Tim for whom he felt he had written his "Star Wars" story. This was a story in which he had included himself as a character in a book he had read.

I: As you were writing this. Whom did you feel you were writing it for?

Tim: M-I-S E -L - F

I: That's interesting because, um I think you said for your flying story it was for the teacher, you weren't too keen on that.

Tim: Yeah.

I: And your voice story was for, remember?

Tim: E- V- E

I: Why is this one for yourself and not for everyone?

Tim: Because I like "Star Wars" stories.

I: Oh, because you (emphatic voice) like Star Wars stories, and you think maybe not everybody else does?

Tim: Yeah. They might say, "Oh boy, who wants to buy this stuff?"

I: Oh.

Tim: Because I asked people, did they like the Star Wars movie and they said, "No, no." and....like a hundred, but I asked fifty nine.

I: Did you really ask people?

Tim: Yes, I did! (emphatic voice)

I: Hum. When did your do that? Just as you meet people or

Tim: Yeah, when we get to (inaudible) Safeway. They say, "What do you like?' And I say, "What do you like? Do you like the Star Wars movies?" And they say, "Nooo!" (emphatic voice). Because I bump into people lots of times.

Discussions of this nature seemed to indicate that Tim was quite aware of possible audiences for his writing. This audience awareness was again evident in a discussion we had about him looking up the orthography of certain words for his "Empire Strikes Back" story.

I: How about your story here, I just wanted to ask you why you were looking up a lot of words for this? Um, you don't just like to write the words down? You want to write them down well, or right?

Tim: I want to get them all right, so when I , so when I go to do it, I never, um, like if. How could I explain? Like if I

never had the right words, and I never revise it, and um, if I thought it was the right word, and I put it down and, and it was put out in books, they would copy the word.

I: They wouldn't correct it, you mean?

Tim: And no one would say, "Wow, what a writer! Doesn't even get it right."

Effects that Tim's keen sense of audience had on his writing are discussed later in this chapter in relation to research question number five, "What stragegies do these writers use in the writing process?"

It must be noted here that although Tim did not mention me as a possible audience for his writing, it appeared as though I had indeed become an audience for his writing and had unwittingly influenced his writing. This became apparent around the end of the study when I asked Mrs. Piquard, Tim's language arts teacher, and Mrs. Loomis, Tim's science teacher, if they had noticed any change in Tim's writing behavior since my arrival. Both teachers thought that Tim wrote more when I was around. Mrs. Loomis specifically mentioned the writing I had observed Tim do during the science period. She explained that normally Tim would not have answered many of the questions on his science sheet. However, that day he had completed the entire sheet.

Fred

Perhaps Fred's perception of audience was best summed up by Fred's mother who said, "I think it's just a matter of when he's writing, he's not bothering. He's just writing as fast as he can and getting it down and getting it done." This remark seemed to indicate that Fred's writing performance was rarely affected by any sense of audience . Indeed, perusal of Fred's journal entries (see Appendix H) showed no concern for audience with regard to his spelling and penmanship. There were occasions, however, whereby Fred's behavior seemed to be affected by audience. One of these occasions occurred when Fred showed his reluctance to read his limerick to his classmate because he considered his friend's limerick to be a little better. Also, at the end of this study, Mr. Cassidy implied that Fred considered me, the researcher, as one of his audiences and that he had noticed a difference in Fred's story writing since my arrival. Mr. Cassidy said that Fred took more pride and more care with his stories. However, Fred's mother did not corroborate this finding. She felt that there had been no improvement in Fred's writing, There had been a difference though, she felt, in his reading. He was taking time to read certain books he had received for Christmas.

Questions regarding audience perception were often followed by a long pause, after which Fred sometimes

replied with a response that denoted uncertainty. For instance, after asking Fred for whom he thought he was writing his story "The Mud Pit" (Appendix I), he said, "Me or the class, I don't know. Me probably."

On another occasion, I asked Fred to try to explain why he had written a particular journal entry. He replied, "It might have been to take up space, to see what he (Mr. Cassidy) would put." In this instance, it appeared as though Mr. Cassidy was viewed as an audience with whom he could enter into dialogue: this seemed to happen rarely. Usually Fred seemed to view Mr. Cassidy as "teacher as examiner" (Britton, 1970), an examiner who marked Fred's stories by noting good words that Fred used in his stories as he read them to the class.

There were additional times when Fred cited a contest, and Spyhunter (an arcade machine) as audiences for his writing. The contest was a school sponsored contest in which the students were to write limericks. Spyhunter was an imaginary audience to which Fred addressed his journal entries. Fred began addressing his journal entries to Spyhunter, an arcade game, because, as Fred explained, he had always begun his journal entries simply by writing down the date and this was getting quite boring. Fred said he decided to use Spyhunter because he was good at this game: he was in the top ten scorers.

Although Fred generally seemed to have some

difficulty verbalizing his perception of audience, it was observed that he did indeed seem to have certain expectations of good writing. He had a preconceived notion of what an audience was looking for in writing. This became particularly apparent when we were discussing his journal entry about a recent school fire. In this entry, he mentioned his problem of having had a missing shoe as the school evacuation began. In the end, Fred crossed out this missing shoe problem because he thought it was an insignificant event which would not be of interest to an audience. When I stated that I thought it was an interesting happening, he disagreed adding that even the fire was rather uninteresting because it was "just a small fire". From this, I deduced that Fred expected his writing to be as exciting as the books he had read -- books such as Alien War War Games by Martyn Godfrey.

Laura

Laura never hesitated, when asked, to tell who her intended audiences were for her stories. Of her school assigned reports and stories, she said that she'd "do them alright", implying that she was doing them for the teacher because she was asked to do so. Laura's home writing, however, was done "for the sake of it", and her dad checked it out for her sometimes. When asked for whom she had written her eight page play on the

Olympics, Laura immediately answered, "Nobody! I wanted it to be in that contest, the Olympic thing."

It was interesting that Laura never named herself as a possible audience for her writing. There was no hint of herself as possible audience when I asked her why she had thrown out her eight page Olympic play. After explaining that the teacher would not accept her play because she had written certain pages in pen and some in ink, some in cursive writing and some in block letters, she said, "There was no use keeping it if no one would look at it anymore, and cause I didn't know you were coming."

Laura seemed very eager to have me as her audience: I had left a folder and a notebook at her home in case she wanted to do some writing, and as soon as she found this out she said, "I'll start writing more stories. I'm sorry." Not only did Laura freely volunteer to write stories for me, she insisted that she wanted to make a good copy of her story and to give it to me in the form of a booklet. She seemed willing to work hard for me.

A week after stating that I was the intended audience for her "Snowflake" story (see Appendix F) which she had written in the notebook I had left at her home, I asked her if she had anyone else in mind as a possible audience. "No," she quickly replied, "maybe Mary" (her best friend in the class). Again, there was

no hint of herself as audience.

At one point, I asked Laura to compare how she had felt about the writing she had done for me in the notebook I had for her at her home, with how she felt about writing the journal for Mrs. Tremblay. Laura concluded that she preferred writing in the notebook I had left her because she could write whatever she wanted: stories, poems, etc.. Another reason why she didn't like writing the journal was because Mrs. Tremblay asked the students to complete the journal entry by the end of the school day.

Synthesis

Amongst the three children, Tim appeared to have the strongest sense of audience awareness. On many occasions he volunteered information which indicated that he often had his audience in mind while writing a story. He seemed to be aware that his audience would judge his stories based on topics, as well as use of writing conventions. At times, he professed to know what kind of stories prospective readers preferred, as was the case with his story, "Empire Strikes Back", a story for which he said he had conducted an informal survey of people, in order to ascertain the popularity of this type of story.

Unlike Tim who, sometimes gave elaborate reasons for specifying audiences for his stories, Fred and Laura

simply named their intended audiences, and Fred did so with some uncertainty. Although Fred expressed his sense of audience with some difficulty, it was deduced that he did indeed have a notion of what an audience looked for in a good piece of writing. It was interesting to note that teachers were usually not named as intended audience for the writing the three informants enjoyed doing. As audiences for this writing the children usually named themselves, a contest, the class, "every kid," or me, the researcher.

It was also noted that I had unwittingly had an effect on the children's writing behavior either by affecting the length of their writing as mentioned by Tim's science teacher, or in the added pride and care of story writing as mentioned by Fred's teacher, or the willingness to write more stories as mentioned by Laura herself.

5. What strategies do these writers use in the writing process?

Tim

Tim was observed as he wrote in twelve creative writing episodes, three workbook writing episodes, two math writing episodes, and one science writing episode. Whether Tim was working on an unfinished story or working on a new story with the story starter provided by the teacher, he usually began the creative writing

session by reading; that is, he read the story starter or he reread whatever he had already written, rereading his piece from beginning to end. On a few occasions, however, he reread only the last few lines before writing. Twice, Tim began the writing period by talking to himself about a mime or a discussion he had just participated in with his classmates.

Tim's prewriting activities, therefore, usually consisted of reading, and talking to himself (or to anyone around him who would listen to his ideas). There was no evidence of Tim silently reflecting about his stories before writing. He wrote as soon as he had finished reading or talking, and he usually began a new piece by immediately writing down the title of his story. Tim did not write continuously for very long; that is, he usually wrote three or four lines, after which he either got up to ask the teacher for help with spelling, or he read his story to himself or the teacher. On a few occasions, he wrote as little as four words and then reread his story. Each writing session contained a great deal of reading for Tim: he usually reread his stories from beginning to end.

Most writing sessions included the teacher as audience. As soon as Tim completed his piece he declared that he was finished and took it to Mrs. Piquard to read. At this time, Mrs. Piquard often asked Tim questions about his piece, thus eliciting more

detail which she then asked Tim to add to his stories. Tim always accompanied his writing with overt pronunciation of the words he was attempting to write, and at times he named each letter of the words. A few times, as the teacher stopped the creative writing sessions, Tim continued to write a few more lines. This behavior was not evidenced during workbook writing, nor during math writing.

A particularly interesting writing session was observed one day when a substitute teacher was present. She told the children that Mrs. Piquard had left them instructions to collect information on dinosaurs. Unlike when Mrs. Piquard was present, the children were allowed to interact with each other during the writing session. In this interactive atomosphere, Tim seemed to become a teacher and an organizer. Students asked him for help with their spelling and he most willingly provided this help. Tim organized himself and his friend by telling his friend to write about plant eating dinosaurs while he would write about the meat eaters. After this he located the plant eating dinosaurs in a book for his friend.

Although Tim followed somewhat the same pattern for workbook writing as creative writing, there were a few differences evidenced. Just as he read frequently during creative writing, he did so during workbook writing as well. He flipped back to previous pages and

read them, once spending three minutes at this type of reading before beginning to write. In creative writing this pre-reading lasted only seconds. Whereas creative writing was interrupted for spelling and reading only, workbook writing was interrupted for spelling and reading, and also for other diversions such as rubbing his eyes, dropping pencils, asking and calculating how many minutes there were before lunch.

"Math", said Tim, "is my worst subject. I hate it." Tim filled most of his twenty minutes of math writing time with many diversions: reading other pages in the textbook, dropping his pencils, scribbling in his scribbler, flipping through his scribbler, tearing his scribbler with his teeth, playing with his shoe, snapping his fingers and falling out of his desk.

Tim was observed writing in science only once. This writing consisted of a sheet of questions dealing with a unit on "matter" which the class had just completed. Tim was then supposed to use this sheet in order to study for a test. During this science writing period, Tim, as he did in all previous writing periods I had observed, overtly pronounced words and letters as he wrote them. As well, I heard him whispering a question to himself, "What is matter?" The diversions evidenced during math were not evident during this science writing session. After this science writing session I asked Mrs. Loomis, Tim's science teacher, whether she thought

Tim's writing behavior that morning was typical of Tim's other science writing sessions. Mrs. Loomis replied that it was not. She explained that normally he would have written very little, whereas that day he had completed the sheet. Mrs. Loomis felt that Tim had written more because I was there to observe him.

For Tim revising meant circling mistakes in punctuation and spelling. Adding more detail to stories, Tim said, was called "adding". He went on to say that adding was "sort of like revising". Tim revised every piece of writing because this was the procedure set up by Mrs. Piquard. Tim explained that the students "just revised what was wrong" with their stories, and that they did so in order "to fix up" their stories.

When I asked Tim why they fixed up their stories, he replied, "The teacher wants us to." Tim went on to explain in a mocking voice that he revised "to make her satisfied". He actually saw no need to draw circles around mistakes; he felt he could, "revise it just in my head and write it down .... I can do circles in my head."

Revising, for Tim, also meant writing two copies, one rough copy and one good copy. It was interesting to note that, in Tim's mind, only two copies could be written. One day, after failing to find one of his stories that he wanted to continue, he decided that

rather than rewrite it from memory as suggested by the teacher, he would work on another story because, he said, he feared that the teacher would accuse him of writing a good copy when he hadn't finished his rough copy. Of all this revising Tim stated, "That's the only part of writing that I hate."

Even though Tim stated that he disliked this form of revising, whereby he circled mistakes, added, and recopied, there was another form of revising that Tim did which he did not call revising. These were instances when he was revising, not for the teacher as in the previous discussion on revision, but for himself, or his perceived audience. Sometimes he made changes in his stories, in order to clarify ideas or to make them more feasible. For instance, in one of his stories he mentioned that he changed a part which described himself as a shrunken person going through a window. He changed this part to a description of himself going under the door instead of through the window because "if the window wasn't open I'd get my face all cut up." Moreover, going under the door, he explained, was a more direct route from under the Christmas tree where he began his escape. And people, he continued, wouldn't be able to put their hand under the door to catch him.

On another occasion, Tim mentioned that he had made a change to "I Can Fly" (see Appendix H) because of his perceived audience. He changed "at a pond" to "at a

wishing pond" because "it looked a little boring". He said that he thought if he had written "at a pond" instead of "at a wishing pond" that people reading his story would say, "Oh, I can tell, it's going to be a boring story."

There were many other such occasions where Tim made changes to his writing -- changes that the teacher had not initiated or dictated, but changes that he decided to make on his own because of clarity, or because of his tremendous awareness of audience. Tim had a strong sense of what makes a good story.

Fred

While Fred wrote in his journal I hand recorded any of his writing strategies which I observed. Fred and his classmates wrote in their journals for five or ten minutes each morning. Fred always began his journal writing quickly and without hesitation, giving the impression that he always knew exactly what he wanted to write. This was, indeed, not the case since he later explained that he sometimes got stuck, especially when he had a boring day. When he got stuck he explained that he just wrote about next week's planned gym class. On three different occasions, I asked Fred if he ever kept things in his mind as ideas for future journal writing and he replied that he did not.

While Fred was writing his journal nothing seemed

to distract him, he paid no attention to other students or to Mr. Cassidy who sometimes talked around him. Fred, however, did not write in his journal for very long -- usually for five minutes. Often, as invited by Mr. Cassidy, other students continued to write in their journals as they listened to Mr. Cassidy read a novel but Fred usually put his journal away and listened to the reading. Indeed Fred's journal entries were quite short (see Appendix H), the longest being eight lines. These entries usually described past or future events such as his brother's birthday or the Christmas vacation. Journal writing, for Fred, was somewhat enjoyable. He referred to it as "fun and better than doing work or copying notes."

Story writing was Fred's favorite kind of writing, and generally Fred's writing behavior during story writing can be described as "committed" and "on - task". Only two stories were written during the time of this study, and it was possible to observe only one writing period in which one of these stories was begun. This writing period began with Mr. Cassidy instructing the students to write down their five W's.

Mr. Cassidy then told them that they could have three minutes in which to discuss their ideas with other people. Fred looked around for a few seconds, then he talked to a nearby classmate. Five minutes later, Fred was writing quite steadily, ignoring various

distractions in the classroom such as scrunched up paper being flung into the waste paper basket and "You missed!" comments.

As soon as Fred completed his five W's, he got up to show them to Mr. Cassidy, at which time Mr. Cassidy reminded him to make sure that his plot development was gradual, and to think of his main problem. Fred started to write "The Mud Pit" (Appendix I) immediately after returning to his desk, and by the end fo the twenty-five minute writing session he had written fifteeen lines. During this time Fred's writing was interrupted three times by his nearest classmate. These interruptions, however, were all related to the task at hand: once the classmate read him what he had written, another time this same classmate asked Fred a question concerning his writing, and lastly they discussed one of the story characters.

Discussions with Fred concerning his prewriting strategies revealed that he had made a decision to write "The Mud Pit" based on the following rational:

> At first, I was going to write about me skiing and make something up but I decided not to because I remembered this. This was funnier and it really happened. With skiing, I'd have to make most of it up, and um, this is not totally made up. Like I did get in trouble. I did get stuck. I just changed it a little.

Fred said that he thought about the first few words of his story but that was about all. He did not think about how to organize what he was going to write. "It usually comes out when I'm writing," he explained. "I got the first part of it in my head but not the middle or the ending."

When his story, "The Mud Pit" (Appendix I) was finished, Fred gave the impression that he was satisfied with it, not wanting to do any more work on it. To the question, "What was difficult about starting this piece?" Fred replied, "Remembering it."

In order to improve his writing, Fred felt he could, "describe things" and "not use the same word over and over again". These two things, he later said, had been mentioned to the class by Mr. Cassidy. When I asked Fred if there was anything else he could do to improve his writing, he replied, "Not really."

During the time of this study, Fred had also written a limerick for a school contest. Fred said that he enjoyed limerick writing. I noticed that the reasons Fred gave for liking limerick writing were similar to the reasons he had given for liking story writing. As in his stories, he thought it was fun inserting humor in the limerick, and it was fun "making up things and dumb names".

Fred's strategies for writing limericks were somewhat similar to his story writing strategies. As in

story writing, little of the limerick was in his head before starting to write, nor did he want to revise the limerick when it was finished. Further strategies for writing the limerick were mentioned by Fred when he explained that it was difficult for him to get the right number of syllables. He said it was also difficult for him to find a variety of rhyming words.

Two novel study sessions were observed during the course of this research project. In the first session, Fred completed the questions sheets quickly, and then he pulled out a book to read. Students had the option to work ahead on these sheets or to read a book of their own choice. Fred chose to read instead of working ahead.. During another novel study session, Fred's class had to write fifteen word definitions and use them in sentences. Fred not only had these definitions to do, but as well he had to correct the previous day's answers to the novel study as some of his answers were incomplete or poorly done. Fred wrote two sentences during this entire twenty minute writing period. He occupied himself with many off-task distractions such as playing with his pencil, talking to two classmates about the impending gym activity, playing with mathematical instruments, and scribbling on his page.

Fred did not, in general, seem to revise any of his writing to any great extent. He considered his pieces finished and did not think about re-working them. Such

was the case when, in order to improve his chances in the limerick contest, he chose to write two more limericks rather than re-work his original. Fred himself stated that he didn't make many changes in his writing. One of the few times, he might make changes, he explained, would be if he were writing about a true account such as "The Mud Pit" (Appendix I) he would then change the names of the people. Fred explained that because he rarely wrote about real life situations, he made few changes to his writing.

On close examination, however, I did notice a few instances where Fred had revised his writing. When writing his limerick, he changed "that" in the second line to "who" because he said it sounded a little better. Further on in the fourth line, he changed "it's Monday" to "that's the rule" because he had already used Monday and "it sort of rhymes." Indeed "school" did rhyme with "rule".

There once was a girl named Rondaes
Who had a mother that hated Mondays
She said get to schc
You know ~~it's Monday~~ *that's the rule*
Then Rondaes said
But mother it's only Sunday.

On another occasion, I noticed that Fred had crossed out a section in his journal (Appendix H) where he had written about himself having only one shoe during

a school fire. He had crossed this out, he said, because it was silly, because people were not concerned about their foot during a fire. Even after telling Fred that I found this "shoe" topic very interesting and humorous, he did not agree with me at all. He was convinced that there was nothing interesting about this topic. It was generally unusual for Fred to cross anything out in his journal; he seemed to write it with little care, paying little attention to spelling or penmanship.

Laura

The only kind of writing Laura did while I observed her in her classroom was workbook and worksheet writing. I also observed her writing a unit test. Laura approached all of this writing quite deliberately, allowing herself short distractions such as asking the teacher a question or sharpening her pencil. This was one of the kinds of writing that Laura sometimes did not complete or else completed unsatisfactorily, especially if it was assigned for homework. Laura explained that she sometimes just "plain forgot" about it, or that she considered this type of writing "plain boring".

At Laura's home we were discussing how sometimes different people have different writing strategies, and Laura volunteered the following information about how she usually went about writing: "I just write it down

because I have it all in my head. I think of it all in my head. I write it all down. Go through it and cross out my mistakes."

Sometimes though this strategy did not seem to work well for Laura. She produced pieces that, of her own admission, were not very good, didn't make sense, or were too short. She tried to explain this by saying that she could do better, but that sometimes she was in a hurry or sometimes she was "too lazy to do good work."

Another factor that seemed to be a part of Laura's writing strategy was her strong will or her need for choice. This seemed to come out when she and I were discussing her autobiography (Appendix J) with her mother. Laura stated that she really didn't like the idea of writing her autobiography. She explained that she had written a short autobiography because she didn't want to make it long, putting such things in it as, "I'm smart." She explained that writing about her intelligence would be embarrassing. It would be bragging. "I didn't want to write more than a page," she stated. Laura thought that writing a long autobiography would also be bragging. Regardless of what was required by the teacher, Laura did not like this assignment and consequently she did not put a great deal of effort into it.

Laura maintained that writing was easier for her when she had a choice of what to write because she had

many stories in her head already. "I have it exactly in my head, and I just write it down." This, perhaps, explained why Laura's writing such as the following story (see Figure 4), fell short of her ability. In this case, she did not have a choice of topic. Laura said she didn't like any of this story; she said that some of it didn't make sense, and that it was "so short." However, she said that she was certain that she could now write a better story because she had since learned about eclipses: she now had the information in her head.

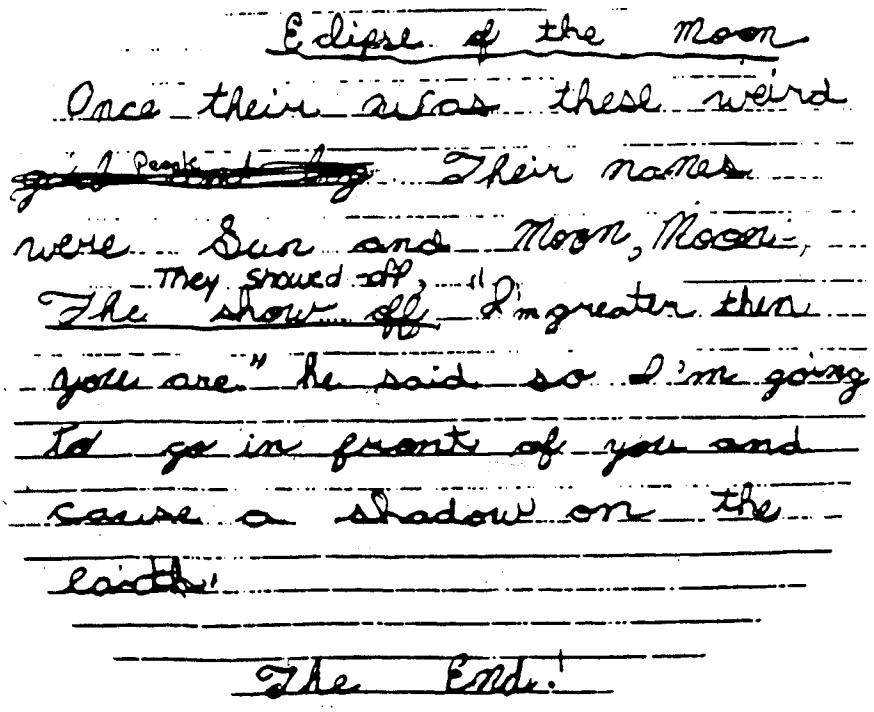


Figure 4: Laura writes a story

Synthesis

Tim's prewriting activities, when writing stories, included reading his previous writing; and the odd time, talking to himself about his ideas. With Tim, as well as with the two other children, there was no evidence of any reflective pre-organizing. Nor did any of them formally organize their ideas with paper and pencil.

Tim's continuous writing was very short in all kinds of writing situations, but most particularly in writing that he disliked such as math, where the time was filled with numerous off-task distractions. In creative writing which he liked, Tim began writing almost immediately and he interrupted his writing for such on-task activities as asking his teacher for help with spelling or reading his piece to his teacher; whereas in math writing, which he disliked, Tim postponed beginning to write, distracted himself with many off-task activities, and consequently wrote almost nothing.

Fred's behavior was very similar to Tim's in that he seemed to postpone beginning writing that he disliked, namely language arts worksheets. If he did not postpone this writing with numerous diversions, he did it quickly, putting it away and taking out a book.

At times, Laura also postponed this type of writing when it was assigned as homework. As well, Laura's creative writing was sometimes not done well because, as

she explained, she was in a hurry or lazy, and at times she did not want to write things that were "not exactly" in her head.

Tim said he hated revising, a term he used to denote writing two copies: one rough copy and one good copy. Revising also meant circling spelling and punctuation mistakes. This form of revising was requested by Mrs. Piquard. There was evidence that Tim did some revising on his own either to clarify and improve his story for himself or for his perceived audience.

Fred and Laura seemed to do little revising, Laura because, in her own words, she was sometimes in a hurry or too lazy, and Fred because he seemed content to have it finished. Fred did make decisions before he started to write, as in his story, "The Mud Pit" (Appendix I), and he did make a few changes as he wrote his limerick; but in both cases he seemed to want to set his pieces aside, considering them finished.

6. What is writing to these children?

Tim

"I don't know what writing is."

That is what Tim said to his teacher when he first started to revise his writing at the beginning of the school year, in September. Tim told me that he had angered Mrs. Piquard, at the time, because, instead of

simply circling his mistakes, he had circled all the capitals in his writing, thus resulting in the statement, "I don't know what writing is." to expiate himself of his mistake.

Some six months later, after this incident, Tim could probably have given Mrs. Piquard a good account of what writing was, for he had certainly been able to give me a fairly profound description of the purpose of writing. "Writing is used," Tim said, "so that people can express themselves." Tim said that he used writing to express what he liked doing -- writing ghost stories.

Not only was Tim able to give an accurate definition of the purpose of writing, he was also able to give valid ideas as to how writing would be incorporated into an author's life. Tim talked about how an author would write a lot during the day; how if an author had to wait for a bus, he would probably use that time to work on an unfinished piece, and how an author would send his story to publishers when the story was finished.

"Writing is for fun," Tim told me, and that is what "writing" was for Tim. He was constantly telling me how much he "loved" writing, and how he thought it would be fun to be an author. Writing was particularly fun for Tim when he was able to create and to write a story of his own choice. He seemed to really value story writing because he valued good literature, which he said was

able to withstand the test of time. This concept of good literature was brought out in the following discussion in which Tim was comparing story writing to personal writing. He was comparing his story, "The Voice" to his personal piece, "My Bike" (see Appendix E).

> Like this "Voice" story, it's good for many years, but not this (referring to his personal piece called, "My Bike"). They'll say, Can I see your bike? Can I see your bike? And some parents will say, Aren't you too old to be on a BMX bike?

On occasions such a this it was apparent that Tim seemed to view good writing as the use of the imagination -- where he was in control of the material being written.

Tim also said that "writing is for learning", and he gave an example of paleontologists who "write books about, um dinosaurs, what they studied."

There was a time when writing was not enjoyable for Tim, and that time was during math periods. Writing was not fun during math time "because you have to do all these equations and stuff ... you know it wouldn't be fun because you can't make up your own story." Again reflecting Tim's emphasis on the value of the imagination in writing.

Writing for Tim, seemed to be an activity largely relegated to the confines of the school. He said

writing was fun "when you're supposed to" and that he didn't like to write at home because, if he did write at home, he would be writing alone and he liked the company of his classmates when writing: they gave him ideas. Moreover, if he were to write at home, he explained, it would probably be at night, in his bedroom which was in the basement and this, he thought, was too scary a place to write.

In the end, he said that he was usually too busy to write at home.

Fred

Fred seemed to think that there were two kinds of writing: one kind being the kind that he made up, such as story writing and journal writing; the other kind being the kind that he didn't make up such as copied science and social studies notes. Story writing was fun for himself and for most kids, Fred said. Whereas "when it's notes most all of us hate it." At the root of these statements seemed to be Fred's desire to control his writing or to be the "author" of his writing, the upper level of Moffett's (1979) five levels of writing. At this higher level the writer is using his own thoughts; he is controlling and revising his ideas.

Writing for Fred, was something that helped him anchor his ideas. He explained that writing a story was better for him than telling a story because his memory

might fail him if he told a story. However, he felt that telling a story would be more interesting to an audience. At times, Fred was not too certain about the purpose of writing. Of journal writing, he said, "I think it helps us to write, I don't really know. I really don't know why we are writing it."

Fred seemed to have an interesting notion of what good writing was. A good piece of writing, for Fred, was one which had length and humor, with length being more important. Indeed, he had mentioned this length factor when he stipulated that he was "getting better at" his journal writing because he was "writing more".

When asked what teachers considered good writing to be, Fred initially replied that they would be looking primarily for length. He went on to say that they would also be looking for good words and structure. Finally when asked to put these in order of importance to teachers, he cited structure as being most important, then good words and length. Structure, Fred said, meant "how you put it in paragraphs, how your person talks, if you use words over and over again so that it gets boring ... " Good words meant "long words that I find in the dictionary ... words that people don't use in every day language."

Fred cited some of these criteria and others when specifying the strengths in one of his own stories, "It's funny, I think, in some parts; um lots of

talking, um in some things I used good words like they whispered and answered.

Fred seemed to relate good writing to intelligence, reading ability, and imagination, as apparent in the following conversation:

I: Who in the class would you say were good writers?

Fred: Jonathan and Monique.

I: Why would you say that Jonathan and Monique's writing is pretty good?"

Fred: Well, they're the smartest kids in the class.

I: O.K. (pause)

Fred: They're the best readers.

I: O.K. for what other reason is their writing pretty good?

Fred: Well they have, at least I think they have, a good imagination.

Imagination was also mentioned when I asked Fred if he had any idea how people became good writers. "By having good imaginations, travelling." he replied. This answer seemed somewhat at odds with his reply to where he thought an author got his ideas from. Fred did not mention imagination, he simply replied, "From his own life experiences." Fred later added that he liked Jonathan and Monique's writing because they sometimes put comedy into it.

Not only did Fred seem to relate writing to intelligence and reading ability, he seemed to relate it to spelling and penmanship, as apparent in his comparison of reading and writing: "Reading's a lot more fun and writing's kinda boring. Anyways, I have a lot of spelling mistakes, and messy handwriting." Here Fred seemed to be concerned with the conventions of writing. He seemed to be concerned with the packaging and not the ideas within that packaging.

In Fred's home, Fred's mother also stated that spelling and handwriting were significant factors in successful writing. She felt that spelling and handwriting prohibited Fred from writing down his many ideas, and from enjoying writing.

Laura

"There really isn't no fun way to teach kids to write."

When Laura made this statement, I felt I had before me a child who considered writing an activity that was totally disdained by everyone. However, when I asked her to expand upon this statement, she said, "Well, cause kids get so used to printing." After clarifying what I meant by writing, she suggested that there were two kinds of writing. Writing where you had a choice of what to write, and writing that was prescribed by the teacher. She explained that when children had a choice

of what to write, they enjoyed writing. This ability to choose was important to Laura whether she was writing reports or stories. When teachers requested writing for which she had no choice, Laura reacted to it in this manner, "They want me to do it so I do it." Laura was one of the first to admint that, in these situations of choice restriction, her writing was usually too short and not very well done. "Otherwise you wouldn't do it?" I asked her.

In order to give Laura time to think about "writing", and what it meant to her, I wrote the following statement in her notebook: Why I write. I asked her to think about this statement over the week-end and to write a list of reasons why she wrote. The following Monday she returned with her written list and read it to me: "Good exercise and fun." She quickly added, "That's the only thing I could think of." The idea of fun was easy for me to understand because Laura had referred to this concept often. She had said that writing was a fun activity when she had a choice of what to write, when she wrote stories and plays, and when she did research projects. She had also referred to this aspect of fun when she hypothesized that being an author would sometimes be fun because authors wrote stories and perhaps, "depending what they're doing they could do research ... " This statement seemed to reflect Laura's own concept of fun. She loved to do research projects

in order to learn.

The idea of writing being good exercise for her "whole arm" seemed like, perhaps, a facetious, flippant answer. However, Laura later referred to this idea in various discussions. The first time was during a discussion about one of her journal entries. I asked her what were the good parts about this writing. "I get to put some muscles in my body." she replied. The second time she mentioned exercise was when I asked her why she thought an author wrote. One of the reasons, she then conjectured, was "because he gets strength in his arm." Perhaps Laura was misinterpretating her teachers' use of "exercise", as in " ... we'll do exercise number two on page four ... "

Before stating that an author wrote to get strength in his arm, Laura had mentioned other reasons why an author wrote: "So he can teach things." This statement seemed to fit in well with her perceived role as a learner. She loved learning; and, she often talked about her preference for reading over writing for that very reason -- because she learned more when she read.

One of Laura's most insightful comments on the nature of writing came when she was talking about reading; "Reading is when you get to write stories." Here, Laura was explaining that when she wrote she was also reading, because as she wrote she read what she had written. This was exactly what Lucy Calkins (1983) had

said in her book, Lessons from a Child. Calkins stated that, while composing, children read continually: as much as 30% of children's writing time was spent on reading. There was therefore no way, Calkins explained, that she could watch writing without watching reading.

To Laura, reading her own stories was fun. Here writing seemed to take on an entertainment aspect. Indeed, along this same line, she had once stated that authors could write for their children. Realistically though, it must be mentioned that Laura did say that writing was something that she did in her "spare time", meaning when she "didn't have anything to do. No chores left."

Synthesis

For Tim writing was something that allowed him to express himself. For Fred writing was something that allowed him to record his thoughts for future use; and for Laura writing seemed to be something that could be used to teach or entertain. Both Tim and Laura thought writing could be used to learn, however Laura stipulated that she enjoyed reading more than writing because she learned more when she read.

Fred concluded that length was most important in defining good writing, next came humour. He felt that teachers, on the other hand, were most concerned with structure, good words and length, in that order. It is

interesting that neither ideas nor voice were mentioned as criteria focused upon by teachers. It was important, Fred said, to have a good imagination in order to produce a good piece of writing, although he mentioned that authors probably wrote from their own life's experiences. In the end, Fred and his mother expressed their belief that spelling and penmanship were important aspects of writing. They were important, Fred's mother said, in that they prevented Fred from expressing his ideas, thus sometimes hampering his enjoyment of writing.

For all three children, there were two kinds of writing. Firstly, there was a kind of writing that all of them enjoyed. This was writing that allowed them to "make up things" or to create. All of them, therefore, enjoyed writing stories. Story writing allowed them to use their imaginations, to create. On the other side of the coin, there was writing that was not fun. For Tim, writing was not fun in math. For Fred writing was not fun when it wasn't his own, as in science or social when he copied notes. For Laura, writing was not particularly enjoyable when it was simply dictated by a teacher -- she did it but sometimes the only positive way she could justify it was to say it was good exercise for her arm.

CHAPTER SIX

THEMES, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Overview

In this chapter, themes and conclusions which emerged from the categorized data of chapter five are presented.

Conclusions are presented in relation to the six research questions.

Implications for educational practice, and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Themes

In chapter five, data was categorized and synthesized in relation to the following six research questions:

1. Do these avid readers/poor writers value writing?
2. Where do these children get their ideas for their writing?
3. What kind of writing do these children like and dislike?
4. What is their perception of audience?
5. What strategies do these writers use in the writing process?
6. What is "writing" to these children?

As the data was categorized and synthesized, the

following themes emerged: expectations of good writing, authorship, choice, and audience.

Expectations of good writing

Kelly (1963) and Britton (1970) suggest that we are affected by our surroundings; that our experiences lead us to expect certain happenings. Such was the case for Laura, Fred and Tim. These children read avidly, and what they read seemed to give them certain expectations of what their own writing should resemble. In other words these children read avidly and were therefore good audiences; they knew what an audience wants and how an audience reacts to a book. Laura liked to read for information and she was challenged by encountering new ideas and finding out new things. She expected to learn something when she read and it seemed that she expected her own writing to teach, but her writing did not always do this for her. In her mind, workbook pages certainly didn't seem to teach her anything. She considered this kind of writing boring. Even report writing could be boring for Laura if she did not have a wide choice of topics. If she was not interested in learning about a topic then her writing was not performing the task of teaching; and consequently she didn't want to do the writing. This was evident in her discussion about her report on "Chief Maskepetoon" (appendix K). Laura stated that she was not the least interested in doing a

report on Indians. This report was indeed very short and received a very mediocre mark from her teacher. At times, though, Laura's writing did teach her. An example of this occurred when she had written a report, at home and on her own volition, on the lunar eclipse. Laura and her mother showed me this report while I was at their home interviewing Laura's mother. The report was on a piece of railboard approximately three feet by two feet. On this she had pasted pictures, drawn a lunar eclipse, and written numerous facts about such an clipse. Laura said that this kind of writing was her favorite kind of writing. Indeed, report writing was "tops" on a "Writing Preference Scale" she had devised for herself -- "tops" that is, when she had a choice of topics. When she had a wide choice of topics her mind seemed open to learning. Because it was important for Laura to learn she did not view writing her autobiography as worthwhile. There was nothing for her to learn there.

Fred and Tim enjoyed reading adventure stories and they, in turn, wanted their own writing to attain this level of high entertainment. For Fred, a written account about a "little" school fire and a missing shoe did not qualify as interesting writing because he felt that people were not interested in reading it. A missing shoe during a small school fire did not compare to aliens from other planets. In other words, because

of the material Fred read, he felt that writing should be very exciting to read. He also knew that good writing is technically correct, and in this area he felt his writing fell short. On many occasions he referred to his poor spelling, and he spoke about this spelling difficulty in relation to his abilities as a writer. Like Fred, Tim also equated good writing with high adventure. Tim was convinced that stories which contained episodes of people being trapped in cages by ghosts such as in his story "The Voice" (Appendix E) would appeal to many audiences; whereas writing which described such personal things as his bicycle would not appeal to readers. Both Tim and Fred wanted clear, poetic writing from the very beginning and they were not satisfied to begin with expressive writing.

These three children all seemed to be struggling with high expectations for their writing. Their avid reading had given them criteria or models for good writing, but they were as yet unable to attain this quality in their own writing. All three children were sometimes frustrated by classroom constra[illegible]s which prevented them from achieving what they v[illegible]as good writing. That is to say, they were frustr[illegible]y workbook writing, fill-in-the-blanks, and te[illegible] directed pieces. Journal writing and other expressive pieces seemed to be especially frustrating to these children because they did not seem to understand the

purpose of this kind of writing in a writer's life. It appeared as though they had not been explicitly taught the value of expressive writing: that one becomes a more effective writer of poetic and transactional works through the use of expressive writing (Britton, 1970).

Authorship

> An author must write from within his own experiences, both real and imagined.
>
> (The World Book Encyclopedia)

What all three informants had in common was a strong desire to create their own pieces of writing. This was a theme that emerged so strongly from each of the children, that, although they were in different schools, it appeared as if they had talked to each other or collaborated in their many statements about wanting to write about what they had in their own heads, and about wanting to "make up things" themselves. They all wanted to be the "one who begins or originates; a creator: an author" (Funk & Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary, 1982).

The idea of being the one who began or originated, which defines the word author, was often mentioned by Tim, Fred, and Laura. All three children expressed a desire to be involved in self-directed writing: they

wanted control of ideas and material. Tim stated it this way, "I want to write stuff on my own" and "I want to use my own ideas." Fred also talked about enjoying writing which he categorized as his "own"; this was writing in which he felt he was able to "make up" whatever he wanted. Laura constantly talked about enjoying writing when she wrote on her "own"; she mentioned the ability to write a great deal on her own because her head was full of stories. In addition to this, she loved doing research projects when she was able to address her own interests.

Story writing was mentioned by all three informants as a genre of writing that they enjoyed. Story writing seemed to provide these children with the opportunity to use their imaginations. Story writing also seemed to satisfy their desire to be the originators, the creators of their writing; for as Fred so succinctly stated "you can make up anything you like" when you write a story.

This concept of enjoying something that they could create seemed to explain somewhat why all three children were not too keen on reporting events of their lives, either in the form of an autobiography as in Laura's case, in the form of a journal as in Fred's case, or in the form of "personal writing" as in Tim's case. This kind of writing seemed to have no sense of purpose for these children: it was simply writing which was required by the teacher. In other words, this kind of personal

writing seemed to lack the flavor of creativeness -- it was simply reporting, a low level thought process (Bloom, 1956). Writing an autobiography is "boring", said Laura. Fred considered most of his journal entries boring, and Tim hated personal writing. All three children seemed to want to get out of this reporting stage: they wanted to attain a higher level of writing -- a level which Moffett (1979) calls "revising inner speech". At this level of writing, writers are using their own ideas. They are "rendering thought into writing", and during this process writers are revising their inner speech. This is the stage of true authorship, says Moffett.

As well as personal writing, there were other types of writing disliked by Tim, Fred and Laura. They disliked workbook sheets, copying notes, and answering comprehension questions. All of these writing activities were lower level activities and were at the opposite end to creativity in Bloom's (1956) taxonomy -- creativity being a high level process skill, a skill that is associated with authorship (Moffett, 1979).

When these children were placed in a position of authorship, whereby they were able to create and originate such as in the story writing situations which they liked, interesting things began to happen. For one thing their writing behavior seemed to differ from the writing behavior they exhibited when writing in areas

they disliked. They began writing almost immediately, they wrote more, and they were more committed to their piece, in that they only interrupted their writing for activities that were related to the writing task at hand. Such activities included asking how a word was spelled or reading each other's writing.

Of the three children, Tim was the one who found himself most in a position of authorship: his classroom was set up so that he was able to write daily. He was able to write on his 'own' topics at least once a week, and he had the opportunity to share his writing with an audience other than his teacher -- his classmates. Within this atmosphere, Tim's attitude towards writing was quite distinctive from the other two informants: he valued writing more than the two other children. He 'loved' it, he said. He saw himself as a potential author although he struggled with penmanship, punctuation, organizational skills, and sometimes fluency, since details were sometimes lacking in his writing. Writing, to Tim, was something that could be preserved, eventually going into a museum, or it was something to be treasured as in his wish to inherit his great-grandfather's writing.

Fred and Laura, unlike Tim, did not think of themselves as potential authors. Fred generally thought "writing was not that much fun" and it certainly wouldn't be fun being an author, he said, because

authors have to sell their writing. Laura thought writing was fun sometimes but she valued it less than reading because she learned more, she said, when she read. In other words, these children, unlike bona fide authors, did not value writing for its own sake, but for what writing could do -- either by helping you to learn, or by being a means of earning a living. They did not focus on the intrinsic value of writing as an aesthetic object to be valued for its own sake.

Within his daily creative writing milieu, Tim was the one who seemed to be most acutely aware of his sources of ideas, more so than Fred and Laura who did not do creative writing on a daily basis in their classrooms. Tim mentioned primary life experiences as sources of ideas: visits to a zoo, a school janitor's actions, friends. He also mentioned secondary experiences as sources of ideas: books, movies, television. Just as authors, who are involved in their craft, search for ideas or topics (Murray, 1968), so did Tim: "I'm going to watch 'The Boy Who Could Fly' ... that'll give me ideas."

Laura seemed to have a more ephemeral, mystical notion of where her ideas originated from -- her head. "Where else would they come from?" she quipped. Unlike Tim, Laura did not talk about her sources of ideas unless specifically querried; then she would divulge quite an interestingly detailed description of where her

ideas originated from -- such as when asked where her ideas came from for her "Snowflake" poem and story.

Fred seemed least certain of where his ideas came from, and he also seemed to be the most disinterested. Yet Fred did seem to have a strong notion of quality literature, what an audience looks for in a story. He seemed to be able to objectively manipulate his ideas with audience in mind. For example, he deliberately crossed out a part in his journal entry which mentioned looking for his shoe during the school fire. People, he thought, are not interested in reading about such trivial things as a lost shoe during a fire.

With regard to what function writing had, it was Tim again, of the three children, who seemed most able to verbalize why people wrote. He stated that people wrote to express themselves, or to express what they liked. In his own case he said he liked ghost stories, and writing allowed him to express that. Neither Tim's teacher, Mrs. Piquard, nor his mother, nor Tim himself, knew where he had acquired the term "to express themselves".

Fred had more difficulty than Tim verbalizing why people wrote. He did not seem to know why he was writing his journal, "I really don't know why we are writing it," he said; again, reflecting a lack of self-felt purpose for the writing.

At times, Laura also seemed to have difficulty

explaining the functions of writing, "Writing is for exercising your arm and for fun. That's all I can think of", she nonchalantly stated.

Laura did however seem better able to describe the purpose of writing when I asked her the hypothetical question, "Why do you suppose an author writes?" To this, she replied, "To teach" or "to write for his children", which again went back to Laura's very functional and practical view of what writing can be used for. She did not view writing as a work in itself, as an art. Writing seemed to have no aesthetic value for her, which in part explained why she did not save very much of her writing.

Choice

Choice was very closely related to authorship, in that as soon as they had made a choice, their writing became their own, something that they could do whatever they wished with, something they could mold, create.

Choice was frequently mentioned by all three children: they wanted their own input into their writing.

Tim referred to choice when he made statements such as the following: "I wanted to write it. She must have read my mind"; "I don't want to do anymore flying stories", "I want to write stories with my own ideas."

Fred referred to choice when he said that he liked

writing when "you can write whatever you want", and for this reason story writing was Fred's favorite kind of writing, and secondly came journal writing.

Choice was mentioned by Laura when she stated that children enjoyed writing when they were able to write on topics of their own choice. She, particularly, seemed to need a great deal of choice: it was not enough for her to be able to choose from a number of writing activities or topics, if the main topic didn't appeal to her. An example of this occurred when she explained why she didn't choose any of the free time writing activities on her classroom wall, "It's all on potatoes!" she said. She did not like the idea of writing about potatoes.

Another example of Laura requiring a great deal of choice occurred when she talked about not having enjoyed writing her social studies report on an Indian chief. Although she had had a choice of various Indians to choose from, this choice was too limiting for Laura -- she was not interested in Indians at the time. "What's so important about it? It happened a long time ago, it's past." she explained.

Audience

Audience arose as a theme primarily because of Tim's striking dedication to his perceived audience, a dedication that affected his writing behavior; and,

secondly, because of the impact an outside audience, a researcher, had on the writing behavior of the three children.

Tim often referred to his readers -- his audience. it was because of his readers that he wanted to spell correctly and it was because of them that he made certain changes in his stories, such as changing "a pond" to "a wishing pond" in order to make it more interesting.

Tim's topic selection was also affected by audience. He was certain that his ghost story, "The Voice" (Appendix E), would appeal to many children, especially around Halloween time. Tim was totally committed to this story.

Tim also considered himself a worthwhile audience for his writing, as was the case when he wrote, "The Empire Strikes Back", a story in which he became the main character of an already published book. In this case he thought that most people wouldn't enjoy that kind of a story, so he was writing it for himself.

Fred and Laura seemed to know what audiences wanted to read and this knowledge seemed to come from their own reading. Fred, because he read adventure stories, seemed to think that audiences were looking for thrilling adventures. Therefore writing about such topics as a "small" school fire and a lost shoe was not very exciting for him. Nor could he imagine that anyone

else would find it interesting. In Laura's case writing her autobiography was boring; it did not seem to measure up to what she was accustomed to reading, and she therefore seemed unable to imagine that anyone else would be interested in reading it. Although Fred and Laura seemed to possess this knowledge of what audiences wanted to read, it seemed to be largely a tacit knowledge. That is to say, they seemed to have difficulty expressing their thoughts on this topic: their replies to questions on audience were usually short and quite unsure.

The impact of audience on writing was also noted in relation to my interaction with the children and their writing. Even though I had tried to leave the writing setting as intact as possible, in the end, the children's writing was somewhat affected. Even though I had explained to the children and their parents before the study began that they should act normally, certain changes in writing behavior, nevertheless, seemed to occur. When most of the data had been collected, I asked teachers and parents if they had noticed any changes in the writing behavior of the informants. Tim's two teachers indicated that they had, indeed, noticed a difference in his writing behavior. For example, Mrs. Piquard, Tim's language arts teacher, explained the effect my presence had on Tim's writing in this way:

> So he's really started writing a lot more, and I think that, as a matter of fact, it's largely because he knows that you're there to watch him write. So he writes.

Tim's science teacher stated that the science writing session that I had observed was not representative of Tim's normal writing behavior. She explained that usually Tim wrote almost nothing during the science period, whereas the day I was there he had completed a sheet of answers to questions. Tim's mother also mentioned that his writing had "sped up" since I had come.

Mr. Cassidy, Fred's homeroom teacher, mentioned that since I had arrived, Fred was taking more care and pride in his stories.

The children had also written in their notebooks for me (see Appendix D for samples of Tim's writing done in this notebook). These notebooks had been given to them during my initial visit to their homes. It was explained that if they did any writing at home that I would appreciate them putting it in the notebook; but, again, reminding them that I didn't want them to write any more than they usually did simply because they were participating in this study. If they didn't put anything in the notebooks, I told them, that would be fine. Shortly after the study began, I discovered that the two boys normally did not do any unassigned writing

at home; however, one day, Fred brought in his notebook and showed me that he had written a list of books that he had read.

As well, during the final interview, which took place in Tim's home, Tim brought me his notebook in which he had written two stories and started a third (see Appendix D). At this point, his mother had just finished telling me that Tim had been "working on things at home" whereas before I came he hadn't done that. She talked about how he had taken the notebook into his room downstairs and that she hadn't seen what he had written. "He's saved it for you." she chuckled.

Laura also wrote a poem and a story, "The Snowflakes" (see Appendix F), in her notebook. She told me that she had written it for me and that she would like to make a good copy for me in the form of a book. I was amazed at her enthusiasm which was evident, not only in her intention to present her story in the form of a book, but also with the length of her "Snowflake" story. This story was much longer than any of her other writing I had seen.

Audience did, indeed, seem to affect the children's writing.

Conclusions

The small number of subjects used in this study, and the inherent differences in the subjects limit

generalizability. However within these confines conclusions can be reached accordingly. These conclusions are thus presented in relation to the six research questions.

1. Do these avid,effective readers/poor writers value writing?

One of the informants, Tim, seemed to value writing most: he thought of himself as a future author of children's stories and he talked about his stories being preserved in a museum. He constantly talked about loving to write. He seemed to have an appreciation of the aesthetic and lasting value of good literature.

Fred and Laura, the other two children who participated in the study, did not seem to value writing in the same way as Tim. This difference between Tim and the other two children might partly be explained by looking at the children's environment. Tim's classroom offered daily creative writing opportunities and weekly sharing of writing, whereas Fred's and Laura's classrooms were more traditionally orientated whereby daily writing usually involved the traditional workbook page format. Writing was generally used to teach something else, rather than being a means of self expression.

As well, it became evident throughout the study that Tim's relatives had actively engaged in writing.

For instance, Tim's uncle, as a child, had corresponded with Charles Shultz, the cartoonist; and Tim had grandparents who were published authors. His grandfather had published engineering books and his grandmother had published survival manuals. This writing environment was not apparent in Laura's and Fred's backgrounds.

Environment was therefore deemed important if these children were to value writing, and the kind of writing the children were encouraged to engage in was also seen as important.

2. Where do these avid,effective readers/poor writers get their ideas for their writing?

It was apparent from the collected data that all three children did, indeed, have ideas for their creative writing. For all three children ideas came from their primary and secondary life experiences -- primary being lived experiences, secondary being from such secondary sources as books, movies or T.V. shows.

Tim, the only participant who experienced daily creative writing and weekly sharing of writing in the classroom, was the only one who seemed to be actively collecting ideas for his story writing.

In conclusion, it appeared as though all three children had ideas for their creative writing but the child, who was encouraged to do daily creative writing

and to share it on a regular basis, became a conscious and active collector of ideas for writing.

Writing milieu was therefore considered to be an important factor influencing children's conscious collecting and valuing of ideas.

3. What kinds of writing do these active,effective readers/poor writers like or dislike?

Two of the children, Laura and Fred, mentioned disliking writing in social studies. Fred disliked it because it involved copying notes and Laura disliked it because it involved answering questions to passages read by the teacher. As well, both Laura and Fred stated that they disliked the sheets or workbook pages in language arts. All three children found little interest in writing about their personal lives. They did not appear to view this kind of writing as true authoring. There was no sense of purpose, little author control over the writing. Their in-class writing activities remained largely at Moffett's (1979) lower levels of writing and thus the children did not actively engage with these writing tasks.

All three children enjoyed story writing, and the data strongly indicated that "choice" was a predominant factor which affected all three participants' writing enjoyment in this area. Tim referred to this when he said that he wanted to write his "own" stories with his

"own" ideas; and Fred said that he enjoyed creative writing because he considered it his "own" and he could "make up things". Finally, Laura said, "I love writing stories when we get a choice of what we want to write."

It was concluded that the three children in this study preferred writing pieces which they felt they had initiated or created -- pieces to which they felt a sense of authorship. These writing tasks involved a self-felt purpose, ownership on the part of the children, and a sense of empowerment when they could draw on their own ideas and imaginations.

4. What perception of audience do these children have?

One of the children, Tim, had a very keen sense of audience. This keen sense of audience influenced his writing: he constantly talked about trying to please various audiences by using good words, good spelling and good plots. The other two children, Fred and Laura, seemed to have acquired a more tacit sense of what an audience requires in a piece of writing through their avid reading: they talked less specifically about audience and they seemed to make fewer changes in their writing because of intended audience. It was therefore concluded that a keen perception of audience can influence writing behavior.

Considering the impact my presence had on the three children's writing behavior, it was concluded that

writing is positively affected if children have audiences, other than their own teachers, for their writing. In the case of all three children, teachers were usually not named as intended audience for writing that the three children enjoyed doing; as audience the children usually named themselves, a contest, the class, other children, or this researcher.

5. What strategies do these avid,effective readers/poor writers use in the writing process?

With all three children, there was no evidence of any reflective pre-thinking. None of the children formally organized their ideas with paper and pencil.

With regard to revision, Tim was the one who did the most revising. Not only did he correct his spelling and punctuation as requested by his teacher, but he also made revisions regarding ideas and vocabulary, either for himself or for his intended readers. Fred and Laura were not as sensitive to their readers' reactions, and they seemed to do little revising. They were generally content to set their first draft pieces aside, considering them finished.

All three children postponed the beginning of that writing which they disliked, such as workbook pages. Once they had begun this "disliked" writing, they disrupted the writing with many off-task interruptions. All three children, however, exhibited different

strategies when they were in a writing situation which they enjoyed, such as in creative writing situations which offered a fair amount of choice. Under these circumstances, the children began their writing almost immediately. They were very committed to these self selected topics; they wrote longer pieces and they only interrupted their writing for on-task interruptions such as having someone read what they had written or by searching for the correct spelling of words.

It was therefore concluded that, for all three children, writing strategies varied depending on whether they were involved in writing which they liked or in writing which they disliked. Writing behavior was positively affected if children were involved in writing with which they felt a sense of authorship.

6. What is writing to these children?

Writing was perceived as having somewhat of a different function by each of the three children. For Tim, writing was something that allowed people to express themselves. For Fred, writing served as an anchor holding down his ideas so that he could incorporate them into stories, etc. Fred also seemed to equate writing with spelling and penmanship -- two areas in which he had difficulty. For Laura, writing was something which was done for exercise and for fun; it was also used to teach and to entertain.

All three children agreed that there were two kinds of writing: there was a kind of writing which allowed them to create something of their "own", as in story writing; and there was another kind of writing which they felt was not their "own", as in workbook pages or math writing.

To Tim, writing also meant writing two copies -- a rough copy and a good copy. Tim insisted that no more than two copies could be written. He was convinced that his language arts teacher would be angry if he wrote more than two copies.

The term "revising" to Tim meant that he circled all punctuation and spelling mistakes as requested by his language arts teacher. Tim said he hated this part of writing because he saw no need to circle his mistakes, and he sarcastically admitted to doing this kind of revising to please the teacher. Interestingly enough, Tim did another kind of revising which he did not call "revising". He, in fact, changed details, added words, and chose topics because of his perception of audience. He seemed to do this kind of revising quite enthusiastically. In these instances, Tim seemed to accept revision as a necessary part of writing. Fred seemed to do less revising than Tim and when he did revise he did not seem to be very interested in talking about it. I had to ask him many questions in order for him to explain any changes in his writing. There was

also little evidence of Laura doing any revision. In fact, she seemed to refuse to do any type of revision or recopying. She, at one point, spoke of her anger at not having a piece of writing accepted by her teacher, Mrs. Cadman because part of the piece was written in pencil and another part in ink. Rather than revise the piece, she threw it away. It was therefore concluded that for Laura, as well as for Fred, revision was not an integral part of writing.

Summary of Conclusions

The analysis of the data as it pertained to each research question revealed several conclusions. However one must be careful not to generalize these conclusions to all avid,effective readers/poor writers. Just as the three subjects in this study exhibited particular differences in their personalities, their attitudes, their writing styles and abilities, etc., so do most children. It is generally quite impossible to apply a "quick fix" to anyone's writing. Good writing is frequently hard work -- it is a process in which many constraints or writing conventions must be dealt with at the same time (Bereiter, 1980; Collins & Gentner, 1980; Flower & Hayes, 1980). Many factors or variables can influence writing. Nevertheless this study sets forth certain conclusions which may contribute to a better understanding, not only of avid, effective readers/poor

writers, but of other writers as well.

The three children in this study had acquired high criteria for good writing through their own reading. Their reading had thus influenced their expectations for their own writing. They wanted their writing to be highly entertaining or highly informative. At times, all three children experienced frustration at not being able to attain these high expectations of good writing in their own writing. Many constraints were responsible for this inability to produce good writing: in some cases poor spelling, penmanship, and organizational skills were involved; in other instances it was the teacher assigned topics which were negatively affecting the children's writing. Another constraint or area of frustration for these children was their negative view of personal writing. They all seemed to think that writing about their personal lives was uninteresting to a reader. Nor did they seem to realize a purpose for this kind of writing. Workbook pages were also disliked by these children and they did not do this kind of work well.

This study found that these three children did indeed have ideas for their writing and these ideas came from their primary and secondary experiences. They eagerly wanted the opportunity to use these ideas in their own way. They wanted to write on topics of their own choice. They wanted to create, to be the

originators. It was interesting to note that these children did not usually mention their teachers as intended audiences for writing that they enjoyed doing.

Writing environment was deemed to be important in the growth of a writer. One of the children in this study found himself in an environment where he experienced daily creative writing, weekly sharing of writing, and weekly self selected topics. This child thrived in this milieu. In spite of problems with organizational skills and penmanship, it was he who expressed the best understanding of the purpose of writing. It was he who valued writing most, and it was also he who was most conscious of collecting ideas for his writing. Of the three children, he possessed the greatest sense of audience awareness. This keen sense of audience had an effect on his writing: he selected his topics and revised his writing with his audience in mind.

It was concluded that writing was positively affected when these children had audiences other than their own teachers for their writing. Writing was also positively affected when these children were involved in writing pieces to which they felt a sense of authorship, or ownership.

Implications and Suggestions for Educational Practice

The following suggestions for educational practice are put forth based on the results of this study. The suggestions are not made, however, as fool-proof remedies for improving the writing of avid, effective readers/poor writers. I do not presume to imply that teachers can absolutely improve children's writing through these suggestions. Indeed, recently I have been unable to motivate an avid reader to write. Even though my classroom was structured to allow for daily writing and sharing of self selected topics, this child was not motivated to write. Talking to him on many occasions about his writing did not seem to produce any significant change in his writing ability or behavior. At a time like this, words such as "conferencing" and "ownership" (Graves, 1983) appear to be idealistic, panacean terms. It is indeed sometimes very difficult for teachers to assist children with writing. A great deal of time and patience is often required since many factors can be at play: perhaps the right combination of teacher-student relationship is required, perhaps an outsider as audience is crucial for these children, or perhaps these children have developed a negative attitude towards writing because of their inability to attain in their own writing what they perceive to be good writing in the books that they read. We, as educators, must nevertheless continue to search for

means of helping children grow as writers. We must look to researchers and most importantly to ourselves and our philosophies of education. In other words, it is not enough to implement suggestions of researchers; we must understand the reasons behind the practices or models we adopt. For instance, if we do not know why certain researchers recommend journal writing, then journals can become a mere reporting of daily schedules -- an activity which becomes boring for the writer as well as the reader.

The following suggestions for educational practice are, therefore, made with the understanding that teachers will question the "raison d'être" of these suggestions, that they will ask themselves why they are promoting particular writing models in their classrooms. It is also expected that teachers will be sensitive to individual differences, and therefore realize that what works for one child may not necessarily work for another.

The suggestions for educational practice are put forth here based on the definite themes or patterns which emerged from the data analysis. These themes -- authorship, choice, audience, expectations of good writing -- indicate that there are certain practices that teachers should implement in order to assist not only avid, effective readers/poor writers but writers in general. It appears to be of utmost importance that

teachers mediate children's environment so that children are placed in a position of authorship, whereby they create their own writing, select their own topics. Placing children in a position of authorship enhances their writing. They are more committed to their writing when they are creating their own writing. They write longer pieces and they exhibit an "on-task" behavior while writing these pieces. This commitment to writing was most saliently evident in one of the children in this study, Tim. Indeed, it was this child who was in a milieu which paralleled somewhat that of an author's: he experienced daily creative writing, and weekly sharing of writing. Tim thrived in this atmosphere. Even though he was considered to be such a poor writer that he was receiving special attention in language arts by being pulled from his homeroom and placed in a small homogeneous group, it was in the end he who valued writing the most. It was he who was most able and willing to verbalize the purpose of writing and it was he who had the greatest sense of audience awareness. Indeed he chose his topics and revised his writing because of his perceived audiences. He was also the one who most consciously searched for ideas to incorporate into his stories. Being in an atmosphere which allowed him to act somewhat like an author seemed to liberate this child -- he did not seem to let writing conventions such as his poor penmanship hamper his desire to write.

Although he was only able to work on a "free choice" topic approximately once per week, this seemed to stimulate him considerably. He loved this free writing time and looked forward to continuing his favorite stories. If one free writing session per week had such dramatic results, what would happen to this child's writing ability and attitude had he been given more opportunity to write on topics of his own choice? Indeed, Britton (1970), Calkins (1986), Graves (1975, 1983), Murray (1968), and Rosen (1969) have referred to the importance of allowing children to write on unassigned topics. Children, they say, must write about their own experiences, their own thoughts and their own opinions. Constant use of workbooks and copying notes from the board is not conducive to helping children become more effective writers.

Further recommendations for educational practices are made based on the impact that "audience" had on the writing of the three children, but most particularly on the writing of the child who found himself in a classroom which supported more frequent writing on self selected topics, and more sharing of writing. It was this child who chose topics with various audiences in mind. At times he considered certain pieces of his writing as appealing primarily to himself, at other times his writing was meant to entertain the children in the classroom, and in some instances it was completed

mainly for the teacher. This child changed words in his compositions and searched for the correct spelling of words because he wanted to appear as a competent writer to his readers. Since it was observed that a keen sense of audience positively influenced the writing behavior of this child, it follows that teachers should promote audience awareness by providing their students with various audiences. Teachers should also discuss expectations of various audiences with their students. In other words, teachers should make students aware that they are writing for an audience and that authors adapt their writing to different audiences.

The importance of audience was also evidenced in the impact I, as an outsider, had on the writing of the three children. By talking to these children about their writing, by being interested in their writing, I became an audience for them. Consequently, the children took more pride in their writing, they wrote longer pieces and a few of them also wrote at home for me. Having audiences other than their own teachers, as mentioned by Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod, and Rosen (1975), Moffett and Wagner (1976), is indeed very important. Since providing children with audiences for their writing other than their teachers positively affected the writing of the children in this study, it is again suggested that teachers provide their students with as many different kinds of audiences as possible,

such as peers, younger children, other classes of children, parents, grandparents, contests, and publishers. It is also suggested that teachers remove themselves as an audience whose only role is to evaluate writing by assigning grades. Rather than grade each piece of writing, it would seem more beneficial to the students if teachers became audiences who commented on their writing by saying (or writing) such remarks as, "You described that well, you used some great words, you spelled such and such a word well, you indented correctly, where did you get the idea, can you tell me more about ... " This talking or conferencing could also help the writer to risk different genres. For instance, teachers could say, "I've noticed that you seem to enjoy writing Halloween stories. Would you like to try writing a Halloween poem or a report on Halloween, or a play, or a song ... "

Since fiction or story writing seemed to have a wide appeal amongst the three children in this study, it would seem wise to incorporate this kind of writing in subjects such as social studies and science.

Furthermore, if educators wish children to value writing based on personal experiences, which the three children in this study did not, perhaps more of that kind of writing should be read to them so that they see that personal lives can be interesting to read and write about. If children cannot be convinced that writing

about personal events in their lives is interesting, perhaps, they should be encouraged to keep thought journals, or journals in which they describe something they have observed, or journals that contain their questions. In other words children need to be taught the value and purpose of expressive, personal writing (Britton, 1970; Graves, 1983, 1985; Rosen, 1969). As well, if children do not seem interested in writing factual accounts of their own lives, they should be encouraged to use their life experiences (Welty, 1983'84) as backgrounds or springboards to story writing, which they seem to enjoy so much. Perhaps teachers can encourage their students to use their life experiences in their fiction by reading them accounts of where authors get their ideas, or by having authors visit the classroom and asking these authors questions concerning the sources of their ideas, or by having the children view films on authors available from libraries and from the Canadian Children's Book Centre.

All the children in this study had expectations of what constitutes good writing, and these expectations were derived from their avid reading. These expectations sometimes produced a feeling of frustration in these children because they were unable to achieve this level of perfection in their own writing. This feeling of frustration sometimes stemmed from difficulties with spelling as in Fred's case. After

all, the books that he read did not contain the spelling mistakes that he made, therefore he could not hope to write at the level he knew was expected of authors. No one seemed to have taught Fred that the meaning or purpose of writing is not found in spelling but rather in the message of the writing. In Vygotsky's (1962) words, "The primary function of speech, in both children and adults is communication, social contact, and writing helps the child rise to a higher level of speech development" (p. 19). Nor did Fred seem to have been taught that in the adult world spelling is often checked by secretaries, friends, editors, etc.. It would therefore seem to be a natural occurrence that teachers allow children to solicit the assistance of their peers, their parents, their siblings, etc., as possible editors. Of course by doing so these "editors" also become audiences for their writing. There is however a danger here that these editors give the author the impression that the surface conventions of writing are of utmost importance. I have found from experience that peers, or classroom students, can easily be instructed to focus on the good points of the piece of writing before correcting spelling or punctuation mistakes. Generally speaking, teachers should realize that these children, based on their avid reading, possess criteria for their own writing. At times they may want their writing to be highly entertaining, or at other times

they may want their writing to be highly informative. They may also consider themselves poor writers because of their spelling, penmanship, lack of details, etc., From this, it appears that teachers should be sensitive to the writing aspirations held by their students. It is the teacher's job to help them grow as writers by introducing them to various genres of writing, by assisting them with the technical skills of writing, by praising the good qualities of their writing.

Many of the suggestions for educational practice which have been proposed here have indeed been put forth by several researchers in the field of children's writing. It therefore remains to be said that these suggested educational practices are considered to be sound advice not only for avid, effective readers/poor writers but for all writers. Again realizing that perhaps not all children will respond positively to these educational practices.

Suggestions for Future Research

It is suggested that research replicating this study be conducted in order to ascertain if most avid,effective readers/poor writers prefer writing pieces which they feel they have initiated or created -- pieces which they feel they own. Replicating this study will provide a clearer profile of the avid,effective reader/poor writer.

Further studies could be conducted in which the audience variable is controlled. For instance, two classrooms having similar writing programs could be selected. Avid, effective readers/poor writers could be identified in each classroom. The children in the experimental group could be paired with a person acting as audience. This person could be a peer within the same classroom, a younger child, a senior citizen, a parent, etc.. The writing of the avid,effective readers/poor writers in the experimental group could then be compared with the writing of the avid, effective readers/poor writers in the control group who had no audience other than their own teacher. This comparing of writing could take place before and after the experimental group had been given an audience for their writing.

In the end, several questions still remain unanswered for me. And, indeed, some of these questions could be the beginning of future research.

1. Are there some active, effective readers/poor writers who, even though given a lot of freedom of choice regarding writing, still do not seem committed to their writing? Are there some who neither write longer nor better in spite of having a lot of choice?
2. How important is audience to these children?
3. Do these children need more prewriting

stimulation in order to develop personal intentions to write?

4. What is the role of the teacher in assisting with prewriting and revising?
5. It was concluded that all three children liked story writing but I wonder if these children need to appreciate other forms of writing. For instance, would these children be committed to their writing if they were to use writing to learn? Can they become their own audiences by writing their own research papers?
6. How do profiles of avid, effective readers/poor writers compare with profiles of avid, effective readers/good writers.
7. What percentage of these avid, effective readers/poor writers have difficulty with spelling or handwriting? What is the effect of these areas of weakness on their attitudes toward writing?

Concluding Statements

Although certain themes emerged in this study and conclusions were made accordingly, it must be emphasized that just as the three children in this study were quite different from one another, so are other children. Therefore the conclusions of this study cannot and should not be generalized to all children.

It is hoped that this study has helped in a small way to understand not only avid, effective readers/poor writers, but writers generally. It was discovered that these children did, indeed, have ideas for their writing and that they definitely wanted the opportunity to use these ideas in their writing. These children enjoyed creating their "own" pieces of writing.

It was discovered that school environment influenced the perception of writing, held by these children. One of the three children found himself in a classroom environment which resembled somewhat that of an author's and this child valued writing most and he became a conscious collector of ideas.

A link was made between the reading and writing of the three children. Because these children were good audiences for the writing of others through their avid reading, they had high criteria for good writing and they expected to find these high criteria in their own writing. All three children experienced a certain amount of frustration at not being able to attain these somewhat unrealistic expectations in their own writing. Their inability to attain this level of perfection in their writing was sometimes due to classroom constraints such as lack of choice in topic selection, or to difficulties with the mechanics of writing such as spelling and handwriting.

And finally, the writing of all three children was

positively affected by having an audience other than their teachers for their writing.

These findings suggest a need for teachers to place avid, effective readers/poor writers, and indeed all children, in a position of authorship. Children should be encouraged to use their "own" ideas in their writing. They, therefore, should be explicitly taught the value of expressive writing as a means of producing good poetic and transactional pieces of writing. The findings also suggest that children should be given a variety of audiences for their writing.

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APPENDIX A

LETTER TO SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

To observe the writing process of children who are avid and effective readers but whose writing does not reflect the level or amount of reading that they do.

METHODOLOGY

This research project will take the form of a case study of two children. The two children may not, necessarily, be in the same classroom.

I would like to observe these two children in their classrooms two times per week during the writing process. The focus will be on what the child does, says, and thinks, etc. before, during and after the actual writing.

As well, I would like to interview these two children twice a week using their writing as a focal point.

It is difficult to determine the exact duration of the study, but I would assume that a minimum of eight weeks or maximum of twelve weeks, will be required.

As well, I am considering children at the grade two to six level.

Of course, consent is required of the teacher, the children and their parents, the principal, and the school board.

Sylvia Jackson (graduate student, University of Alberta.) 459-4655

Attached is a check list which I hope will help describe the type of child I am interested in observing.

DEFINITION OF TERMS FOR THE PURPOSE OF SELECTING CHILDREN FOR THE STUDY

THE FOLLOWING ARE SIMPLY GENERAL GUIDELINES WHICH MAY HELP IDENTIFY CHILDREN WHOSE WRITING DOES NOT REFLECT THE LEVEL AND AMOUNT OF READING THAT THEY DO.

Writing which does not reflect the amount of reading done by the student could be weak in one or more of the following areas:

____	elaboration....	Ideas are sparse, details are lacking, etc..
____	coherence....	Parts of the writing may not make sense or contribute to the meaning of the whole piece.
____	organization....	Writing may lack a natural sequencing of ideas.
____	spelling....	Many words do not adhere to conventional spelling.
____	punctuation....	Writing does not adhere to conventional punctuation.

Avid readers: Children who read a great deal on their own volition.

____ will read extra (not assigned by the teacher) material at school. This could be any type of material such as joke books, magazines, comics, unnassigned basal reader stories, etc.

____ will read extra (not assigned by the teacher or parents) material at home. As above, this includes any type of material.

Effective readers: Children who score six months (or more) beyond their grade level on a standardized reading test.

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM

February 20, 1987

Dear parents,

I am conducting a project in which I am seeking information from students about their reading and writing.

Participants in this project will be guaranteed anonymity and their responses will be treated with confidentiality.

Information will be gathered primarily through interviews and classroom observations. I expect to visit the school two times per week for eight weeks in order to collect this information.

Should you have any questions regarding this project, please feel free to contact either myself at 459-4655, or my university advisor, Dr. Joyce Edwards at 432-5102.

Sincerely,

Sylvia Jackson
Graduate Student
University of Alberta

My child, _____, has my permission to participate in the above project.

_____
Parent's signature

APPENDIX C

FRED'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

My Autobiography.

My name's ——. I was born Oct. 1975, in Edmonton. I have a brother named John. My mom's a sectertary and my dad owns part of a buisness called —— I want to be a garbage man or own a petstore.

I have one pet named ——. She's a small, golden colled dog. Last year I broke my leg. I had to get it reset two times, my cast was on for three months.

This summer I went to EXPO 86 and spent a month with my grand parnts. My best freind's name's —— and he's a little wiede at times. My other freinds names are ——, ——, ——, and ——. There all good freinds.

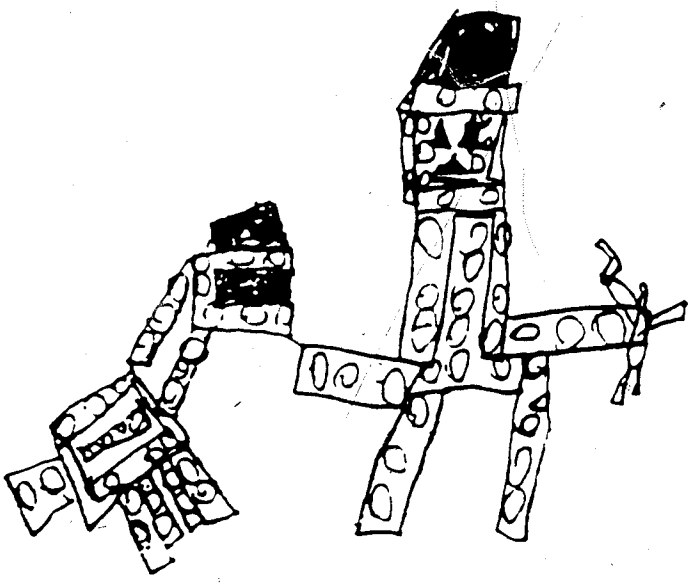
My hobbies are flying airplanes and larnching rockets. My fav. things are T.V. Food and running and my hobbies. Pretty dull uh?

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE OF TIM'S WRITING DONE IN NOTEBOOK GIVEN TO HIM BY THE RESEARCHER FOR HOME USE

ROBOTIX

Once I made a
ship. I flew to a world.
a ship flew there and
Never came Back!
scientist send them up
there! I went searching
for them. Skelat



a small World

Once I shrink right
in front of my dad
he dropped his his hammer.
I was knocked out! @?#
I found myself in a
[redacted]
package. at night
I snuck out. I found
myself on a bird.
He talked it was like

a dream. he took me to
his house . to sleep.
I covered my self
with grass.
in the morning I was
tooken to wisird -

Short Story

Anything can happen
I have a monster he can
do Anything one day he
went wild nobody could
Stop him We had prided
I Want tell you
Soon day I waited
for my frainds, We
worked and worked
We traped him
yad

Call Idiot
he told me to jump
in a lake! I was lame!

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE OF TIM'S CLASSROOM WRITING, "The Voice" and "My Bike"

The Voice

Once I went to a very Spooky house that my friend use to live in. Every day I pass that house the cuton would close. So I got the ghost busters they said they they would be there in a week So I waited in m basement. Suddenly I heard Help Help Help. a wee kwen t by they wanted all the evidents so I began its like this every time I pass the house the cuton would close and I heard a Voice saying HELP! I came With them they said Some one died in there I went in. I Saw my freind in there he was in a floating cage a chain went around me Help! the ghost busters Came ddddddddd

AhAhAhAha I gave the ghost a hock flip he went right thaqh the floor CRACKLE ZZip he Escaped ZZ ZZ the ghost busters burned the floor dawn there was a brown COFFIN! that had plans that was for the navy It was the phantom Jet the ghost Busters made. I drove it. I chose the ghost around and around Fifty time ada ninty times at night finaly I got him heeee e llll p I wan Stay here for part two.

my Bike

my bike is yellow and Black
I got it in grade 2 [illegible] its a my my [illegible]
[illegible] parts on to my Bike
my Da [illegible] [illegible]
my Dad added on a seat and pedals.

APPENDIX F

LAURA'S STORY, "THE SNOWFLAKES"

(Because a photocopy of the story was unavailable, it was transcribed from an audio tape.)

The Snowflakes

Once upon a time there were four snowflakes: mother, father, sister and brother. Sister and brother are really playful. They both really like each other. Mother and father are the best cuddlers ever. Every spare minute, they have a little cuddle and a kiss.

One day, brother and sister were playing on the swing. It is called the star swing. They love the star swing. Mother and father had always checked the star swing so that it was tightly secured. But one day they forgot to make sure that the star swing was secure and the star swing was loose.

So sister and brother went to play on the swing but luckily the sister said, "Don't forget to ask mom and dad if it is secure."

"Oh, yes. Mom, dad, can you please check if the star swing is secure?"

"Oh, yes. We just about forgot to check. We will be right over." said mother.

"We will be waiting at the star swing."

A couple of hours later...

"Finally! What took you so long?"

"Oh, we just about forgot but we did remember."

"Thank gosh, you remembered."

"You're right, brother (after they checked). Thank you."

"I'll just give it a tug first. Mom and dad, this isn't right at all. I just pulled one set down. Do you know what could happen if brother didn't check, mom and dad?"

"Yes, we could have lost brother."

(Laura explained that this story was not finished.)

APPENDIX G

TIM'S STORY, "I CAN FLY"

I Can fly

wishing

Once I was at a Pond
~~that~~ was a wishing ponder
a ferry got stuck in it
I went to save it. I Jump
in splash slop I was going
told re wne I took the ferry
out she took me out and gave
me pixie dust, I flew
Weeeeeeeeeee I can
fly I went to the moon and
Never came Back.

APPENDIX H

FRED'S JOURNAL ENTRIES

It's spet 9, The fish I cought last weeKeh were rainbow trout. Today I am going to try to talk my mom take us to the mall for super so I can play at wizards castle. I am pretty good at this one game it's like a kungke game. ✓

It's spet. 9, Nothing much is happing right now. My cousin went to a saints game last night. I don't know the score because went to bed before he got home. Is your cousin staying with you?

It's spet. 16, My brothers birthday party is coming up this weekend, It is real birthday is the 26th. I hope He gose to bullwinkle so they have great arcades. Yes, they do.

It's Spet 17, I found out he is not going to be with us. I think he's just going to rent some movies and stay home, (boring).

It's Spet. 22 I was right my brother birthday was boring. His birday party was this saturday. on sunday we went to my uncles he has a farm. Where is it?

It's Nov. 4, I play foot ball at resses I'm a pretty good tackler if I do say so myself. I know I'm not the best, but I'm not the worst I guess by now you know I'm not the best journel writer nither. Not bad, getting better.

It's Nov. 5, I'm just going write this of the top of my head. I got 4 new comics last night they were Spider-Man and Iron 2 of each

It's NOV. 13, My almenas keeps getting taking, I got them all back but knows oggs got one. If you wandering what almenas are there little pices of plastic men shaped like monsters. There neat but cost a lot of money.

They'd be better off at home. Some cranky gray-haired, freckle-faced teacher might take them!

It's Dec. 16, I miss jim tonight because of the Cristmas concert I think were having a test today I don't want to do it!!!, but its math and that's my best subject. (I think)

It's Dec. 17 2 more days till Cristmas hoiladays. I know how to see what my presents are, you see you carefully take of the tape so that when you you put it back on parents won't tell that you did it. You also have to unfold it just right so you can see what you get but you dont leave any traces that you did it behind.

It's Jan. 5. It is the new year, I made a promis to myself that I will try not to beat up my brother a much a last year. My school promis is ill try to get better marks and write better and spell better.

It's Jan. 9, I got the tape I wanted yesterday. It's called Bangels Diffecnt Light. It's pretty good.

It's Jan. 12, Ryan Wachs at school today he told me that he went to Hoaloo and somewhere else. I went skating this weekend. Other than that I had a pretty boring weekend.

It's Jan. 19 I saw Crocodile Dundi this weekend It was pretty good. I didn't go to my dads this weekend. because my dad went to his mom and dads.

It's Jan. 20, and I'm getting bored of writing that; anyway I have gim today. (sometime ago you correct my spelling of gim) tomorrow I might go to the comic store and blow my aloccince.

It's Feb. 2, my mom wouldn't let me blow my aloccence on comics instead I boogle my shoes. The weekend was pretty boring. All I did was get money & already saw and watch T.V.

It's Feb 8, I went to gym yesterday I was the only one who did 25 push ups. But on the tramp I really goffed up. On the horse I am learning how to do a staddle over better. On the rings we were doing a different kind of push ups.

It's Feb 9, I got one of the highest marks in class in the thing you have to fill in the blanks. The highest was 84 by ____ 2nd 76 I think by ____ 3rd 75 by ____ I think 4th 72 by ____ (thatt) me and somebody eles.

~~It's Feb 6, We have a sub today. I think he hates my guts. He gave me hi...~~ ~~moving but I don't know i... ... back talking, doing was stocking in my ... and suddenly and other people where to, and ... But I don't mind you in the real. But I don't mind cause I don't actually think hes absolu... of laughs ether.~~

It's Feb. 10, I have gym tonight, I think were going on the floor, the bars and the beam. I suck on the floor and the beam I used to be good on the beam but I brock my leg last year and now I don't have any balance.

It's Feb. 16, I went to the water park and fantasy land on Friday. Saturday I went skiing it was pretty boring only fun part was when I TRIED going down the bunny hill with one ski every time I tried turning I stopped. (sometimes fell)

It's Feb. 20, and I have to read my story in front of the class after this. We went to the art museum, I liked the jade exhibition. I didn't love the mummies exact. This weekend I'm hoping to go to the mall. I'm propably won't get to go there. That's really all that's going to happen this weekend.

It's Feb. 24; I'm real mad in social where doing our debate and I had my speech done and when I went to get it today it was gone. I think my cousin threw it out. I have gym today I think were doing bars, floor, and beam.

It's Feb. 23. I did okay in ... yesterday. Not so good in ... though I got an 8+ on a test. Boy did I make some stupied mistakes

APPENDIX I

FRED'S STORY, "THE MUD PIT"

(Because a photocopy of the story was unavailable, it was trancribed from an audio tape.)

The Mud Pit

Once upon a time not so long ago about three or four years back, me and my friend Tom were in class when, " Now class don't go in the mud while they are planting trees. After all it just rained." said our teacher (the old bat).

Before dismissal, there is one anouncement, "Don't go in the mud where they are planting trees. After all it just rained." said our principal (the old goat).

Tom whispered, "Fred, meet you outside by the mud!"

"Okay." I whispered back.

Ding! School was out.

"Yo, Fred!" Tom yelled out. "Over here!"

"I'm coming, I'm coming." I answered.

"Let's go in the mud pit," Lane said after I came.

"Are you nuts? " I yelled.

"Are you?" he asked.

"Yes!" I answered.

"Oh yeah!" he yelled back. "Well you're also short, weird, dumb and weak!"

"So you're shorter, wierder, dumber and weaker." I answered back calmly.

"Oh yeah," he said shyly. "Well come o[illegible]at could happen?"

"Well I guess you're right," I said.

Then we stepped into the mud pit. "He

so bad." Tom said.

"Oh yeah, then how come we are up to our necks in mud?" I replied.

"Well there's only one thing I can think of to do and that's to yell help!"

We yelled, "Help!" until we were sick.

I got hold of a stump and pulled myself out. Finally I got him out. "Thanks a lot, thanks a lot," Tom said quietly.

When we got to my house this is what happened : "You scum, go change and get that nice boy a loan of clothes!" my mother yelled.

So I did what my mother said, and to this day I still haven't got my clothes back.

APPENDIX J

LAURA'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

My name is ———— .
I was born in ———— in 19— on
August —th. I was a lazy baby.
I told my brother to get my
toys. I was a quiet baby. When
I was born. But when my brother
was born he was crying his lungs
out. We where both born at 9:00.

I have been in dancing for
six years. My favorite singer is
Neil Diamond. ———— ————
is my best friend.

APPENDIX K

LAURA'S REPORT, "CHIEF MASKEPETOON"

Chief Maskepetoon

My report is on Chief Maskepetoon. Maskepetoon means broken or wounded arm.

He was a woodland Cree indian. He lived to abdut 1800 -1869. He had a great reputation as a warrior. He fought enemy bands of Blackfoot, Peigan and Sarcees. They called him Mone-gaba-now or great Chief. He became chief working on peace until he was killed in 1869.