The Development, Implementation, and Evaluation of an Effective Reading and Writing Program for a Rural, Small Town Junior High School

Lynn R. Curtis

Eastern Illinois University

This research is a product of the graduate program in Educational Administration at Eastern Illinois University. Find out more about the program.

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The Development, Implementation, and Evaluation
of an Effective Reading and Writing Program

for a Rural, Small Town Junior High School

(TITLE)

BY

Lynn R. Curtis

FIELD EXPERIENCE

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Specialist in Educational Administration

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING
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The Development, Implementation, and Evaluation
of an Effective Reading and Writing Program
for a Rural, Small Town Junior High School
by
Lynn R. Curtis

B.S. Illinois State University, 1968
M.S. Eastern Illinois University, 1983

FIELD STUDY
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the
degree of Specialist in Education Administration in the
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Abstract
The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the extra time provided for reading and writing in Macon Junior High School, Macon, Illinois. The following hypotheses were tested: The reading and writing treatment has a significant effect on student reading comprehension scores, writing skills, enjoyment of reading, and on the encouragement of students to read more. There is a significant difference between the cost of the reading and writing program and the fine and applied arts courses it replaced. Subjects included students and teachers in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades at Macon Junior High School. Achievement test scores in reading comprehension, writing samples, student and teacher questionnaires, and cost data were used to test the hypotheses. Results of this study shows significant improvement in reading comprehension scores on achievement tests for 8th grade students, but not for 6th and 7th graders. Descriptive statistics show improvement in writing skills, improved student attitudes toward the reading and writing program, and that the program was more economical then the programs it replaced. The recommendation of this study is the continuation of the reading and writing program at Macon Junior High School.
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Chapter 1 -- Overview of the Problem

Introduction

The objective of this study is to determine what, if any, positive effects the additional reading and writing instruction has on measured academic achievement in reading and writing and on attitudes of junior high school students. Does the extra time improve the reading ability of students? Does the extra time in reading and writing encourage students to read more and consequently, to enjoy reading more? In the fall of 1985, a new reading and writing program in the junior high curriculum at Macon Junior High School, Macon, Illinois, replaced the elective courses in industrial arts, home economics, and art. These fine and applied arts had been cut the year before due to deficit financing in the Macon School district. The reading and writing courses substituted for the fine and applied art courses were in addition to the already existing language arts course at three grade levels. It is not the intention of this study to compare the losses of knowledge or skills resulting from the loss of the fine and applied art courses with any possible achievement gains resulting from the additional reading and writing classes.

It has been three years since the above course changes were implemented. Data has been collected and is available to evaluate the program and determine the effects it has had on student achievement, reading and writing behavior and
attitudes.

The new reading and writing program was implemented in the fall of 1985 with three of the present academic teachers taking some of the work load of the new program. A reading coordinator was employed to develop the new program and coordinate it with these three staff members. The new reading and writing program adds 50 minutes of reading and writing each day to the existing 50 minutes per day in language arts for all junior high students. The reading and writing instructors use specific instructional objectives developed for the program (see Appendix A).

In the writing courses, students are taught four different types of written expression. They are narration, exposition, description, and persuasion. Every paragraph includes one of these types of writing or a combination of two or more of them.

Students study four stages of writing activities: the prewriting stage, writing stage, revision stage, and final draft. Methods to evaluate the final draft are explained in appendix B.

**Statement of the Problem**

This field study examines the effectiveness of the reading and writing program. It examines the following questions:

1. Do the reading and writing courses improve reading scores?
2. Do the reading and writing courses increase writing skills?

3. Do the reading and writing courses result in greater enjoyment of reading by students?

4. Do the reading and writing courses encourage students to read more?

5. Are the reading and writing courses more economical than the fine and applied art courses they replaced?

Recently, greater emphasis has been placed on the academic subjects in the Macon school curriculum. The Superintendent of Macon Schools suggested in 1985, that junior high students could benefit by having a period of reading and writing in addition to language arts. The primary goal of the additional courses in reading and writing was to encourage students to read. It was expected that: 1) students would develop a better attitude toward reading; 2) more learning would take place as demonstrated by higher reading achievement test scores and; 3) writing skills would improve.

Limitations of the Study

This study has the following limitations:

1. The setting for this field experience is in a small rural town. Therefore, results of this study may not be generalized to students in city, suburban, or rural schools.

2. This study is limited to the reading and writing program implemented at Macon Junior High School. The
results may not be generalized to all reading and writing programs.

3. Junior High administrators and teachers do not have any control over the elementary reading and writing program.

4. Some teachers may not have a positive attitude toward the reading and writing program.

Definition of Terms

The following are working definitions of specific terms referred to in this study:

Basal Reading System - Complete package of teaching materials which provides an entire reading curriculum (summarized in what is called a "scope and sequence chart"), instructional strategies for teaching reading, a graded anthology of selections for children to read, and practice exercises.

Choral Reading - Groups read in unison.

Decoding - Readers relate the symbols on the printed page to the language sounds they represent and then derive a meaning from these symbols.

Encoding - Writers use such skills as handwriting, spelling, and punctuation to transcribe language sounds in symbols which communicate meaning.

Global Reading Style - Telling or acting out a story or viewing a film about a story before reading it.

Language Experience - Students write stories about their experiences and then they read them.
Linguistic - Patterns of letters are taught and combined to form words.

Phonics - Isolated letter sounds or letter clusters are taught sequentially and blended to form words.

Reading Style Inventory - A test used to identify students' reading style strengths.

Stanford Achievement Test - A standardized test, published by The Psychological Corporation, that measures general level of scholastic achievement.

Tactile/Kinesthetic Experiences - Psychomotor experiences of students which help them understand reading concepts better (examples - acting in plays, writing stories, creating and using puppets for story telling).

Tactile/Kinesthetic Materials - Resources that allow students to have hands on experience to understand reading better (examples - typewriter, computer, floor games, and paints).

The Ethos of a School - Phrase stating a distinctive personality of a school. The reflection of a community it serves, the students who attend, the staff who labor in it, its history, its values, and its policies.

Whole Word Learning - Learning process where new words are presented on flash cards and in sentences, with accompanying pictures.
Chapter II
Rationale, Related Literature and Research

Rationale

Reading is not a separate subject area in the junior high school independent of the other content areas. A course devoted to reading impacts on all academic areas. Improved student achievement is irrefutably linked to student reading ability, interest, and skill (Lipton and Liss, 1978). Foley (1984) suggests that this impact on other subject areas is affected by the student's attitude toward reading. Students who do not enjoy reading will have a difficult time in learning all across the curriculum (Foley, 1984).

An additional function of the program being examined is the writing component. The relationship between adequate reading technique and effective writing skills is significant. Well developed writing skills are important techniques in expanding the learner's ability to communicate (Boiarsky and Johnson, 1983). Ricci (1985) explains that even though writing skills are very important tools for students to acquire, students are not often motivated to pursue this goal. "To say that writing is 'fun' does not negate the fact that for some students writing can be painfully difficult, it is a struggle for them. However, if a student comes to understand that writing is a way of learning subject matter, that writing does not only occur in
the language arts class, that writing is a way of releasing one's feelings --- then, writing need not be a stressful situation (Ricci, 1985, p. 43).

Review of the Literature

Many of the commission reports of the early 1980's emphasized the importance of re-emphasizing reading and writing in our school curriculum (LaPoints, 1986). In light of this focus, President Reagan invited all Americans to observe and "Year of the Reader" in 1987 with "appropriate educational activities to recognize the importance of restoring reading to a place of preeminence in our personal lives and in the life of our nation" (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson, 1984, p. 3).

Much of the literature concerned with reading and writing in the school curriculum describes these areas of instruction to be necessary basic life skills (Anderson, et al., 1984; Gutknecht, 1985; Crist, 1983). Anderson (1984) suggests reading is a cornerstone for a child's success in school and, indeed, throughout life. Learning to read starts at the nursery school level and continues all the way through college. Anderson's research proposes the most important time for reading skills to be taught and learned is during the early years of schooling. The early years set the stage for later learning. Without the ability to read, excellence in high school and beyond is unattainable (Anderson et al, 1984).
Anderson (1984) believes having a nation of readers is important for society. Economic research has established that schooling is an investment that forms human capital. Human capital is that natural resource in any country that provides leadership, productivity, and growth for all facets of the nation's economy and society. Humans that are producers will keep our country working, sound, and strong (Anderson et al., 1984).

Although the need for a nation of readers is widely accepted, there exists much disagreement concerning the most appropriate approach to delivering reading instruction. LaPointe (1986) believes the overwhelming impression that flows from teacher responses and from student perceptions is that most classrooms are filled with variety and that most teachers will do whatever it takes to teach reading. These professionals describe their approach as "eclectic." However it is described, it seems that U.S. reading teachers believe that all children must learn to read, that students differ from one another, and that no one system is best for all youngsters (LaPointe, 1986).

In examining methods of implementing reading instruction, research suggests an important connection between the acquisition of reading skill and student's preference of reading activities over other activities (Gutknecht, 1985). The National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) found after interviewing more than one
million 9, 13, and 17 year olds:

1. More than half of the students assessed preferred movies to either television or reading. Almost half of the 17 year olds selected reading a book as their least favorite choice of activity.

2. The proportion of students who enjoy reading very much drops from 81% for age nine, to 50% for age 13, to only 42% for age 17.

3. More than a quarter of the teenagers assessed say it is usually hard for them to finish a book they have started.

4. A third to more than half the teenagers have problems concentrating on their reading, finishing classroom silent reading in time, finding books of interest to them and reading long books.

5. 72% of 13 year olds and 75% of the 17 year olds indicated that they spent none or less than one hour per day reading for their own enjoyment.

Gutknecht concludes that negative attitudes toward reading exist, and that they increase with each year spent in school (Gutknecht, 1983, p. 4-5).

In Crist's article, "Wanted: Reading for Pleasure - Not Dead, but Alive," the author emphasized the importance of students learning to read for pleasure to increase reading performance. The English department in which Crist worked, with the assistance of the school librarian, developed
techniques designed to arouse student interest in reading for pleasure. Having book fairs, installing a paperback book exchange club, and allowing weekly Read-Ins were some of the activities implemented to develop students' interest in pleasure reading. Students' involvement in reading began to change many of their daily habits. Rather than spending their money on four or five games of Pac-Man, they would buy a book. Buying a book became a status symbol for students. Everyone bought, even students who had never before read an entire book (Crist, 1983).

The emphasis in the literature on attitude toward reading and preference for reading activities suggests a definite relationship between reading attitude and reading performance. This relationship is illustrated by Gutknecht (1985) in the following conclusions:

"1. For each age, one or two hours per day of reading for one's enjoyment appears to be associated with higher performance than no reading or less than one hour of reading; and
2. The student most likely to read with comprehension tends to think reading is important, enjoy reading, read for enjoyment almost daily, watch television moderately, and spend some time on homework daily" (Gutknecht, 1985, p. 7).

From Gutknecht's findings (1985), it is evident that those students who enjoyed reading and thought that it was
important, both indicators of positive attitudes towards reading, had higher reading performance.

Several programs in reading that have increased reading achievement describe factors important to the development of life-long reading skills (Chick and Lila, 1983; Zemmels, 1982; Carbo, 1987). Each of these programs accepts the premise that positive attitudes help reading development, but each program approaches the implementation differently.

The De Anza Reading Center, a California Demonstration Program for Intensive Instruction in Reading, was established in January of 1973. It is a replication of the Model Schools Reading Program at Santa Barbara Junior High School (Chick and Lila, 1983).

The De Anza Reading Center staff was committed to two basic goals: to increase the reading achievement and to improve the self-concept of each student enrolled in the two year program. To meet these goals, the staff implemented the following instructional strategies:

1. Supportive, non-threatening environment emphasizing individual success.
2. Diagnostic-prescriptive approach to individualized instruction and learning.
3. Low pupil-teacher ratio with teachers and instructional aides who care about students and believe they can learn.
4. Wide variety of high interest, multi-sensory materials and methods to meet the needs of various learning styles.

5. Program designed to meet the needs of all students: remedial, corrective, and developmental (p. 7).

The center has been operating since January of 1973, when the first group of seventh graders began participating in the program. Each project group received instruction in the Reading Center for two years as seventh and eighth graders. All students at the project grade level participated in heterogeneous classes regardless of their reading levels and abilities. Since the project began, five groups have successfully completed the program. The results of the program for the 1982-1983 school year were as follows:

1. Project participants made a mean gain of 23 months on the reading subtest of the CTBS S/3 during the seven months of instruction.

2. Parents reported that the program had been effective for their children. Students indicated that their reading abilities had improved, they felt better about themselves in general, and they no longer hated to read.

3. Overall, evaluation data provided convincing evidence that De Anza Reading Center had produced educationally significant results during the 1982-83
In a study by Zemmels (1982), a reading program for students in grades 7-9 in Perris Union School District, California, was examined. The program was initiated in 1979 as a result of low reading scores. When students entered the seventh grade they were divided into homogeneous groups. During the first 6 weeks of school each group met once a day for 50 minutes to complete the Formula-Three-Reading, Spelling, and Learning Program. Following the first 6 weeks, groups rotated from teacher to teacher for 6-week blocks throughout the next three years. No text or packaged programs were used. Teachers adapted and created their own materials in order that students could apply the skills they acquired in phase one. As students improved, they were promoted to higher level groups. Results of the program indicated that the initial class of seventh graders, whose reading level was an average of two years below the national norm, had raised their reading levels an average of four years during three years of the program. The Perris Union High School staff believed that the impact of the reading program, beginning with the 7th grade at Perris Valley Junior High School, had a positive impact throughout the district (Zemmels, 1982).

In a study matching reading style with student learning style to facilitate improvement in reading achievement and enjoyment, Carbo (1987) described yet another approach to
developing reading skills. Student's individual reading styles, or their natural way of learning to read, can be identified with a 52 item questionnaire called the Reading Style Inventory (RSI), and that information can be used to design an effective reading program. Learning style research indicates that student achievement is affected by at least five major learning-style stimuli: environmental, emotional, sociological, physical, and psychological. The Reading Style Inventory, which is based in part on the Dunn and Dunn learning styles model, is a questionnaire that can be administered to students in grades 2-12. The RSI diagnoses the learning styles of youngsters specifically for reading, and identifies 18 elements of reading style. Each element can affect an individual's ability to read positively if the student's reading style is matched, or negatively if it is mismatched.

Carbo believes that many students who have had difficulty learning to read are likely to have been taught with procedures and under conditions that seriously mismatched their reading styles. For example, poor readers who were tested with RSI tended to be strongly tactual/kinesthetic, whereas most current reading instruction engages the auditory and visual senses of the learner. Many poor readers prefer dim light, and feel uncomfortable in brightly lit classrooms. When students' reading styles are gravely mismatched with instructional
styles, they exhibit debilitating, stress-producing, antisocial, and/or withdrawn behavior. She concluded the educators need to be aware of the importance of matching individuals' reading styles with their learning styles.

Carbo claims that to improve literacy in the United States, educators need to make learning to read as easy and pleasurable as possible for all students. Carbo offers the following recommendations to increase reading achievement in the schools:

1. Eliminate decoding from achievement tests and state competency exams.
2. Deemphasize decoding scores when determining student placement.
3. Accommodate students' reading styles.
4. Provide reading styles courses and inservice.
5. Evaluate basal readers and workbooks.
6. Read excellent literature to students at least once every day, and make those readings exciting and enjoyable.
7. Create comfortable, relaxing reading environments and well stocked classroom libraries.
8. Use a variety of reading methods.
9. Use many reading materials and instruction techniques that match global/tactile/kinesthetic reading styles.
10. Allow primary children time to read in pairs, and
provide sustained silent reading time for older students (p. 57-59).

Carbo reinforces the belief that to improve literacy in this country, reading programs must be refined so that each child is given an equal chance to learn to read. To expect that one reading method, instructional focus, or set of materials can provide that opportunity for every student, or even for most children, is both ingenious and inequitable (Carbo, 1984).

Additionally, Carbo (1984) states that principals of schools are the ones who make a difference in effective reading programs. Principals who assume leadership roles see to it that their students have the very best opportunities to learn to read. Carbo followed up on work done by five innovative principals who realized the importance of a sound reading program and implemented reading style programs. The author found that in just four to ten months, administratively supported reading styles based instruction resulted in:

1. Increased reading achievement.
2. Improved student attitudes toward reading.
3. Better student-teacher relationships.
4. Positive changes in the teacher's role and ability to teach reading.
5. More reading for pleasure.
6. Dramatically decreased discipline problems (p. 21).
Authors such as Vacca (1980), and Farrell (1982) have also written about studying various approaches to reading instruction for the improvement of reading achievement. Vacca (1984) did a study on the effect of holistic activities and subskill instruction. The purpose of the study was to measure the effects of holistic and subskill instruction on students' reading comprehension and attitudes toward reading. Holistic instruction centered around strategies designed to engage students actively in reading through a constant interaction with print. During the holistic instruction four different strategies were used. The different strategies were:

1. Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading: A strategy which permits students to focus on generating meaning from reading over gradually increasing stretches of time.

2. ReQuest: A strategy that is an acronym for "reciprocal questioning," in which teacher and student take turns asking each other questions about portions of a selection they have read.

3. Radio Reading (Vacca, 1976): A strategy that uses oral reading to emphasize the importance of the communication of ideas rather than accuracy of pronunciation.

4. Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (Stauffer 1969): A strategy that allows a teacher to serve as an
intellectual agitator by directing reading with the frequent use of three questions (p. 514).

Subskill instruction was arranged in a logical sequence and taught in a prescribed manner through the TPA (Teach, Practice, Apply) lesson format centered around eight comprehension subskills. The subskills were stated in terms of reading behaviors. The teacher's main objectives are to: 1) identify appropriate skill needs of students through informal diagnosis, 2) teach the relevant subskills, 3) provide practice in those subskills, and 4) provide for application of those subskills (Vacca, 1980).

Thirty-four students in grades 7-8 and 14 graduate student tutors participated in the experiment. The 34 students were assigned randomly to one of two groups, 17 to a group. Two or three students were then each assigned randomly to one of seven tutors for each group. Group one received three weeks of the holistic treatment while Group two received three weeks of the subskill treatment. Each tutor selected appropriate reading materials and difficulty levels (Vacca, 1980).

When the effects of holistic and subskill instruction on paragraph comprehension were analyzed, there were no significant differences between holistic and subskill approaches on students' attitudes toward reading as determined by the Estes Scale (Vacca, 1980).

Farrell (1982), reported that a formal sustained silent
reading program increased reading ability and interest. Sustained silent reading (SSR) programs allow students to read self selected materials during a specified time each day. Farrell's study occurred in the following setting. A large traditional classroom with bright windows was used. All book selections were read during study hall. The students involved were eighth graders. Each day students would spend 40 minutes reading silently from books they had selected. While reading, each kept a list of unfamiliar words. They passed these lists in at the end of the period, and used the words for weekly vocabulary development.

Farrell also wanted to provide students with skills to analyze their selection intelligently. A specific form in which students could write book reports was developed. The students were allowed to work on the book reports during class time and were closely monitored by the teacher so that the problem of copying was eliminated.

The program was evaluated by administering the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test, Level E, in early October and late May. Results indicated that 90% of the students improved between one and two years. Students who gained the most were students whose previous reading scores were originally among the lowest in the class. Besides the increase in test scores, Farrell found the sustained silent reading program had other merits. The preeminent value of the program was the growing interest students exhibited in reading itself.
Students became more involved in their books, showing reluctance to lay them aside when the bell rang. Their choices indicated growing sophistication as they moved away from the young adult shelves toward more substantial fare by Tolkien, Carroll, and Dickens.

There is a school of thought that reading and writing should be taught in conjunction with each other (Rasinski, 1987). According to Rasinski, reading and writing are both major components of literacy. Reading helps children write better, and experiences in writing are beneficial to childrens' reading development. This authors work recommends the use of dialogue journals to better develop the skills of reading and writing. Dialogue journals are gaining acceptance in schools and homes as a way of connecting reading and writing in a purposeful and natural way.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress, administered by the Educational Testing Service, Princeton, N.J., did an assessment of reading and writing trends from 1974 to 1985 (LaPoints, 1986). The director of NAEP, Archie LaPoints (1986), noticed from the trend that better readers are better writers and better writers are better readers.

A similar study by Karlin and Karlin (1984), found that the writing ability of students matches the attention given to their reading development. They believe improvement in
writing might well lead to improvement in reading. Reading and writing draw upon the same bases—language, experiences, and similar processes. Both deal with meaning—in one case obtaining meaning and in the other producing meaning. Karlin and Karlin (1984) suggest the following writing activities to increase reading comprehension:

1. Teach students to base their writing on what they learn. When students write on what they learn they have to organize information. By organizing information this will help the student to understand and remember more of it (sic). Therefore, increasing reading comprehension (sic).

2. The writing activity of sentence combining (sic). The task of including in a sentence ideas contained in a group of sentences helps students to determine what ways the ideas might be related. Students understanding the relationships of ideas helps to increase comprehension (sic).

3. Prereading and Postreading Writing activities (sic). A writing exercise that supports such surveys is one in which students develop paragraphs based on the headings and subheadings of a chapter. Not only does such writing require them to speculate about the nature of the information they are to study, but also stimulates them to think about what they already know
about the topics (p. 127).

The Karlin and Karlin (1984) study suggests there is enough support in research from this area to encourage and include writing as one aspect of a program fostering reading development. Secondary effects of the writing ability of students have led to the institution of programs of "writing across the curriculum" (p. 127).

Birnbaum (1982) found a high correlation between proficient readers and proficient writers. The author also found similarities in cognitive behaviors that distinguish proficient readers and writers from those who are not. Birnbaum's study implies that proficient students, regardless of whether they are reading or writing, engage in processes which help them derive meaning from written language.

Boiarsky and Clifford (1983) suggest the teaching of reading and writing can be no less than the teaching of thinking. They claim that students need to engage in complex cognitive processes to truly master the basics. Many teachers use basal materials to teach reading and writing. Boiarsky and Clifford conclude that this method may be detrimental in that it often replaces original writing in the classroom. Use of basal materials provides children with little or no practice in developing and increasing their fluency in writing, in developing syntactic proficiency, or in expressing original thoughts. Nor do they have an opportunity to explore their own reactions and
experiences as they read various stories, poems, and descriptions. They believe that reading and writing need to be developed together, and that they need to be taught as part of children's general cognitive development (Boiarsky and Clifford, 1983).

Literature discussing writing across the curriculum has provided a plethora of studies (Ricci, 1985; Dudley-Marling, 1985; Hartwell, 1985; Moffett, 1968; Hannafin, 1987; Burns, 1984; and Daiute, 1983). This discussion of writing in the curriculum yields as great a variety in methods as did the reading methods.

According to Ricci (1985), writing can become fun by providing students with more opportunities for writing -- both free writing and structured writing. With the increased emphasis on writing, students will come to the realization that the more they write across the curriculum, the easier the words can and will flow. Ricci is a social studies teacher who uses the avenue of journal writing to try to motivate and inspire eighth grade students to write and to adopt a positive attitude toward writing. The author also worked very closely with language arts teachers focusing on the writing process through integrated units.

Ricci (1985) writes that writing across the curriculum requires cooperation among staff people. Many teachers feel they are not well enough trained to teach writing. Teacher inservices are needed to train teachers in different subject
areas so they will feel more secure and comfortable requiring students to write in their classes. Ricci suggests the best leaders to set up and conduct inservice programs on writing in different subject areas are usually the language arts teachers or reading specialists. Teachers need to learn several writing methods that can be used in their subject areas to encourage and motivate students to write. These subject matter teachers also need help in methods of evaluating writing (Ricci, 1985).

Dudley-Marling (1985) writes about another method used to encourage students to write more and to have writing become fun by using computer assisted instruction (CAI). One of the greatest instructional benefits of computers may be found in open-ended computer activities such as word processing, where the computer is used more as a learning tool than as an electronic tutor (Dudley-Marling, 1985).

Though considerable interest has been expressed in the use of word processing for the teaching of writing, differences of opinion exist as to the effectiveness, and even the desirability, of such approaches (Daiute, 1985). Perhaps some of the disagreement concerning the teaching of writing skills via computerized word processing can be traced to fundamental differences in teaching philosophy. Traditionally, writing skills have been taught through one of two distinct methods: the reductive approach or the holistic approach (Hartwell, 1985).
In the reductive approach, writing is taught by focusing on discrete, often isolated mechanical skills, including punctuation, syntactical rules, and so forth. The holistic approach concentrates attention on the process of writing as opposed to specific mechanics. The basic assumption of this method is that as learners concentrate on meaning and on composition as a whole, mechanical skills develop naturally. Learners are taught that writing consists of three distinct steps: pre-writing or planning, writing, and most importantly, revision (Moffet, 1968).

There is considerable evidence to support the efficacy of the holistic approach to writing instruction. The purpose of a study by Dalton and Hannafin (1987) was to examine the effects of a year long holistic writing program featuring word processing on the writing skills of junior high school students. The subjects were 80 seventh grade students using a word processor three times per week to complete writing assignments while the control group used pen and paper. Writing samples taken upon completion of the treatment were analyzed and result were discussed.

Dalton and Hannafin felt there were a number of results from this study that warrant discussion. First, relatively low achievers benefited more from composition taught via word processing than conventional instructional methods. Word processing improved the revision process and consequently made writing less tedious for low ability
learners. Many low ability learners perceive the revision process as difficult, tedious and burdensome. Consequently, low achievers are often disinclined to edit and revise their writing. The ease of revision resulting from word processing, however, seems to increased the likelihood of revision by low ability learners.

The teachers involved in this study noted that learners using the word processor required less encouragement to revise drafts of their writing assignments and generally spent more time revising their writing than their counterparts using conventional methods. Word processing made the writing process more tolerable because error correction was simplified, and the computer minimized much of the reticence with which many learners have associated paper and pencil writing.

Although the study done by Dudley and Hannafin demonstrates some of the considerable potential of word processing to improve writing skills, several important problems remain. First, the question of interference resulting from inadequate keyboarding skills must be resolved. Many students at the junior high level had not received formal typing instruction. As a result, many students lost valuable time in writing on the computer because of using the hunt and peck method of typing. Secondly, was the problem of gaining access to the computers. Trips to the computer lab were time consuming.
Each trip required the distribution of necessary software, reducing the amount of time available for instruction and practice. Finally, some students in the word processing group reported that they occasionally neglected the careful planning ordinarily completed prior to composing. This observation is consistent with the comments of several authors who have cautioned that word processing per se does not teach students how or what to write; it only simplifies the method of recording composition. These researchers believe that the use of word processing to improve writing skills has merit but feel that additional research is still needed to identify methods most likely to improve writing skills (Burns, 1984; Daiute, 1983).

Uniqueness of the Study

With emphasis on budget cuts in education today, a reading and writing program is very inexpensive to implement and retain. Reading and writing programs are highly recommended in the learning development of an individual. As of this writing very little has been written about the different types of reading and writing programs implemented in the state of Illinois. The Macon Junior High reading and writing program may provide a model for other schools.

Much controversy over the implementation of a reading and writing program at Macon Junior High occurred among staff people. The program replaced expensive programs such as industrial arts, home economics, and art in the junior
high curriculum. Many staff people felt the cut programs offered more to the development of an individual than did the new reading and writing program. The program has been in effect for four years. Evaluation of the program now should help determine whether or not it has a significant impact on measured student achievement, attitudes toward reading, and amount of reading for pleasure by students.
Chapter III -- Design of the Study

General Design of the Study

According to Moore (1983), in educational research, experimental designs are often not appropriate. In these instances causal-comparative or ex post facto research is recommended. This type of research suggests possible causal relationships amongst and between different levels of nonmanipulated independent variables. The independent variables in this study are the reading treatment for 6th grade students with two years of reading instruction, the 7th grade students with three years of reading instruction, and the 8th grade students with four years of reading instruction. The dependent measures are two years of achievement in reading comprehension for 6th grade students, three years achievement scores in reading comprehension for 7th grade students, and four years of achievement scores in reading comprehension for 8th grade students. Reading test scores for the past four consecutive years were to be analyzed for reading improvement.

Writing samples from students over a one year period of time were collected and analyzed for writing skill improvement. The design of this procedure is termed the time series design. In a time series design, the researcher periodically obtains measurements from a single group of subjects. The treatment is administered between the measurements. In this study, one measurement is represented
by the first writing sample followed by further exposure to the writing program. The second and third writing samples constitute additional measurements with further involvement in the writing program between the measurements.

An additional concern of this study, suited to the time series design, is whether or not students read more following involvement in the reading program. Data describing the amount of reading being done by the subjects were not available.

The design used, collecting data from subjects through the use of questionnaires, is the one-shot case study. According to Campbell and Stanley (1972) the case study consists of a carefully studied single instance which is compared with general expectations of what the data would have been had the treatment not occurred. The student and teacher questionnaires represent the carefully studied single instance.

Population

Students in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade at Macon Junior High School during the 1987-88 school year who attended Macon Schools during their 5th through 8th grade years were included for purposes of analyzing test results. All students in the 7th and 8th grades constituted the population administered the student questionnaires. Students in the 6th grade were not administered the student questionnaires because they were not involved in the reading
and writing program as 5th graders. The total number involved in completing the students questionnaires were 113. Teachers who filled out the teachers' questionnaire were all teachers who were on the junior high staff during the same school year.

**Data Collection and Instrumentation**

The reading comprehension section of the Stanford Achievement Test published by the Psychological Corporation was the standardized test used to measure student growth. Test scores from this year's 6th grade were collected when they were in the 5th and 6th grade, the 7th graders when they were in the 5th, 6th, and 7th grade, and the 8th graders when they were in the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade.

The Stanford Achievement Test was given to all junior high students during February, 1988. The test were collected and sent to The Psychological Corporation for scoring results. The Macon school system received the test results in the first week of May, 1988. Test results were discussed with Macon Junior High faculty and then sent home to parents.

Throughout the 1987-88 school year, junior high students did many writing exercises in their reading and writing classes. Writing exercises centered around the established goals of the reading and writing teachers (see Appendix A). All writing exercises were kept in each student's folder. Periodically, writing done by the
students was evaluated by student and teachers (see Appendix B). For this paper, writing samples were randomly selected by the reading coordinator to help illustrate growth, if any, in student writing skills. The writing samples consist of three academic levels (highs, middle, and low) for each grade level (see appendix H).

Student and teacher questionnaires were administered to assess any changes in the attitudes of students toward the reading and writing program. A student questionnaire was given to each 7th and 8th grade student (see Appendix C). Sixth graders did not receive the questionnaire because this was their first year in the program. The purpose of the student questionnaire was to determine if students enjoy reading more now, and if writing is easier for them than it was two years ago. The teacher questionnaire was given to the junior high faculty to obtain their feedback on the students' level of accomplishment and attitude toward reading and writing (see Appendix D).

Student and teacher questionnaires were distributed and collected over a two week period in the month of October, 1987. The questionnaires were analyzed by the process of using tally sheets to score results and transfer the results to bar graphs for better understanding (see Appendices E, F, and G).

The student questionnaire was composed of 20 items and the teacher questionnaire was composed of 15 items. The
content of each questionnaire was developed from written goals and objectives of the reading and writing program (see Appendix A). Both questionnaires have positive and negative items to strengthen the confidence of the respondents' answers. Negative statements on the student and teacher questionnaires are listed in Table 1.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negatively worded items on attitude questionnaires.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Questionnaire</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Questionnaire</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responses on the questionnaires were assigned a value of 1 to 4. An item marked 1 represented a strongly positive response. An item marked 4 represented a strongly negative response. Therefore, a low score represents a strongly positive attitude toward the extra time spent in reading and writing. A high score represents a strongly negative attitude toward the extra reading and writing work.

Bar graphs were designed to illustrate the results of the student and teacher questionnaires (see Appendices F and
The bar graphs were divided into four categories to reflect the scores from the questionnaires. On the student bar graph the categories are: Strongly Agree (scores 20-34), Agree (scores 35-49), Disagree (scores 50-64), and Strongly Disagree (scores 65-80). On the teacher bar graph the four categories are: Strongly Agree (scores 15-22), Agree (scores 23-37), Disagree (scores 38-51), and Strongly Disagree (52-60).

To compare the cost of the reading and writing program with the cost of the fine and applied art courses that were cut, data from the central office was secured and analyzed. The time period used to determine the savings or economical loss of the reading and writing program was from the school year of 1984-85 through school year of 1987-88. The 1984-85 school year was the last year for the programs of industrial arts, home economics, and art, which were cut due to deficit financing. The school year 1985-86 was the first year for the reading and writing program. Costs of the reading and writing program and of the fine and applied arts are illustrated in Table 5.

Data Analysis

In analyzing the results of achievement test scores in reading for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students over the past two to four years, a one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) repeated measure design for each grade level was used. The ANOVA design compared the standard scaled reading score of
each student that took the Stanford Achievement test over the experimental period of time. Scaled scores on the Stanford Achievement Tests are valid scores because they are equivalent across different forms used and levels tested over a period of time. In this study different forms were used at different levels of testing of two to four years.

To evaluate students' improvement in writing skills for junior high students over the past two to four years, different writing samples were randomly selected to be analyzed (see Appendix H). The first phase of evaluation of the writing samples were evaluated by students using teacher made grid (see Appendix B). After the students evaluated the writing samples, reading and writing teachers then evaluated the samples and gave feedback if student evaluations were right or wrong.

Descriptive statistics, in the form of questionnaires and tally sheets with results transferred to bar graphs that were divided into four different categories (see Appendices C-G), were used to measure students' attitudes towards the extra time spent in reading and writing. When a large number of student scores fall in any one category, this suggests student attitude toward the reading and writing program are very strong in that category. The greater the number of scores that fall in the Strongly Agree and Agree categories the greater the positive attitude toward reading and writing. Positive attitudes indicate that students
enjoy the reading and writing program and have a tendency to read and write more than in the past.

To determine whether the reading and writing program is more economical than the fine and applied arts programs it replaced, at Macon Junior High School, costs were compared. Costs of the fine and applied arts program were identified. These cost were compared with costs of the reading and writing program and are reported in Table 6.
Chapter IV -- Results

Introduction
This study was designed to answer five questions. Data was unavailable to answer one of the questions. Data was collected, analyzed, and interpreted to answer the remaining four questions.

The following discussion presents each question individually, stated in its original form. The results of the analyses of the data are described, and appropriate tables are included.

Question No. 1
Do the reading and writing courses improve reading scores?

Results
Examination of the data reveals significant improvement in achievement scores for 8th grade students who have received the reading and writing instruction for four school years. Analysis of the data from the 6th and 7th grade students does not reveal significant improvement, but the data does suggest a general increase in the F-ratio the longer students are exposed to the instruction (Table 2).

The 8th grade scores yield an F-ratio of 10.85 with the critical value of F being 2.67 at the .05 level of significance. The F ratio for the 8th grade scores is strongly significant, and therefore confirms significant growth in achievement scores.
The 7th grade scores yield an F-ratio of 2.61 with a critical value of F being 3.13 at the .05 level of significance. The F-ratio for the 7th grade scores is not significant, but the 2.61 value is relatively close to the 3.13 critical value. The 6th grade scores produced an F-ratio of .41 with a critical value of F being 4.00 at the .05 level of significance.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scores</th>
<th>Calculated F-ratio</th>
<th>Critical Value of F</th>
<th>Significant/Not significant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8th grade</td>
<td>10.85</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th grade</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>Not Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th grade</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>Not Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question No. 2

Do the reading and writing courses increase writing skills.

Results

During the 1986-87 and 1987-88 school years students
completed a self analysis of their writing skills by completing the student writing analysis form (see Appendix B). The student analysis form consisted of 8 different question for students to answer. Students were to mark a (+) if they felt they had showed growth in meeting the objectives set earlier in the year and a (-) if they showed no growth in meeting the objectives. On the student analysis form, one question and extra writing space for general comments was provided for the reading and writing teachers to use to verify student responses (see Appendix B). Table 3 lists the results of student response for each question the student analysis form.

Table 3

Responses from Student Analysis Form

School Year 1986-87

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question #</th>
<th># Students marking (+)</th>
<th># Students Marking (-)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School Year 1987-88

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question #</th>
<th># Students marking (+)</th>
<th># Students marking (-)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Such a large number of students marking (+) and reading and writing teachers meeting with students to help evaluate and verify student markings shows there were significant improvement in writing skills over the past two years. In Appendix H writing samples of students used to help evaluate improvement in writing skills have been included. Reading and writing teachers and the reading specialist commented on strengths and weaknesses of students' writing over a period of time. All teachers and the specialist found growth in the students' writing ability.

**Question No. 3**

Do the reading and writing courses result in greater enjoyment of reading by students.
Results

A concern in the reading and writing program was the perception of students and teachers about the quality of the program. Questionnaires were given to students and teachers to determine their perceptions of the program and also to provide feedback whether students' attitude towards reading and writing had changed positively. Appendices E, F, and G give results of the student and teacher questionnaires. Results from the appendices are summarized in Table 4 and Table 5 for more concise information.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results of Student Responses toward Reading-Writing Program</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results of Teacher Responses toward Reading-Writing Program</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results of bar graphs in appendices F and G and from Tables 4 and 5 show that most students have positive attitudes toward the reading and writing program at Macon Junior High School. This statement is based upon the number
of the students who fell in the Strongly Agree and Agree categories.

Question No. 4

Do the reading and writing courses encourage students to read more.

Results

Data describing the amount of reading being done by the subjects was not available.

Question No. 5

The reading and writing courses are more economical than the fine and applied art courses they replaced.

Results

During the summer of 1984, the Macon Community Schools hired a new superintendent. One of the main goals for the new superintendent was to improve the financial status of the district. During the first four months of the 1984-85 school year, the superintendent evaluated the financial condition of the district and its curriculum. In November of 1984, the superintendent recommended to the board of education some changes that could be made to solve the problems that existed. He believed that students needed more reading and writing in their curriculum. He also believed courses such as industrial arts, home economics, and art in the junior high curriculum really served no educational value. As a result of evaluating the financial outlook and programs the superintendent recommended
replacing the junior high programs of industrial arts, home economics, and art with a reading and writing program. Table 6 reflects the savings to the district of the new reading and writing program over the cuts of other programs and positions.

Table 6

| Estimated expenditures of cut programs compared to adding of a reading and writing program from fall of 1985 to spring of 1988 |
|---|---|
| Estimated expenditures 1985-88 (costs reflect salaries & supplies) | |
| Art | $21,289 |
| Industrial arts | 21,300 |
| Home Economics | 23,759 |
| Total cost | $66,348 | $63,348 |
| Reading & Writing program | 24,557 | **24,557** |
| Total savings to district | $38,791 |

The addition of a reading and writing program to the district's junior high curriculum replacing the existing programs represented a savings of $38,791 over the three year period of time reviewed.
Chapter V
Summary, Finding, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

This study examines the effectiveness of the reading and writing program at the Macon Junior High School, Macon, Illinois. The program was developed in the 1984-85 school year and implemented during the 1985-86 school year. The reading and writing program has been in effect for three years. The specific objectives of the program to evaluate are: (1) The reading and writing courses improve reading scores; (2) The reading and writing courses increase writing skills; (3) The reading and writing courses result in greater enjoyment of reading by students; (4) The reading and writing courses encourage students to read more; and (5) The reading and writing courses are more economical than the fine and applied art courses they replaced.

Setting for the study was Macon Junior High School located in Macon, Illinois. Students in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade at Macon Junior High School during the 1987-88 school year, who attended Macon Schools during their 5th through 8th grade years, constituted the population of this study for improvement in reading scores. All students in the 7th and 8th grades and their teachers constituted the population administered the student and teacher questionnaires. This study has two limitations. One is the setting for this field experience is in a small rural
town. Therefore, results of this study may not be generalized to students in city, suburban, or rural schools. Secondly, this study is limited to the reading and writing program implemented at Macon Junior High School. The results may not be generalized to all reading and writing programs.

To examine whether or not the five objectives of the reading and writing program were achieved, a variety of data, instrumentation, and methods of analysis was used. Achievement test scores in reading comprehension over a two to four year period of time were used to measure improvement in reading scores. To analyze the results of achievement scores in reading for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students over the past two to four years, a one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) repeated measure design for each grade level was used. The independent variable in this study was the reading and writing treatment each level of students received and the dependent variables were the achievement scores in reading comprehension each student received over a period of two to four years, writing samples from students, and questionnaire responses from students and teachers. Examination of the data revealed significant improvement in achievement scores for 8th grade students who received the reading and writing instruction for three years. Analysis of the data from the 6th and 7th grade students does not reveal significant improvement in reading scores but...
suggests a general improvement the longer students are exposed to the instruction.

Writing samples from students over a one-year period of time were collected and analyzed for writing skill improvement. The design of this procedure is called the time series design. To help in evaluation of writing skills, students responded on self analysis forms with verification of student responses by reading and writing teachers and the reading specialist. Results from the student self analysis forms shows there was significant improvement in writing skills over the past two years. All teachers and the specialist also found growth in the students' writing ability.

Student and teacher questionnaires were administered to assess any changes in the attitudes of students toward the reading and writing program. The purpose of the questionnaires was to determine if students enjoy reading more now, and if writing is easier for them than it was two years ago. The questionnaires were analyzed by the process of using tally sheets to score results and transfer the results to bar graphs for better understanding. The bar graphs were divided into four different categories to reflect the scores from the questionnaires. The four different categories were: (1) Strongly Agree; (2) Agree; (3) Disagree; and (4) Strongly Disagree. 71% of student responses fell in the strongly agree and agree categories.
with 70% of the teachers responding the same. Results of the responses show that students have a positive attitude toward the reading and writing program and that teachers have also observed their change.

Data from the central office of the Macon School District was collected and analyzed to compare costs of the reading and writing program to the costs of industrial arts, home economics, and art, the programs they replaced. Data show there was a substantial cost savings in implementing the reading and writing program over the costs of the fine and applied art programs.

Findings of the Study

This section of the study deals with the findings for each of the questions. Results of the data are described and appropriate tables included.

Findings of this study show there is a significant improvement in reading comprehension scores for 8th grade students who have received the reading treatment for three years. The 8th grade scores yield an F-ratio of 10.85 with the critical value of F being 2.67 at the .05 level of significance. The 7th grade scores yield an F-ratio of 2.61 with the critical value of F being 3.13 at the .05 level of significance. Therefore, the findings for improvement in reading comprehension scores for 7th grade students who received the reading treatment for two years were not significant. The 6th grade scores produced an F-ratio
of .41 with the critical value of F being 4.00 at the .05 level of significance. Therefore, the improvement in the comprehension scores for 6th grade students who received the reading treatment for one year were not significant. While the results from the 6th and 7th grade students does not reveal significant improvement, the data does suggest a general increase in the F-ratio the longer students are exposed to the program.

This study found significant improvement in writing skills of students over the past two years. During the 1986-87 and 1987-88 school years, students completed self analysis of their writing skills by completing student analysis forms once a year. The reading and writing teachers and reading specialist were able to verify student responses. The student analysis form consists of 8 different questions to which students responded with a (+) if they felt they showed growth in meeting the objectives set earlier in the year. The students responded with a (-) if they felt they showed no growth in meeting the objectives. The total number of students marking a (+) for all question was 84% (2524 out of 3000) compared to 16% (476 out of 3000) marking a (-) on the student analysis form. All reading and writing teachers and the reading specialist reported they found growth in the students' writing abilities.

Another finding of this study indicates that students
generally have positive attitudes toward the reading and writing program. Student and teacher questionnaires were administered to assess the attitudes of the students. Results of the student and teacher questionnaires were transferred to tally sheets. From the tally sheets, the results were transferred to bar graphs. The bar graphs were divided into four different categories of: (1) Strongly Agree; (2) Agree; (3) Disagree; and (4) Strongly Disagree. Responses that fell in the strongly agree and agree categories represented positive attitudes by students toward the reading and writing program. Responses that fell in the disagree and strongly disagree categories represented a negative attitude toward the reading and writing program. It was found that 71% (80 out of 112) of the student responses fell in the strongly agree or agree categories. The teacher questionnaire results showed that 7 out of 10 or 70% of the teacher responses fell in the strongly agree or agree categories.

A final finding in this study was that it was much more economical to implement the reading and writing program in the junior high curriculum at Macon Junior High School than to continue the industrial arts, home economics, and art programs. Data collected over a three year period of time reflects tremendous savings to the Macon School District. The total savings of implementing the reading and writing program compared to the applied and fine art programs it
Conclusions from this Study

Results from this study can be helpful to school administrators in the Macon School District in evaluating the effectiveness of the junior high school reading and writing program. Findings show that the longer students are involved in the reading and writing treatment, the greater the increase in achievement scores in reading comprehension of students. There was a significant improvement in reading scores for the 8th grade students but not for the 6th and 7th grade students. There are several reasons for no significant improvement of 6th grade students' reading scores. One reason is that their 6th grade year is their first year in the junior high building. The students are subject to different teachers, administrators, and curriculum than they were in their 4th and 5th grade years. The 7th grade students showed no significant improvement in reading scores but there was an increase in the F-ratio on the ANOVA measure design. Descriptive statistics showed there were positive attitudes by students toward the reading and writing program and that students' writing skill definitely improved. The positive attitude of the students can be attributed to the positive attitudes of the reading and writing teachers and specialist. They believed in the program and wanted it to work. The program has not only demonstrated improved reading and writing skills, it is very
economical to the Macon School District as compared with the program it replaced.

Recommendations

Based upon the results of this field experience, the following recommendations are made:

1. The program should continue to exist as part of the Macon Junior High School curriculum.

2. Further study should be done to determine whether students are reading more.

3. A follow up study should take place to determine whether students continue to score higher in reading achievement later in their high school years.

4. Further study should explore the relationship between scores of students collected in this study with scores of students who did not attend Macon Junior High School prior to attending Macon High School.
Delta Kappan, 68 (2), 135-138


Instructional Approaches To Reading Comprehension.

*Journal of Reading*, 26 (6), 512-518.


*Golden Bell Award Winner*, 1-7.
References


Appendix A

Reading and Writing Program Objectives

**Reading**

1. Students demonstrate increased interest when they browse and read.
2. Students' demonstrate that they have developed broader and more mature reading interests.
3. Students cite incidences or points of view developed from their reading.
4. Students' cite instances in which they have used reading as a source of ideas to solve their own personal, vocational, and/or educational problems.
5. Students, through free spoken and written expression, indicate they are involved in their reading.
6. Students exhibit flexibility of mind and seek to understand points of view other than their own.

**Writing**

1. Students write about what they've learned, and about personal experiences.
2. Students write for a defined purpose, and in a defined mode (letter, story, book report, etc).
3. Students organize their ideas for writing, and gain control of the mechanics of writing.
4. Students demonstrate growth in their ability to communicate understanding through the written word.
5. Students approach writing with a positive attitudes.
Appendix B

READING AND WRITING EVALUATION FORM

NAME __________________________ GRADE __________ DATE __________

Please mark (+) for shows growth in meeting objective and (-) for shows no growth in meeting objective.

1. Student has included name and date on each sample.

2. Student has written complete sentences.

3. Student has used a variety of sentence structure.

4. Student has used descriptive language.

5. Student has used correct punctuation.

6. Student has used correct spelling.

7. Student has written using correct paragraphing.

8. In general, quality of writing has improved.

9. Student showed improvement in ability to comprehend reading material.
Appendix B (continued)

Pre-testing Reading Results

Post-testing Reading

General Comments:

__________________________
Signature of Evaluator
Appendix C

Student Questionnaire on Reading and Writing

Please circle the response on the right that is closest to your feelings about each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I feel comfortable writing.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I usually am able to write what I have intended to say.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Writing does not seem to be getting any easier to do.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I feel I write in correct paragraphs.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I do not often use descriptive language as I write.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I do not vary sentence structure.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. When I read written work I easily understand what is being said.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I cannot often see where other writers need to edit their work to improve it.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I often notice things other writers do in their work that I would like to try in my own writing.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Reading is something I enjoy.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C (continued)

11. I sometimes have trouble understanding what the author of a book is trying to tell me. 1 2 3 4
12. I read for pleasure about once a week. 1 2 3 4
13. I never read for pleasure. 1 2 3 4
14. My favorite kind of reading is fiction. 1 2 3 4
15. I do not enjoy reading true fiction. 1 2 3 4
16. I always seem to be the last person to finish when we are reading a passage silently. 1 2 3 4
17. I never used to enjoy reading, but now I do. 1 2 3 4
18. I usually am able to remember most of the parts of a story I have read. 1 2 3 4
19. I find my reading in other classes has improved. 1 2 3 4
20. Reading and Writing are now activities I look forward to doing. 1 2 3 4
Appendix D

Teacher Questionnaire on Reading and Writing

Please circle the response on the right that is closest to your feelings about each statement.

1. I have noticed a significant difference in students' ability to accurately express their thoughts in writing within the last 2 years.
2. I have noticed students are doing a better job writing complete sentences.
3. Students are writing better essay questions on test.
4. I have not noticed any difference in the sentence structure that students are using.
5. Students' writing does not exhibit the use of a good vocabulary.
6. Many of my students use expressive language while writing.
7. Few of my students use good paragraphing techniques while writing.

[Scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree]
8. I often see evidence of appropriate organizational skills in my students' writing.  

9. In general, the quality of students' work is improving.  

10. I have not seen evidence of a change in the comprehension abilities of my students' reading work.  

11. I have seen changes in my students' ability to communicate in written work.  

12. My students seem to be taking less time to write answers to essay questions on tests.  

13. In my course, students do not need to be able to express their thoughts clearly in writing.  

14. Students do not seem to be understanding their reading assignment any better than before.
Appendix D (continued)

15. The reading and writing program has become evident in the work of students in my classes.
Appendix E

Scoring and Tally Sheet of Student and Teacher Questionnaires

The four different categories on each questionnaire were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
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</table>

The scoring for each of the different categories was:

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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Teacher Scores</th>
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<td>Score_________</td>
<td>Score_________</td>
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<tr>
<td>#2 _________</td>
<td>#2 _________</td>
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<tr>
<td>#3 _________</td>
<td>#3 _________</td>
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<table>
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<th>Teacher #10</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student #113</th>
<th>Score_________</th>
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</table>
### Tally Sheet of Student Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>30 32 34 36</td>
<td>38 40 42 44 46 48 50 52 54 56 58 60 62 64</td>
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<td>35 37 39 41 43 45 47 49</td>
<td>51 53 55 57 59 61 63</td>
<td>65 67 69 71 73 75 77 79</td>
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### Tally Sheet of Teacher Scores

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<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>X X X X X</td>
<td>39 41 43 45 47 49 51 53 55 57 59</td>
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Appendix F

Student Questionnaire Responses

![Bar Chart]

<table>
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<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<td>60-64</td>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>70-74</td>
<td>75-80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of Students

---

50
45
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
Appendix G

Teacher Questionnaire Responses
Appendix H

Student Writing Samples For School Year 1987-88

The next 28 pages will include writing samples from students during the 1987-88 school year. The writing samples were picked randomly from the 7th and 8th grade students by the reading specialist. The writing samples include a sample from different academic levels of students. The different academic levels will be high, middle, and low. The writing samples were samples taken in the months of August, December, and May of the school year.

For each writing sample there is a cover page explaining the grade level of the student, the academic level of the student, and the writing sample strengths and weaknesses as explained by the reading and writing specialist.

The writing specialist explains that these students often are making some of the same mistakes at the end of the year as they did in the beginning, but their writing shows improvement by:

1. Writing being greater in length.
2. Increase in sentence variety.
3. Increase use of different vocabulary.
5. Clearer expression of ideas.
6. Ability to rewrite ideas from one form to another.
7. Ability to write from another person's perspective.
8. Ability to focus on a central idea and support it with details.

The writing samples which follows are of a 7th grade student in the higher academic level. The samples show the following strengths and weaknesses for each month collected.

August

**Strengths**
- Complex sentences
- Variety of sentence form
- Use of hyperbole

**Weaknesses**
- Punctuation problems

December

**Strengths**
- Good summary skills
- Strong conclusion

**Weaknesses**
- Punctuation problems

May

**Strengths**
- Good paragraphing skills
- Creative interest
- Unexpected ending

**Weaknesses**
- Still punctuation problems
"Two Can Play the Same Game"

One day when I was walking along my friend, seven foot pool in which I can't swim, because I would drown, Tom came up to me and pushed me in. I was so steamed that the water boiled. Some how I finally got out and the only thing he could say was, "Gotcha." I just left and decided that it was my turn to strike back.

The next day I took my fifty pound toy box and sat it on top of my door.

Five minutes later Tom walked in and the toy box cluttered him! He was out cold.

Then I taped a sign to his forehead that read, "Gotcha."

I then went on with my day.

7-H-A
Bright Morning was a young, quiet Navajo Indian girl. She lived with her tribe in a hidden valley called Canyon de Chelly.

Bright Morning got in trouble in many ways. First she left all her sheep alone in a storm, hoping her black dog would watch them. Her mother went back to get them.

Next, Bright Morning was kidnapped by Spaniards. She was to be used as a slave. She later escaped.

The Long Knives then destroyed her village. Bright Morning and her tribe were then taken to Bosque Redondo.

Before they were taken away, Bright Morning married Tall Boy. They then escaped and went back to Canyon de Chelly. Bright Morning had a baby.

I think she broke the spear because she wanted no more violence or fighting.

The future of the Navajo lay with sheep herding.

7-11-D
Our Mixed up Hike on Everest

In March of 1953, Sir Edmond Hillary and my partner Tensing Norgay set out upon Mt. Everest. Like myself, Tensing was a brave and adventurous man.

On March 7 we pulled out our inflatable tricycles and pedalled to the first slope. We were so worn out that we pulled out a bush and got drunk.

The next day we decided to rest and watch T.V. all day. We did that until noon. We ate lunch and started up our trikes. We sped up to the 40 ft. rock step. I pulled out my water pistol and blasted a hole clear through it. We whizzed through that and slept on the other side of the hole for the rest of the night.

The next morning we showed what was left of my big nice I brought along. We then started off and in two hours we were at the top. We were so happy that we jumped around and fell off the mountain.
The writing samples which follows are of a 7th grade student in the middle academic level. The samples show the following strengths and weaknesses for each month collected.

**August**

**Strength**
- Good subject verb agreement

**Weaknesses**
- Very little variety of sentences
- Minimum writing

**December**

**Strength**
- Good summary

**Weaknesses**
- Spelling problems
- Sentence problems

**May**

**Strength**
- Willing to write more than minimum
- Sign of upper level comprehension

**Weaknesses**
- Punctuation problems
- Spelling problems
The Good and Bad Things
About Junior High

The things about sixth grade that were good were the Dunhills. The sports were great because you could be in them. Also, that year, you didn't have to have lockers. Like, if you had it in 7th grade, you could put your lock in and keep your things in it. That was nice.

The sad things about sixth grade were that you only had three minutes to get to your classes. The lockers were little. You got picked on a lot.

The good things about sixth grade were the people who were not picked on, which you don't get in a seventh grade. The bad thing about sixth grade was Mr. Cusher for a teacher.
Bright Morning is an Indian girl who had been told to watch the sheep by her parents. While she was watching the sheep, a rainstorm came along. Bright Morning gets scared and leaves the sheep standing underneath a tree by themselves in the rainstorm. When she gets back to her parents, they were angry, because she was supposed to watch the sheep, and they would get killed out there in the storm, all by themselves.

Later, Bright Morning was kidnapped by the Spaniards. They took Bright Morning and her friend Running Bird east that was both her teat Spanish as village to be slaves for their people. The two girls met another girl who was a slave too. All three of the girls were trying to figure out how to escape. On Easter Day, when all the Spanish people were at church, the three girls escaped.
7-M-D

by taking some houses of the

When the three girls got
back to the camp the long knives came. The long knives are American
soldiers. The long knives told Bright
"Man-eat-meat" that they
had to leave the village and they
would burn down their houses.
The Indians did not leave or
the long knives burned down more
of the houses. The soldiers told them
that they would be back in the Indian
village in a few days and that the
Indians had better be gone or they
would burn down the whole village.
So when the American soldiers
came back the Indians were gone.
The Indians went to live in some
canions away from where their
village was. The Indians were
plangent to run out of water and
food. Back in town some other
Indians did not think it was
good enough to know to do
what they left the people to
Tall Boy lay down back to the people, because the other warriors did not want him, because he could not use his right arm, because one of the Spaniards had shot it while he was fighting on time.

Bright Morning was expecting a baby by Tall Boy. He is a boy that was chosen by his parents to be married. Bright Morning to have the baby in the canyon by their old village. Tall Boy wanted to go back to the Indian Village. Bright Morning ended up going back to the canyon.

While Bright Morning was playing with his baby boy, his baby boy took the spear and stepped on it and kicked it because she did not want her baby boy to grow up to be a warrior. She wanted him to be a shepherd.
Mt. Everest

My name is Noodles Major. It is March 1, 1953. I am getting ready to climb Mt. Everest with Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay. We are ready to start climbing. It is 6:30 a.m. We have our tents, 20 pounds of oxygen, gear, and masks on and are ready to go! We were moving slowly but steadily up the mountain.

We have now reached the South Peak. It is now 9:00 a.m. Looking ahead was both beautiful and Evans. These were two big ridges. We were not sure that we were going to make it through there because they were so big.

We then reached the first slope. We had to cut different pieces of snow and ice. We were then able to shuffle past the difficult portions. Our oxygen started freezing off. We then saw that there were icicles hanging from the oxygen tubes. We then took off the icicles and kept a good eye on the tubes.

Hours and hours after the first snow slope, we then reached the rock step. We
Here decided that the altitude spelled
the difference between success or failure.
We then had to use every little rod
to be able to get up the mountain
to the very top.

We then reached the top after
almost a month.
The writing samples which follow are of a 7th grade student in the lower academic level. The samples show the following strengths and weaknesses for each month collected.

**August**

**Strengths**
- None noted

**Weaknesses**
- Tense problems
- Spelling problems
- Thoughts not clearly expressed
- Minimal expressive style

**December**

**Strengths**
- Good summary for individual
- Thoughts clearly expressed

**Weaknesses**
- Still tense problems
- Some sentence problems

**May**

**Strengths**
- Quality of writing has improved

**Weaknesses**
- Punctuation problems
- Spelling and capitalization problems
6th and 7th

The things I liked about 6th grade were they had better lunches, and also better looking girls. I liked the teachers we had, and I also liked getting away from the little kids at the grade school.

The things I hated about 6th grade is I had to walk farther to school, and I was scared of the big kids, and of getting initiated like getting goalposted and all that stuff.

The things I like about 7th grade is I don't get picked on and I like my classes now there going. The things I hate about 7th are the teachers like Mr. Cutler, Mr. Tendale and Mr. Smith so on and so on.

7-7-8
Long Down The Moon

The most important characters are Tall Boy, Bright Morning, Running Bird, the beamardle, and the dog. Bright Morning leaves and the sun shines.

Then the beamardle come to the village and cut their harving and take back to a beamardle village to work. Bright Morning does and goes back to the canyon.

When they get back the beamardle come to the village and

Then one day Tall Boy went out cutting wood and came and says this is my territory and I will tell them what shall happen. Tall Boy broke the vendor came and got the boy up the mountain and to a place where criminals live. Tall Boy learns there is a village and goes back to the canyon. Bright Morning and Ten boy leave from the beamardle. Bright Morning gets married with Tall Girl and they have a baby son.

The reason Bright Morning left the beamardle because Bright Morning didn't want her son to be a mountain like Tall Boy was.

J.L. D.
Craig Sullivan is a 4.9 boy born to play basket ball. He is a good pitcher and a good batter. But there is 2 things wrong with him that is his temper and attitude.

Craig Sullivan is also a basketball player. He was a starter for almost half of his seventh grade year.

Craig is a very nice kid. He is honest and is also considerate.

Craig is 13 years old and was born on June 22, 1975. Craig has 1 brother named David and 1 sister, Carissa. Craig also has two dogs, a cat and a bunny and the name is Runston. He is my favorite because his name is lively. The reason they named him Runston because his dance and his block, and the nickname for the Cubs is black and his name is Thunder.

Craig wants to be a professional basketball player when he grows up. Craig idol is Speed Web. Speed is a player in the NBA. Speed is the shortest player in the NBA. Speed is 5'7 and can slam a basketball. Craig likes Facebook because Speed is 5'7 and so is Craig.

7-2-79
The writing samples which follows are of an 8th grade student in the higher academic level. The samples show the following strengths and weaknesses for each month collected.

August

**Strengths**
- Good paragraphing skills
- Attempts more complex sentencing

**Weaknesses**
- Punctuation problems
- Spelling problems
- Some ideas not clearly expressed

December

**Strengths**
- Good paragraphing
- Evidence of upper level comprehension

**Weaknesses**
- Some word choice problems
- Punctuation problems

May

**Strengths**
- Good paragraphing
- Improvement in punctuation
- Good summary skills

**Weaknesses**
- None noted
Brothers

Both Richard and John were kings of England and brothers. They were different in many ways.

King John was a greedy and jealous man. He was a spendthrift, always giving gifts to other people. He was hateful and had few friends. He never got along with his brother, who robbed the treasury and planned to seize the throne while Richard was a prisoner.

King Richard was the opposite of his brother. He was well respected and lawful. He was a fearless and mighty king who rode to battle and none could withstand his might. He had many friends, even one who saved his life. He was always on a crusade and never home.

S. H. A.
Across Five Aprils

The meaning of the title Five Aprils is how the Creightons respond to the many problems caused by the war which lasts for five Aprils. Sethso is the youngest of the Creightons, who are Matt, Ellen, Tom, Ed, John, and Bill.

In mid-April, 1861 Sethso is confused and doesn't understand the talk among the older Creightons and with Abraham. Sethso, Bill, lanse, to fight for the South and Tom and Ed brass to fight for the North, when Sethso goes to Newton for supplies, Sethso is teased by Bill. Bill, Morton, about Bill fighting for the South. Sethso defends Bill's actions and this causes many problems. Morton, first attacks Sethso, who is saved by a guy named Burdon who is a local farmer.

Morton then with the help of others, burn down Matt Creighton's barn and Matt is killed by a heart attack. 8 - 4 - 69
Legend of Sleepy Hollow

The "Legend of Sleepy Hollow" is about a headless horseman what is suspected to be the ghost of a long dead Hessian trooper in search of his head.

Ichabod Crane was unfortunate and met up with this horseman and set the rule of his life. After the chase by the Headless Horseman, Ichabod Crane was never seen again.

I think the Headless Horseman was Brom Bones because he wanted to get rid of Ichabod. Getting rid of Ichabod would end his competition for Katrina. Brom also liked to play tricks on people. Brom also had a fast horse just like the horsemen.

G - H - D
The writing samples which follows are of an 8th grade student in the middle academic level. The samples show the following strengths and weakness for each month collected.

August

Strengths

None noted

Weaknesses

Punctuation problems

No paragraphing

December

Strengths

Some paragraphing

Beginning to draw reference from story

Weaknesses

Verb tense problems

Punctuation problems

Capitalization problems

May

Strengths

Good paragraphing

Good summary skills

Weaknesses

Some punctuation problems
Are we having fun yet?

No, I am not having fun yet, because I am not home watching my soap operas. We also have a lot of homework and it is only the second day. I am not having fun because I have to listen to the sixth graders play in band and they are really bad. There are a lot of other reasons, but those are too many. I can't even start to tell you, but I am glad to get back and see all of my friends.

G.M.A
The Bishop's Candlestick

This story is about a Bishop who sheltered a young man named Jean, who was a con artist. Jean steals two silver candlesticks and runs away. Jean is caught by the gendarmes who are the police, and is taken back to the Bishop. The Bishop gives the silver to Jean, so he could become a honest man.

I would describe the Bishop as a kind man letting a strange man stay in this home for shelter. The Bishop is content and brave. The Bishop also thought the candlesticks would bring good to Jean.
Across Five Aprils

Across Five Aprils means five Aprils during the Civil War. The first April Jenny and her family are working on their farm, in the fields, and talking about the war in 1861.

The second April in 1862 the war began and the family was split apart over the north and the south. One of Jenny's brothers Bill went to the south because he felt the north was wrong, and Tom another brother fought for the north. A small minority of the town treated the family bad because of Bill fighting for the south.

During the third April of the war in 1863, war is still at its worst and school gets shut. Jenny goes out to visit him and while there they get married. John found Bill in a prison camp and wrote a letter to Jenny's wife Nancy.

April, 1864, in fourth April, Jenny works on the farm and helps her mother and father while the brothers are still off at war.

During the last April, 1865, John and Bill return and the war is over. John and Jenny take Jenny to save them and to get a better education while John goes to college.
The writing samples which follow are of an 8th grade student in the lower academic level. The samples show the following strengths and weaknesses for each month collected.

**August**

**Strengths**

None noted

**Weaknesses**

Spelling problems
Punctuation problems
Capitalization problems

**December**

**Strengths**

Starting to draw conclusions
Upper level comprehension

**Weaknesses**

Verb tense problem
Punctuation problem
Spelling problems

**May**

**Strengths**

Better paragraphing
More content
Restatement of material from one form to another

**Weaknesses**

Spelling problems
Grammar problems
Dear Mrs. Moore,

My summer disaster was scary. My dad told me to take the truck around the door so we could load the truck, I started it and ran around the corner! I hit a wall, and I broke a tenderwood fender. It just fell off me, little. I had to pay for it. It cost me 300$, and I worked all summer, and made almost all without go broke.

S. L. A.

Your student,

Ann Herbert
The Court

Langlet went to Granville's bedroom. It should have gone to her room, but he was stupid. He picked the second table up.

Langlet then went to look at the third table. He killed Granville and two knights, and arrested Madrid.

I think that the third table was a big problem and that we will never solve it. Langlet decided he couldn't trust anybody, and he took up the second table. Langlet had just finished trust with the second table. The court might not have gotten up.

8-2-D
T Quinton Johnson told the team about the test drive. The kids ignored him around the pool, feeling 炎热. The owner of the pool, Mr. Johnson, paid for the equipment and maintenance. The owner's son was a top swimmer on the school's team. He was a fast swimmer, so Mr. Johnson had to fix the pool to keep up. The owner's daughter, age 14, was the best swimmer on the team. She was a strong swimmer, but Mr. Johnson had to fix the pool to keep up with her.