



Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts

Volume 38

Issue 3 January/February 1998

Article 3

2-1-1998

ESL learners: Process writing and publishing good literature

Jane F. Rudden
Millersville University

Anita R. Nedeff
Central Elementary School

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons

 Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Rudden, J. F., & Nedeff, A. R. (1998). ESL learners: Process writing and publishing good literature. *Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts*, 38 (3). Retrieved from https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons/vol38/iss3/3

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Special Education and Literacy Studies at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact maira.bundza@wmich.edu.





ESL learners: Process writing and publishing good literature

Jane F. Rudden

Millersville University

Anita R. Nedeff

Central Elementary School

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to report on our examination of books written by children who are ESL learners, and compare the books with criteria for meritorious literature (Norton, 1995), and to discuss the implications of the results relevant to process writing instruction with second language learners. The books examined were written by students in grades K through 5 in a rural elementary school. They had been in the United States for a short period of time. Their familiarization with process writing was due to its being a part of their daily curriculum. The school's writing program embraces those contexts purported to promote writing development, specifically, that feedback be focused primarily on content and secondarily on writing conventions and language form. The results of our inspection indicate an unexpected adherence to criteria for literary genres. Because each author's book was written in English and translated into his native language, there was a validation of the primary language as fundamental to achievement, and the links between languages and cultures were maintained. Also noteworthy, in subsequent written and oral communications by the children, a growing facility with the English language was observed. Implications of these findings would serve teachers of ESL students looking for ways to better prepare themselves for instructing a population of diverse learners.

Research on second language acquisition in young children has focused on strategies for promoting the primary language (Cummins, 1989; Freeman and Freeman, 1993), theoretical positions on second language/first language learning (Fitzgerald, 1994; Krashen; 1982), and the interaction of reading and writing in the language acquisition process (Ernst and Richard, 1994; Fitzgerald, 1993; 1994; Perrotta, 1994). The benefits of literature-based instruction as related to writing products of ESL learners have been enumerated by researchers whose focus is trained on the influence of literature on language

development (Peregoy and Boyle, 1997). Literature is viewed as the best material for reading instruction (Cullinan, 1989; Huck, 1977), and promotes opportunities for talk. The talk related to reading literature addresses a linguistic benefit for ESL learners, and is viewed as a rung on the scaffold of mastering the conventions of the English language (Allen, 1994). Cultural benefits accruing from a literature-based approach include a story structure similar across all cultures.

Though the reading/writing connection has been examined in light of its importance in the language acquisition process, there is no indication in the review of literature that the writing products of students have ever been inspected against criteria for meritorious literature. Analyzing the written works of ESL children compared with criteria seemed important to us, given the curricular concentration in the school on reading good literature and process writing. To uncover a heretofore ignored benefit of process writing would give added support to the program and reaffirm the notion that children's writing is affected by what they read. This inquiry serves as a way of establishing an objectivity that is generally absent because teachers are so close to the children and co-own their success. It also stands in contrast to the practice of analyzing writing samples based on holistic rubrics or state standardized mandates.

Norton's (1995) criteria for selecting good literature across genres is widely accepted as a reference document. It follows that these criteria are valid not only for selection, but for authoring, too. Our inquiry was guided by the question: When process writing is used to teach ESL children, how do their writing products stand up against meritorious literature? The results suggest Norton's criteria as important and useful for ESL teachers.

Participants

The authors you will meet here are all second language learners, and students in grades K through 5, attending a small city elementary school in a university town in a Mid-Atlantic state. They have been in the United States from one to three years. Because process writing is a part of their daily curriculum, they are familiar with each step of the writing process: brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Though literature is used in teaching reading, the students were not directly instructed to write according to the criteria we used to evaluate their written books.

The School's Writing Program

Traditional models for educating ESL children have emphasized pull-out approaches (Shirmer, Casbon, and Twiss, 1996). The children are removed from the classroom for certain periods of the day for intensive instruction in English. When they become proficient enough to integrate fully into general classroom instruction, the pull-out sessions are stopped. Innovative literacy practices for ESL learners at this school include a combination approach to the traditional

pull-out program. The Title I reading specialist visits each classroom each day (push-in), and underachieving readers needing additional help, regardless of their native language, visit the specialist's classroom for short periods of individual instruction (pull-out). The materials used during the pull-out sessions are frequently student-authored. Every student in the school participates in authoring a book every year. In the primary grades, authoring is a group effort. Beginning in the 3rd grade, each student authors at least one book every year. Early on in the program, the students dubbed their publishing enterprise the Students as Authors Project (Nedeff, Brady, Maxwell, Oaks, and Seckel, 1994). It embraces those contexts purported to promote writing development (Peyton, 1990); activities to promote self-esteem and risk taking; integration of writing with reading, listening, and speaking; opportunities for blocks of time to write; support for talking about and reflecting on their writing; and editing conferences with peers and the teacher to provide feedback that focuses primarily on content and secondarily on writing conventions and language form. Nedeff et al. (1994) reported benefits in these areas and expressed hope for continued improvement in reading comprehension, process writing, critical thinking skills, and an increase in student self-esteem. Successes attributed to this approach are supported in the research (Ernst, 1993; Hudelson, 1986). For us, there remained an unanswered question; How do these books stand up to criteria for meritorious literature?

Selection of Works for Evaluation

The selection criteria for the books reviewed are: (a) the author is an ESL learner; (b) the final version of the book is a result of process writing; (c) the assistance of a more capable other is limited to teacher/student conferences during the editing phase. Following are summaries and evaluations of eight books, and the criteria offered by Norton (1995) for the specific genre. The selections include four fantasies, two information books, one realistic fiction book, and one picture storybook.

First Fantasy

LuLu is from China. Her book, *The Beautiful Princess*, reveals LuLu's schema for fairy tales. This is the story of a beautiful princess, Rena, who lived in a large castle with her beautiful unicorn named Sparkle. Rena was in love with a handsome prince, Prince Charming, and this was a source of jealousy for the ugly prince named Bad Prince. So jealous was Bad Prince, he decided to capture the beautiful Princess while she played in her garden. Sparkle observed the kidnapping and ran to Prince Charming to ask him to rescue the Princess. This he did. Rena and Prince Charming were married and lived happily ever after... with their unicorn, Sparkle. See Appendix A

The Beautiful Princess evaluated against criteria (Norton, 1995):

1. The story uses the basic literary elements found in story structure.

2. The framework developed by the author is founded on a story structure which includes a beginning, events leading to a problem, a climax, resolution, and conclusion. Every action in this story is consistent with this framework. The identification of the beautiful princess, Rena, is established, along with the setting and introduction of other characters. The villain creates the problem, the good prince executes the rescue, and they live happily ever after.

3. The author's use of characterization allows children to suspend disbelief. Though the characters do not begin a real world, the setting is typical of fairy tales and fantasies familiar to children; a castle. The presence of a pet unicorn is a further fanciful element in a fanciful world. The beautiful princess is in love with a good prince, and there is a rivalry for her affections between the good prince and the bad prince. This mixture of fantasy and reality spares the reader being overly worried about the fate of the beautiful princess. The language used in the story furthers its consistency with modern fantasy. "Once upon a time" begins the story, and "they married and lived happily ever after" ends it.

4. Details of the setting provided in the text are sketchy. However, the illustrations are sufficiently detailed and appropriate to carrying the message of the text. The bad prince is described as ugly, and the illustration features a skull and crossbones motif in his chamber. When the text indicates that the bad prince captured the beautiful princess, the illustrations provide the reader with the method of kidnapping by showing the bad prince plotting to put a paper bag over the beautiful princess' head. Events in the story happen over time. The text seems to leap from one event to another without complete details. It's necessary for the reader to bring a good bit of background knowledge to the story related to capture and rescue.

5. The theme can be construed as good conquers evil. This is a worthwhile theme for children. The goodness of the beautiful princess is established early in the words and illustrations describing her genteel life. The impending menace against this goodness is portrayed by the bad prince. He is soundly overpowered by the good prince.

6. The author encourages readers to suspend disbelief via a consistent point of view. The story is told in the third person, and a matter-of-fact march through the events is maintained throughout the story. The writing is economical, yet descriptive. The illustrations provide added details, thereby balancing the text and enriching the fantasy.

Norton's (1995) criteria for evaluating modern fantasy

1. Does the author use basic literary elements?
2. Is every action consistent with the framework developed by the author?
3. Does the author's characterization allow children to suspend disbelief? Do characters begin in a real world before they travel to the world of fantasy? Does a believable character accept a fanciful world, characters, or happenings? Does the author use an appropriate language or create a believable language consistent with the story?
4. Does the author pay careful attention to the details in the setting? If the author develops several time periods, are the settings authentic and integral to the story?
5. Is the theme worthwhile for children?
6. Does the author encourage readers to suspend disbelief by developing a point of view that is consistent in every detail including sights, feelings, and physical reactions?

Figure 1

Second Fantasy

Wayne, a native of China, wrote a modern fantasy that begins in the land of reality, and quickly moves to the fantastic, and an unlikely outcome that would be the envy of any fifth-grader. In *Wayne and Tony*, the main character, Wayne, rescues a cat-like robot, Tony, from an encounter with a rat, and is rewarded by the robot's creative ability to teach him what he was having trouble learning in school. His trouble in school stemmed from inattention to IQ.

Wayne and Tony evaluated against criteria:

1. This modern fantasy uses basic literary elements found in story structure.
2. The "once upon a time" framework of this fantasy begins in a land of reality, quickly moves to introduce a fantastic character, and ends with an unlikely outcome that would be the envy of any fifth-grader. The beginning of the tale is confusing. The characters of Wayne and his robot friend, Tony, are introduced in a leapfrog manner; providing a skimpy background for the reader. Once the logical structure of the story begins, the fantasy rolls smoothly and incorporates the literary elements of story structure through the conclusion.
3. Wayne is the main character; a fifth-grader having trouble with his schoolwork. He doesn't pay close attention in school, and has trouble completing his homework because of it. Wayne begins in a real world, allowing the reader to suspend disbelief. The quick and early introduction of Tony, the cat-like robot, catapults the reader into

a world of fantasy. Despite this abrupt change, the transition is palatable because it's so ridiculous. The language is believable and consistent with the characters and story line. The author avoids the use of glorified terms, maintaining a childlike rendition of what might be. The detailed illustrations enhance the sense of adventure and Wayne's carelessness stated in the text. Tony's use of a magic flashlight to teach Wayne the evolutionary stages of any given object almost backfires when Wayne abuses this "magic." The conclusion is abrupt, leapfrogging from a rather narrow escape with a dinosaur to Wayne becoming "a top student in class." See Appendix B.

4. The details of the setting are sparse. However, the illustrations throughout the story are true to the text and enhance the sense of adventure and carelessness stated in the text. The depictions of all characters are simplistic, yet sufficient in detail. Tony's magic flashlight is described in both the text and illustrations with bolts of lightning emanating from the light, revealing the evolutionary stages of the object shined on.

5. The belief in magic as the answer to good grades might be mistaken as the theme of this tale. However, underlying the pranks and "happily ever after" nature of Wayne's future academic success, the message of using power with care and avoiding reckless abuse is a subtle, though important, thread in the message. When Wayne shined the light on the rat to discover its evolutionary forefather, a dinosaur appeared. Wayne thought that was pretty funny, but his laughter didn't last long.

The dinosaur was running toward him. In a hurry Wayne pushed another button, but this time nothing happened. Before he had another try, the dinosaur knocked off the flashlight. "Help! Help!" Wayne yelled and ran as fast as he could"

Tony saved the day by picking up the flashlight and pushing the right button just in time. This he did despite his fear of rats.

6. Further encouragement to suspend disbelief is provided for the reader by a consistent point of view. The story is told in the third person. The sights, feelings, and physical reactions are consistent with the characters as the story develops. The conclusion is abrupt, however, leapfrogging from a rather narrow escape with a dinosaur to Wayne's becoming "a top student in class."

Third Fantasy

An equally adventurous modern fantasy was written by Nan Wu, also featured as the main character. In *The Green Dragon*, Nan Wu alternates between the believable and unbelievable as the events unfold. The story begins in the world of reality; with Nan Wu innocently putting his book bag down on his desk; and quickly moves into the world of fantasy when a dragon walks out of the picture on the

wall. Sandwiched between the peaceful beginning and a peaceful conclusion are four events; the dragon walks out of the picture, breaks the house into bits, is pursued by the police, and finally meets his demise. Nan Wu is the clever hero of the story. When he shows the dragon its photograph, all the story's events are reversed, and peace is restored. See Appendix C.

The Green Dragon evaluated against criteria:

1. This is a modern fantasy and uses basic literary elements found in story structure.

2. The story begins in the world of reality. The framework set up by the author is maintained throughout the story. The events alternate between the believable and the unbelievable as the story unfolds. For example, when the dragon breaks the house into pieces, the police shoot at the dragon; that's believable (never mind the presence of a dragon). The police call an airplane to combat the dragon, and the dragon bites the airplane in two; that's unbelievable.

3. The believable main character, a young boy napping after a long day at school, accepts the fantastic event of a picture of a dragon coming to life. Initially taken in by the dragon's gentle nature, the boy quickly realizes the dragon must be controlled because of the destruction and havoc it is causing. The language used to reveal the events is simple and straightforward.

4. The setting is carefully described and beautifully illustrated. The illustrations enhance the text in that more information is provided, giving the reader a clear image of location, character, and situation. Early on, the author implies that the rest of the story will be born out of a dream. The story line is very brief. There are four main events; the dragon emerges from a photograph, breaks the house into bits, is pursued by the police, and meets his demise. The little boy is the hero of the story. He runs for the photograph, shows it to the dragon, and "the dragon shrank and went into the picture." Events then reverse themselves, the photo breaks into pieces and the house comes back together again. The story ends abruptly with the little boy going inside the house and locking it.

5. There is no apparent theme in the story. It is a tale of adventure that would be pleasurable for children. Because of the unbelievable nature of the events, children would be willing to suspend disbelief and imagine themselves saving the day against a mighty force. Perhaps it could be stretched to encompass a theme of seeing things for what they are, and not being taken in by initial charm.

Fourth Fantasy

Lucy Yi wrote *Why the Sky is Blue*, a lovely example of a modern fantasy. The framework set up by Yi at the beginning of the story prepares the reader for a dream. Suspension of disbelief is further encouraged by introducing the main character's query, "She wondered why the sky was blue." The sky had lived a life of darkness until the

sun and the angel painted it. This made the sun happier, too, because now he could read his books better and his light could shine through. Through no fault of his own, the sky was always dark. He explained, "I was born that way." Sky willingly let his friends help him become a better sky. Logical closure is brought to this tale when Samantha awakens from her dream and returns to the world of reality. See Appendix D.

Why the Sky is Blue evaluated against criteria:

1. This modern fantasy uses the basic literary elements found in the story structure.

2. The framework set up by the author at the beginning of the story clearly prepares the reader for a dream. Logical closure is brought at the end when the main character, Samantha, wakes up and is once again in the real world. While in the real world, her actions and language are consistent with reality. When in the world of her dreams, or fantasy land, the actions of the characters are unrealistic.

3. The author facilitates the suspension of disbelief by introducing the query, "She wondered why the sky was blue," while Samantha was in the real world. When she lies down for a nap, Samantha transitions to fantasy. She is a believable character and she readily accepts the fantasy world. The characters in Samantha's dream are angels, an enthroned "star gardener," and the planets. The language of the fantasy world is figurative, and images of the heavens are carried in the illustrations. For example, when the angel lifts Samantha up to the sky, she sees "an odd-looking man... sitting in a chair by his star garden. ...He had a long nose and long hair made out of sunbeams." The illustrations supporting this text is a mix of the real and the fantastic. Samantha's house is partially in view and she has hold of the hands of a smiling angel. The star gardener sits amid his "flowers" and welcomes their arrival with a smile.

4. Careful attention is paid to the setting in the real world, beginning with Samantha gazing at the sky and wondering why it is blue. She is accompanied by her cat, who is sitting comfortably on a pillow looking out over the rolling hills marking the horizon. The final scene is equally detailed. In the fantasy world, the settings are the focus of the illustrations. They are simplistic, yet fully representative of the text. They enhance rather than detract. For example, the cloud castle by Mars, Star market, and the black, then newly painted blue sky, are integral to the story. The Star Market setting straddles the real and the fantastic. There happens to be such a market in the author's neighborhood.

5. It is reasonable to say there is an intertwining of themes in this story: friendship and happiness that comes with a bright outlook. These are worthwhile themes for children. Though subtle in presentation, the implication is clear. For example,

"I feel good," said the sky, because I am bright and colored. The sky had lived a life of black until the sun and the angel painted it. This made the sun happier, too, because now he could read his books better and his light could shine through."

Sky willingly let his friends help him become a better sky.

6. The point of view developed by the author is consistent in the expression of sights, feelings, and physical reactions, with one exception. There is a foreshadowing of evil or impending harm at the beginning of Samantha's adventure. "The angel put Samantha on the clouds and stayed with her, because she needed to guard Samantha from evil." It is implied that perhaps the odd-looking man is evil, but not so. This is not followed through.

Norton's (1995) criteria for evaluating informational books

Taken from recommendations made by the National Science Teachers Association and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

1. All facts should be accurate.
2. Stereotypes should be eliminated.
3. Illustrations should clarify the text.
4. Analytical thinking should be encouraged.
5. The organization should aid understanding.
6. The style should stimulate interest.

Figure 2

First Informational Book

Co-authored by Susan and Lisa, both from China, *Picture Dictionary* is an informational book featuring the English and Chinese spelling for words naming objects typically found in school. Each word pair is accompanied by an illustration and the Chinese character. This book is a straightforward approach to teaching ESL students the vocabulary words they will most frequently hear and use in their American school. The entries are presented in alphabetical order, use large print, and avoid stereotyping in the illustrations. See Appendices E and F.

Picture Dictionary evaluated against criteria:

1. Accuracy of facts: Eighteen entries make up the entire book: book, boy, chalkboard, clock, computer, desk, door, girl, glue, map, paper, pen, pencil, school, scissors, tape, teacher, window. Each word is translated into a Chinese character, followed by an illustration. The only exception to accuracy is found in the illustration for "glue." It

appears to be a chicken with two small dashes, presumably glue drops, coming out of its mouth. Unless this depicts a typical glue dispenser used in schools, this illustration is more misleading than informative.

2. Stereotyping is avoided. Adults and children are engaged in activities that are common but not stereotypical. For example, the teacher is a female, the girls have two ponytails, and the boy is wearing a baseball cap.

3. Illustrations clarify the text except in the example for "glue," mentioned above.

4. It cannot be reasonably defended that critical thinking is encouraged.

5. Entries appear in alphabetical order. This is an aid to understanding and further facilitates learning. However, only nine letters of the alphabet are represented.

6. The style of the book stimulates interest in that it is very colorful and uses large print. Given the format of the book (pages held together by rings) more words could be added over time. The intricacies of the Chinese characters are beautifully depicted and would be interesting to non-ESL children, too.

Second Informational Book

To: My Dear Friend was written by Brenda, a native of Taiwan. This is a collection of letters written to her friend back home highlighting traditional American holidays and what it's like living in a different cultural environment. All of the facts presented are based on the author's personal experiences and provide details to explain various American holiday traditions. Illustrations clarify the text, explicate inferred meanings, and include elements of correct letter writing. See Appendices G and H.

To: My Dear Friend evaluated against criteria:

The criteria for informational texts are used because many facts are stated about American traditions, though couched in narrative, friendly letter style. This piece does not fit the criteria for biographies since neither the development of characterization is of primary concern, nor are the research methods of the author under scrutiny.

1. All of the facts are accurate. They are based on personal experience and provide details to explain various American holiday traditions. For example: "On my first Halloween, I dressed up in my dance costume and went to the mall to trick-or-treat... I never had gotten so much candy before." Additionally, comparisons are drawn between Taiwanese traditions and American traditions. For example: "In Taiwan, I never heard of Thanksgiving Day, so Thanksgiving Day is special to me. On that day I ate Thanksgiving dinner with my family. When I ate the turkey, it tasted good." A second example: "In Taiwan, just the parents give children the gifts on Christmas Day. In America, Christmas Day is very interesting, because children have to

give their parents gifts, and the parents always give their children gifts too."

2. Stereotypes are eliminated. The comparisons drawn between American and Taiwanese traditions are stated without judgment.

3. Illustrations clarify the text and include elements of correct letter writing: multiple pages, stamps, elements of a letter, and an addressed envelope. The illustrations provide details inferred in the text. For example, in her letter describing the New Year, Brenda says, "I saw the big Apple in New York fall down on TV, which was so pretty." If taken literally, the reading might think a huge piece of fruit originating in New York crashed down on the television set. The illustration cleverly shows a television, antennae and all, tuned into New Year's Eve in Time Square. The big apple is descending the stories of a tall building.

4. It cannot be justifiably stated that this book stimulates critical thinking. However, since letter writing is generally viewed as a means of friendly communication for the sake of keeping in touch, versus a catalyst for critical interpretations by the reader, this component of the criteria can be waived.

5. The organization of the book aids understanding, in that the holidays featured are in chronological order. The book begins and ends with a letter featuring the differences in American and Taiwanese schools. In her last letter, the author looks forward to celebrating Chinese New Year in America. This illustrates the holding on to customs of the homeland, and adopting those of the new home. The author uses the traditions of her homeland to mark her progress in her new home. "The coming Chinese New Year will be my first time in America."

6. The style of the friendly letter stimulates reader interest. Embedding facts in this style facilitates the readers' taking an efferent and/or aesthetic stance to the book.

Realistic fiction

Virginia is from Taiwan and authored a book entitled *Thunder*. This is the story of the Steven's family vacationing in the Colorado woods near the Arkansas River. The Steven's children, Mark, 14, and Sarah, 10, wander away from the campsite and are unable to find their way back for several days. Their ingenuity and the bravery of a little dog, Thunder, eventually leads them back to the campsite and their parents. The plot is believable, the characters overcome their problem through resourcefulness, and the events unfold in a natural versus contrived manner. The author develops the characters as the story evolves. Initially bickering siblings, Mark and Sarah become partners in reaching a common goal, they complement each other in talents, and their fear of the woods is eradicated. *Thunder* is a story of problem solving and adventure, each worthwhile and appealing themes for children. See Appendix I.

Norton's (1995) criteria for evaluating realistic fiction:

1. The content is honestly presented: sensationalizing and capitalizing on the novelty of a subject is avoided.
2. The story exposes personal and social values central to our culture, at the same time revealing how overt expression of those values may have changed.
3. The story allows readers to draw personal conclusions from the evidence; the author respects the readers' intelligence.
4. The author recognizes that today's young readers are in the process of growing toward adult sophistication.
5. The language and syntax help reveal the background and the nature of characters and situations.
6. The author writes in a hopeful tone; the story communicates in an honest way that there is hope in this world.
7. The story reflects sensitivity to the needs and rights of girls and boys without preference.
8. If violence is included in the story, the author treats the subject appropriately.
9. The story satisfies children's basic needs and provides them with increased insights into their own problems and social relationships.
10. The story provides children with enjoyment.

Figure 3

Thunder evaluated against the criteria:

1. This is a story about something that could really happen. The plot is believable in that numerous stories have been featured in the news about hikers and campers being lost in the woods and surviving for many days before being rescued.

2. Personal and social values central to our culture are not central to this story.

3. The climax of the story, Mark's dream of geography class and realization that they should head downstream, seemed natural rather than contrived or insulting to the readers' intelligence. They were in a situation that called for logic and their using all their knowledge of the wilderness. It's feasible that Mark's subconscious would take over during sleep and fill in the gaps of his thinking that daylight and the stress of "what next" would prohibit.

4. The characters seemed real and identifiable to middle grade readers. The author gave us an idea of Mark's and Sarah's personality as the story evolved. They bickered about where to go on vacation, Sarah's apprehension about bears in the woods was revealed early on, and there was no indication of a sibling rivalry that would make their setting out from camp together unbelievable. The difference in their

ages was mentioned, but no implication was made regarding differences in strength of character. Mark and Sarah shared in the decision making while they were lost.

5. The characters seemed to grow as the story evolved. Their resourcefulness was tapped, they became partners in reaching their goal, their talents were complementary, and each overcame a fear of the woods.

6-7. A sense of hope in this world is communicated through the collaboration of the two main characters in their struggle to find their way back to camp. Their strengths and weaknesses are shown and the reader sees the value of optimism.

	<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
<u>Mark</u>	Use of backpack items for food fire, fishing Responded to Sarah's exhaustion and worry Knowledge of geography Brave	Unaware of Thunder's usefulness
<u>Sarah</u>	Resourceful with friendship bracelet for fishing line Recognition of Thunder's worth Brave	Initial low stamina level for walking great distances

Figure 4

8. There is no violence in the story.

9-10. The author wanted to tell a story of problem solving and adventure. This is a worthwhile theme for middle elementary school children. They are in the process of growing toward a stage of maturity that abhors patronizing. The language used in this story represents a hopeful tone and avoids preference, bias, and negative stereotyping of males and females. This story provides enjoyment and insights into problems and relationships typical of the intended readers.

Picture Storybook

There Was a Rabbit Named Bunny, was written by Brenda shortly after she arrived in America from China. This is a hello and good-bye tale. The reader is introduced to Bunny and told about the things she likes and dislikes. The absence of a complicated plot does not detract from the appeal this story would have for children. They will be able to identify with Bunny by the very ordinary nature of the tale. That is, Bunny has a family, goes to school, and plays with friends. She does not like to go shopping with her parents or to clean

her room with her brother. The author's style and language are appropriate and uncomplicated. The repetitive text assists in the readability and makes this story appropriate for beginning readers. The main emphasis in evaluating picture books is on the complementary relationship between words and pictures. The illustrations in *There Was a Rabbit Named Bunny* enhance the characterization of Bunny, correspond accurately to the content of the story, and are highly detailed and colorful. The text, illustrations, format, and typography are in complete harmony. See Appendix J.

Norton's criteria for evaluation of picture storybooks

1. The illustrations are accurate and correspond to the content of the story.
2. The illustrations complement the setting, plot, and mood of the story.
3. The illustrations enhance characterization.
4. Both the text and illustrations avoid stereotypes of race and sex.
5. The plot appeals to children.
6. The theme is worthwhile.
7. What is the purpose for sharing this book with children or recommending that they read it?
8. The author's style and language are appropriate for the children's interests and age levels.
9. The text, the illustrations, the format, and the typography are in harmony.

Figure 5

There Was a Rabbit Named Bunny evaluated against the criteria:

1. The illustrations are accurate and correspond to the content of the story. It might be argued that some of the illustrations are cluttered vs. complex. Backgrounds and clothing are very detailed. However, no extraneous objects or background ornaments are included. All components serve the story line.

2. Illustrations complement the setting, plot, and mood of the story. Each statement of Bunny's likes and dislikes is complemented by an illustration that carried the message and the mood. Illustrations depict each setting: the mall, school, her room. When Bunny's sad, she's shown with a frown; when happy, a smile.

3. Illustrations enhance the characterization of Bunny. She is portrayed as having friends from various ethnic backgrounds, disliking going out with her parents and doing chores with her brother, and liking school. These are typical problems and relationships of the intended readers.

4. Animals are used as the main characters, encouraging the symbolic nature of their activities to human life. Stereotyping of race and sex are avoided. Bunny's friends, though shown with different colored skin, are engaged in non-stereotypical activities, like playing ball and going to school.

5. This story is short on plot. It's a hello and good-bye tale. The reader is introduced to Bunny and told about the things she likes and dislikes. The absence of plot does not detract from the appeal this story would have for children. They will be able to identify with Bunny by the very ordinary nature of the tale. That is, Bunny has a family, goes to school, and plays with her friends.

6. There is no defined theme in this book. It might be suggested that a possible theme could be meeting a new friend, or introducing yourself to a new friend and telling about your life.

7. This story can be shared with a child or recommended for a beginning reader. The text is repetitive, fostering word recognition skills; and the illustrations clearly carry the message of the printed word.

8. The author's style and language are appropriate for the interests and age levels of young children. The text is uncomplicated and straightforward, using language that sounds natural. The repetitive text assists in readability.

9. The text, illustrations, format, and typography are in complete harmony. The text is uncluttered by extraneous words. The format is predictable and judiciously segmented so that one new bit of information is offered on each page. The book is constructed of a combination of sturdy paper layers and then laminated. Illustrations are brightly colored, reinforce the text, and are consistent in size and detail. The typography is exceptionally appropriate. The story is handwritten in clear, black printing, suggesting a pen pal familiarity between the author and reader.

Discussion and Implications for Teaching ESL Learners

The results of our inspection of books authored by ESL learners indicated an unexpected adherence to criteria for literary genre. Because each author's book was written in English and translated into his native language by parents and grandparents, there was a validation of the primary language as fundamental to achievement. The links between languages and cultures were maintained via the translations. Also noteworthy, in subsequent written and oral communications by the children, we observed a growing facility with the English language.

Teachers of ESL students are constantly looking for ways to better prepare themselves for the challenge of instructing a population of diverse learners. Strategy workshops, professional development opportunities, research articles, observations of master teachers; are a part of their repertoire of resources. The literary achievements revealed through the inspection of these books may be pointing to a

resource right at ESL teachers' fingertips; the possibilities for success using process writing with ESL learners. The objectives of a process writing program do not ordinarily specify instruction in genre criteria. Rather, the focus is on instruction in the stages of the writing process, writing for meaning, and careful attention to a sense of story. As these young authors have demonstrated, there is a conformance to literary genre in their writing. It is reasonable to presume this is based on the synergistic effects of using literature and writing in combination to teach ESL learners. Teaching reading with good literature and promoting writing within the recursive format of process writing, is mutually enhancing to the second language acquisition process (Farnan, Flood and Lapp, 1994).

REFERENCES

- Allen, V.G. (1994). Selecting materials for the reading instruction of ESL children. In K. Spangenberg-Urbschat & R. Pritchard (Eds.), *Kids come in all languages: Reading instruction for ESL students* (pp. 108-131). Newark DE: International Reading Association.
- Cullinan, B.E. (1989). *Literature and the child* (2nd ed.). San Diego CA: Harcourt Brace.
- Cummins, J. (1989). *Empowering minority students*. Sacramento CA: California Association of Bilingual Education.
- Ernst, G. (1993). A multicultural curriculum for the 21st century. In C.G. Hass & F.W. Parkay (Eds.), *Curriculum planning* (6th ed., pp. 84-90). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Ernst, G., & Richard, K.L. (1995). Reading and writing pathways to conversation in the ESL classroom. *The Reading Teacher*, 48, 320-326.
- Farnan, N., Flood, J., & Lapp, D. (1994). Comprehending through reading and writing: Six research-based instructional strategies. In K. Spangenberg-Urbschat & R. Pritchard (Eds.), *Kids come in all languages: Reading instruction for ESL students* (pp. 135-157). Newark DE: International Reading Association.
- Fitzgerald, J. (1993). Literacy and students who are learning English as a second language. *The Reading Teacher*, 46, 538-647.
- Fitzgerald, J. (1994). Crossing boundaries: What do second-language-learning theories say to reading and writing teachers of English-as-a-second-language learners? *Reading Horizons*, 34, 339-355.
- Freeman, D.E., & Freeman, Y.S. (April 1993). Strategies for promoting the primary languages of all students. *The Reading Teacher*, 46, 552-558.
- Huck, C. (1977). Literature as the content of reading. *Theory into Practice*, 16, 363-371.
- Hudelson, S. (1986). ESL children's writing: What we've learned, what we're learning. In P. Rigg & S. Enright (Eds.), *Children and ESL: Integrating perspectives* (pp. 25-54). Washington DC: TESOL.
- Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. NY: Pergamon.

- Nedeff, A.R., Brady, N., Maxwell, B., Oaks, R., & Seckel, M.A. (1994). Students as authors. *The Reading Teacher*, 47, 349.
- Norton, D.E. (1995). *Through the eyes of a child* (4th ed.). Englewood Cliffs NJ: Simon & Schuster.
- Peregoy, S.F., & Boyle, O.F. (1997). *Reading, writing, learning in ESL: A resource book for K-12 teachers* (2nd ed.). NY: Longman.
- Perrotta, B. (1994). Writing development and second language acquisition in young children. *Childhood Education*, 237-241.
- Peyton, J. (1990). Beginning at the beginning: First-grade ESL students learn to write. In A.M. Padilla, H. Fairchild, & C. Valades (Eds.), *Bilingual education issues and strategies* (pp. 195-218). Newbury Park CA: SAGE.
- Shirmer, B.R., Casbon, J., & Twiss, L.L. (1996). Innovative literacy practices for ESL learners. *The Reading Teacher*, 49, 412-414.

Jane F. Rudden is a faculty member in the Department of Elementary and Early childhood Education, at Millersville University in Millersville Pennsylvania. Anita R. Nedeff is a teacher at Central Elementary School in Morgantown West Virginia.

APPENDICES

Appendix A
From *The Beautiful Princess* by LuLu



Once upon a time there was a beautiful Princess named Rena. She had a beautiful unicorn named Sparkle, because she was

Appendix B
From *Wayne and Tony* by Wayne

In a little town lived a naughty boy, Wayne. One day on his way home from school, Wayne heard someone calling "Help!". A big rat was running after something. He ran over and drove the rat away.

This was a cat-like robot named Tony. Tony was afraid of nothing but rats. Wayne helped Tony get out of trouble, so they became good friends.

One afternoon, Wayne started his homework assigned by his science teacher, Mrs. Buchman.

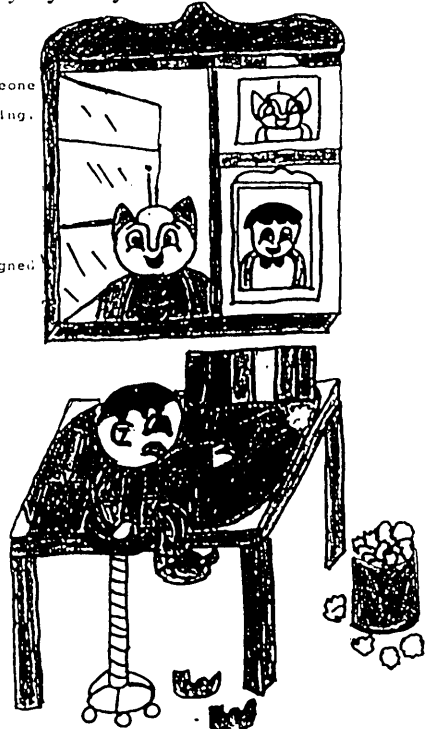
"Where does a pencil come from?" she had asked. Wayne tried hard, but he couldn't remember what the teacher said in class. He was not stupid, but he never listened to the teacher attentively.

When Wayne was worried about his homework, Tony appeared at the window and asked, "What's up?"

"I can't figure out this question," Wayne answered. Tony laughed at him.

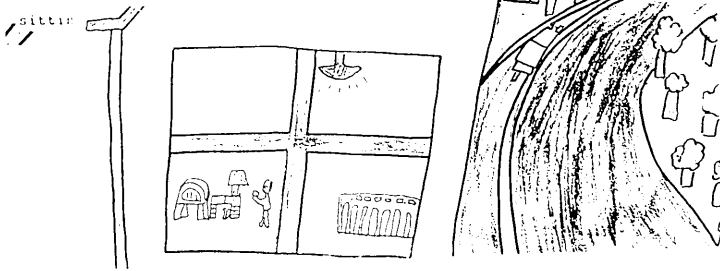
"Because you never listen to the teacher," he said.

Wayne flared up. "Shut up! It's never too late to learn. And, I am learning now!"



Appendix C
From *The Green Dragon* by Nan Wu





One day after school I went home. I was tired from walking. I went upstairs to my room to sleep. I put my school bag on the desk. As I put the bag down, I saw a picture of a green dragon. I didn't know who had put it there. I picked it up and looked at it. It was a picture of a dragon



Appendix D
From *Why the Sky is Blue* by Lucy Yi

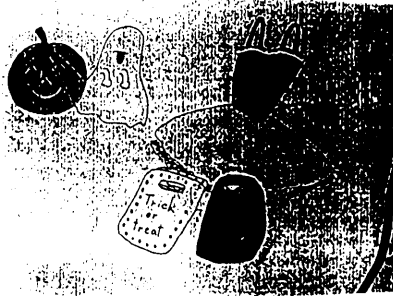


Appendices E and F
From *Picture Dictionary* by Susan and Lisa

glue	胶水	
map	地图	
pencil	铅笔	
school	学校	

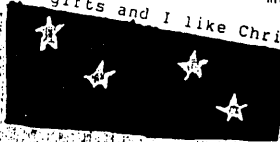
Appendix G
From *To: My Dear Friend* by Brenda

On my first Halloween, I dressed up in my dance costume and went to the mall to trick-or-treat. That was a happy evening. I had two bags of candy. I was so happy, because I never had gotten so much candy before. I like Halloween now.



Appendix H
Christmas letter from *To: My Dear Friend* by Brenda

My first Christmas Day here was different. In Taiwan, just the parents give children the gifts on Christmas Day. In America, Christmas Day is very interesting, because children have to give their parents gifts, and the parents always give their children gifts too. This time my father bought a middle-size tree, so we could put the gifts under it. On Christmas Day my sister and I went caroling. We went to a house to sing Christmas songs. The master gave us some candy. Then we left. When we went back home, we opened the gifts. I was so happy. My mother gave me two Barbie dolls. My father gave me a pair of shoes and a pretty dress. My sister gave me a purse and a notebook. I got a lot of gifts and I like Christmas Day so much.



Appendix I From *Thunder* by Virginia

Thunder on the bank of a river. Thunder had a little scratch on his neck. Mark and Sarah were Scouts, so they knew a little about light scratches. They hurried and scooped some water from the river and washed the scratch. They camped there until the scratch healed.

The children stayed on the riverbank for a few days, just so Thunder would feel better. One sunny morning Thunder felt better, so they decided to move on, following the river downstream.

That night, as Mark ate his only candy bar, he suddenly started to think about their camping spot in the Colorado woods near the Arkansas River. The more he thought about it, the more it made sense. The river must be either the Arkansas River or the South Platte River. Just then Sarah called him and woke him from his thoughts. They were all very tired, so they went to sleep. Mark kept having dreams about his geography class in school. School, Geography, Think, and River kept coming into his mind. Suddenly, he got it. In the coffee shop he had heard Mr. Stevens talking to Sarah about their camping spot, a camping spot near the



Appendix J From *There Was a Rabbit Named Bunny* by Brenda



There was a rabbit named Bunny
Bunny liked to play ball with her
friends.