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WEIGHING ALTERNATIVES:

HOW FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADE STUDENTS

USE THE INFORMATION THEY OBTAIN IN

PEER WRITING CONFERENCES

A Dissertation Presented

By

RENA ELIZABETH MOORE

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Masha K. Rudman, Member

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George E. Urch, Acting Dean
School of Education

In loving memory of my grandfather

who dreamed that his heirs would

receive the education he did not have.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A B S T R A C T

WEIGHING ALTERNATIVES:

HOW FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADE STUDENTS

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PEER WRITING CONFERENCES

(September 1987)

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Peer writing conferences are often cited as one strategy for implementing a writing process approach within the classroom, but few studies have looked specifically at this component at the upper elementary level. In this study, the researcher used naturalistic procedures to explore revisions students made in their written pieces following peer writing conferences. She observed, interviewed, and recorded ten students in a fifth and sixth grade classroom over a seven month period to identify how students used (or did not use) their peers' comments and suggestions to revise their written pieces.

Throughout the study peers were able to respond quite capably to the content of a piece of writing. They pointed out details and descriptions that were missing, edited simple grammatical errors, and helped authors select topics or choose

titles for their pieces. Students attended to the parts of a piece but seldom responded to a piece as a whole. Students did not suggest alternative genres for a text.

However, students' revision process following peer conferences was highly individual. Some students revised more frequently following teacher conferences, while others revised more following peer conferences. A third group of students seemed to use all elements of the writing program—mini-lessons, peer conferences, teacher conferences, author's circles, stories by other authors—in their revisions.

This study suggests an expanded role for both students and teachers within a writing program and has implications for teacher training. Since students are able to respond ably to the content of each other's written pieces, then peer writing conferences can be a valuable addition to a classroom writing program. Teachers will need to help young writers by expanding on peers' comments, providing alternative writing strategies and genres, and calling attention to the skills and techniques professional writers employ.

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CHAPTER I

THE STUDY

Background for the Study

The study of writing in schools has occupied a central
role in educational research over the past fifteen years. Both
Emig (1971) and Graves (1973) stimulated a rethinking of
writing instruction and led a shift in writing research
(Graves, 1981; Hairston, 1982). Previously, writing research
had centered on studies of written products. Few researchers
looked at the actual composing process: what writers do when
they write (Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, & Schoer, 1963). Headlines
such as "Why Johnny Can't Write" (Sheils, 1975) created a
national furor. As one of the "3 R's," writing became a focal
point for curriculum review within the school and a target area
for foundation and federal funding as the "Back to Basics"
movement gained momentum (Judy & Judy, 1981). Although there
had been other "periodic bouts of public concern and
professional browbeating" over the quality of writing
instruction, this perception of a "writing crisis" appeared to
be "more widespread and enduring than its predecessors"
(Mayher, Lester, & Pradl, 1983, p. 64).

Among the many writing research studies begun, perhaps the most well known at the elementary level was the work of Donald Graves, Lucy Calkins, and Susan Sowers at Atkinson Academy, a public school in New Hampshire (Graves, 1982b). Other long-term writing studies were conducted in Shoreham, Long Island (Perl, 1983; Perl & Wilson, 1986), Michigan (Clark & Florio, 1982), Indiana (Harste & Burke, 1980; Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984) and Ohio (King & Rentel, 1981). As information from these studies was published, many teachers began to question their own writing programs and adopt the procedures detailed in the descriptions of these classrooms.

During the same time period, the Bay Area Writing Project was developed to help train teachers to be better writers and teachers of writing. The project had three primary assumptions:

1) The best teacher of teachers is another teacher;

2) teachers of composition should, themselves, write;

3) a substantial body of knowledge about composition exists, which can assist teachers in improving the writing skills of students (Dunham & Mills, 1981).

From its beginnings in California, the Bay Area Writing Project model has been disseminated to over 100 sites in the United States and Canada. This model seemed to be popular as much for

its mode of inservice training for teachers as its subject matter. The New Jersey Writing Project was the first of these writing projects to demonstrate significant improvement in student writing as a result of inservice training and was validated for dissemination throughout the nation. (Dunham & Mills, 1981).

In spite of this work and research, the results of writing tests have continued to generate public concern. The report, "Writing Trends Across the Decade, 1974 to 1984" (summarized in Applebee, Langer, & Mullis, 1986), revealed that more than 90% of the 15,000 students (aged 9, 13, and 17) tested received an overall rating of "poor" on their descriptive, persuasive, and imaginative prose. Archie Lapointe, executive director of the assessment stated, "There is cause for concern both about lack of progress and the generally low level of writing proficiency, because these skills are so important for effective communication throughout people's lives." ("Writings of U.S. Students," 1986).

Goodman (1986) believes that it was precisely the Back to Basics movement which has led to the decline in both writing and reading skills. The original push was to increase classroom time on isolated skills. Many children became adept at worksheets and tests on these isolated skills but were not able to integrate these skills and become competent readers and writers. As teachers devoted more classroom time to "skill

building," less time was devoted to the actual reading and writing of prose. Graves (1978) spent one year under a Ford Foundation grant observing writing programs in elementary schools. He found that in most classrooms what was called writing consisted of workbook exercises, drills in penmanship, vocabulary, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar. Little writing was required other than short answers, incomplete sentences, or circling appropriate responses. There were few chances to work with connected discourse. For the young writer, "basics are not the small-focus technical things but broad things like meaning and motivation, purpose and point. . . . because the learning process proceeds from intent and content down to the contemplation of technical points, not the other way around" (Moffett, 1968, p. 205). However, the emphasis on writing mechanics persisted even though the National Assessment of Educational Progress, Writing Mechanics, 1969-1974 (1975) stated that the problems students were having with writing were not with writing mechanics, but with connected discourse. Moffett, Graves, and Goodman feel children learn to read and write by spending time in the process of reading and writing, interacting with written and spoken language.

Vygotsky (1983) questioned the value of teaching writing as a "motor skill" (p 290). Instead, he proposed three practical requirements for the teaching of writing:

1) The teaching of writing should begin in the
   preschool years;

2) Writing should be meaningful for children and
   should be "incorporated into a task that is
   necessary and relevant to life;" (p.291)

3) Writing should be taught naturally as part of
   the children's play.

There is still a lack of connection between the
information writing research provides for classroom instruction
and the way writing is taught in most schools. Graves (1983),
Calkins (1983, 1986), Atwell (1987), Hansen (1987) and others
have published accessible books for the writing teacher. Each
book attempts to answer very specific questions about the
writing process and the teaching of writing. Yet, there are
still many unanswered questions on the implementation of a
writing process curriculum and, more importantly, how children
learn to become proficient writers. "Why is this so? Because
the changes are recent, the new approaches to instruction may
not be well enough understood and their implications not fully
explored" (Applebee, Langer, & Mullis, 1986, p. 13). This
study attempts to look at one aspect of the writing process,
peer writing conferences, and its importance to young writer's
development.

Need for the Study

Peer writing conferences are often cited as one strategy for implementing a writing process approach within the classroom, but few studies have looked specifically at this component at the upper elementary level. Two studies that did focus on peer writing conferences (Nunn, 1984; Finn, 1985) found that children were able to solve problems in their writing, discuss their feeling and ideas, and develop topics for future pieces of writing. Neither researcher, however, attempted to trace the influence of peers' suggestions on the development of a particular piece of writing. Nor did they look at the differences between the types of peer responses to a piece of writing and the types of teacher responses to the same piece of writing. Finn (1985) suggested that future researchers needed to closely study the teacher-student con- ferences and peer conferences, drafts, and final copies of one child over a period of time to help "reveal the dynamics of teacher and peer interaction with one student and a piece of writing" (p. 120). This study builds on the research that has gone before and extends our knowledge of children's writing development.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to observe and describe

how fifth and sixth grade students use the information they
obtain in peer writing conferences in the revision of their
written pieces, to note any patterns that emerge from the
data, and to draw conclusions which might be valuable to
other researchers and teachers of writing. Specifically,
this study focussed on the documentation of:

1) Student interactions during peer writing
    conferences.

2) Student revision of a piece after peer
    writing conferences.

3) Student interpretations of useful
    information from peer writing conferences.

4) Student beliefs about how their peers
    influence their writing.

5) Student differences in the use of
    information from peer writing conferences
    and student-teacher writing conferences.

Assumptions

The two fundamental assumptions underlying this study
are:

1) meaning is central to all literacy tasks
    and must be central to literacy instruction,
    and

2) research must be conducted in a meaningful
    context.

These assumptions influenced both the design of my study and
my choice of research site and informants.

The communicative and social importance of literacy tasks has often been overlooked within the classroom. The first assumption dictates that this study be conducted in a classroom where meaning is kept as the central focus at all times. A teacher demonstrates that she or he understands the primacy of meaning within the language arts curriculum by contextualizing the activities presented. For writing, this means providing an audience that cares to hear what each student has to say. Students do not write to complete a worksheet; they write to discover, to create, and to communicate meaning. The teacher is not the only audience within the classroom. There are twenty to thirty peers within the classroom who act as the audience for a piece. Thus, in a meaning-centered classroom there needs to be not only a writing period, but also time throughout the school day when children use writing for multiple reasons. We learn what we use and need to use; writing is no exception. The classroom selected for this study exemplified such a writing program.

The second assumption requires that if children's classroom writing is to be studied, then it must be studied within the classroom. "Human action and experience are context dependent and can only be understood within their contexts" (Mishler, 1979); therefore, the uniquely human activity of writing needs to be examined in the context in which the writing is produced.

> Writing takes place in an environment
> that shapes the purpose, function,
> writer-audience relationships, and
> modes of discourse; to a large extent
> the context determines whether or
> not writing will occur. It is
> essential, therefore, to consider
> writing contexts and the constituents
> of a nurturing school climate as a
> part of the research territory to be
> covered. (King, 1978, p. 193)

The context of the classroom is a rich and varied one. The interactions between students and teachers create "a mutually defined classroom culture" (Bolster 1983), and, although "the specific elements of the culture vary from classroom to classroom, ...the process of development is always the same" (p. 297). Thus, studying writing in the classroom context necessitates that the researcher use the tools of the ethnographer who studies, describes, and attempts to explain cultures. The researcher must be both immersed in the culture in order to understand it, yet distanced from the culture in order to interpret it. One must be both detached and involved, both participant and observer (Agar, 1980). The research methods used in this study were adapted from the procedures delineated by Goetz & LeCompte (1984), Popkewitz & Tabachnick (1981), Agar (1980), Spradley (1979), and Lofland (1971). The data collected became the final arbiter of the categories and coding systems used (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Three over-lapping bodies of literature provided the
focus and direction for this study. First, studies of
children's writing development established the groundwork
for studying writing and writers "in process" within the
classroom and inspired the major questions and design of
this study. Second, studies of the development of children's
revision strategies identified types of revisions that young
authors are able to make and suggested possible guidelines
to use in examining children's revisions. Third, discussions
of the interactions during student-teacher and student-student
writing conferences clarified those areas requiring further
research and crystallized the primary focus of my research.

Children's Writing Development

Sixteen years ago, Janet Emig (1971) stated that little
was known about writing development to help teachers of
writing:

> If certain elements in a certain order
> characterize the evolution of all student
> writing or even most writing in a given mode,
> and very little is known about these elements
> or their ordering, the teaching of composition
> proceeds for both students and teachers as a
> metaphysical or, at best, a wholly intuitive
> endeavor. (p. 1)

Emig studied the composing process of twelfth graders using a combination of several research methodologies: case study, observations, interviews, and analysis of compositions. She found that the teaching of writing focussed primarily on the corrections of errors in completed pieces, the teacher was the only audience for the writing, and there was little time for thinking or revision within the classroom. She found this to be antithetical to the reflective process used by experienced writers.

The second pioneering research study in children's writing development was Graves' dissertation (1973), a four month observation of seven year olds' writing within the classroom. His two conclusions with most relevance for this study are: (1) children in informal settings where there were choices in writing topics wrote more and longer compositions than children in classroom where writing was asssigned, and (2) children need no external motivation to write. He further concluded that assigned writing tasks often inhibited the content and amount of writing.

Sondra Perl (1979) looked at the composing aloud of remedial college level writers. Based on her data she rejected the prewriting, writing, rewriting continuum (Rohman, 1965) and instead proposed that writing is recursive, writers at any point in the writing process may return to an earlier or later stage in the process. This compares

to the switching between writer and reader that Hansen (1983),
Giacobbe (1982), Boutwell (1983), and Calkins (1986) describe
or, as Murray (1982) calls them, conversations with one's
"other self." The idea that writing is a recursive process
is an important one for teachers of writing. If writing
is recursive, then there are direct implications for
classroom instruction. Children will not proceed through
a set series of steps in a linear fashion; different children
will be at different points in the writing process at any
given time; and classroom teachers must be flexible and
adaptable enough to handle this range of writing development.

Frank Smith (1982) has said that classrooms are poor
places to write. Yet, the studies of Graves (1983) and
Calkins (1983, 1986) indicate that this need not be the case.
To help more students become proficient writers, researchers
need to analyze carefully what makes these classrooms
hospitable climates for young writers. According to Graves
(1982c) the teaching of writing is "centered in helping
children to solve problems for themselves. Otherwise, they
will see the teacher as the one in control of the writing
process, and not themselves" (p. 173, 174). However, in
many classrooms the classroom teacher is also "not in
control" of the process or the curriculum. Smith (1981)
noted a growing trend toward reducing teacher's power and

control over the curriculum and characterized the issue as one concerning "who is to be in control of classrooms, the people in the classroom (teachers and children) or the people elsewhere who develop programs" (p. 634). Such writing programs "transfer instructional decision making from the teacher (and children) in the classroom to procedures laid down by people removed from the teaching situation by time and distance" (p. 636). Calkins (1986) echoed these sentiments: "...in most American classrooms, the teacher's focus is not on the child, but on a unit of study, the textbook, the prepackaged curriculum" (p.6). She described writing workshops as one place for both teachers and children to focus on topics which matter to them. "Around the country, we are finding that the writing workshop can provide a new image for what classrooms can look and sound and feel like, new expectations for what it means to teach wisely and well, and a new sense of personal connectedness" (Calkins, 1986, p. 8).

The tremendous explosion of knowledge over the past fifty years means that education must do more than teach children facts to memorize. All learners need to be able to analyze, synthesize, evaluate, and integrate information if they are to be truly knowledgeable adults. Writing helps develop these skills. Many skilled writers use the process of writing to clarify their thinking about

a topic. Piaget stated it strongly, "I write even if only for myself, I could not think unless I did so" (quoted in Brown, 1980, p. 2).

Other writers view the writing process as the means by which one discovers what one wants to say (Odell, 1980; Emig, 1977; Elbow, 1973). As one writes, new assumptions and previously unidentified implications can be recognized in one's writing that are not apparent in the hazy approximations that one's memory often provides (Odell, 1980). "Writing to learn depends on an active rather than a passive approach to learning. It requires that we conceive of both learning and writing as meaning-making processes that involve the learner actively building connections" (Mayer, Lester, & Pradl, 1983, p. 78) between what is being learned and what is already known. Thus, writing becomes a tool to discover and sort out the world of information that surrounds us.

If children are to learn to use the writing process for life-long learning, then the classroom must support discovery and risk taking. Both the students and their written pieces must be valued for their attempts to interpret the often chaotic outside world. Teachers "need to develop school literacy tasks that help children remain at the center of control, adapting writing to meet their own changing

intentions" (Ryan, 1986, p. 288).

> And because children's understanding of the world is necessarily limited by an as yet undeveloped picture of themselves and their place in the world, it would seem that the primary purpose of the educator would be to help them enlarge this understanding by allowing them to write more deeply into meaning. If we reverse the process and first concentrate on helping children become better writers, we cannot guarantee they will develop a greater understanding of experience. We cannot be certain they will find their intention in their own way. (Mikkelsen, 1987, p. 71)

"Teaching and learning, then, should be a collaborative effort through which teachers empower students to take control of their own literacy" (Ryan, 1986, P. 288.). Through modeling during discussions and conferences, teachers empower students to develop their own skills as critical readers and writers, extremely important skills if students are to gain control of their learning and grow as independent thinkers. Peer conferences provide one opportunity for students to practice and hone these skills. This study attempts to document the student's development and use of conferring strategies in a classroom that is a good place for teaching writing.

Children's Revision Strategies

"Revision is predicated on the writer caring about meaning and ... about effectively communicating meaning" (Haley-James,

1981b, p. 562) Thus, in order for revision to take place, there must be a purpose for the writing and an environment where communication is encouraged. Writing researchers continue to emphasize the centrality of purpose, meaning, and communication in writing development and instruction, but nowhere is it more important than in the area of revising a piece of writing. "If through drafting we're exploring, discovering, and creating meaning, then in revision we're ensuring that the intended meaning is the one we're communicating" (Mayer, Lester, & Pradl, 1983, p. 44).

In the National Assessment of Educational Progress (1977) assessment of revision skills, upper elementary students were found to make few revisions in completed pieces even when given ample time to revise. At the fourth grade level, 40% of the students made no changes in the text. While the percentage of students who made no changes decreased to 22% at the eighth grade level, most of the changes made were in punctuation and spelling.

While acknowledging that the students in their study spent little classroom time writing or revising, Scardamalia and Bereiter (1983) found that their students under study could identify areas in their writing that needed revision as accurately as a group of semi-professional writers, but the students had few strategies for changing their writing. Overall, they stated that there was "little revision activity

and what there <was tended> to make things worse" (p. 89). It seems that students need instruction in both using different types of revision strategies and evaluating what makes an effective piece of writing.

"If teachers are to help children control their writing, they need to know what children see, and the process and order of their seeing. Without help, most children see little sense in revision" (Graves, 1983, p. 151). For Graves, revision is "seeing again," and children acquire this seeing, this perception by writing. "Revision, or reseeing, is not necessarily a natural act " (Graves, 1983, p.160). Calkins (1986) feels teacher instruction contributes to a student's development of revision strategies. The revisions that students make with teacher help in the primary grades become part of the student's repertoire in later grades. The student seems to have internalized "the questions that can be asked of an emerging draft" (p. 94). This internalization allows the student to move back and forth between the role of writer of the piece and reader of the piece. Thus, the student learns to "see" the piece from both the writer's and the reader's point of view and make revisions which lead to clarity in the written piece. "To the extent that a writer feels a gap between intention and accomplishment, she will be amenable to subsequent suggestions for revision" (Mayer, Lester, & Pradl, 1983, p. 131).

Both Graves (1983) and Calkins (1983, 1986) found that children at all grade levels were able to make some revisions in their writing. Children at the primary grade levels began by making changes at the word level or by adding on information often at the end of the text. Older children rewrote their pieces; many chose to completely redraft their piece, while others rewrote certain sections to make them clear to their audience. The children in these studies took part in writing workshops during the school day, and many of their teachers were also involved in writing workshops. Thus, given optimum conditions for writing, children can and do revise.

Peer Writing Conferences

There is a dearth of studies on the effects of peer writing conferences on student's composing process, but many researchers have mentioned the importance of students sharing their writing with peers. "Teaching students to read and respond to a piece of writing, particularly a piece of writing in progress, is one of the central tasks of a teacher in a writing class" (Perl, 1983, p. 22). She emphasizes two important components of the writing process strengthened by peer writing conferences:

1) Audience--"Writers need to internalize a sense of audience for their writing." If students are encouraged to

read their writing to one another, they are "better able to understand the relationship that develops among writers, readers, and texts."

      2) Authorship--"The ultimate responsibility for writing lies with the author...Authors choose what to write, how to write it, and how much response they require." They must also learn "how to accommodate to the demands of an audience." (p. 22)

      Calkins (1983, 1986) and Graves (1983) included information on writing conferences in their analysis of their students' writing development. However, their emphasis was primarily on teacher-student conferences, not on peer conferences. There are few studies that look specifically at student interactions within peer conferences.

      Nunn (1984) looked at peer interactions during collaborative writing at the 4th/5th grade level. She found that students used these peer interactions to maintain interpersonal relationships as well as to critically examine existing ideas, explore new ideas, and solve problems related to the writing task. She also found that the nature of the writing assignment influenced the type of language used during the peer conference.

      In her dissertation study, Finn (1985) focussed primarily on conferences between children in order to "understand what they say and what their conferences mean to them as young

writers" (p. 18). She analyzed the audio transcripts of 83 peer conferences of two groups of nine to eleven year old children, and coded the behaviors of both the writer and the peer within the conference. Her interest in the decision-making process at work within the peer conferences led Finn to look closely at the concepts of ownership, voice, and intent to determine "precisely where control of the process lay" (p. 52). She found that children in the peer conferences discussed people, events, and things which were close to them; their feelings about a particular subject; and new ideas which might lead to a future piece of writing. She also found that the children showed many examples of being aware of their intended audience.

Summary of the Literature

While there have been many studies on the writing process over the past fifteen years, few have been conducted in the upper elementary classroom. Most studies have focussed on the primary or high school grades, but several significant findings for this study have emerged from the studies that were conducted in the upper elementary grades.

Students in the upper elementary grades are developmentally able to step outside of themselves and consider their teacher's and peer's questions about their writing. This

ability to look at text through the eyes of both the writer and the reader allows students to reconsider and resee their texts, necessary components for revision to take place. However, revisions do not take place in a vacuum. Students need responses to their writing to help them discover unclear passages and to help them select appropriate revision strategies. Through modeling, teachers help children learn to respond appropriately to a peer's writing.

If older students are able to revise their texts and are able to respond to the texts of their peers, then revision and peer conferences become important components of a writing program. The writing teacher no longer is the only audience for a student's piece of writing. Both the students and teacher have new roles to fill within the classroom as the teacher shares some of his or her "power" and "authority" with the students. Writing classrooms have a different look and feel as teachers attempt to empower students to take charge of their own learning.

This study builds on the information that Finn (1985) obtained and attempts to explain how students internalize the information they receive from peer writing conferences and use it to revise their texts.

C H A P T E R   I I I

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study I followed the writing development of fifth and sixth grade students, ages nine to eleven, as they wrote, shared, and revised their written pieces. Primarily, this study focussed on the documentation of student interactions during peer and teacher writing conferences, students' selection of revisions to make within their texts, and the differences between the interactions and follow-up of peer writing conferences and teacher writing conferences.

The data for this study were collected using qualitative methods, including participant observation, informal interviewing, peer conference sheets, individual student writing folders, self-evaluations, audiotapes of peer and teacher writing conferences, and videotapes of author's circles and mini-lessons. Because the social and physical context is an important component of learning, these data were collected within the classroom setting as unobtrusively as possible. With the exception of the field notes from the participant observer, all of the other methods of data collections were accepted components of the classroom writing program. My goal was to change the character of this writing program as little as possible as I collected the data for this study.

Access and Social Relationships

Access

This study was conducted in the elementary school where I have taught for the past nine years. The principal of the school granted permission for me to conduct the study during the year I worked half-time in the primary classroom. A letter describing the study was prepared for parents and approved by the Chairman of the Human Subjects Committee at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Signed permission slips were obtained from the parents of each of the students in the study.

Relationships with the Students

My entry into the classroom was eased by the fact that I had previously taught all but three of the students in the class. Mrs. B. introduced me to the class on the first day of writing instruction. She said I would be working in the classroom during writing time to study how she taught writing and to observe what happened in the classroom during writing. The students I had taught accepted my role. From previous experience in my writing class, they knew I would sometimes take time out from writing conferences to take notes, ask survey questions, or videotape the class. They would continue their conferences or discussions when I walked up closer to

hear their comments. If I asked them a question, they would answer it, but generally they continued about their work seemingly without thought to my presence.

However, I had a different experience with the three new (to me) students. This was the first or second year in a writing process classroom for each of these students. They were unsure of their role and the teacher's role within the writing program. My being in the classroom only confused the matter. Each of the students would seek me out if Mrs. B. was not available for help or advice. One of the students would ask to see my notes of peer conferences and mini-lessons so that she could see if there had been anything she had missed. With varying degrees of success, I tried to establish a non-teaching position within the class, but I must admit that sometimes the teacher in me won out. It was with difficulty I spurned their efforts to make me their writing coach by redirecting them to a friend or their teacher whenever possible. For this and other reasons, only one of these students was included in the final sample group in this study.

I should note that at all times I allowed any child who asked to read my notes. Sometimes they would be impressed with how much of a discussion I had been able to get down. More often they would complain that they could not read my personalized shorthand and rushed handwriting. On one occasion

I was asked not to write something down. I honored that request.

Relationship with the Teacher

This study would not have been possible without the acceptance and trust of Mrs. B. She and I have taught in the same building and taken workshops together for the past eight years. She opened her classroom to me and provided me with her personal notes on each child. Because we had often bared our souls to each other as we began to use a writing process approach within our classrooms, I had not been uneasy about working with her. As the study progressed, however, I found myself thinking more before I spoke to her, carefully phrasing my observations or questions to appear non-judgmental. Sometimes I failed. We shared our observations of the students and the program, and I would blurt out a problem as I saw it without asking for her interpretation of the event. Because I did not begin my formal analysis of the data until the summer, we both were unable to see the development of certain writers within the class. At times we were both distressed about their lack of apparent growth in writing. It was only with hindsight and careful data analysis that the individual's writing development could be noted.

The ethnographer's balancing act between stranger and friend (Agar, 1980) and between participant and observer within

the classroom proved challenging for me. Mrs. B.'s support,
trust, interest, flexibility, and openness allowed me to
objectively scrutinize the interactions within the classroom,
yet maintain our friendship outside the classroom. She
remained both my friend and a subject in my research. We have
both been amazed at how much there was to learn within her
classroom.

The Physical Setting

The School

The school selected for this study is in a small New
England town near a large university. Serving students in
kindergarten through sixth grade, the school has a population
of less than 110 children with five classroom teachers, a
half-time principal, and various part-time specialists. The
school population is predominantly White, but the students come
from homes representing diverse socio-economic groups, from
loggers, carpenters and truck drivers to lawyers, doctors and
university professors. The presence of the near-by university
with a large school of education means that the teachers in the
school have access to a broad range of workshops, inservice
courses, and degree programs.

There are five regular classrooms in the small, one-level
building and all classes are made up of mixed grades. At the

present time, there is a K-1, 1-2, 3-4, and two 5-6 classes.
There is also an aide in the K-1 and 3-4 classrooms. The
school places a priority on individualizing instruction and
meeting individual student needs. This is made possible by the
small size of most classes. The school strives for a 20:1
student to teacher ratio, and the fifth-sixth grades are even
smaller with a ratio of 16:1.

Outside each classroom is a large bulletin board where
teachers can display current class projects. These bulletin
boards are covered with student work and often student made
letters and labels.

The 5-6 Classroom

The 5-6 classroom is a 30' X 35' space with large, south
facing windows. There are two large bulletin boards within the
room and throughout the year they are covered with displays of
the children's work in science, reading, math or social
studies. There are two large tables and one large rug area.
Both of these spaces are used by the students during writing
time for conferences.

Student desks are clustered in groups of one to five and
are rearranged on a monthly basis. This arrangement is made by
student choice, but with teacher approval of the final plan.
As the year progresses students move in and out of groups as
friendships wax and wane.

The Teacher

The teacher, Mrs. B., has taught for twelve years in every grade K - 6. During the past six years she has taught writing through a process approach. She has studied closely the works of Donald Graves (1983) and Lucy Calkins (1986). For two summers she attended workshops on the writing process led by Nancie Atwell (1987) and sponsored by Northeastern University. She has also taught the writing process to other elementary school teachers through Commonwealth Inservice Institute grants.

Within her classroom, Mrs. B. employs an integrated, comprehension-centered approach to the language arts, and she uses writing throughout the subject areas as a means of thinking and problem solving. She agrees with the work of Odell (1980) and Emig (1977) and feels that children better understand what they know and what questions they have through writing. She stresses flexibility, independence, and risk taking throughout the school curriculum. She oftens nudges the children to think for themselves by her frequent questions, "What do you think?" "Can you find another way to do it?"

Within the school district, she is regarded as an excellent teacher. Her students consistently do well on

standardized tests, and over the years she has won awards for
excellence in teaching.

Although an experienced, well-trained teacher, Mrs. B. had
never taught writing process to fifth and sixth graders. Thus,
she was eager to participate in this research which she felt
would help her document and evaluate the development of the
writing program over the year.

The Writing Program

Because this was Mrs. B.'s first year as a fifth-sixth
grade teacher, she began the year by adapting procedures that
had worked during writing time in her grade 3-4 class to this
new age group. As in the past writing was held at a specific
time every day, 10:30 to 11:15 A.M. to provide the consistency
Mrs. B. felt the students needed to take risks and grow as
writers (Platt, 1979; Graves, 1983). This consistency in the
writing program established "a context where <students> have
both freedom and a structure of authority, so that the
predictable routine of each day's writing and conferencing
encourages them to follow through on their own interests"
(Rouse, 1984). Each student had an individual writing folder
which was kept in the student's desk and a cumulative writing
folder which was kept in a file cabinet easily accessible to
the students.

Mini-lessons.   Two or three times a week, Mrs. B. would present a large or whole group mini-lesson on a particular topic in the writing process. Her first mini-lesson of the year was a discussion of "What is writing?" and "Why do we write?" Other mini-lessons covered such diverse topics as visual imagery, character development, dialogue, punctuation, peer conferences, and development of leads and endings. (See Appendix D for a partial list of the mini-lessons presented from September to March.)

Peer Conferences.   From the beginning of the year Mrs. B. encouraged peer writing conferences by assigning a "conference buddy" to each child. Frequently, her first question in a teacher-student conference was, "What did your conference buddy have to say?" She also would follow up and extend comments and suggestions from peers. She not only acknowledged the importance of peers as an audience for writing, she also helped her students develop the ability to respond to each other's writing.   Through modeling, mini-lessons, restatements, room arrangement, and teacher/student/peer conferences, Mrs. B. prepared her students for their role as peer responders. Over the next few months the students began to share with many other students besides their originally assigned conference buddy. At the beginning of the year the students consistently audiotaped their peer conferences, but many of the students had difficulty operating the tape recorders. By the middle of the

year most of the students were filling out peer response sheets to record their peer conferences.

Author's Circles. Once or twice a week the whole class would come together for author's circles. Sometimes students would ask to share a piece of writing during author's circle so they could receive suggestions from their peers. Other times students would ask to share a finished piece so everyone could enjoy it. Occasionally, Mrs. B. would direct an author's circle by asking specific students to read portions of their writing to illustrate a particular strategy or technique she was demonstrating to the class. During author's circles students were asked to sit on the edge of the rug. By the middle of the year, a student had pulled a large orange chair over to the rug area to serve as the author's chair. This physical evidence of authorship seemed as important to the fifth and sixth graders as it is in the primary grades (Graves & Hansen, 1983).

The author read his or her piece, then called on students who had questions, suggestions or comments. Mrs. B., too, would ask questions or make comments, but her primary role seem to be as interpreter for the students. As necessary, she would restate or clarify student's questions to help the author understand them. She would also restate questions or comments that reinforced particular mini-lessons that she had taught.

Even with this limited direction, author's circles were generally by and for the students.

Teacher Conferences. Mrs. B. met with each child every two or three days. She would check around the classroom to see what each child was doing, then call up three or four students individually to meet with her. Sometimes a student would ask for a conference. At other times Mrs. B. would review certain student's writing folders at home and meet with them the following day. Her conferences were as individualized as the other components of her curriculum. In back-to-back conferences, she might work primarily on content with one child, then concentrate exclusively on the design of the piece with another child. She attempted to match her conference style with the needs of the students in order to find out what they knew "and thus, what to teach, how to extend their knowledge into new territory" (Hansen, 1987, p. 161).

There was also quite a variation in the amount of time she spent with each child. Some conferences would be five minutes long, others would be fifteen minutes. As the year progressed, her conferences seemed to remain between five to ten minutes. Thus, in a typical day Mrs. B would spend five to ten minutes getting the class organized for writing, twenty to thirty minutes in individual conferences, and five to 10 minutes directing a mini-lesson or walking around the room quickly meeting with several individual students. Although busy, she

did not seem rushed. She had time for students who needed help, and she had time to joke with a child over a new puppy.

Writing Other Genres. Mrs. B.'s primary adaptation for fifth and sixth graders was the introduction of particular genres of writing as the year progressed. Through mini-lessons, she introduced the students to journalism, mystery stories, scary stories, poetry, biographies, realistic fiction, and fantasies. She began the mini-lesson on each of these topics the same way: by reading examples of good stories in that particular genre. Students then brainstormed the characteristics of that genre and attempted to write a piece using those characteristics. As students had difficulty or seemed unclear about a characteristic, Mrs. B. would develop another mini-lesson on that characteristic. She also continually used other students as models on how to develop clues in a mystery story, how to develop a feeling for a subject in a biography, or how to make a character feel real in realistic fiction.

Published Writing. Students were encouraged to publish their writing in several formats. Some writing was displayed on the walls of the classroom. Other students kept a photo album with copies of their finished pieces in it. Some students continued to make and illustrate individual books. The school-wide literary magazine published twice a year

provided another avenue for publication as did the "Pelham Piper," a school newspaper sent home every six weeks. As the students became more proficient on the keyboard, more and more finished pieces were completed on the computer and illustrated with a computer-generated drawing.

Writing Across the Curriculum. In keeping with Mrs. B.'s philosophy that writing is an important element in thinking and problem solving, students were asked to keep logs in reading, science and social studies. They wrote reports and character descriptions of the heroes and heroines in the novels they read, they developed stories using pictographs from Native American stories, they wrote in science journals to explain what they had learned and what questions they still had about an experiment. A small group of students wrote a letter to the superintendent to protest the district-wide ban on skateboards at school. Writing was present in every area of the curriculum and in all aspects of the school day.

The Sample

The ten students in this study included all students who were in the classroom for the entire year and whose parents gave permission for them to be in the research group. Out of a total of sixteen students who were in the classroom at some time during the year, two left for other schools over the

December holidays; another child joined the group in January;
one child received special education services during writing
time; and two children did not have permission to be included
in the study. Pseudonyms have been used throughout the study
to protect the identity of the children.

Data Collection

The data for this study were collected using a variety of
qualitative methods, including participant observation,
informal interviews, peer conference sheets, individual student
writing folders, self-evaluations, audiotapes of peer and
teacher writing conferences, and videotapes of author's circles
and mini-lessons. With the exception of the field notes from
the participant observer, all of the other methods of data
collection were components of the classroom writing program.
These typical, somewhat unobtrusive measures were used to
lessen the influence of the research and the researcher on the
classroom program. But, I realize with hindsight that it may
be easier to "document the contamination rather than to
neutralize it" (Calkins, 1983, 15). Thus, I have also tried to
note whenever a data collection method hindered or helped the
implementation of the writing program and the children's
writing development.

Participant Observation

From September 9 to March 10 I observed in the fifth and sixth grade classroom three or four times a week. I came into the classroom at the start of the writing period, 10:30 A.M. and remained until the end of the writing block at approximately 11:15 A.M. I also visited in the classroom during other times of the school day to observe how Mrs. B integrated writing into other subject areas and to note any differences or similarities in her interactions with the students.

At first I tried to get an overview of the entire class in my field notes. I would note the desk arrangement, where students were sitting, which students were conferring, and each child's topic. As I continued with my observations, I began to spend more time trying to take verbatim notes of students' discussions and sharing. I would jot down quick quotes, then ask the students to explain any ambiguous details or questions. I would stand close by one or two groups so that I could easily shift my focus as necessary.

Although I spent much of my time quietly observing and taking notes, I also interacted with the students, responding to questions and asking them for clarifications. My interactions were also recorded in the field notes and caused me some consternation when I observed how often I interacted with the three new students. As stated previously, when I

became aware of these interactions, I consciously developed strategies to direct these students to a peer or their teacher.

When I began my data collection, I had a clear idea of what constituted a peer conference. By November, as both the children and I became more settled in the writing program, I began to sense that the offhand, mumbled-half-to-oneself remarks made by the students were indeed rudimentary peer conferences or at least an attempt to share with a peer. I began to capture some of these remarks. When I wrote my profiles of the individual writers, I saw that it was often these previously overlooked statements that helped me to show the individuality of each young writer.

My field notes provided the background, the setting for the data obtained from the audiotapes, videotapes, and other written records. Through the field notes, I was able to recreate in my mind the context for a particular draft of a piece, peer, or teacher conference. The field notes set the scene for the individual characters and actions.

Informal Interviews

My decision to be both a limited participant and observer within the classroom meant that I would informally ask questions of the students or respond to their questions as part of my data collection. I would ask about parts of a peer conference that I had not heard or ask a student what she or he

was doing if I could not tell. I would ask a student about how they chose a topic or what they were going to do next, knowing that by asking the questions I might be influencing the future direction of the piece. As I began to analyze my data, I started to seek confirmation of the connections I was seeing between questions and suggestions that were raised in peer or teacher conferences and revisions in a piece of writing. I developed a list of questions to guide my inquiry.

What led you to make this revision?

What made you think you needed to change this?

How did you select this title or topic?

Why did you write this piece in this style?

What changes did you decide not to make?

How do you feel about the piece now?

How do you feel about your peer's comments?

How do you feel about your teacher's comments?

What parts of the piece still aren't quite right?

What are your favorite parts of the piece?

What would you do differently if you could redo it?

I did not ask all of these questions to every student in the study. Some students volunteered the answers. Mrs. B. would also ask for some of this information in her teacher conferences or on the student's self-evaluation forms. I used these questions as a guideline for examining students' feelings about their writing, peer conferences, and teacher conferences.

Peer Conference Sheets

On November 12 Mrs. B. introduced a writing conference and revision form to the group and asked that all peer conferences be recorded on the sheet. There were spaces on the form for the names of the peer readers, comments from the peer readers on what they liked about the piece, and suggestions from the peer readers. At the bottom of the page there were spaces for the writer to list any revisions made in the piece and to tell what still needed work in the piece. The students began to fill these out during their peer conferences. These forms were brought to their teacher conferences, and Mrs. B., too, would add her comments and suggestions for revisions to the sheet. One student, Kathleen, particularly liked the new forms. She had refused to be audiotaped during her peer conferences saying that she didn't like the sound of her voice. She said that the forms had a "space for all the information you need." These forms continued to be used for the rest of the year with some minor revisions suggested by the students.

Individual Student Writing Folders

The students in the class kept a writing folder in their desks which contained their works in progress. Each student also had a cumulative writing folder in a central location which held finished pieces. As part of the standard classroom

practices, all drafts of a piece and any abandoned pieces were kept in one of these two writing folders.

Where possible, all original drafts and final copies were kept for each of the students in the study. Where any original drafts or final copies were lost or thrown out by mistake, replicates were made from the transcripts of peer or teacher conferences.

Student Self-Evaluations

Throughout the year Mrs. B. requested that the students evaluate either their writing in general or a particular piece of writing. Sometimes she would ask for this self-evaluation during a conference. At other times she would have the students fill out worksheets asking the students to critique their own writing. These were added to the collection of data for each student.

Audiotapes of Peer and Teacher Conferences

Audiotapes of Peer Conferences. From the beginning of the year, students were encouraged to make audiotapes of their peer conferences. The students were told that the tapes were for their benefit to help them remember their friend's comments and suggestions. At once there was a marked difference in the student's reliance on the tape recorders. One student never used them. Another student could be seen replaying her

conference tape over and over. Most students used them occasionally, preferring to share informally at their desks without them. Some conference data were lost because the students would rewind and listen to their conferences. Often they would stop the tape in the middle of a conference, then record over the rest of the first conference. One student never managed to record more than "testing, testing, one, two, three," by himself. Part of my time was often spent helping children to record on the tape recorders.

Audiotapes of Teacher Conferences. Mrs. B. would record many of her conferences with students. At the beginning of the year, she seemed to be more aware of the presence of the tape recorder, turning it off during interruptions or when addressing the whole class. By October, there were distinct pauses in the tape as one student would leave and another would join Mrs. B. for a conference. Taping her conferences with students was not a new experience for Mrs. B. In the past she had often recorded her conferences with students to examine her questioning style and to reflect on the amount of teacher talk versus student talk. Whether she recorded the conferences or not, Mrs. B. kept careful notes of each conference.

Videotapes of Author's Circles and Mini-Lessons

Author's circles were videotaped on a weekly basis from September 23 to the end of January. Either an AV person, this

researcher, or a student would handle the videotaping. Other events such as storytelling and science experiments were also videotaped, so using the videotape in the room during writing was not an isolated occurrence.

Data Analysis

The preliminary analysis of the data from this study began the first day I observed in the fifth-sixth grade classroom. I went home, reviewed my notes and began a reflecting-questioning process that would continue over the next nine months: Am I collecting the "right" data? What am I missing? How does this data fit with what I know about writing development?

Each day I would read over my field notes and jot down any clarifications I needed from Mrs. B. or one of the students. Next, I would make lists of any pieces of student writing that I needed to copy or review. I starred or underlined any observations that seemed particularly important and wrote a sentence or phrase in the margin to help me recall my initial impression. I also categorized and numbered all teacher conferences, peer conferences and mini-lessons covered in my field notes.

Throughout the year I listened to a few audiotapes and reviewed the videotapes, but it was only during the summer that

I was able to analyze these data. First, I transcribed each of the audiotapes and videotapes of the peer and teacher conferences for the 10 students in the study. These transcripts were dated and combined with copies of the drafts of the written pieces and the data from the field notes to make a chronological record of the development of each piece of writing. Three to four pieces of writing from throughout the school year were collected for each subject.

After collating these materials for each of the ten students in this study, I selected a piece of non-fiction writing for each of the ten students for further analysis. Non-fiction pieces, primarily personal narratives, were selected because there is some evidence from the research that both conferences and revisions are easier when students know the subject matter well and can notice inconsistencies between what actually happened and the words they've put down on paper (Calkins, 1983). These ten particular pieces of non-fiction writing were selected because there were verbatim transcripts either in the field notes or on audiotape of peer and teacher conferences, and there were copies of the various drafts of that piece of writing. Thus, the students' development of the pieces and the influence of peer and teacher responses could be examined.

The transcripts of both peer and teacher conferences were coded using Graves' (1982) and Finn's (1985) classification

systems of the description of verbal behavior during
conferences. (See Appendix A for Graves' coding system,
Appendix B for Finn's coding system, and Appendix C for Finn's
comparison of the two coding systems.) Finn had "borrowed"
Graves' procedures for developing the concepts "to describe the
utterances of children involved in peer conferences" (p. 45),
but she did not use his categorization of concepts. Whereas
Graves' system used one set of concepts to code both the
writer's and the responder's verbal remarks, Finn's coding
system "distinguished the concepts of the writer from those of
the peer" in order to "better understand their respective roles
in the conferences" (p. 46).

Although both classification systems provided a great deal
of specific information about peer and teacher conference
interactions, the large number of categories with response
percentages of less than 5% (as many as 23 of 26 categories),
led me to feel that both systems discriminated too finely for
my limited data. Using the conference categories from Calkins
(1986), I clustered behavior codes from Graves' and Finn's
systems. Because behaviors were assigned to specific
categories based on the content of verbal interactions, certain
behavior codes appear in more than one interaction category.
Figure 1 illustrates these clusters:

Categories Adapted from Calkins	Categories from Graves' Coding System			Categories from Finn's Coding System		
Content Interactions	I	Is	Ia	WCL	WEA	M
	EX	EXv	AU	WEI	WEM	O
	AC	ACa	ACf	WPV	WEL	D
	AUi	AUo	AUc	PCL	PEA	RP
	T	L	LGs	PEM	PEO	QF
	Id	O	AUco	PEL	PEI	QM
	MO	AUn	LGm	Sau	RA	PF
				RO	WET	WEO
				PCL	PET	PPV
				QI	TO	
Process Interactions	P	I	Is	WCL	WSP	D
	AC	ACa	O	PCL	PSP	M
	T	AUi	AUo	QF	QM	I
	MO	F	AUn	CP	QI	SAu
Evaluation Interactions	I	Is	Ia	PF	SPJ	E
	F	AUc	AUn	EPS	SAu	RO
	SD	LGm	AUco	RP	PE	TO
	Id	LGs				
Design Interactions	P	SD	ACa	PSP	PE	E
	T	AUi	AUo	WEO	PEO	A
	I	Ia	Id	RO	TO	O
	O	Is		WSP	PF	SAu
Editing Interactions	N	M	L	RM	WM	
	SD					

Figure 1. Verbal Behavior Codes from Graves' and Finn's Coding System clustered using the categories adapted from Calkins (1986).

The revised categories made distinctions between peer and teacher conferences more apparent and highlighted the influences of a particular category of interactions on the revision of a piece. Once all peer and teacher conferences were quantified, I began to look for evidence of the influence of peer and teacher responses on the drafts of the ten selected pieces of writing. Where possible, direct links were made between peer or teacher comments and revisions in the text.

I initially analyzed only the ten coded pieces, but I later expanded my analysis to include two or three additional pieces of writing for each of the ten students. However, I only included additional pieces in the study if I had some evidence of peer and teacher conferences on the piece in my notes, in the notes of an author's circle, or on peer response sheets. Because the information about peer or teacher conferences obtained from notes often included only one or two important elements that occurred in the conference, I did not quantify these interactions. The written documentation of peer and teacher conferences left a shorthand record that could jog the writer's or teacher's memory of what had occurred in the conference, but the verbal record was not comparable to either the verbatim field note or audiotape transcripts. The written records did provide many examples of direct links between conference interactions and revisions in a text.

My next step was to develop a profile, a limited case study of each of the ten young writers. In these case studies I stressed students' participation in peer and teacher conferences, revisions made in their texts following these conferences, and students' feelings about their writing and their views on the influence of their peers and teacher on that writing. Where possible, I tried to also include any data on students' interactions in the role of writer and peer within the conference setting. Previously overlooked data--short asides to peers, note writing, seating arrangments, and frequency of sharing in large and small groups--became important as I began to create a picture of each child as a writer. These case studies were shared with Mrs. B. for her comments and insights on how well I had captured the essence of these young writers.

The next several months were spent examining these case studies, the frequency charts of the coded conferences, and the field notes for any trends, themes, patterns, or unanswered questions that I had not previously discovered. The final step in my data analysis was to interview once again each of the students in my study. These final interviews took place approximately seven to eight months after I had concluded my data collection. My primary goal for these interviews was to see how the students felt about themselves as writers almost a year after the study, how they felt they had changed as writers

over the year, what differences they saw between their writing
program this year and the previous year, and what differences
they perceived in the usefulness of teacher and peer writing
conferences. In general the information obtained in these
interviews was not included in this dissertation, but it was
used to validate or re-evaluate my own findings.

Second Thoughts

Conducting research in a classroom setting necessitates
that the researcher accept a great number of distractions,
inconveniences, interruptions, and technical difficulties while
remaining objective, impartial, observant, flexible,
reflective, and questioning. Often I felt overwhelmed, as if I
were trying to broadcast a play-by-play description of a three
ring circus. I would have had it no other way. Students and
teachers together make a classroom. The students and teacher
in this classroom also were busy making their writing program.
Through the data I collected and my analysis of those data, I
tried to capture their creation.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Throughout my data collection I found a peculiar process
occurring. My field of vision seemed to expand and contract
moment by moment as I focussed on the whole group dynamic then
turned to record individual nuances. Observations of one
without the other, and on some days I confess I neglected one
or the other, lost some of their context, their meaning. Yet,
this is what describing behavior in a classroom setting
requires and, I believe, what excellent teaching requires. One
must see both the whole class and the individual within that
class to provide instruction that is cohesive, yet meets
individual needs. As I began my data analysis, I tried to keep
this challenge in mind: to show how individuals responded
during writing conferences and revised their pieces while at
the same time trying to show how these individuals, under their
teacher's tutelage, influenced each other's growth in writing
over the year and jointly established a personal writing
curriculum.

A discussion of my findings leads me to the same dilemma:
how to discuss the development of individual pieces of writing
and note differences in students' revision processes over the
year while continuing to provide some insight into the
classroom context which fosters the development of these

writing skills. I have attempted to ameliorate my discomfort by focussing initially on the research questions that stimulated this research and then describing some of the classroom activities that fostered peer interactions.

The research questions that guided this study are: What is the nature of student interactions during peer writing conferences? What kinds of revisions do students make following a peer writing conference? How do students determine what information is useful in a peer writing conference? What are student beliefs about how their peers influence their writing? What are student differences in the use of information from peer writing conferences and student-teacher writing conferences? The last question caused me to analyze student-teacher conferences as carefully as peer conferences because it would have been impossible to compare them without similar research data.

First, I will describe the nature of student interactions during peer writing conferences initially focussing on the 10 coded pieces, then expanding the description to include other types of student interactions such as informal conferences and author's circles. Second, I will describe the nature of interactions during student-teacher writing conferences. Where possible, I will compare the interactions during peer writing conferences with the interactions during student-teacher writing conferences. Third, I will describe the revisions found in the students' writing and present several case studies

to illustrate how peer and teacher conferences influence the
development of a piece of writing. Fourth, I will summarize
students' beliefs about how their peers and teacher influence
their writing. Finally, I will return to my focus on the whole
class and describe the elements of this classroom that make it
a conducive environment for peer sharing.

Student Interactions During Peer Writing Conferences

This dissertation was formulated to assess how student
writers use their peers's comments and suggestions in the
development of a piece of writing. The transcriptions of peer
writing conferences for one piece of non-fiction writing for
each of the ten students under study were analyzed. Only
verbatim transcripts of peer conferences, either from the field
notes or the audiotapes, were coded and used in this analysis.
In all, 19 peer conferences were coded using both Graves'
(1982) and Finn's (1985) classification systems for the
description of verbal behavior during conferences.

Table 1 summarizes the frequency with which the coded
behaviors occurred across all 19 peer conferences using Graves'
system, and Table 2 summarizes the findings using Finn's
system. In an effort to clarify the results, these categories
were further clustered into five main categories using a
classification system adapted from the conference categories of
Calkins (1986). Table 3 presents these findings.

TABLE   1

FREQUENCY OF CODED BEHAVIORS
IN STUDENT/PEER CONFERENCES
USING GRAVES' CODING SYSTEM

Writer Behaviors	Number of Times Behavior Occurs in Total Conferences	% of Total Writer Codes
Standard, Judgment (SD)	12	11.5
Process (P)	18	17.3
Information (I)	0	0
Information, selection (Is)	1	1
Information, addition (Ia)	3	2.9
Information, deletion (Id)	0	0
Experience (EX)	48	46.2
Experience, verification (EXv)	1	1
Audience (AU)	0	0
Motivation (MO)	0	0
Action (AC)	0	0
Action, sequence of (ACa)	2	1.9
Action, frequency of (ACf)	1	1
Organization (O)	1	1
Audience, interest to self (AUi)	0	0
Audience, interest to others (AUo)	2	1.9
Audience, clarify to self (AUc)	0	0
Audience, clarify to others (AUco)	0	0
Audience, no need to consider (AUn)	0	0
Neatness (N)	0	0
Mechanics (M)	0	0
Feelings (F)	7	6.7
Topic (T)	2	1.9
Language (L)	6	5.8
Length, needs to be shorter (LGs)	0	0
Length, needs to be longer (LGm)	0	0

n = 104

(continued on next page)

FREQUENCY OF CODED BEHAVIORS
IN STUDENT/PEER CONFERENCES
USING GRAVES' CODING SYSTEM
(CONTINUED)

Peer Behaviors	Number of Times Behavior Occurs in Total Conferences	% of Total Peer Codes
Standard, Judgment (SD)	24	17.1
Process (P)	13	19.3
Information (I)	0	0
Information, selection (Is)	1	.7
Information, addition (Ia)	21	15
Information, deletion (Id)	0	0
Experience (EX)	45	32.1
Experience, verification (EXv)	4	2.9
Audience (AU)	3	2.1
Motivation (MO)	0	0
Action (AC)	0	0
Action, sequence of (ACa)	1	.7
Action, frequency of (ACf)	3	2.1
Organization (O)	1	.7
Audience, interest to self (AUi)	5	3.6
Audience, interest to others (AUo)	1	.7
Audience, clarify to self (AUc)	3	2.1
Audience, clarify to others (AUco)	0	0
Audience, no need to consider (AUn)	0	0
Neatness (N)	0	0
Mechanics (M)	0	0
Feelings (F)	4	2.9
Topic (T)	1	.7
Language (L)	3	2.1
Length, needs to be shorter (LGs)	1	.7
Length, needs to be longer (LGm)	6	4.3

n = 140

TABLE   2

FREQUENCY OF CODED BEHAVIORS
IN STUDENT/PEER CONFERENCES
USING FINN'S CODING SYSTEM

Writer Behaviors	Number of Times Behavior Occurs in Total Conferences	% of Total Writer Codes
Writer Conference Lead (WCL)	10	7.6
Writer Shares Process (WSP)	8	6.1
Seeks Peer Judgment (SPJ)	12	9.2
Writer Explores Territory (WET)	44	33.6
Writer Explores Meaning (WEM)	0	0
Writer Explores Organization (WEO)	1	.8
Writer Point of View (WPV)	0	0
Writer Explores Language (WEL)	6	4.6
Writer Explores Action (WEA)	6	4.6
Writer Explores Information (WEI)	1	.8
Writer Defines (D)	1	.8
Writer Reads (R)	17	13
Writer States Intent (I)	0	0
Writer Confirms Peer Statement (C)	7	5.3
Writer Refers to Mechanics (WM)	0	0
Writer Refers to Audience (A)	2	1.5
Writer Evaluates (E)	4	3.1
Writer Engages in Playfulness (WP1)	0	0
Writer Explains Motivation (M)	0	0
Writer Confers Alone (CA)	0	0
Writer States Ownership (O)	1	.8
Writer Expresses Personal State (EPS)	8	6.1
Writer Expresses Voice (V)	0	0
Writer Expresses Feelings Toward Conference (WFC)	3	2.3

n = 131

FREQUENCY OF CODED BEHAVIORS
IN STUDENT/PEER CONFERENCES
USING FINN'S CODING SYSTEM
(CONTINUED)

Peer Behaviors	Number of Times Behavior Occurs in Total Conferences	% of Total Peer Codes
Peer Conference Lead (PCL)	2	1.4
Peer Reads (PR)	0	0
Peer Receives the Piece (RP)	2	1.4
Peer Shares the Process (PSP)	8	1.4
Peer Explores the Territory (PET)	47	33.6
Peer Explores the Meaning (PEM)	0	0
Peer Explores the Organization (PEO)	1	.7
Peer Explores Point of View (PPV)	0	0
Peer Explores Action (PEA)	6	4.3
Peer Explores Language (PEL)	5	3.6
Peer Explores Information (PEI)	7	5
Peer Questions Writer's Focus (QF)	1	.7
Peer Questions Motivation (QM)	0	0
Peer Evaluates (PE)	22	15.8
Peer Questions Intent (QI)	0	0
Peer Refers to Mechanics (RM)	0	0
Peer Suggests Consideration of Audience (SAu)	3	2.1
Peer Engages in Playfulness (PP1)	0	0
Peer Probes Feelings of Writer (PF)	2	1.4
Peer Takes Ownership (TO)	11	7.9
Peer Respects Ownership (RO)	10	7.1
Peer Responds Affectively (RA)	13	9.3
Peer Refers to Conference Process (CP)	0	0

n = 140

TABLE   3

CLUSTERED CODING SYSTEM
(Adapted from Calkins, 1986)

Writer Behaviors	Number of Times Behavior Occurs in Total Conferences	% of Total Writer Codes
Content Interactions	63	61.8
Process Interactions	20	19.6
Design Interactions	0	0
Evaluation Interactions	19	18.6
Editing Interactions	0	0

n = 102

Peer Behaviors	Number of Times Behavior Occurs in Total Conferences	% of Total Peer Codes
Content Interactions	81	58.7
Process Interactions	15	10.9
Design Interactions	0	0
Evaluation Interactions	42	30.4
Editing Interactions	0	0

n = 138

These Tables demonstrate that the majority of interactions
during these peer writing conferences center on the content of
the piece.   61.8% of the writer responses and 58.7% of the peer
responses refer to the content of the piece. The other coded
writer behaviors were closely divided between process
interactions (19.6%) and evaluation interactions (18.6%). The
remaining peer interactions, however, lean heavily toward
evaluation (30.4%) with only 10.9% coded as process
interactions.   The following conference typifies the
interactions that take place during a peer conference and
illustrates how each conference was coded:

Clustered Coding System	Finn's Coding System	Graves' Coding System	Student	Peer Conference
Process Content	WCL R	P	Sarah:	Here's my story. Pathetic is my little puppy. She is about three months old. She is very small, but she eats a ton. P.T. is a mutt. We don't know what kind. She may be part fox terrier. Her hair is a light tannish beige, also part white. We bought her a purple collar and leash. She's had a lot of flea baths so far.

Content	PET	EX	Trina:	Why did you call her P.T.?
Content	WET	EX	Sarah:	P.T. stands for pathetic because she was always doing pathetic things like sleeping in funny positions.
Content	PET	EX	Trina:	Why does she take so many flea baths?
Content	WET	EX	Sarah:	'Cause she's got fleas!
Content	PET	EX	Trina:	How does she react to other dogs?
Content Evaluation	WET SPJ	EX SD	Sarah:	She's scared of them. Anything else?
Evaluation	PE	SD	Trina:	Not that I can think of.
Process	WSP I	P	Sarah:	I'm going to change some things and write a second draft.

Other Types of Peer Conferences

The analysis of peer writing conferences using the three coding systems was performed only on audiotape recorded peer conferences or on those peer conferences in the field notes where there was a near-verbatim transript of the conference from beginning to end. But, as I reviewed my field notes of peer conferences that took place at students' desks or tables, field notes and audiotapes of peer conferences on the rug, and field notes, audiotapes, and videotapes of peer exchanges

during author's circles, it seemed clear that there was a
slightly different focus during each.

When I began my data collection, I had a very clear idea
of what constituted a peer conference. But, as the year
progressed, I began to see that the two or three sentence
discussions that took place around the tables or at student
desks, often little more than mumbling out loud, were also peer
conferences. For the purposes of this dissertation, I have
assigned different labels to these two types of conferences.

Formal peer conferences are defined as those where the
author asks for a conference or notifies the peer in some way
that a conference is needed. Thus, the conference has a clear
beginning. During these conferences the author indicates the
conference's importance by taping the conference or writing
down peer comments, questions, and/or suggestions. The
conference also has a definite end. The author will often
thank the peer or discuss the next steps in the development of
the piece.

Informal peer conferences encompass other discussions and
reflections on a piece that may influence its development, but
they generally refer to only a portion of the piece. Often
these discussions seem to focus on the process of developing a
section of the piece, or they may center on the choice of a
particular word or expression. Formal and informal peer
conferences also differ along two other dimensions, length and

affect. Formal peer conferences generally included either the reading of a substantial chunk of the text or the entire text, while informal peer conferences usually focussed on only one or two sections of the text. In formal peer conferences, writer and peer comments were generally limited to the content of the text or background information on the content. Only infrequently did the writer and peer engage in the playful banter displayed in the informal conferences. Occasionally, formal and informal peer conferences differ in the number of participants as well, with formal conferences always between two people and informal conferences sometimes including two, three or more participants. The following example is an informal peer conference on the same piece of writing shared during the formal peer conference example. This informal conference stands out because it is one of the few cases where an informal conference is longer than many of the formal peer conferences and the entire piece is read at the beginning of the conference.

```
            (Sarah read the 2nd draft of her
              story, PT, to Ian and David.)
        David:  That's good, that's good.  I liked
                bony fingers.
        Ian:    Yeh, it's pretty good.  PT, bump.
                PT, bump.  Are you going to tame her?
        Sarah:  She's pretty good.  She just
                bites a lot.
        Ian:    I'd keep her inside, or she might
                bite someone.
```

```
Sarah:   One day she bit my sock and I
         raised my foot about a foot off
         the ground before she let go.
David:   That's funny.  You told me that.
Ian:     Did you tell that in your story?
David:   I think you should.  That's funny.
Sarah:   OK
```

One area that was not discussed in the coded, formal

peer conferences was topic selection. In my field notes

students who were having difficulty finding a topic would

simply turn to the person next to them for help.

```
Barry:   I can't think of anything to write
         about.
Nick:    You could write about going to
         North Carolina this summer.
Barry:   I don't know.
Nick:    The hurricane is supposed to
         hit North Carolina. (There was a
         hurricane warning in effect for the
         North Carolina coastline.)
Barry:   If it hits, there'll be nothing
         left next year.
Nick:    Yeh, same with Nantucket.
```

In a second informal peer conference the writer expressed

his dissatisfaction with the stories he was writing. His peers

reminded him of the steps of the process and explored his

topic selection.

```
Chris:   What can I write about?
Jason:   Don't ask me, ask Nick.
Nick:    I don't know.
Jason:   What did you do with your other story?
Chris:   It's right here, but I don't like it.
Jason:   Good thing you didn't throw it in the
         trash.  Mrs. B would be mad.
```

(Chris stared around the room. His eyes were not really
looking at any one thing.)

Chris: Well, I think this is going to be a loser
         story, too, but here goes.

.

.

.

Nick: What's the title?
Chris: Dungeons and Dragons. Got any other ideas
         for an action story?
Nick: No.
Chris: I'm thinking about a different story, like
         dungeons and dragons with a different title.
Jason: You wrote 3 D & D stories last year, but
         you didn't finish any of them.
Chris: I didn't know anything about D & D last year
         except Orcs are dumb.

Before I began to record students' discussions at

their desks, I might have dismissed these conferences as

classroom chit-chat. In my own classroom, I might have

asked the students to stop talking and "get to work" on

their writing. Now, I understand how much talking students

do about their writing and how important this talk is in

their development as writers and responders.

Peer Interactions During Author's Circles

Data from author's circles were not included in the

discussion of informal and formal peer conferences. They

have some of the characteristics of both, but they retain

their own identity and importance in the development of a

piece of writing. The transcripts of the audiotapes and

videotapes of the whole group author's circles yielded two

important findings. First, author's circle was the principal

place writers came to get help with the title of their pieces. Usually two or three would be suggested, and the writer would choose from them. Second, students would often ask follow-up questions during author's circle. Thus, there would be a chain of questions on one topic or theme. Mrs. B. would sometimes focus discussion on one topic to insure that this occurred, but generally it happened spontaneously as one student's question stimulated another.

Chris came to author's circle wanting a new title for his story and suggestions for the end of his story:

```
Tom:     When the mechanic shot the guy it sounded
         like the policeman just walked up and
         started asking him questions.
Chris:   He heard the shot.
Tom:     But it happened so fast...
Barry:   At the end it happened so fast
         I didn't know what was going on.
Sarah:   I had a suggestion for the end.
         You could say the policeman tells
         Mac that he's going to be famous,
         but then they find he shot the
         wrong guy.  So Mac will just
         stay a motorcycle mechanic.
    (Sarah's suggestion began a discussion among
     the students about her suggestion and produced
     alternative endings for Chris to consider.)
```

In the second example, Trina is trying to describe a room in the Breakers mansion in Newport. She had been working on this description since the middle of September. Now one month later she was still asking for help with the description.

Sarah: From your description, I see only four
          doors in the room?
David: What was in it?
Sarah: When you read it, I thought it was
          a room of doors, but it's beautiful.
          You should describe it. (Sarah is
          looking at a postcard of the room
          that Trina is passing around the
          group.)
.
.
David: You could tell about the table, the
          mirror in the room, the silk chair,
          the table, the flowers all around the
          room.
Ian: You could start with the fireplace and
          tell about all the flowers in it, and
          the table with the big pot of flowers.
Sarah: You could say, when I walked in we saw
          the doors and the fireplace overflowing
          with flowers.

Author's Circle also provided a time for enjoying and
celebrating each writer's finished story. When all revisions
had been made and the final copy edited and transcribed, the
author would read the piece to the class. Students would make
comments about the parts of the piece they liked.

Mrs. B.: Anyone else?
Chris: I'm done with mine.
Mrs. B.: What's the title?
Chris: "The Broken Brake Line."
    (Chris reads his story.)
Sarah: I like how you give some
          suspense to the story like
          you said that he had a western
          accent like the boss...
          Also, you said the police
          officer asked, "Who's
          motorcycle is this?" Then
          Mac said, "Oh, that's what
          the criminal said."

```
David:      I like your title.  That's
            what started all this.
Ian:        I like the way you described
            the bike, an old motorcyle that's
            really rusted.
Jason:      You said the suspense was
            appalling.  What does that
            mean?
Chris:      I looked "scary" up in the
            Thesaurus, and that's what
            it said.
```

Summary of Interactions During Peer Writing Conferences

With teacher guidance peers can learn to be effective

responders to their classmate's writing. In the conferences

I analyzed, peers helped the writer select a topic or a

title for a piece; asked probing questions about the subject

of a piece; assisted the author in developing the lead or

ending of a piece; suggested ways to describe the setting

of a piece; evaluated the piece based on their interest in

the piece; reminded the author of the steps of the writing

process; asked clarifying questions about vague sections of

the piece; helped the author to proofread the piece for

simple punctuation, spelling, and capitalization errors,

and applauded the author's completed piece of writing.

Each of the students was able to take on both the role

of responder and author. Thus, each student was able to

look at writing from the point of view of both reader

and writer.

Interactions during Student-Teacher
Writing Conferences

To provide comparative data, transcriptions of
student-teacher writing conferences from the ten sample
pieces were analyzed using both Graves' (1982) and Finn's
(1985) classification systems of verbal behavior during
writing conferences. Finn's coding system was modified
to yield results for teacher and writer rather than peer
and writer. To provide consistency, these data, too,
were clustered using the revised categories adapted from
Calkins (1986). These results are presented in Tables IV,
V, and VI.

From these data it appears that students and their
teacher spend a good deal of time discussing the content
of a piece and the background details of that piece. 50.2%
of the writer interactions and 40.3% of the teacher
interactions during student-teacher writing conferences were
classified as content interactions. There was a qualitative
differences in the teacher's discussion of the content of a
piece. Mrs. B.would focus a series of questions on an area
of text, and she asked for more explanation of an event in
the piece. The same incidents were often discussed in both
peer and teacher conferences. As in the student-peer
writing conferences, process and evaluation interactions
account for most of the remaining verbal interactions during

TABLE 4

FREQUENCY OF CODED BEHAVIORS
IN STUDENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES
USING GRAVES' CODING SYSTEM

Writer Behaviors	Number of Times Behavior Occurs in Total Conferences	% of Total Writer Codes
Standard, Judgment (SD)	47	14.4
Process (P)	62	19
Information (I)	1	.3
Information, selection (Is)	7	2.1
Information, addition (Ia)	11	3.4
Information, deletion (Id)	0	0
Experience (EX)	124	37.9
Experience, verification (EXv)	11	3.4
Audience (AU)	3	.9
Motivation (MO)	2	.6
Action (AC)	0	0
Action, sequence of (ACa)	1	.3
Action, frequency of (ACf)	1	.3
Organization (O)	3	.9
Audience, interest to self (AUi)	2	.6
Audience, interest to others (AUo)	6	1.8
Audience, clarify to self (AUc)	0	0
Audience, clarify to others (AUco)	0	0
Audience, no need to consider (AUn)	1	.3
Neatness (N)	2	.6
Mechanics (M)	6	1.8
Feelings (F)	13	4
Topic (T)	10	3.1
Language (L)	9	2.8
Length, needs to be shorter (LGs)	1	.3
Length, needs to be longer (LGm)	4	1.2

n = 327

FREQUENCY OF CODED BEHAVIORS
IN STUDENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES
USING GRAVES' CODING SYSTEM
(CONTINUED)

Teacher Behaviors	Number of Times Behavior Occurs in Total Conferences	% of Total Teacher Codes
Standard, Judgment (SD)	89	19.1
Process (P)	93	20
Information (I)	3	.6
Information, selection (Is)	14	3
Information, addition (Ia)	14	3
Information, deletion (Id)	1	.2
Experience (EX)	90	19.3
Experience, verification (EXv)	44	9.4
Audience (AU)	3	.6
Motivation (MO)	6	1.3
Action (AC)	0	0
Action, sequence of (ACa)	6	1.3
Action, frequency of (ACf)	0	0
Organization (O)	5	1.1
Audience, interest to self (AUi)	9	1.9
Audience, interest to others (AUo)	10	2
Audience, clarify to self (AUc)	13	2.8
Audience, clarify to others (AUco)	1	.2
Audience, no need to consider (AUn)	0	0
Neatness (N)	2	.4
Mechanics (M)	5	1.1
Feelings (F)	24	5
Topic (T)	11	2.4
Language (L)	24	5
Length, needs to be shorter (LGs)	0	0
Length, needs to be longer (LGm)	0	0

n = 467

TABLE 5

FREQUENCY OF CODED BEHAVIORS
IN STUDENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES
USING FINN'S CODING SYSTEM

Writer Behaviors	Number of Times Behavior Occurs in Total Conferences	% of Total Writer Codes
Writer Conference Lead (WCL)	0	0
Writer Shares Process (WSP)	56	15.8
Seeks Teacher Judgment (SPJ)	18	5.1
Writer Explores Territory (WET)	96	27
Writer Explores Meaning (WEM)	1	.3
Writer Explores Organization (WEO)	2	.6
Writer Point of View (WPV)	0	0
Writer Explores Language (WEL)	9	2.5
Writer Explores Action (WEA)	9	2.5
Writer Explores Information (WEI)	17	4.8
Writer Defines (D)	7	2
Writer Reads (R)	19	5.4
Writer States Intent (I)	5	1.4
Writer Confirms Teacher Statement (C)	56	15.8
Writer Refers to Mechanics (WM)	6	1.7
Writer Refers to Audience (A)	8	2.3
Writer Evaluates (E)	28	7.9
Writer Engages in Playfulness (WP1)	0	0
Writer Explains Motivation (M)	5	1.4
Writer Confers Alone (CA)	0	0
Writer States Ownership (O)	1	.3
Writer Expresses Personal State (EPS)	10	2.8
Writer Expresses Voice (V)	1	.3
Writer Expresses Feelings Toward Conference (WFC)	2	.6

n = 355

FREQUENCY OF CODED BEHAVIORS
IN STUDENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES
USING FINN'S CODING SYSTEM*
(CONTINUED)

Teacher Behaviors	Number of Times Behavior Occurs in Total Conferences	% of Total Teacher Codes
Teacher Conference Lead (PCL)	26	5.2
Teacher Reads (PR)	0	0
Teacher Receives the Piece (RP)	3	.6
Teacher Shares the Process (PSP)	70	14.1
Teacher Explores the Territory (PET)	112	22.6
Teacher Explores the Meaning (PEM)	3	.6
Teacher Explores the Organization (PEO)	3	.6
Teacher Explores Point of View (PPV)	1	.2
Teacher Explores Language (PEL)	22	4.4
Teacher Explores Information (PEI)	31	6.3
Teacher Explores Action (PEA)	19	3.8
Teacher Questions Writer's Focus (QF)	13	2.6
Teacher Questions Motivation (QM)	7	1.4
Teacher Evaluates (PE)	40	8
Teacher Questions Intent (QI)	5	1
Teacher Refers to Mechanics (RM)	9	1.8
Teacher Suggests Consideration of Audience (SAu)	27	5.4
Teacher Engages in Playfulness (PP1)	0	0
Teacher Probes Feelings of Writer (PF)	51	10.3
Teacher Takes Ownership (TO)	18	3.6
Teacher Respects Ownership (RO)	22	4.4
Teacher Responds Affectively (RA)	10	2
Teacher Refers to Conference Process (CP)	4	.8

n = 496

*Peer has been replaced with Teacher in each description
of the codes, but the codes themselves have remained the
same

TABLE 6

CLUSTERED CODING SYSTEM
(Adapted from Calkins, 1986)

Writer Behaviors	Number of Times Behavior Occurs in Total Conferences	% of Total Writer Codes
Content Interactions	162	50.2
Process Interactions	73	22.6
Design Interactions	0	0
Evaluation Interactions	80	24.8
Editing Interactions	8	3.5

n = 323

Teacher Behaviors	Number of Times Behavior Occurs in Total Conferences	% of Total Teacher Codes
Content Interactions	188	40.3
Process Interactions	112	24
Design Interactions	8	1.7
Evaluation Interactions	151	32.4
Editing Interactions	7	1.5

n = 466

student-teacher conferences. However, the teacher also served
as final editor of a piece of writing and provided extensions
or enrichment activities in writing for the students. I have
grouped these extensions under the design category since many
of the activities ask the child to look at another piece of
writing and study the form or design of that piece.

It is noteworthy that few conferences contained only
one kind of interaction. In the student-teacher writing
conferences as in the peer conferences, many different
categories of interactions occurred in each conference.
However, I have chosen the following selections from
student-teacher conferences to help illustrate each category
of interaction.

Content Interactions

```
        (Jason read his story "The Cake Caper" to Mrs. B.)
    Mrs. B.:   OK.  That really happened?
    Jason:     Yep.
    Mrs. B.:   It's an interesting story.  It's got some
               interesting things to it. . . Tell me about
               the part you remember most.
    Jason:     Just staring where the cake was and looking
               down at Cheyenne where she was sitting.
    Mrs. B.:   You just stared down where the cake was?
    Jason:     Yeh, and looked down at her and she was
               looking like there was nothing unusual.
    Mrs. B.:   What happened when you stared down at
               the dog and the dog looked up at you with
               that kind of look like what are you looking
               at me for?  Then what happened?
    Jason:     We just laughed.
    Mrs. B.:   You all laughed?
    Jason:     Yeh.
    Mrs. B.:   What else?
```

Jason: She just kept on sitting and looking at us
          like why are you staring at me, why are you
          laughing at me. All I did was eat a cake.
          Then we threw her outside and that was that.
          We weren't mad at her.

Up to this point in the conference, Mrs. B. functioned

in the same fashion as any of the students. Several of the

students could develop a line of questions almost as well.

It is with the next exchange that Mrs. B. assumed a teaching

role and asked Jason to evaluate what he had written in light

of what he had written before.

Evaluation Interactions

Mrs. B.: The other story you wrote about your dog,
          do you have it right there with you, Jason?
          What I'd like for you to do is go back and
          read that other story because you had some
          really good descriptions of what happened.
          Then look at this story thinking about what
          you have just said, and see if you can
          figure out yourself some additions and
          changes that you can make in this story to
          improve what you have already put down.
          It is a good start. Now you need to broaden
          it.
Jason: OK.
      (Jason's development of this piece of writing
        is detailed in his case study.)

Another example of conference interactions that call for an

evaluation of the piece of writing follows:

Mrs. B.: What do you like about your story?
Tom: The revised story?
Mrs. B.: Yes.
Tom: I've improved from when I was younger.
Mrs. B.: How did you improve?

```
Tom:        I can describe things better.
Mrs. B.:    Read something that you've described,
            that you think you have described well.
Tom:        David emerged from the kitchen, swung the
            sleeping bag at Jahnava and hit him.
            Jahnava lost his balance, stumbled and
            fell into the couch.
Mrs. B.:    Why do you like that?
Tom:        Well, it's different than any other
            sentence that went before.
Mrs. B.:    How is it different?
Tom:        It's better than saying Wylie swung
            the sleeping bag at Jahnava and Jahnava
            fell down.
Mrs. B.:    I agree with you.  It is an excellent
            sentence...It's a super sentence because
            it really tells your reader what is going
            on.
```

Process Interactions

In the category of process interactions I have included
two examples that show different areas for discussing the
process of developing a piece of writing. The first example
deals with how writers choose topics. The second example
traces the steps the writer took to develop the piece and
includes some evaluation of these steps.

Example #1:

```
Mrs. B.:    How did you come up with this story?
Ann:        I was going to write another story
            about my summer, and I was thinking
            and thinking.  I picked my Dad's
            birthday because it was interesting
            because he thought he wouldn't have
            a cake.  Then I started to look in
            the cookbook, but all these things
            I couldn't make by myself.
```

Example #2:

Mrs. B.:		What do you think of adding that part?
Tom:		It makes a difference.
Mrs. B.:		What kind of difference does it make?
Tom:		It tells more about what happened.
Mrs. B.:		What are you going to do now?
Tom:		Well, I'm going to read the whole story over again and see if it holds together.
Mrs. B.:		When was the last time you read it to your conference buddy?
Tom:		Friday, I wasn't here. It might have been Wednesday or Thursday.
Mrs. B.:		When you get finished with this part, I suggest you read it to your writing buddy and see what he says. Don't put it in a final draft yet, and don't worry about punctuation and spelling.

Editing Interactions

This last reference to editing the draft brings up
another kind of interaction centered on editing the piece.
These interactions usually occurred after the piece had been
finished, but could occur at any time. During several
conferences like the one above, Mrs. B. attempted to put
editing in its proper perspective. (It should be noted that
the term "editing" as used here refers primarily to proof-
reading. The more encompassing roles of an editor were
included under design interactions.) The first example shows
the writer choosing whether or not to work on editing or
revising his story. The second example illustrates a more
common discussion of the need to edit a piece once it is in
final form.

Example #1:

    Mrs. B.:   David, first of all, I want to know
                  why you asked for a conference with me.
    David: So I can get my spelling corrected, and
                  so you can give me suggestions also.
    Mrs. B.:   So you're asking for two things.
                  Suggestions for what?
    David: For my story. To make it better.
    Mrs. B.:   And spelling?
    David: Spelling? So people can read it.
    Mrs. B.:   Let's work on one or the other,
                  suggestions or spelling?
    David: Suggestions.

Example #2:

    Mrs. B.:   I think that's excellent. I think you
                  did a super job on that. Very nicely
                  done. Now, were there any other parts
                  that need to be clarified?
    Ann: No.
    Mrs. B.:   Now do you have your spelling book
                  with you?
    Ann: Yeh.
    Mrs. B.:   Let me see it. If you correct your
                  spelling, it'll be OK. The whole
                  class needs to work on punctuation,
                  so we are going to work on punctuation
                  together. Then, you can correct your
                  punctuation and do a final draft.
                  So let's just check. Have I assigned
                  any spelling words for you so far?
                  No, I don't think so. OK, I'll add
                  these.
    Ann: OK.
        (Mrs. B. looked through Ann's writing and
        wrote down a new spelling list from the
        words Ann had misspelled in her story.)

Design Interactions

    The design interactions category contains no student
interactions and only a few student-teacher interactions.

Yet, Calkins (1986) believes design conferences add a lot
to writing classrooms with older children who are more
experienced writers. In design conferences the emphasis is
on the "shape" of a piece of writing, it's "thematic focus."
"The structure of a piece is determined not by the topic but
by the author <who> creates the shape and form of a piece,
critiques it, and recreates it" (p. 146). In the following
example, Mrs. B. helped Sarah to see her story in a different
light.

        Mrs. B.:   We talked yesterday about giving PT
                   a little more personality... What do
                   you recall in books that you have read
                   that describe an animal?
        Sarah: Well, like Robert McClung tells about
                   the animal with information but in a
                   story.
        Mrs. B.:   Do you recall some of that?
        Sarah: No
        Mrs. B.:   One of the ways is to go through
                   events that happen with that animal,
                   that tell about the animal and give
                   you a feeling for it. I've got
                   several short stories here that tell
                   you about animals. Why don't I give
                   these to you. You'll read them pretty
                   quickly.
        Sarah: All of them?
        Mrs. B.:   See if that gives you some ideas.
        Sarah: OK.
          (Sarah took the stack of books with the short
            stories marked and returned to her desk to read.)

Summary of Student-Teacher Interactions

        Student-teacher writing conferences cover some of the

same background experiences and content information as

student-peer writing conferences. However, the teacher
interactions are more frequently concerned with the writer's
process than peer interactions, 24% of teacher interactions
vs. 10.9% of peer interactions. Also, in this sample of coded
conferences, only teacher interactions focussed on the design
of a piece or the editing of a piece of writing. During
informal peer conferences but not in formal ones, peers did
help each other proofread their pieces. However, only the
teacher assumed the more encompassing duties of an editor
such as assisting the writer in the paragraphing of a piece
or suggesting that the writer redo the lead for a piece.

In summary, the students in this study seemed to
focus on the details of a piece. They could help each other
add a word to sharpen a description or insert missing
information. It was the teacher who looked at the whole piece
of writing and evaluated how all the parts of the text worked
together to form a completed piece.

Revisions within Students' Texts

In the context of this dissertation, I looked through the
transcripts of peer conferences for interactions that led to
revisions in the author's text. Classroom writing teachers
also look for experiences that cause students to review and
revise their written pieces. Sowers (1982), however, warns

that one should not "expect to find a cause-effect or stimulus-response relationship between a question and a student's revision" (p.88). Life in a fifth/sixth grade room also hinders the observation of a direct connection between a peer's question and the appearance of a revision within the text. The students in this classroom are surrounded by myriad opportunities to discuss their own writing, a peer's writing, their teacher's writing, and the writing in textbooks and trade books. Mini-Lessons, Author's Circles, Peer Conferences, Teacher Conferences and other related activities focus attention on the qualities of good writing. Nonetheless, I have attempted through observations and student interviews to assign links where I can find them.

Originally, I was looking only for interactions during peer conferences that led to revisions in a piece, but I expanded my exploration of the path of student revisions to include revisions inspired by teacher conferences, mini-lessons, and author's circles as well as peer conferences. The expansion was necessary because in examining the data I soon found that a piece of writing would contain several revisions, each one arguably attributable to a different component of the writing classroom.

After reviewing the transcripts of both peer and teacher conferences, I found that often a question would lead directly to a specific revision in the text. But, usually when that

occurred, the revision was an insertion or clarification of the content of the piece and did not involve a major rethinking or reworking of the piece. Calkins (1983) classifies these insertions not as true revisions, but as "refinements" of the piece. It was the large-scale revisions, the total reworking of a piece, whose genesis was the most difficult to determine. I would stare incredulously as a child would tell me that an entire piece was reconsidered and rewritten because of an offhand remark a peer had made during an author's circle, a remark that I had dismissed in my preliminary analysis. Thus, it seems that it is the author's interpretation of a statement or remark, the personal translation of that statement or remark based on the author's knowledge and previous experience, that stimulates revision.

Calkins (1983) describes an episode in which Susie, the subject of her case study, read her lead to both her friend Diane and to Calkins, but she didn't wait for their answers. Instead she began reworking the lead and wrote another draft. Calkins states that Susie was beginning to "internalize" her audience, and she was now able to shuttle between and combine reading, writing, questioning and planning. She was developing what Calkins calls an "executive function" (p. 55). She no longer needed to write down four or five different leads to a piece. Susie could now think through these leads in her head, then write them down based on her experience as a writer.

Much of the older child's writing process is internalized. Thus, in order to understand that process, Mrs. B. and I often asked the children to describe their process in developing a piece. Some children were better able to do this than others. Graves (1982) explains the children's difficulty by saying that "writers of any age do far more than they can explain simply because consciousness consistently lags behind performance <and> for this reason, interviews...never fully get at what learners can do in writing" (p.176). Also, although seven of the students had participated in process-conference writing programs for at least four years, they were not all at the same level of writing development. "Every child's writing development involves the special combination of that youngster's personal style, cognitive development, and writing instruction" (Calkins, 1983).

The accumulated transcripts of peer conferences, teacher conferences, author's circles, and mini-lessons show that writers who are immersed in the sharing and discussion of writing select the ideas and suggestions they understand and can use to revise a piece. However, like Finn (1985), I've found that this selection process appears to be highly individual, as idiosyncractic (Graves, 1983) as the development of writing itself.

Types of Student Revisions

The idiosyncratic nature of the process of revising a piece of writing and sharing it with others leads to many changes in the written pieces but stymies intrepid researchers searching for the causes of these changes. There are few discrete findings to cubbyhole into categories. There are young writers and their pieces developing over time, but in different ways and at varying paces.

In order to convey some of this individuality and diversity, I have included several case studies that illustrate the development of a piece of writing and the peer and teacher conferences that shape it. The children selected for these case studies cover the academic spectrum from a remedial fifth grader to an above average sixth grader. Included are children who have been exposed to a writing conference approach since they entered kindergarten, and one child who is in her first year in a writing process classroom.

I have grouped these case studies according to each writer's perceived ability or inability to make use of comments and suggestions received in peer and teacher conferences. I elected to begin the case studies with David, rated as an average writer by his classroom teacher. To me, he was perhaps the most "typical" young writer in the group. He quickly jotted down short, concise stories

and announced to his partner, "I'm done. I need a conference." He followed the procedures for writing established by his teacher, but just to complete them and rush on to the next step. However, because he did follow the procedures exactly for whatever reason, I have a very complete record of all David's conferences and drafts. He also dutifully revised his pieces after both peer and teacher conferences although most of his revisions follow teacher conferences.

Ann, Sarah, and Kathleen comprise the next group of case studies. These three girls were grouped together because they each seemed to be able to use equally well the comments and suggestions of both their peers and their teacher in the revision of their written pieces. They were also perceived to be among the best writers in the class by their peers and their teacher.

The third group of case studies consists of two fifth grade students who had received remedial services in both reading and writing. Ian and Nick both needed extra help in the language arts area, but they were very different as writers. Ian relied on his peers to help him compensate for his difficulties. Nick rarely conferred with another student until he was directed to do so by his teacher. He relied on the teacher to help him with his revisions.

The final group of case studies, Jason, Tom, Chris, and Trina, illustrate some of the problems young writers can have. Jason and Tom lacked confidence in their own ability to express themselves in their writing. Jason also did not trust his own ideas for revising his text. Chris had difficulty understanding what the teacher wanted him to do. He felt that she wanted him to revise his piece. Chris felt something could be done, but he didn't know what exactly it was. Trina was a sixth grade student having difficulty adjusting to a writing process classroom. A good student, she had been used to praise for the stories she wrote on the topics her teachers assigned. In this classroom she could not find topics that interested her that she also knew intimately. She was not able to use either her peers' or teacher's suggestions for revisions in her stories.

Although these case studies have been grouped along a particular theme or dimension, each one describes other important components of the writing process such as topic selection, ownership of the piece, importance of audience, development of voice, becoming student experts, and using writing to express personal feelings.

Three other students, Matthew, John, and Barry, are included in peer conference dialogues, but they were not selected for inclusion in the sample group because they

were not members of the writing class for the entire school year.

Correct spelling and punctuation are used in all samples of written work except in those cases where spelling or punctuation errors are a primary focus. (Samples of the students' original drafts and complete pieces are included in Appendix E.)

An Average Writer--David

David with his blonde hair and freckles reminded me of Dennis-the-Menace. A fifth grader he had above average ability, but he was an average writer as rated by Mrs. B. David had worked in writing process classrooms since first grade. His was the first voice I heard as I entered the classroom, for David seemed to never whisper. His laughter and comments accompanied every audiotape, and he alone accounted for over one quarter of the comments made during author's circles. His exuberance about life carried over into his writing. But, David was also impulsive, and that too carried over into his writing.

From the beginning of the year, David had relied on two stock responses for his friend's writing: "What else did you do?" and "Make it longer, put it in." Using just these two comments, he did provide a service to his peers, but he seemed to be growing little as a responder. He also

seemed to be following the same pattern in his own writing. He wrote short, simple stories and was coaxed into revising them by his peers and teacher.

David and Ian had been assigned as each other's conference buddy. In the first example of one of their peer conferences, David illustrates one of the earliest appearing benefits of peer conferences (Calkins, 1986) and two of the simplest types of revision, rereading the piece and crossing out obviously redundant words in the text.

David: We were way up in the mountains. I was eating supper. I looked over and saw some mountain goats come running toward us. I stared in awe. They stopped to eat grass 50 feet away from us and ate some grass. <"Oops, I've already said that." David crossed out "and ate some grass."> My Dad took some pictures, click, click, click. Then they ran away. We pitched our tent and went to bed. The next morning we hiked up a 14840 ft. peak. It was a great view. Then we hiked out and rode a train home. The end.

Ian: That's a good story. What was it like at the top? Was there a view part?
David: It was rocky at the top, but the view was spectacular. You could see valleys and stuff.
Ian: You should put that in. How did your sister do? She's young.
David: It was a pretty tough climb, but she did OK.
Ian: Did you lose your ear pressure?
David: It wasn't that high.
Ian: Were the valleys neat?
David: Yeh, well, they were pretty far away.

```
          They had trees in them and stuff.
Ian:      You should add that.  How many days
          did it take you?
David:    Only one to climb up.
Ian:      Did you find a new site every night.
David:    Almost.
Ian:      You could draw a map to show where you
          were.
David:    I don't know.
Ian:      That's all I can think of.
David:    OK.
```

David listened intently to the first few comments Ian

made about his piece then seemed ready to go. He kept

looking around the room while his partner was talking. Ian,

on the other hand, seemed to be on a mission. When I reviewed

other transcripts where Ian was the peer responder, it was

apparent that this conference was typical of his questioning

style in formal peer conferences. Ian seemed to be

"milking" his partner for more information. Calkins (1983)

says teachers, too, resort to "milking" writers when their

open-ended questions lead to only sketchy, quick answers.

"Sometimes these questions work, but more often, they only

distract writers from what they have to say" (p. 134). Ian's

questions also appeared scattered, not focussed on any one

event or part of David's text. The more Ian questioned,

the less information David put into his answers. When David

returned to his desk, he revised his text using only the

information elicited by Ian's first question. David's

revisions are underlined in draft #2.

Draft #2:

    We were way up in the mountains. I was
eating supper. I looked over and saw some
mountain goats come running toward us. I
stared in awe. They stopped to eat grass
50 feet away from us. My Dad took some
pictures, click, click, click. Then they
ran away. We pitched our tent and went to bed.
    The next morning we hiked up a 14,840 ft.
peak. <u>It was a tough climb because it was
rocky. The view was spectacular</u>. Then we hiked
out and rode a train home. The End.

After this revision David scheduled a conference with

Mrs. B. Her first question was about his peer conference

with Ian.

Mrs. B.:	What were some of the things Ian told you?
David:	He said to say that it was rocky... That was his suggestion.
Mrs. B.:	That was the only one?
David.:	Yeh.
Mrs. B.:	You don't remember any other suggestions?
David:	He said another one. He said to say when I looked down into the valley that there were trees, but I didn't want to. I didn't want to use that one.
Mrs. B.:	Why?
David:	Because I didn't think it was necessary.
Mrs. B.:	Why did you think Ian was asking you if it were rocky or if there were trees in the valley?
David:	So that he could get a picture in his mind of what it looks like.
Mrs. B.:	Ah, do you think that's important?
David:	Yeh.

David had learned the vocabulary, the phrases his teacher

associated with descriptions. However, he did not appear to have incorporated the idea of painting a picture in words, of "showing, not telling" in his description of the view from the mountaintop. Mrs. B. continued her questions to help flesh out David's description.

David: ...We had to walk up a snow field to get
            to this mountain.
Mrs. B.:   You walked up a snow field?
David: Yeh, and then we slid down on our butts.
Mrs. B.:   Was there snow at the bottom as you
            started up?
David: It was grassy, then it got snowier.
⋮
Mrs. B.:   It went immediately from grass to snow?
David: Well, from grass, then to rocks, then to
            snow.
⋮
Mrs. B.:   How did you feel as you were hiking?
David: I had a pretty heavy pack on, so I
            was tired, but it was nice to be out in
            in the wilderness and have fresh air.
Mrs. B.:   ...How is the fresh air nice?
David: It was cool and clean.
⋮
Mrs. B.:   Who was with you?
David: My dad and my mom and my sister.
⋮
Mrs. B.:   Where did you get it <supper>?
David: We cooked it on our cooking stove.
            We have a little portable one.

David left the conference with Mrs. B. and returned to his desk to begin the third draft of his piece. Again, those revisions that appear to be direct outcomes of his conference with his teacher are underlined in the draft.

Final Draft--Draft #3

<u>My family and I had just reached the top of the mountain. We were sitting on a rock eating the soup we had just cooked.</u> I looked over and saw some mountain goats come running toward us. They had big, shaggy fur coats. I stared in awe. They moved to eat grass 50 feet away from us. My Dad took some pictures...click, click, click. Then they ran away.

We pitched our tent next to a lake at the foot of the mountain we were going to climb the next day. Then we went to bed.

The next morning we hiked up a mountain. It was a tough climb because it was rocky. <u>First, we hiked on grass, then rocks, then snow. I got tired but that's okay because the air was fresh and cool. It was a great view from the top of the mountain. You could see all sorts of shrubs and rocks. Below us was a steep, snowy field. Then I looked to the south and saw all sorts of valleys, cliffs, mountains, and rivers.</u> The view was spectacular.

<u>Then we slid down the snowy field on our butts. I got going pretty fast. My hands started getting numb because I didn't have gloves on.</u> Then we hiked out and rode the train back home.

From an examination of the transcript of David's conference with his teacher, it was obvious that David had added almost all the information that the two of them discussed. At this point in the year (middle of September), I could not determine if it was the questions Mrs. B. asked that caused David to make the underlined revisions in his text, or if he were uncritically submitting to her position of sanctioned authority, a position that his peer Ian did not possess in David's mind. Olson & Torrance (1983) state that the usual "response to accepted authority is

simple deference, capitulation--not evaluation, criticism, or
judgment. . . . On the other hand, to challenge an idea of a
peer is, at least, a contest between two equals" (p. 38).
Whatever his reasons, David continued for much of the
year to share with his peers, but he made major revisions in
his text only after teacher conferences.

It should be noted that David never rewrote his piece.
His first draft was starred and numbered, and separate pages of
notes and additions were stapled to it. As he read subsequent
drafts to his peers and teacher, he flipped back and forth
between the original draft and his additions and revisions.
Mrs. B. had left the form of his drafts up to David and did
not ask that he recopy them.

> Mrs. B.: Can you do a final draft from this, or
> do you need to write it out one more
> time? I don't care. It's up to you.
> If you understand this, then this is fine.
> David: Yeh, I do.

At the beginning of the year, only one other child in the
room, Ann, was following this revision strategy. The other
students were recopying their drafts. However, by January
only three of the students in the study were recopying drafts.
The others were following David's "numbering and starring"
strategy of revision.

Good Writers--Ann, Kathleen, and Sarah

Each of these fifth grade girls had been in a process-conference writing program since entering kindergarten. They all were able to use either their peers' or teacher's suggestions in the revision of their written pieces. All three wrote easily and comfortably. Ann and Kathleen would quietly go about their work on their stories at their desks. Jenny, more outgoing and something of a "tomboy," would often sit at a table with several boys, usually David, Ian or Tom. These three writers also differed in their choice of topics and methods of revision. These differences are illustrated in the following case studies.

Ann

Ann stated that she is "thinking about being a writer" when she grows up. She always spoke in a high-pitched voice like that of a younger child, and this "voice" appeared in the stories of her own family and in her fictional pieces. Graves (1983) defines voice as the "dynamo of the writing process, the reason for writing in the first place" (p. 31) Ann's gentle good looks and soft-spoken manner belied the strong voice that permeated her pieces and her seriousness of purpose in developing her writing ability. Never was this more clear than in the second week of school when Ann chose to share with someone other than her assigned conference buddy.

```
Researcher:   Ann, why did you read your
              story to Kathleen?
Ann:          Well, when I read it to my
              partner, I wasn't finished,
              but also I didn't get any
              questions.  I needed some
              questions.
```

Ann brought a businesslike quality to her peer conferences. She read her draft, wrote down her peer's suggestions and comments on a separate piece of paper, and returned to her desk to revise her piece. After six weeks of being Ann's conference buddy, Nick took his role as seriously.

```
Ann:   Nick, I need a conference.
Nick:  OK.
   (The two of them moved to the rug area for
    a conference.  Ann read her story,
    "My Dad's Birthday.")
Nick:  How old is your Dad?
Ann:   He is turning 41.
Nick:  Where did you go for breakfast?
Ann:   I don't remember.  Somewhere near
       the Christmas shops.
Nick:  What gifts did you give him?
Ann:   A card and a medal.
Nick:  When did you give your Dad his cake?
Ann:   After he opened his presents.
Nick:  Did he like it?
Ann:   Yes.
Nick:  OK.
Ann:   Thanks.
```

Back at her desk Ann numbered each question 1 - 5, wrote down her response to each one, and reread her story to find a spot for each addition.   When she was finished, she asked for a conference with Mrs. B. and followed the

same format: she wrote down Mrs. B.'s questions, found a
place for them in her story, and put the number of the
question in that spot. She then scheduled a second conference
with Mrs. B. to share these revisions.

> Mrs. B.: You read this to me yesterday.
> What do you want to confer with
> me about today?
> Ann: Well, I answered your questions,
> and I want to know if I should go
> on to a second draft.
> .
> .
> Mrs. B.: You want me to see if the answers
> you wrote clarify the parts. OK,
> read the parts where you wrote
> additions.

Mrs. B.'s use of the word "additions" rather than
revisions was accurate in this story. Ann was the other
child, along with David, in the classroom at the beginning
of year who was making additions to her pieces by starring
and numbering her text and adding on additional pages as
needed.

Ann made clarifications and refinements in her stories
after peer and teacher conferences, but she seemed to use
strategies and information from whole class mini-lessons to
make major changes in her writing. After a series of
mini-lessons on developing characters through dialogue
and providing text and description between quotes, Ann began
to write "A Mischievous Puppy," a story where dialogue carried

most of the action, description, and character development.

Mrs. B.:	Where did you get the idea from?
Ann:	Well, last year I wrote the same story, but I got stuck so I decided to do it now.
Mrs. B.:	So are you going to do the very same things?
Ann:	Well, I didn't really remember the same things, so I'm going to make it different.
Mrs. B.:	What are you going to do next? What's going to happen next?
Ann:	...She <the mother> is going give the puppy to Ellen, and it is going to get into a lot of mischief.
Mrs. B.:	Aha, so it's going to prove out the title. I like your beginning. It is an exciting beginning, "Mommy, mommy, do you know what day it is?" "Of course, I do." That's kind of a funny beginning. I just know something special is going to happen.
Ann:	I tried to add in some description.
Mrs. B.:	That's what I thought because we talked about that before, didn't we?

In this conference with Mrs. B., Ann also brought up an interesting fact that can only occur in classes where children select their own topics. Ann had explored the territory of this piece in past years, but she could not get the story down on paper. In the third grade Ann had written a very personal story concerning her desire for a dog and her mother's feeling that a dog was too much work and would get lonely in a house with two working parents and two children in school all day. In fourth grade she had attempted to write a fictionalized

account of a little girl receiving a much-wanted puppy for a birthday present, but the piece had not worked for her, and she had abandoned it. Now, mid-way through fifth grade, Ann had once again begun to write about a little girl and her puppy.

Graves (1983) feels that children write about topics that they know.

> Children learn through making decisions.
> They search their lives and interests,
> make a choice and write. Some of the
> decisions are poor ones. The topic could
> not be controlled, little was known about
> the subject, or the child chose the topic
> to impress another. They lost control of
> their writing. But, with help, they
> regain control, make better choices.
> Above all, they learn to control a subject,
> limit it, persuade, sequence information,
> change their language...all to satisfy
> their own voices, not the voices of others.
> (Graves, 1983, p. 31)

He also feels that children make "sensible choices" about their topics "because of the total fabric of the classroom" (p. 21) and the help of the teacher within that classroom. Ann made sensible choices about her topics, and her teacher and classmates helped her to refine and expand them.

Kathleen

During a survey of her feelings about herself as a writer, Kathleen described herself as a "writer," but she

felt her writing wasn't "very good" and "needs a lot of work."
She shared her writing with her friends to get their ideas
of ways to revise her writing. She said that my friends
"tell me where I haven't said what I wanted to say" because
sometimes "it makes sense to me but not to them."

Throughout the year, it was easy to forget that Kathleen
was in the room. She sat at her desk and wrote or shared
quietly with a friend. She rarely made a comment during
author's circle or whole group mini-lesson. When she was
finished with a draft, she shared with a friend, then asked
to meet with her teacher. Yet, several times during the
year, Mrs. B. called on Kathleen to read the beginning of
one of her stories to the group as an example of how to
write a lead. Her "Fun Town" story is one such example:

>   Today we're going to Fun Town. I was
> excited. I went downstairs; everyone was
> waiting. Quickly, I went upstairs to get
> dressed. When I came back, everyone was
> in the car.

Kathleen shared this story with Ian, and he had only
one suggestion.

> Ian: You might want to add a little
>   more detail. I think you should
>   add more details of what rides
>   you went on and stuff.
> Kathleen: Anymore?
> Ian: No, I think that's it.

She added a few more rides to her story, then met with
Mrs. B. to go over the revisions.

```
Mrs. B.:    Kathleen, is this the story, Fun Town?
Kathleen:   Yeh.
Mrs. B.:    What have you done on it so far?
Kathleen:   I shared it.
Mrs. B.:    You finished the story and shared it
            with your conference buddy.  What
            suggestions or changes did you get
            from your conference buddy, or what
            changes did you make?
Kathleen:   He said that I could add some.
Mrs. B.:    What did you change and what
            did you add?
Kathleen:   I added one part.
       .
       .
Mrs. B.:    Why did you change it?
Kathleen:   It added more detail.
```

Sometimes, Kathleen appeared to be working on family
issues in her writing. In her Halloween story, "The Deadly
Maze", her younger sister is lost in a maze, and Kathleen
searches for her only to discover her sister's dead body.
In the first draft of "When I Helped Santa," she included
the following dialogue:

> My mother was nagging, "Kathleen, you should go
> to bed or Santa Claus won't come."
> I said, "Santa's not real, so don't tell me to
> go to bed."

Kathleen shared this piece with Mrs. B. After a brief
discussion of her character's personality as expressed in
the piece, Kathleen changed the reply to

> I said, "Santa isn't real, so why should I go
> to bed?"

Kathleen refused to be audiotaped. Only one audiotape of Kathleen's peer conferences remains. She said that she didn't like the sound of her voice on the tape. In the beginning of December, Mrs. B. introduced a conference form for the children to fill out when they were sharing with peers. I discussed this form with Kathleen:

> Researcher: Is this form helpful to you?
> Kathleen: Yes.
> Researcher: Have you used the tape recorders?
> Kathleen: In the beginning of the year, but I didn't like how I sounded.
> Researcher: Did the tapes help you remember your friend's comments?
> Kathleen: No, they took too much time and half the time they didn't work. People were always complaining about the tape recorders.
> Researcher: Are the forms better?
> Kathleen: Everything, all the information you need is right here <on the form>.
> Researcher: Is there anything that is left out?
> Kathleen: There's no place to write when you started the piece. And there's not really a place just for suggestions in the middle of the piece before it is finished.
> (Mrs. B. and I reviewed these comments and revised the form.)

Kathleen was an easily overlooked student. Each classroom has one. She was a good student, a good writer, and she asked for very little from her teacher. She used her friend's and teacher's suggestions to help her revise her pieces. She filled out her "Conference & Revision Form" and included

suggestions from both her peers and Mrs. B.

Peer Readers	What specifically did the reader like?	What specific changes were suggested?
Ann	She liked the way I add details like jumbled and "poof!"	She said to say it's Christmas all the time in Magic Land.
Trina	She liked the way I added words like jumbled.	You could change the title.
Ann	You used unusual words a lot.	Add more details at the end of your story.
Mrs. B.	She liked the idea of the story the descriptions, and the clarity.	Add what you were wearing Change simile "bowl full of jelly"

On her conference form in the "List, Specifically, What You Did to Revise This Paper" section, Kathleen notes that she has made these revisions in her story. She changed the title from "The Magic Man" to "The Magic Hat." She did make it Christmas all year long in Magic Land. She added a part at the end about being frozen, she added what she was wearing, "a long green nightgown", and she changed her

simile to "stomach looked like a big red apple." Kathleen grew and changed as a writer over the year, but her writing skills would have gone unnoticed by most of the class except for the fact that her teacher sought her out and asked her to share her stories with the group.

Sarah

One could argue that Sarah was the best writer in the class. She wrote easily, confidently, and fluently. Her stories and the revisions of those stories took her to unexplored areas that many of her classmates openly admired. She rarely shared her pieces until they were almost complete. Often, she would have a whole draft completed before she shared with a peer or a teacher.

Sarah was a student who could make any teacher feel she or he had to struggle to stay even one day ahead of her. Yet, Mrs. B. was able to accommodate Sarah's skills by directing her to read how other authors had tackled similar problems within their writing. At the beginning of the year, Sarah came to Mrs. B. with a story about her dog P.T. She had already shared her story with Trina, Ian, and David. (Those peer conferences were detailed under the section entitled, "Student Interactions During Peer Conferences.")

> Draft 1: P.T. P.T. stands for pathetic.
> Pathetic is my little puppy. She's about

3 months old. She's very small, but she
eats a ton. P.T. is a mutt. We don't know
the kind. She may be part fox terrier.
Her hair is a light tannish beige, also part
white. We bought her a purple collar and leash.
She's had a lot of flea baths so far.
We call her P.T., Pathetic, because she's
always bumping into stuff. She does pathetic
things, like sleeping in an awkward position.
When she was a week old, my mom saw her and said
she was the most pathetic looking thing.
Everytime she hears a loud noise, she gets scared.
One time it was a real loud noise and she dove
under a plant. She also gets scared by other
dogs barking. PT is a fast little pup. She can
run as fast as me. She even comes when I call her,
but I have to hit the ground. She bites hard for
a little puppy. She has a loud yelp, bark, and
whine. She has a small body, but long legs.
She cute. I love her a ton.

Mrs. B.:   We talked yesterday about giving PT a
           little more personality... What do you
           recall in books that you have read that
           describe an animal?
Sarah: Well, like Robert McClung tells about
           the animal with information like in a
           story.
Mrs. B.:   Do you recall some of that?
Sarah: No.
Mrs. B.:   One of the ways is to go through events
           that happen with that animal and that
           tells about the animal and gives you a
           feeling for it. I've got several short
           stories here that tell you about animals.
           Why don't I give these to you. You'll
           read them pretty quickly.

Sarah took the stories and returned to her desk. Two days
later, she came to Mrs. B. with a new draft of her story.

Mrs. B.:   Sarah, the last time we had a conference you
           were checking into how authors develop animal
           characters so that the reader can feel a
           connection with the animal. What have you done
           since then?

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eats a ton. P.T. is a mutt. We don't know
the kind. She may be part fox terrier.
Her hair is a light tannish beige, also part
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later, she came to Mrs. B. with a new draft of her story.

Mrs. B.:   Sarah, the last time we had a conference you
            were checking into how authors develop animal
            characters so that the reader can feel a
            connection with the animal. What have you done
            since then?

Sarah: Well, I put all the information from my report
          into story form.
Mrs. B.: OK, let me hear what you have.
Sarah: OK.

Draft #2: P.T. Scratch, scratch. I opened my eyes.
          I saw a tannish-beige figure. "Mmmmmm,"
          It was P.T. my puppy. I lifted her small,
          bony body to my bed. She started to play
          with my ear. "Ouch, you bit my ear!" I put
          her on the floor. She scratched the door.
          I brought her out. I fed her puppy chow and
          sat down at the table. She gobbled it up like
          a little pig. She started to shine. I
          unhooked her. She darted toward the path with
          her ears flopping. I ran after her. "P. T.,"
          I called. She stopped and ran to me. "Good,
          puppy." She licked my face with her tiny pink
          tongue. She was panting loudly so I started to
          run to the trailer. She ran after me. Before
          I knew what had happened, she was a foot in
          front of me. Zoom! She dashed right to her
          water bowl and drank nearly half.
              My mom came out of the trailer. "So,
          how's our little mutt today?" P.T. trotted
          over to my mom. Boom! She bumped into the
          picnic table. She got up and dashed to my
          mother. She did a forward roll before she
          reached her. My Mom picked her up. "Sarah,
          today we're going to your great-grandfather's."
              "But I want to stay at camp."
              "P.T.'s coming."
              "Ok, good."
              P.T. started to bite my foot. I took
          her for a walk. I snapped on her purple leash
          and walked down the street. There were a lot
          of campsites. A lot of people stopped to say,
          "Oh, how cute." All of a sudden a dog started
          barking. P.T. started to shake. I picked her
          up. She stopped. We walked a ways. I put her
          down. She ran back to the trailer.
              "Hi, John."
              "Hi, hey, will you give her her pills?"
              "Does she take the pink one?"
              "Not now."
              "OK." I gave her her green pill. She ate
          it right up.
              "Time to go."
              "OK." I put her in her box and put her in

the car. She was eating a Kleenex. I picked
her up and soon we were there.

     All my cousins thought she was cute. She
fell asleep. Then there was a loud noise.
P.T. woke up and dashed under a plant. I
picked her up and sat down on a rocker. She
squirmed out of my arms, flew off the rocker
and did two forward rolls and sat up. Everyone
laughed, even me. She barked and bit my sock.
I lifted my foot up. She was still on it, and
she went a foot off the ground. I put my foot
down.

     "Sarah, it's time to go."
     "OK." I picked P.T. up. I put P.T. in
the box and brought her to the car. We said
good-bye to everybody. P.T. barked as we left.

Mrs. B.:	How do you like this story compared to the other P.T.?
Sarah:	Well, I think it's better because the other one was just like a report, and I kept saying she did this and she... It was in report form.
Mrs. B.:	I agree with you. Did you keep the other copy? I agree with you because this is a story that interested me when you started reading it. What are you doing now? Have you finished P.T.?
Sarah:	Yeh, I'm done with it.
Mrs. B.:	OK ...

When Sarah read this story at author's circle, there was

some confusion over the setting and characters in her story.

Jason:	What kind of dog is she?
Sarah:	She's a mutt. See what I did, before I wrote a report that had all that stuff in it, and I tried to put all that information in this <draft>. So if I read this <first draft> a lot of these questions will be answered.
Mrs. B.:	It's almost a continuation. This is almost a second story.
Sarah:	I'm thinking about writing an introduction to tell about PT.

And so she did. A few days later Sarah returned to author's
circle to share the introduction to her piece.

Sarah:	Introduction of PT
	PT stands for pathetic. She's my puppy. In this story we are in Fall River at a camping place called Maple Rock. My mom I, and her future husband John are there. We are staying in a trailer. We go to our great grandmas's for a little party. We've had PT for two days and this is her first camping trip. She is 1 1/2 months old.
Mrs. B.:	Do you understand what Sarah just did?
David:	She put on an introduction for her story to give more information.

In December Sarah began to write a "peaceful" war
story. Her main character was an American soldier, a male.
Sarah wrote the story in first person. She shared her story
with Tom and Ian, both of them said the story was good and asked
a little about the soldier, but they had no suggestions. She
shared the story with Mrs. B. and received a reminder to stay
in first person. Sarah had used "he" in a few places. They
then discussed the setting.

Mrs. B.:	I have a question. When is the story taking place? Is it sometime in the past? future? now?
Sarah:	It's in the past like an old war story..
Mrs. B.:	If it's an old war story, then how did a B-52 bomber come?
Sarah:	I guess I should change that.
Mrs. B.:	That's what I thought it was like. I thought it was taking place around the Revolutionary War or older, but then when I get over here about the B-52 bomber, I go, "Wait a minute. Is it

```
                        the past?  the present?  the future,
                        or when?
            Sarah:      It's supposed to be pretty old, like
                        World War I.
            Mrs. B.:    Then you might want to look back at
                        World War I and see what kind of planes
                        there were then so you can get that
                        description.  That would be the kind
                        of research an author would do, matching
                        equipment with the time.
            Sarah:      OK.
```

Sarah was a writer, and, in order to meet her needs,

her teacher must provide her with the kinds of information

that writers need to use. Through the works of other authors,

Mrs. B. was "showing not telling" Sarah alternative ways to

revise her text. This strategy worked very well. Sarah was

able to read the short stories that Mrs. B. provided and

write her own "fictionalized" true story of P.T. "inspired"

she said by the short stories. Writers also do research

on their topics, and Mrs. B. attempted to improve Sarah's

writing by suggesting that she collect more background details

for her war story. "The amateur thinks that the writer has

an idea...and a few facts. He doesn't. He has shelves

of reports, miles of tape-recorded interviews, notebooks

of quotations and facts....It takes hundreds of pages of

notes to make one...article" (Murray, 1968, p.6). Sarah

was on her way to filling her shelves and notebooks and

making herself an "expert" (Calkins, 1986) in order to be

a better writer.

Remedial Writers--Ian and Nick

Ian and Nick were two of the five children in the class who had been involved in the writing process since kindergarten. Over the past five years both had received remedial services in reading, writing, spelling, handwriting and visual motor integration. Their disabilities had not disappeared while learning to write using a process approach, but some of the usual accompanying problems seemed to have been avoided. Neither boy hated writing nor tried to avoid writing in class. Both participated in all areas of the writing period and actively shared their stories. Although both boys had writing difficulties, their personalities and problems were so dissimilar that I have included both of them to illustrate that remedial students also learn to write and revise in a highly individual manner.

Ian

Looking at a draft of one of Ian's stories would make any teacher shiver. Words were omitted, spelling was barely at the phonetic level, his letter formation was atrocious, and he rarely used punctuation or paragraphs in his stories. Although he began the year reading almost at grade level, his other language arts skills were still one to two years behind. His first story of the year illustrated some of these problem areas:

Draft #1:

                         At The Beach
              I went snorkling in the ocean it
         was fun I coulb stay unnder for aBout
         2 min sming arond with a mask on looking
         around. Kicking up sand going deper
         looking crabs. then come up for air.
                         the End

He conferred with Mrs. B., and Ian told her what he saw when

he was looking around.

        Ian: I saw the image of the wave at the top
              of the water with the bottom of the waves
              in front of me.

Mrs. B wrote down this description for him on the back of his

paper and asked him to reread his piece to see if anything else

was missing. Ian went back to his desk and began to work on

Draft #2.

        Draft #2:   Snorkling
                     I went snorkling. when I got to
                the point when I was about a foot over
                my head. and looked up and I saw the
                gust an image of the top of the water.

Ian then met with his conference buddy:

        Ian: This is a small story.
                (Ian read "Snorkling.")
        David: You should make it longer.
                What did you see?
        Ian: I saw crabs and pretty rocks.
        David: You should say that "I looked
                down at the bottom. I saw crabs
                and pretty rocks"

Ian returned to his desk and spent the next two days working
on his third draft.

Draft #3:   Snorkling
                        I went to my ganmothers this
                   sumer. she lives right down the street
                   from the ocean. Thats where I went
                   snorkling. I went snorkling when it
                   was mendem tide. I din't go out that far.
                   But I did go out far anew to see the crads
                   and shells. then I pluced up my snorkel
                   looked up at the water and saw gust an image
                   of the top of the water and saw the in dents
                   for the coming waves. then I sarted loesing
                   ari so I serfist and swaym back in. and went
                   back to my Ganmothers house and watch TV
                   then I had saper and we played a came of
                   treav prsoet and went to bed
                                        the End

Ian signed up for another conference with his teacher.

        Mrs. B.:   What's your story about Ian?
        Ian: It's about going to my grandmother's
                   and snorkeling.
        Mrs. B.:   But your title is...
        Ian: Snorkeling.
        Mrs. B.:   So is it about going to your
                   grandmother's and while you were
                   there snorkeling, or is it about
                   snorkeling?
        Ian: It is about snorkeling.
        Mrs. B.:   If your story is about snorkeling,
                   is there a part that is unnecessary
                   in your story?
        Ian: The grandmother part.

Once again Ian returned to his desk to begin another draft.

All of the revisions that were suggested in teacher and peer

conferences are underlined.

Draft   #4:   Snorkeling
          I went to my grandmother's house this
summer. She lives right down the street from
the Pacific Ocean. The day we got there it
was crummy, but the next day we went down to
the beach. And I went snorkeling. At about
medium time I walked out to where it was about
up to be chest and put the snorkel in my mouth
and went underwater. <u>I swam out a little more</u>
<u>until I was about 2 feet over my head.</u> When I
<u>looked down, I saw crabs and shells.</u> Then I
plugged up by snorkel and looked up at the sky.
<u>And saw just an image of the top of the water</u>
<u>and the indentions of the incoming waves.</u> Then
I started losing air so I surfaced and swam in
to shore to dry off. Then I had lunch. When
I was done, I went for one more swim. <u>Then we</u>
<u>we went back to my grandmother's.</u>

Ian's teacher helped him edit his final draft. His skills
were such that he was often unable to reread his piece to correct
his errors. He skipped words when he wrote, and he also
skipped words when he read. Ian could correct a few misspelled
words, capitalize the first word in a sentence and most proper
nouns, and put in end stop punctuation. His teacher waited
until the piece was in final form before beginning to help him
proofread his piece. In many other classrooms Ian's paper would
be a hemorrhage of red marks, and his feelings as a writer might
be diminished. Ian had learned, as had his teachers, to separate
what he had to say from his language mechanics skills. Ian
volunteered that he didn't know why people were interested in
kid's writing. "It's pretty basic to me because I just think
'Oh, it's just another story,' but people think 'Oh, you wrote
a story? Wow, let's hear it.' I've written more you know."

Ian saw himself as a story writer. He knew that he had
problems in spelling and penmanship, but not in writing. His
standardized test scores supported Ian's view of himself as a
learner. In January of the sixth grade, he scored at the
4.6 level in spelling, at the 5.8 level in language mechanics,
but at the 10.3 level in language expression. He also scored
a 6 on the holistic scoring of his sixth grade writing sample.

Ian's peers were not unaware of his problems. On one
occasion Ian was having difficulty reading his story as he
flipped from page to page. His peer was becoming confused
and could not follow the story.

> Tom: What's happening now? Where are
> they? I don't follow it.
> Ian: I know. I have to practice
> reading it.

His teacher, Mrs. B., also had difficulty following Ian's
story.

> Mrs. B.: Ian, what do you want me to do
> with this piece?
> Ian: I want your suggestions.
> Mrs. B.: Well, I have some questions.
> Some of the writing I didn't
> understand....Do you know why
> I had trouble reading this?
> Ian: My handwriting.
> Mrs. B.: Yes, but mainly the spelling
> and punctuation.

In January Ian began to type (with the help of his father)

his stories at home on a word processor. With the typed
text, Ian seemed to find it easier to read his stories, and
he began to do far more revision, not on the computer,
but in pencil on the typed copies. Since he continued to
write the first draft of his stories at school, Ian's
difficulties with spelling were still noticeable.

        Ian: How do you spell "drench" like in
                drench coat?
        David: There's no such thing as "drench coat."
                It is a trench coat. How come you
                always ask us to spell things? Why
                don't you just look it up?
        (Ian continued writing trench coat. He
        looked as if he didn't hear David.)

It is difficult for someone with David's above average skills
to understand that "just looking it up" was almost impossible
for Ian. He relied on his friends to give him at least some
idea of how to spell a word. He was proud of the skills he
had as he showed during the rest of his conference with David.

        Ian: Now his actions. I know how to spell this
                a - c - t - i - o - n. Now, what's that
                word? Imitation. No. You know, when you
                look at someone and scare them?
        David: What?
        Ian: I know, "intimidation."

    Ian compensated for his problem areas, and he had learned
to use his teacher, his friends, and the computer to help him
overcome his difficulties.

Nick

Nick was very different from Ian. While Ian was generally laughing and joking in the classroom, Nick was quiet and soft-spoken. Being Ann's conference partner had helped Nick to focus on others' stories and make comments about them. But he often looked a little embarrassed when he was sharing with Ann, for they were the only boy-girl pair assigned to be conference buddies.

As I observed Nick one day during a conference with Ann, it appeared that he wasn't paying attention. He was chewing his fingers and watching me through most of the conference. When Ann had finished and returned to her desk, I decided to ask him what he thought of Ann's story. Nick replied that he thought it was good. I then asked him if he could tell me what it was about. Nick told me that Ann's family had rented an R. V. and had gone to the beach where they had played miniature golf. Ann's mother and brother were "chicken to go in the cold water," but Ann and her father had gone in. Then one day it had rained. I said, "Thanks, Nick, I'd missed some of that," but Nick hadn't. He had been listening to Ann.

Throughout the year I found that it was very important to be both participant and observer. I could carefully note all the verbal and nonverbal behaviors of the students, but I frequently needed to stop and ask them what they were doing.

Sometimes their answers validated my assumptions, but more often my assumptions were wrong.

Nick particularly had not learned the social skills of "looking busy" or "looking interested." He would often sit staring around the room during writing. After I had misjudged his attention to Ann's story, I began to go over and ask him what he was doing when I saw him staring around.

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Researcher:   Nick, did you share with Ann today?
Nick:         No.
Researcher:   Have you shared with Mrs. B.?
Nick:         Twice.
Researcher:   What did you learn from that?
Nick:         I learned to add little things
              on the side of my paper to include
              with my story.  I have to think
              about where I'm going to put
              them in.
```

Nick never shared very often with his partner. He would meet with Ann or one of his other friends once when he finished his text, but often Mrs. B. would have to remind him to do that. Rarely did he confer with peers or his teacher until his piece was completed.

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Ann:    Is this a true story?
Nick:   No.
   (Ann thinks carefully before her
    next response.  There is almost
    a 30 second pause.)
Nick:   Are you ready to share?
Ann:    No, Well, yeh.  Are you
        writing like you are the
        person in the story, or are
        you writing about someone else?
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Nick:    Someone else.
Ann:     Are you going to add anymore?
Nick:    No.
```

Nick did not go through the recopying that Ian did nor did he attach his additions to his stories on separate pieces of paper like David and Ann. Nick crossed out words and wrote above them or in the margins. His revisions were mainly refinements of his story. Words were inserted or changed, but the content of the piece changed little. Nick said that he wrote most of his stories "for Mrs. B." However, he felt that his peers helped him mainly with words and things, while Mrs. B. helped him with "the harder stuff" like spelling and taught him things like paragraphing.

When I asked Nick how he rated writing in relation to his other subject areas, he said, "I like writing more than math. I think I like it more than reading. I think it is one of my best subjects. I like it. It's interesting."

Both Ian and Nick enjoyed writing and felt successful at it, feelings that not many "remedial" students have. Nick, like Ian, was able to separate his skill in creating a story on paper from the spelling and penmanship problems he struggled to overcome.

Meyer, Lester, & Pradl (1983) state that teachers all over the country have found that teaching writing as a process works better than more traditional programs with average or

less able students.

> If such a program is started early
> enough and sustained long enough,
> it's sufficiently flexible to permit
> every growing writer to find his own
> voice and to have a set of positive
> experiences with writing. There
> will be individual differences in
> achievement, but no one need lack
> confidence. (p. 118)

In closure, both boys seemed to be developing their writing
skills in this writing program as well as their coping
skills to help them compensate for their writing difficulties.
At the same time they maintained confidence in their
ability to communicate with others through writing.

Uncertain Writers--Jason, Tom, Chris, and Trina

These writers shared one common characteristic,
discomfort with some aspect of the writing process.
Each one handled that discomfort in a slightly different
way. Writing is a difficult process. It is "more than
the act of transcribing meaning bearing sounds to graphic
symbols on paper. What happens on paper is only the
outward manisfestation of a complex thought activity"
(Tway, 1984, p. 1). The complexity of the writing process
means that students can experience problems in a multitude
of areas. By closely analyzing the conference and interview
transcripts for each of these students, I attempted to

uncover what each of them thought about writing and the writing process.

Jason

Jason was beginning his third year in a writing process classroom. A quiet, dark haired boy with big dark eyes, he generally worked quietly at his desk or shared quietly with his friends. An only child, Jason often wrote stories about his dog Cheyenne. He shared with his friends because that was a step the teacher had said to include before a piece of writing could be put in final draft form, but he seemed to see little reason for doing so. On September 12 I found Jason and Barry had just finished a conference. The following conversation illustrates Jason's uncertainties over peer conferences:

> Researcher: Jason, did you and Barry share today?
> Jason: No, we just read our stories to each other. We didn't know we were supposed to make comments.
> Researcher: Jason, when you read to each other last year what did you do?
> Jason: Well, we read to each other and then gave comments, questions, and suggestions.
> Researcher: Is it different this year?
> Jason: I guess not.

As the year progressed Jason continued to confer with peers and to offer suggestions and comments during group

author's circles. But in January he still was not clear on the roles and responsibilities within a peer conference.

>Mrs. B.:   Why did you choose to read it to
>   only one other person?
>Jason: What he gave me, I added. I
>   thought if I read it to another
>   person, the story would never end.
>   Since I had already added Chris's
>   suggestion for an ending, I just
>   stopped.

Jason's response indicated that he was balancing how to accept peer's suggestions for improving his writing while maintaining ownership of his piece. The cumulative effect of adding all possible suggestions could be that "my story would never end." It was easier for Jason to avoid seeking too many comments than to say no to one. Jason's feelings of powerlessness seemed to come from his not taking ownership of his piece. Jason wrote often about his family and his pet, two subjects he knew well. Yet, once he committed them to paper, he did not revise them alone. At this time it appeared that he had not internalized an audience for his piece, but neither had he internalized a critic. His piece was there, waiting to be shaped, but not by him. He left to others the task of reviewing, revising, and completing his pieces. No wonder he felt so powerless as he responded to his peers' suggestions.

A study of Jason's drafts supported the fact that most
of the revisions made in his stories were initiated by
a peer or a teacher. Jason's stories began with a one or
two paragraph description of some event with The End written
at the bottom. Then, after conferring with peers and his
teacher he would add a new beginning, a clarification, a new
ending to his bare bones story. The development of his
story, "The Cake Caper," followed this pattern.

> Draft #1: Cheyenne was in the house. My mom was
> baking me a birthday cake I was playing video
> games. Then my dog walked into the kitchen.
> Then my mom came down the hall. I walked to talk
> to her. We both entered the kitchen at the same
> time. Then, we saw Cheyenne with crumbs on her
> mouth. She had eaten the whole cake!

> Barry: Can you give me a description of
>   Cheyenne?
> Jason: She's a black laborador retriever
>   with a white stomach and big ears.
> Barry: Pretty good description. Why
>   don't you put it in your story?
> Jason: Ok, I will.

After sharing with Barry, Jason added a description of
Cheyenne at the bottom of the page and began to write draft #2
without referring to draft #1. Calkins (1983) described this
same type of revision in Susie's work and called the drafts
"sequels" rather than revisions. There were more details in
Draft #2, but forgotten was the description of Cheyenne.

Draft #2: Cheyenne was in the house at about 4:00
in the afternoon. My mom was baking me a cake for
my birthday. My mom walked to her room. I was
playing video games and had a great score of
100,000. I heard my mom walking down the hall.
I walked to meet her. We both entered the kitchen
at the same time. We saw Cheyenne with crumbs on
her mouth. We stared where the cake was, but only
crumbs remained. Cheyenne had eaten the whole cake!
She got in big trouble with mom, me, and my dad.

During his conference with Mrs. B., Jason provided

additional details on what his family did and how they felt

after Cheyenne ate the cake.

Jason: She just kept on sitting and looking
            at us like why are you staring at me,
            why are you laughing at me. All I
            did was eat a cake. Then we threw
            her outside and that was that. We
            weren't mad at her.
Mrs. B: The other story you wrote about your
            dog, do you have it right there with
            you, Jason? What I'd like for you
            to do is go back and read that other
            story because you had some really good
            descriptions of what happened and then
            look at this story...and see if you can
            figure out yourself some additions and
            changes that you can make in this story
            to improve what you have already put
            down. It is a good start. Now, you
            need to broaden it.
Jason: OK.

Following this conference Jason returned to his desk

and began to reread the first Cheyenne story. Then he

started to rewrite the description of Cheyenne, one of his

peer's suggestions.

Draft #3: Cheyenne is 3/4 black laborador retriever.
We think she has doberman pincher in her, but we're
not sure. She has a bunch of nicknames. Our
favorite is Kinser. The things she likes best are
eating things besides dog food and playing. She
plays in two ways. One, she likes tug of war and
chasing balls. The other way is she tries to out
smart you, and that's her way of winning. This is
one time she out smarted us.
     Cheyenne was in the house at about 4:00 in the
afternoon. My mom was baking me a double layer,
cream-filled cake for my birthday. My mom walked
to her room. I was playing video games and had
just got a great score of 100,000 points. I heard
my mom coming down the hall. I walked to meet her.
We both entered the kitchen at the same time. We
saw Cheyenne with crumbs on her mouth, whiskers,
and nose. We stared where the cake was, but
only crumbs remained. Cheyenne had eaten the whole
cake! We started to laugh, but Chey just sat there
thinking, "Why are you looking at me. You have
nothing against me. I just have crumbs on my
whiskers, nose, and mouth. Cheyenne got kicked
out of the house until it was time for her to go
to bed.

     In March when I asked Jason why he revised his texts he

said "to make them better. Your first draft is never as good

as your final copy." I followed this up by asking Jason how

his friends had helped him revise his pieces. He replied,

"They usually gave me good ideas and they asked me to take

more time to describe it. I was thinking of <doing> it."

Jason's comment made me feel that I might have missed a

part of his revision process. He was thinking about

revising his piece and thinking about doing it the way

his peers suggested, but he needed his peers' confirmation

that this was an appropriate revision. I probed his

comment to corroborate my observation.

Researcher: So you were thinking
             about using it.
Jason: Yeh.
Researcher: But,
Jason: They're the ones that
             confirmed it, that I
             should do it because
             it was a good idea.

This interaction elicited by my informal interview with Jason shed light on his development of revision skills over the year. From September to January, Jason seemed totally dependent on his peers and teachers to provide ideas and the impetus for his revisions. By March he was beginning to learn to read his writing like both a writer and a reader, "playing both creator and critic in the game of making meaning" (Murray, 1985, p. 201). But his insecurity and uncertainity with this newly-discovered ability caused him to hesitate and seek his peers' opinion and support before acting on his ideas for revision. The classroom writing program gave him the opportunity and the pace to develop confidence in his revision skills.

Tom

Tom, a quiet fifth grader with outstanding academic ability, had participated in a process-conference writing

program since first grade. Writing had often been tortuous for him. Before this year, his stories were often brief, almost telegraphic reports of incidents that had happened to him or the characters in his story. He seemed unable to review his pieces or to make more than simple word-level changes in them. Throughout his fifth grade year Tom continued to work diligently on each piece of writing sharing them frequently with peers and teacher, but he only completed five pieces. At one point Ms. B. asked him why he was recopying his first draft, a process that took a great deal of time.

Mrs. B.: Why did you, when you revised, why do you begin writing all over again?

Tom: Well, it's neater. It doesn't get all messy.

Mrs. B.: Does the mess bother you?

Tom: It doesn't bother me, but it's easier to write a new draft.

Mrs. B.: Writing it all over is easier, even though you have to write all these words over and over.

Tom: It would be a totally different story.

Mrs. B.: You changed that much of it?

Tom: Yeh.

This example provided a glimpse of Tom's personality and illuminated one of the reasons for his slow progress through his drafts. Tom liked order. He was neat, his desk was neat, and his work was neat. Later, in a complaint to a friend, another problem with his drafts came up. "I hate this yellow paper," Tom mumbled, "It tears every time you try to erase."

Assured that he could use white paper for both his drafts and final copies, Tom began to revise more freely and to spend less time on his drafts. However, he continued to write neatly in his small, clear cursive in his drafts and in the "flaps" and "added sections" he began to use in January.

Tom began the year on shaky footing with his assigned conference buddy.

Matthew: I think that's good. I don't know why you don't like it. (Matthew thought for a moment then continued.) I think you should say "Matthew and Wylie put their roller skates behind the couch."

Tom: If I keep putting where everybody put things, it will be a boring story. Give me a suggestion. You're not a very good partner.

Matthew: Yes, I am. I was trying to give you a suggestion. (Matthew began to look over Tom's story.)

Matthew: Is this your whole story?

Tom: Yes.

Matthew: I can't really read cursive. You should put more of what we do.

Tom: What else should I say?

Matthew: You should add more action.

Tom: I can't.

Matthew: Yes, you can. You could say, "Wylie slammed Matthew with a sleeping bag and Matthew rolled away." That would be better. Unless you have action, it's a very boring story.

Tom: I know.

Matthew: You need action.

Like Jason Tom appeared to have difficulty revising his stories. He knew that something was missing, that he needed to

interest his reader, but he did not seem to know how to go about making his text of interest to others. Graves (1983) believes that a situation like Tom's may not be negative.

> Growth comes when problems are solved by child or adult. Sometimes the person is unaware of the problem-solving process; the discrepancy or uneasiness is slight. The solution is almost automatic. On the other hand, there are times when the force of writing, the desperate wanting to write something significant, is very strong and the pain of imbalance, the unsolved problem, is even greater. It can often be a time of disillusionment with the self, even with the persons around them. The writer will often say, 'I am beyond help. No one can get me out of this predicament.' The solution and control must reside with the writer, but outsiders. . . can help the writer to frame the problem, come in touch with the original intentions which have been obliterated in disillusionment, and get on with the solution. (p. 233)

This year it appeared that Tom felt the force of writing, and it was important to him that his peers like his stories. "Where the child is the originator of the task at hand, he is likely to have a much greater commitment to it and to take much greater responsibility for formulating his ideas in a manner which is clear and explicit enough for others to understand" (Clay, 1983, p. 266). In the past Tom might have lacked commitment to his topics, but in the fifth grade he was ready for the work revision entails.

With both his friends' and his teacher's help, Tom was able to include action in his story, but it was not an easy process. He checked out each addition with his peer until Matthew complained that he never had time to write because "Tom always wants me to have a conference with him." Revising his stories was a new risk that Tom was taking. He needed support and encouragement to continue taking risks. His peers provided that, although sometimes reluctantly, as well as his teacher and the classroom setting.

In January Tom was ready for another risk. Tom wanted to write a funny story, but he was worried that it would be too crazy. Tom did not seem to be a "natural" comedian. He was generally serious about his sports, his classwork, and his family life. He had a twin brother who had severe asthma, and with two working parents, Tom was sometimes his brother's primary caretaker. He told Mrs. B. that he had tried writing funny stories in the past, and they just hadn't worked. But, this time it did. His story, "Laundry Day," told of all the disasters that occurred when a whole box of detergent was spilled in a washing machine. David summed up the reason for the success of Tom's story.

David: It's about real life...All these things
            could have happened...That's what makes
            it funny, but not silly.
Mrs. B.: Tom, what things did you learn?
Tom: If you keep on trying hard, you
            can get what you want accomplished.

```
Mrs. B.:    What do you mean?
Tom:        I'd been wanting to write a funny
            story, but I couldn't... then I came
            back to it and did it.
Mrs. B.:    How did you do it?
Tom:        I just (Tom began to explain, but
            became flustered and stopped.)
David:      I think I know.  In his story he
            took a regular, normal kid and made
            different things happen to him.
Mrs. B.:    Is that what you meant, Tom?
Tom:        Yeh.
```

Tom had ideas about his writing and how he was developing as a writer, but he sometimes had difficulty expressing himself verbally and in writing. He stated that his peers gave him suggestions about what to add to his stories, while Mrs. B. helped him fix "things that were wrong with the writing and things that help you understand it better." Tom's peers helped him get his ideas down on paper and Mrs. B. helped Tom clarify those ideas. Tom needed both components, and with them he was able to take more risks in his writing.

Chris

Chris was the youngest child in the class. He had attended a private kindergarten when he was four and entered first grade at five. Although very intelligent and tall for his age, Chris's immature behavior often gave him away; for example, he was the child who would come in crying after recess when he felt the soccer teams had been "unfair." Although it was difficult to tell from his conferences and

drafts, Chris said that the impetus for his revisions came
from his friends.

> Chris: John told me to add more action.
>
> Chris: During author's circle they (the students)
> told me where I could put more action.
>
> Chris: They (peers) remind me of things that
> I forgot to put in my story.

Chris's comments led me to relook at the transcripts of
his peer and teacher conferences. Two patterns appeared.
First, another student did initiate each of the statements
that Chris said led to his revisions, but in each case, Mrs. B.
had restated or agreed with the peer's statement before Chris
actually revised the piece.   The second pattern was less clear,
but could be related to Chris's cognitive development. Chris
continued to discuss his revisions by saying:

> Chris: I understand what they <other students>
> are saying about my writing.
> Sometimes I don't know what
> Mrs. B. wants me to do.

Classrooms are made up of children at many different
emotional, cognitive, social, and physical levels. Multi-grade
classrooms, like the one in this study, only emphasize these
differences. At one end was Trina, a twelve year old
preadolescent on the edge of adolescence. At the other end was
Chris, in the middle childhood years barely able to understand

the preadolescent behavior of the boys, not to mention the girls, around him. Somewhere in the middle of this broad range of development the classroom teacher tried to create mini-lessons, plan group projects and teach skills appropriate for each child. Not everything worked, and sometimes "the ends" were missed, and Chris ended up saying, "I don't know what Mrs. B. wants me to do."

Chris worked for seven weeks on his story, "Lost in the Woods," but he wasn't satisfied with it when he was done. He stated that when he began his piece it was like a story about the day he got lost in the woods. However, his peers and teacher kept suggesting that he add more facts to his true story. "It became more like a report," said Chris. Part of Chris's problem might be his own insistence that "Lost in the Woods" was a true story.

> Mrs. B.: John, you are Chris's partner. He's read the story. What questions did you have?
>
> John: I told him to put a little more action in it.
>
> Mrs. B.: Where can he put a little more action in it?
>
> John: Right here, when they run into the woods, you say that they got lost, and then you say you come out a few houses down. You could make it more exciting there.
>
> Chris: Well, it's a true story.

Chris's insistence that his was a true story seemed to keep

him from including the action his peer thought was necessary to make his story more interesting. Calkins (1986) states that students often "overdo the importance of 'telling the true thing' by which they mean retelling the literal truth of an incident," and that they are focussed on "telling the true thing rather than on recreating an effective portrayal of the incident for <their> audience" (p. 90). Chris seemed to weigh his peers' comments and include those in his text that led to the "true thing." Yet, when he was done with his story, he wasn't satisfied, and he did not know why. Again, Chris's developmental level could be an issue. Calkins (1986) observes that behavior like Chris's was typical for third graders. Chris was the age of a fourth grader.

In January Chris made a major revision in one of his stories that required the rethinking of the plot line. This was the first time I had observed Chris as he made a major change in his text. Up to this point his revisions had been insertions, additions, or word changes. Never before had he attempted to change the focus of a piece of writing. In fact very few of the students in the classroom had. As I watched Chris subtly rework his piece to provide an unexpected twist at the end, I was reminded of Calkins' (1983) story of Susie and her growth as a writer during fourth grade. Susie moved from adding on and refining her pieces to taking a new perspective, "shuttling back and forth between writing and

reading...between looking back and looking forward" (p. 50).
Chris, too, had to continually think about his reader as he
developed the clues, provided diversions, and finally produced
a plausible denouement. Slowly, Chris was maturing as a
writer.

"The Broken Brakeline" began as the story of a gunfight
in a motorcycle shop. Most of Chris's peers focussed on the
end of his piece where the gunfight occurred. However, one
student, Sarah, asked Chris, "What happened to the boss?"
In an informal interview Chris stated that it was that
question that led him to change his story. In his first
lead for the story there was no connection between
the guy on the motorcycle and the boss.

> Lead #1 "Hmmmmm. Boss wants me to advertise
> his motorcycle shop," said Mac, a dark-haired
> teenager who worked at a motorcycle shop. Just
> then a customer drove up. "Can I help you?"
> said Mac.
>   The customer was thin and short. A
> motorcycle helmet covered his face. "My
> motorcycle's busted," he said with a western
> accent.

In his second lead, Chris began to add the clues that
would reveal the man on the motorcycle as Mac's boss.

> Lead #2 "Hmmm," said Mac, a dark-haired
> teenager, "Boss wants me to make an
> advertisement for the shop. I bet he
> likes me." Then he heard someone
> riding up to the shop.
>   The man was fairly tall and he
> had on a leather jacket and a motorcycle

> helmet that covered his face. "My
> motorcycle's busted," he said with a
> western accent.
>   "What's wrong?" replied Mac. He
> thought to himself, "Boss has a western
> accent, too."

I did not observe this change in Chris's writing
in my field notes, and I did not hear it on the audiotapes
or videotapes. Only Chris made the connection between
Sarah's question about what happened to the boss and the
possibility of allowing Mac's boss to become the villain
in the piece. Mrs. B.'s mini-lessons on writing mystery
stories had provided Chris with the skills to scatter
not-too-obvious clues throughout his story. Thus, the
combination of author's circle, peer comments, and
teacher-led mini-lessons combined to support Chris as he
made his first attempt to rethink and refocus a piece of
writing.

Trina

Not all students within a writing program can be called
success stories. Graves (1983) talks about the differences
in individual writers and how these differences can be
attributed to topic; teacher behaviors; audience; components
of the writing process; mechanical factors such as spelling,
penmanship, and punctuation; organic factors such as sleep,
diet, barometric pressure, and temperature; self concept; and

school environment. The following case study also examines
the possibility that developmental level and past learning
experiences can account for some of the differences between
writers and help explain why some students seem to flourish
in a writing process classroom while others languish.

Trina was a sixth grader new to the school. In her
previous school she had been a good student and her past
report cards reflected that. She had received good grades
for writing stories based on story starters and unfinished
sentences. In sixth grade she found herself in a room where
everyone else looked at a blank sheet of paper as their
"story starter," and developed their own topics and ideas.
Trinal faced a blank page and, unlike the other students had
no writing process to rely on to get her started (Clark, 1987).
Trina grasped onto her peers' and teacher's comments and
questions as if they contained some secrets being kept from
her. She reread and relistened to their suggestions and
spent the entire year trying to find out what to do with them.

Trina would come up to me as I observed in the classroom
and ask me to read her the questions her peers had asked her.
She exclaimed that it was a good thing she had two conference
buddies available (due to the odd number of students in the
class) because she "really needed them." For the first two
months of school, one could find Trina sitting on the rug

either sharing into the tape recorder with a conference buddy
or listening to a peer conference over and over again on the
tape recorder. Yet, she made very few revisions in her
text.

Trina's first story was "The Morning Room," a description
of a room she had visited on a tour of the Breakers Mansion in
Newport, Rhode Island. She worked on this story from September
to November. On October 1 Trina shared her latest draft with
one of her conference buddies.

Trina: The Morning Room
    The pink curtains in the morning room were
    gently swaying in the breeze as our group slowly
    toppled into the small space there was to
    stand to see this beautifully arranged
    room. I stood and stared in amazement
    and listened to the tour guide. She
    told us that one of the four doors in
    the room was false. A false door is a
    door that either has a brick wall behind
    it or just doesn't open. I figured the
    Vanderbilts, the owners, might have built
    the false door because they might have
    wanted an equal amount of doors in the
    room, or they might have wanted two doors
    on opposite walls. Then my Mom quietly
    came up behind me and said, "Time to go."
        I replied, "OK, in a minute." Then
    in a hop, skip, and a jump, I was out of
    the room and listening to the tour guide
    tell us about the front doors. They each
    weighed about eleven hundred pounds. She
    let each of us push and pull the doors to
    see how light they felt. They felt light
    because the hinges were huge.
        Then we went out to the backyard and
    saw the ocean. It was beautiful. Then we
    went to see another mansion called the Marble
    House. The End.

Trina: Do you have any questions?

Sarah: What did the ocean look like?

Trina: The ocean was beautiful.

Sarah: What did it look like? Did it have blue water? green water? Was the white water rushing against the rocks?

Trina: It was ocean. I don't know. Well, you couldn't see it against the rocks.

Sarah: Maybe you could say that, you could see the tip of the ocean over the rocks, you could see beyond the ocean over the tall pine trees or something like that. And also, at first you said you had to all cram into the room, and then you were out in a hop, skip, and a jump.

Trina: Well, but that's because. Hmm. I should have written that in, but everybody left, and I was sitting and staring in amazement, and I didn't notice that everyone else had left.

Sarah: Oh, OK. Did you really hop, skip, and jump?

Trina: That's what Mrs. B. was saying. I could say something different.

Sarah: Well, it's a good story. (Pause in the tape.)

Sarah: You could describe what else was in the room...

(Trina showed Sarah a postcard of the room.)

Sarah: You could describe the pink chairs or the gold ones.

Trina: I said pink curtains.

Sarah: The fireplace with plants overflowing in it.

Trina: Overflowing?

Sarah: So you could explain more about the room. They <readers> don't want to know...about the doors, they want to know what the room looks like.

After this conference Trina changed the second sentence in the second paragraph of her text to read:

> I looked around once more, and then followed my
> mother out and started listening to the tour guide
> tell us about the front doors.

She made her next revision at the end of her piece. In the

third and final paragraph, she changed the first sentence.

> Then we went out to the backyard and saw the blue-
> gray ocean hitting against the rocks.

After these revisions, Trina shared her piece at

author's circle.

Sarah:	When you read it, I thought it was a room of doors, but it's beautiful. You should describe it.
Trina:	But where should I put it.
Mrs. B.:	That's the question: Where should it be added?
Ian:	You could write another story and start over.
Sarah:	You could put an arrow and add the descriptions over here.
.	
.	
David:	What was the starting of the story? (Trina reread the first few sentences.) Right after that you could tell about the table, the mirror in the room the silk chair, the flowers all around the room.
Ian:	You could start with the fireplace and tell about all the flowers in it and the table with the big pot of flowers.

Trina took all these suggestions and made one final revision

in her text. She changed the second sentence in the first

paragraph to read:

> I stood and stared in amazement at this beautifully
> arranged room that had: a lovely table with a lot of
> pretty flowers on top. It looked marvelous.

Trina continued throughout the year to have difficulty
knowing when and how to revise her pieces. Even after her
peers and teacher gave her very specific suggestions for
revisions, she would only change so much of her story and
then no more. She did seem, however, to change more of her
texts after peer comments rather than teacher comments.

Trina seemed unsure of herself in the writing classroom.
She appeared to lack trust in her peers and teacher. She was
new to the school and had not known either her classmates
or her teacher before coming to school in September. Trina
seemed befuddled as a writer. Perhaps the most socially
mature of all the students under study and certainly one
of the oldest, Trina tottered on the brink of adolescence,
seemingly past the pre-adolescent level of the majority of
the group. The themes she chose for her works of fiction,
a story of a girl whose boyfriend dies and a story about a
new girl in school written in the form of a diary, indicated
a growing preoccupation with male-female sex roles and
dating issues. Yet, she never finished them. Perhaps because
they represented issues Trina knew would be a part of her life
in the future, she was drawn to write about them. But, because
she had experienced these issues only vicariously, she could

neither infuse them with reality nor bring closure, a
conclusion that she did not know, to the pieces. However,
these pieces reflected the romantic, adolescent novels that
she was reading, and, as attempts to mimic the authors' style
and dialogue, they worked.

Mimicry is one of the three forces (Wilde, 1985) feels
generates fiction. The second force is the sanctioning of
fiction by the adult world. It is a "legitimate form"
because it exists in trade books, and they in turn are "read
by the teacher" (p.122). The third force is the "comfort or
safety that fiction can provide the writer." Children
sometimes can not comfortably write about themselves.
"They need the distance of 'pretend' to explore issues that
<affect> their lives" (p.122). Trina might have had her
safety level needs (Hill & Boone, 1982) met in a classroom
where everyone was using the writing process for the first
time and where she already knew the other students in the
class. But, that was not the case. Everyone else in the
study had learned to write using a process-conference approach,
and seven of the other ten students in the study had been
taught in previous years by Mrs. B. Also, "writing frequency
must precede writing security" (Hill & Boone, 1982, p. 25),
and Trina had not written frequently enough to feel secure in
her ability or in the classroom.

As Atwell (1987) says about adolescents, they "shuttle back and forth between naivete and worldliness" (p.28) and they "value their school friendships and social relationships far more than their school subjects" (p. 36). In her behavior Trina exemplifies these adolescent traits. At a time when she seems to be exploring "Who am I?" she is thrust into a classroom where she is expected to take ownership of her writing, to select topics and decide on the content and design of her pieces, to choose from student and teacher comments and questions those that will be most helpful in revising her writing, and to trust herself to make those choices, decisions, and selections!

In June, as the students were working on their biographies of a family member who's had to overcome an obstacle or handicap, a familiar trend re-emerged in Trina's conferences. The students had been given a worksheet listing some sample questions to ask the subject of their biography. Mrs. B. had also asked the students to read their information to each other and to help each other try to think of additional questions to ask their subjects. Trina's over-reliance on these sample questions showed in her responses during a peer conference with David on his biography of his mother. Once again Trina seemed to be grasping at something to hold on to.

        Trina: Where are your questions?
        David: My questions? What are your questions?
        Trina: There (pointing to the sample questions
                  on the Biography worksheet). The ones
                  we just got.
        David: Are you using these?
        Trina: Yeh. (Trina reads down the list of
                  questions.) Oh, I've already asked that.
        David: What?
        Trina: What her goal was? (Trina continues to
                  ask each question on the sheet.)

However, Trina was free enough from the constraints of the

list to ask a follow-up question if David's response suggested

one.

        Trina: What stood in the way of her goal?
        David: What stood in the way? It wasn't winter
                  all year. She needed to train.
        Trina: So did she go to special places where
                  they make snow?
        David: No, she ran and roller skiied. Do you
                  know what roller skis are?
        Trina: No.
        David: It's like a ski with wheels on it,
                  and you can go skiing on roads.
        Trina: Oh, yeah, I've seen those.

    The reliance on this list of questions resurfaced

when Trina read her piece to David and responded to his

questions. After a lengthy description of the charac-

teristics of the subject of Trina's biography, David began

to sum them up:

        David: What else does it say like determined
                  and all?
        Trina: Where?
        David: On that paper....Determined, strong-willed
                  nice.

                    OK, is that enough?
        Trina: What are her attributes?
        David: We just went over those?
        Trina: Oh, that's right. That's all.

A year in a process-conference writing program appeared
to help Trina to respond to her peer's writing and to answer
their questions about her own writing. There was little
evidence to suggest that she was able to use effectively
either her peers' or her teacher's suggestions to improve
her writing. After six years in the "welfare cycle"
(Graves, 1982) of teacher-centered writing projects,
Trina would need more than one year to develop the ability
to write for herself.

Summary of the Revisions Found in Students' Texts

Students in this classroom made different types of
revisions within their written pieces. First, all of the
students made revisions at the word level; words would be
inserted or deleted from their texts. Often these revisions
would follow a peer's or teacher's question. A question such
as "What color was the ocean?" would cause the writer to insert
"blue" before the word "ocean" in his or her text. All of the
students made revisions at the phrase level. These revisions,
too, often occurred in response to a peer's or teacher's
question. The questions "How did you feel as you were

climbing?" led the author to add "I got tired, but that's okay because the air was fresh and cool." These revisions are what Calkins (1983) calls "refinements" in a piece.

The second category of observed revisions refers to the rewriting of a section of a text. Eight of the students in the study rewrote either the beginning or the ending of one of their written pieces. I could associate a few of these with a peer's or teacher's question or suggestion, but most of them were not attributable to any one component of the writing process. Several students started their stories with dialogue after a mini-lesson on catching the reader's interest, but when I interviewed them only one of the students said that the mini-lesson had influenced her decision to begin her story that way, but all of them said they changed their leads to make them more interesting to their friends.

I categorized only two revisions in my final revision category, reformulating the entire piece. Only two pieces of the thirty-six collected from the ten students in the study showed a significant realignment of the elements of the piece once it was written down. One student changed the genre of her piece from a report format to a first-person, vacation story. Another student changed the villain and the motive in his gunfight story. Both of these revisions were inspired by a peer or teacher's comment, but the author worked out the specific revision alone.

The process of revision is idiosyncratic. Students may use a peer's comment to change a word or completely revamp the text. Some students relied more on their peer's comments to suggest revisions, while others looked to the teacher for help with their revisions. One student seemed to make refinements in her pieces following peer and teacher conferences, but rewrote sections of her text following mini-lessons and author's circles. One finding is clear: different students respond best to different components of the writing program. If revision is important to a classroom writing teacher, then each of these components of a writing program needs to be included.

Student Feelings About the Usefulness of Peer and Teacher Conferences

Each of the ten students in this study had very clear ideas on how both peer and teacher conference were important to the development of their written pieces. However, as in every other aspect studied, each child interpreted this importance a little differently, based on his or her individual need. Generalizations are presented in this section and any dissenting opinions are noted.

Through peer conferences students learn what information they need to add to their writing to make it understandable to their peers.

> Writing permits the differentiation
> of the speaker/writer from the text.
> Not only does that encourage the
> awareness of the difference between
> 'what was said' and 'what was meant'
> but more importantly, that separation
> permits the editing and revision of
> a text in the attempt to make 'what
> was said' and appropriate representation
> of 'what was meant.' (Olson, 1981, p.107)

Kathleen stated that her peers "tell me where I haven't said what I wanted to say" because sometimes "it makes sense to me but not to them." "It happened to me, so I know what it was all about," Chris told me when I asked him about the usefulness of peer conferences. "My friends though don't know what I did, so I have to add more."

In peer conferences students learned that they need to describe the setting and events of the story in detail so the reader can get a "picture in the mind" of what occurred. David added descriptions with lots of details to his story because it helped the reader feel that "they are a part of the story." Chris also felt that it helped "to put description in your story, so you don't get all kinds of questions and have to add more to your second draft."

Peer conferences provided an audience for children simply to share their pieces. Ann felt strongly that conferences were places where one went to get help, but also places one went to celebrate. "Sometimes I just want

to share a piece that I've finished. I want my friends to hear it."

The students contrasted peer conferences and teacher conferences in the following ways:

Tom: My friends help me with the ideas for my story; Mrs. B. helps me with my writing. She is a writer and she helps me clarify what I want to say.

Nick: My peers work with me on the little things like words and sentences in my story; Mrs. B. helps me with the harder things like spelling and paragraphing.

Sarah: My friends help me with the details of my story; Mrs. B. helps me see the other things I could do in my writing.

Jason: My peers give me suggestions from a peers' point of view so my stories will be more interesting to my friends; Mrs. B. helps me make my stories better by showing more details and descriptions I can add to them.

Chris: My friends help me to decide what topics to write about; Mrs. B. helps me to work out the parts of my stories that don't make sense.

Ann: My friends help me add more details to my stories; Mrs. B. helps me to add new parts to my stories to make them more interesting.

Ian: My friends can help me with the ideas for my stories, so it just won't be my single-minded ideas for the story. It will be somebody else's and somebody else's and it will make a better story. Mrs. B. helps me with writing by helping

me with the ideas for my stories to make
them more dimensional.

As I reviewed the students comments, I was impressed with
how closely they parallelled the results I had obtained when
I coded the peer and teacher conferences. The students mainly
talked about how their peers helped them with the details and
ideas of the content of their pieces, while their teacher
helped them with the process, editing and design components
of their pieces. Peers seemed to help each other find ideas
or topics for stories and to work out the details of the
stories. Tom, Sarah, and Ann saw their teacher as helping
them from a writer's perspective, from one writer to another.
They seemed to understand that a writer is the best teacher
of writing and they valued that in their teacher. Each child
took from the writing process program what he or she needed.
In Nick's case where mechanics was a major concern, he saw
his peers helping him with "the little things like words and
sentences," while his teacher helped him with "the harder
things like spelling and paragraphing."

It was interesting that none of the students mentioned
evaluation of a piece of writing by either a peer or the
teacher. This may be attributable to the fact that in this
school grades are directly related to grade level skills
and objectives. Students receive a grade of G if they are
working on grade level objectives, a grade of GB if they

are working on below grade level objectives, and a grade of
E if they are consistently working on above grade level
objectives.

In summary it appears that the students in this class
were able to state their feelings about peer and teacher
conferences and to judge the effectiveness of and the
differences between teacher and peer conferences.

Components of a Writing Program That Support Peer Conferences

I have a very firm belief that the most important
component in a successful writing program is a teacher
who has a strong background in research on writing
development and the teaching of writing, and who is
also a writer. I selected Mrs. B.'s classroom as the
setting for my study because she is such a teacher.
During my background observations in her classroom and
in the half a year I spent collecting data there, I
noted many ways that she implemented her beliefs and
knowledge about writing and writing development in the
writing curriculum. (The writing program in Mrs. B.'s
classroom was detailed in Chapter 3.) It is important
to Mrs. B. that her students have the skills to take
control of their own writing process and that they are
able to act as effective responders to other students'

writing. She has set up the following components in the class writing program to help students learn how to interact appropriately with each other.

Modeling. It is evident from the examples used in the student/teacher conference section that Mrs. B. modeled appropriate questions and comments in each of the conference categories. Graves (1983), Calkins (1986) and Finn (1985) have each found that upper elementary students can learn to internalize teacher responses and use them in peer conferences.

Reinforcing Peer Conferences. Mrs. B. began many of her conferences with her students by asking them what questions their peers had asked about the piece. This simple technique highlighted the importance of reading the piece to a peer. She next would ask if the writer had made any changes in the piece after these comments, and if not why. She attempted to balance the students' need to retain ownership of their pieces, and the students' need to view the piece with a critical eye.

```
Mrs. B.:  What were some of the things that Ian
          told you?
David:    He said to say that it was rocky.  He
          asked me if it were rocky climbing up
          the mountains, and I said, Yeh.  He said
          that I should write that in.  That was
          his suggestion.
Mrs. B.:  That was the only one.
David:    Yeh.
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Mrs. B.:    You don't remember any other suggestions?
David:      He said another one.  He said to say when
            I looked down into the valley that there
            were trees, but I didn't do that because
            I didn't want to.  I didn't want to use
            that one.
Mrs. B.:    Why?
David:      Because I didn't think it was necessary.
Mrs. B.:    Why do you think Ian was asking you if it
            were rocky or if there were trees in the
            valley?
David:      So that he could get a picture in his mind
            of what it looks like?
Mrs. B.:    Ah, do you think that's important?
David:      Yes.
```

Mini-Lessons on Peer Conferences. Mrs. B. also did not

leave to chance the student's ability to comment on a

peer's writing. In her third mini-lesson of the year,

she asked two students who were able to confer well to

re-enact a conference they had completed. After their

demonstration, Mrs. B. commended them for their skills

and summed up the utility of their conference.

```
Mrs. B.:    Ian asked questions that asked David
            to think about and describe what he
            is writing about so that he could
            get a picture in his mind of what
            David was saying.
```

Mediated Peer Conferences. Another strategy Mrs. B.

used was to ask a peer to sit in on her conference with

another student.

```
Mrs. B.:    OK, Chris, why did you want a
            conference with me?
Chris:      Well, I am starting my second draft.
Mrs. B.:    Oh, who is your conference buddy?
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Chris:      John.
Mrs. B.:    Did John give you any suggestions?
Chris:      Not really.  He asked me one question.
Mrs. B.:    Let me get John.
    (Mrs. B. asked John to join the conference.)
Mrs. B.:    John, you are Chris's partner.  He's
            read the story to you.  What questions
            did you have?
John:       I told him to put a little more action
            in it.
Mrs. B.:    Where can he put a little more aciton
            in it?
Chris:      Well, it's a true story.
Mrs. B.:    Where can he put a little more action in it?
John:       Right here, when they run into the woods,
            You say that they got lost, and then you
            say you come out a few houses down.  You
            could make it more exciting there.
Mrs. B.:    Now, wait a minute...This is a true story
            that Chris is doing.  What you think would
            have made a good story may not have been
            how it happened or how he wants to write
            it.  What I'd like to do not is help you
            with types of questions to help Chris.
John:       OK.
    (Chris read his story, "Lost in the Woods.")
    .
    .
Mrs. B.:    So there are two things going on at the
            same time.  You are lost, and you are kind
            of nervous about that.  And you are also
            worried that the other boys are going to
            find you, and you are going to be tagged.
Chris:      Yeh.
Mrs. B.:    Did you have a question, John.
John:       Why didn't you just turn around and go
            back?
Chris:      'Cause the other boys were there.
John :      Right.  You stopped and you listened.
Chris:      Yeh, every few feet.
John:       Did you hear anything?
Chris:      One time we thought we heard them, but
            then we started running.
Mrs. B.:    So once you heard the boys.  What else
            did you hear?
Chris:      We heard the birds, the wind.
    .
    .
Mrs. B.:    Can you go back and work on that section?
```

Chris: Yeh.
Mrs. B.:   Thanks, you two.

Studying Other Writers. Mrs. B. also asked the children
to look at the way other writers handle certain subjects.
She reinforced the idea that the students were authors by using
their work to illustrate techniques of good writing. In the
following mini-lesson, the class was discussing what makes a
good lead:

    Mrs. B.:   Anybody else?
    David: I can say something. I didn't read mine,
             but, well, I started it off differently.
             Then, people gave me suggestions, and
             I changed it around a little.
    Mrs. B.:   So you took their suggestions and worked
             it around?
    David: Yeh.
    Mrs. B.:   And how does yours start, David?
    .
    .
    David: My family and I had just reached the top
             of the mountain. We were sitting on a rock
             eating soup that we had cooked.
    Mrs. B.:   It wasn't that you started at the bottom
             and told about your climb up the mountain.
             Your story begins after you've reached the
             top.

Mrs. B. also used the works of professional writers to
illustrate alternative ways of handling a topic. In the
example included under the Designs Interactions category,
Mrs. B. asked Sarah if she knew of any authors who describe
animals with personality. Then, she provided Sarah with
several short stories to read to see how other authors

establish a personality for an animal.

Room Arrangement. An often overlooked strategy that Mrs. B. used to help her students learn how to interact in peer conferences was to organize the room to promote individual and small group interaction. The room was rearranged by the students and Mrs. B. several times throughout the year, but there was always a large rug area, small tables, and clustered desks to facilitate interaction. There was a "fit between the objectives and means of learning" (Mayer & Brause, 1986, p. 619).

In summary, the listening and responding skills during peer conferences exhibited by the students in this study, did not develop alone. The classroom teacher carefully planned her own actions and the components of the writing program to support peer conferences and the development of the skills of the students as peer responders. She empowered the students to "take control of their own literacy" (Ryan, 1986, p. 288) by sharing control of the writing program with the students. She shared but did not abdicate her authority as the teacher within the classroom.

Summary of Findings

A number of points can be made in each of the major divisions of this chapter.

First, student interactions during peer conferences
confirmed the findings of Graves (1983), Finn (1985), and
Calkins (1986) that students can serve as responders for each
others' writing.

Peers served as an audience for other students' written
pieces. Merely reading a piece to a peer caused students to
reread their pieces and find careless errors such as missing
words or redundant information.

> Feedback is particularly important for
> inexperienced writers who tend to assume that
> because the idea they were trying to express
> was clear to them, the text they've produced
> must necessarily be clear to a reader. This
> rather natural egocentricity frequently results
> in our reading our texts in such a way that
> we're actually 'reading' our thought processes
> rather than the words. We may fill in omitted
> words, expand undeveloped thoughts, and mentally
> punctuate unpunctuated passages without noticing
> that we are doing so. Successful editing means
> learning to read the text that is actually there
> as though we've never seen it before. (Mayer,
> Lester, & Pradl, 1983, p. 6)

David exhibited the benefits of reading one's text to an
audience when he crossed out obviously redundant words in
his piece while he was sharing his "Mountain Goats" story with
Ian.

Peers also served as an appreciative audience when students
had completed a piece of writing and were sharing the final copy.
Even if the peers did not make any suggestions or ask any
questions, they affirmed the writer's work and achievement in

creating the piece. The writing did not come forth in a vacuum; there was a live audience to receive it.

Peers prodded writers to add details to their stories and to clarify elements of their writing that did not make sense. Peers' responses helped the writer realize that there was a mismatch between the story in the writer's head and the one on the paper. Kathleen expressed it well when she said that "my friends tell me where I haven't said what I wanted to say" because sometimes "it makes sense to me but not to them." Throughout the data it was apparent that all of the students could ask probing questions to explore the descriptions and activities occurring within the writing. They could help the writer to see what information the writer knew that the reader needed to know to understand the piece. Quite capably, peers could discuss the content of a piece of writing with the author and comment on those areas where more information was needed.

Peers assisted writers in the selection of topics for their pieces. Ian indicated his awareness of the importance of his peers in the development of his topics: "My friends can help me with the ideas for my stories, so it just won't be my single-minded ideas for the story. It will be somebody else's and somebody else's, and it will be a better story." Peers often reminded each other of recent occurrences in their lives such as birthdays, new pets, family trips, sibling

problems, all common occurrences in most children's lives, and helped each other select the most interesting details to include.

Peers helped writers choose titles for their stories. Primarily during author's circles, peers proposed titles for written pieces, and the author selected from them. One of the students, Chris, relied almost exclusively on his peers to suggest titles for his stories.

Peers built on or extended each other's comments, particularly during author's circles, on a piece of writing. This extended questioning allowed the writer to focus on a specific section of the text and "close in on needed information" (Graves, 1983, p. 82). One suggestion often brought out alternative suggestions and comments from other peers.

Peers provided an analysis of a piece of writing from a "kid's" point of view. The students in this class wanted and needed their peers to like their stories, to find them interesting, exciting, or funny. Often what interests eleven and twelve year olds may not be of interest to their teacher. Thus, peers provide a different perspective for responding to and evaluating a piece of writing. Their evaluation was based on their interests, knowledge, and previous writing experience. Teachers may not be ideal audiences for student writing "because they are often too good. That is, they read well, work hard at trying to make sense of the most incoherent prose, and

tend to be too kind to students in their responses" (Mayer, Lester, & Pradl, 1983, p. 3). "A student responds and comments to a peer more in his own terms whereas the teacher is more likely to focus too soon on technique" (Moffett, 1968, p. 194).

Peers functioned as the "internal audience" for a piece of writing. As Sarah stated, "I add detail and description to my stories because I know that those are the questions my friends will ask." "What is done first in revision becomes part of rehearsal" (Calkins, 1986, p. 137) as students learn to internalize their audiences' questions. This internalization of audience helped the writer read a piece from the perspective of both writer and reader.

Peers acted as proofreaders for simple spelling and grammatical errors in a text. Although occurring infrequently in the transcripts, peers sometimes did help the writer correct spelling mistakes, insert correct punctuation, and use appropriate capitalization.

Peers helped each other remember the steps of the writing process. The most common examples in the transcripts were "What are you going to do next?" and "What are you doing now?" Peers also reminded each other to edit final copies, schedule conferences with the teacher, and to save all drafts.

In summary peers served as a valuable addition to this writing program, but conferring skills do not develop in a

vacuum. The teacher's influence on the structure of the class can allow peer responses to occur and flourish, or it can stifle them. Given optimal conditions, students can learn to respond appropriately to the content of another student's piece of writing. In the peer conferences analyzed, students mainly addressed the content of a piece, seeking to clarify information or suggesting information that needed to be added in a small section of the text. The students in this classroom were able to take on many of the responsibilities of the writing teacher, but they were not able to help their peers rewrite sections of their stories or help them select alternative genres for their texts.

Second, interactions during the coded student-teacher writing conferences focussed primarily on the content of the piece, but the teacher stressed process more than peers. Only the teacher suggested the reformulation of the entire text or the evaluation of the entire text. The teacher also provided instruction to extend student's knowledge into new territory.

> With assistance, every child can do more than he can by himself... What the child can do in cooperation today he can do alone tomorrow. Therefore the only good kind of instruction is that which marches ahead of development and leads it; it must be aimed not so much at the ripe as at the ripening functions. It remains necessary to determine the lowest threshold at which instruction...may begin since a certain minimal ripeness of functions is required. But we must consider the upper threshold as well;

> instruction must be oriented toward the future,
> not the past. (Vygotsky, 1934/1962, p. 103; 104).

Through her use of individual conferences, Mrs. B. attempted
to meet each child's needs at his or her own level of development.
Whole class mini-lessons, peer conferences, author's circles, as
well as trade books read during reading times, allowed students
exposure to modes of writing beyond their present level of skills
and assured that "ripening functions" could be nurtured if by
chance they were missed during the individual conferences. The
teacher also served as the final editor for a piece of writing
helping the students to paragraph the piece or restate a section
of text.

The teacher periodically asked students to evaluate their
progress in writing and to compare different pieces that they had
written. By calling student's attention to the changes they had
made over time, Mrs. B. helped her students to understand how
their writing had developed and to set goals for future writing.
Asking students to evaluate their own pieces required them to be
critical readers of their own writing. It also helped students
to begin to develop an understanding of what makes good writing.

Third, students' revisions of their written pieces after
peer and teacher conferences were very individual, each student
selecting the information from the conferences that seemed to
fit his or her understanding of writing and the piece under
construction. Revision seemed to be predicated on a host of

factors including interest, intent, age, topic, genre, and past
learning history.

All of the ten students made revisions in their texts at the
word or phrase level, eight of the ten students rewrote leads
or endings. Two of the students made major revisions in their
entire text that required the complete reworking of the piece.
Students' revisions seemed to be inspired more by the students'
interpretation of their friends' remarks than by the remarks
themselves. Often, I could not analyze a student's writing
process without probing for more information from the student.
The students in this study were able to express why they made
specific revisions.

Fourth, student feelings on the usefulness of their
friends' and teacher's comments indicate that both play an
important role in their writing development. Students felt
that their peers helped them put more details in their stories,
while their teacher helped them work on the "harder stuff"
like paragraphing or rewriting a confusing section of text.
They felt their peers could point out where more information was
needed in their texts, while their teacher could help them insert
that information. The students saw their peers and their
teacher both performing necessary, but distinct roles in the
writing program.

Fifth, students don't develop the skills to be peer
responders in a vacuum. The writing program must support peer

sharing, and the writing teacher needs to train them to be effective listeners and responders. Some methods that the classroom teacher in this study used were modeling, reinforcing peers' comments, mediated peer conferences, mini-lessons, studying other writers, and room arrangement. She also shared her authority within the classroom to help her students take control of their own learning, a necessary step if students are to become lifetime learners.

C H A P T E R   V

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

I began this study to investigate how students revise
their written pieces in response to their peers' comments and
suggestions. By following the students' development of their
written pieces in the classroom, I observed that the students'
revisions were influenced by classroom mini-lessons, teacher
conferences, and author's circles as well as peer conferences.
The analysis of the data from field notes, audiotapes,
videotapes, student writing folders, teacher's notes,
examination of written pieces, and informal interviews led me
to specific conclusions in the areas of students as peer
responders and students' revision process. These findings have
implications for classroom writing instruction and writing
research.

Students As Peer Responders

The first important conclusion from the findings of this
study is that students can serve as peer responders for each
other's writing and assume many of the roles traditionally
filled by the classroom writing teacher. The peer responders
in this classroom provided an audience for other students'

written pieces. They prodded authors to add details and to clarify elements of the content of their written pieces that did not make sense. They assisted writers in the selection of topics and titles for their pieces. Peer responders also acted as proofreaders for simple spelling, capitalization, and punctuation errors in an author's text and helped each other remember the steps of the writing process.

The second conclusion from my study is that the students in this classroom did not discuss the design or form of a written piece in peer conferences. In the transcipts of field notes and audiotapes analyzed for this study, peer responders did not present alternative genres for an author to explore, help the author reformulate an entire text, or act as editor for a piece, i.e., paragraphing the piece, helping the author rewrite a section of the piece, or rearranging a sequence of events. Both what the students in this study could and could not do as peer responders have implications for classroom teachers and researchers.

Implications for Writing Teachers and Researchers

The fact that peers can serve as peer responders and assume some of the roles of the classroom writing teacher has direct implications for the writing teacher and the writing program. In this study, peers could question missing information in the content of a piece and could "spot writing

problems very well," but often they did not "have enough
understanding of the cause of a problem to know how to solve
it" (Moffett, 1968, p. 196). If peer responders can help
authors to clarify the content of their pieces, then a time for
peer conferences should be included in the writing program.
The teacher at the upper elementary level could delegate much
of the discussion of the content of a piece to the peer
conference.

One of the writing teacher's roles in this classroom was
reinforcing peers' suggestions and questions about a piece of
writing and helping the author incorporate missing information
suggested by peers' comments into the text. The teacher in
this study consistently began her conferences with a student by
asking what questions peers had asked. Often Mrs. B. had to
reinforce peers' comments because some of the students in this
study used peers' suggestions to revise their pieces only after
Mrs. B. had reinforced or restated them. One child rarely
revised after a peer conference; his revisions generally
followed teacher conferences. There was also a qualitative
difference in the discussion of the content of a piece in peer
and teacher conferences. Mrs. B. more often focussed a series
of questions on an area of text and asked for more explanation
of an event, but the incidents discussed in the peer and
teacher conferences were often the same. Through mediated
conferences she helped peer responders to understand when to

present suggestions, then back off, to leave the decision to revise or not up to the student. In this study my emphasis was on peer conferences. A more in-depth study might be undertaken of the relationship between peer and teacher conferences and the effects of both on the development of a piece of writing and young writers. A separate study might be undertaken on the use of mediated conferences to develop students' skills as peer responders.

Two other important roles for the classroom writing teacher arise from the second conclusion from this study: students did not discuss the design of a piece or suggest the reformulation of a piece in peer conferences. The first important role for the classroom writing teacher is that of final proofreader for students' written pieces. In this particular classroom, Mrs. B. assumed this role. By closely observing a student's independent use of proofreading skills, she knew what mistakes the student could be expected to correct and what skills she needed to teach either individually, in small groups, or to the whole class depending on the needs of the individual and the group.

The second role of the classroom teacher, a role that students did not assume, is one often performed by a good editor, helping the author reformulate his or her text. Mrs. B. was the only one in this study who assumed this role. She helped students review their texts, try out a different genre

for the text, rearrange the components of a piece, or look at the works of other authors, both classroom writers and trade book authors, to experience modes of writing beyond the students' present skill levels.

If classroom teachers are to take on the multiple roles of an editor, then many teachers will need additional training. The classroom writing teacher in this study needed increased and varied skills to respond to and lead her student writers. Mrs. B. had taken college courses and workshops on both creative writing and teaching writing. A writer herself, Mrs. B. understood the nuances of developing a piece of writing in a particular genre, knew what it was like to search for the exact word in a line of poetry, and had struggled to make the reader feel what it was like to climb a mountain. She knew writing was a difficult, complex task and that it required time, work, and patience. She seemed to empathize with her students as they labored over a description or a lead to a piece. Three students, Tom, Sarah, and Ann, in particular seemed to identify with Mrs. B. as a writer who shared with them what she knew about writing. Tom said it most forcefully, "Mrs. B. helps me with my writing. She is a writer, and she helps me clarify what I want to say."

A good writer such as Sarah raised more issues for the classroom writing teacher.

> It is easier to confer with weak students
> than with strong ones... A conference with a
> weak student may inspire him to collect more
> information or simply to continue writing.
> It requires a more sophisticated understanding
> of the writing process to diagnose a good story
> and make it better. Teachers must work hard
> to move these students to higher levels of
> excellence. (Clark, 1987, p. 55)

Through her knowledge as a teacher of reading, Mrs. B.

introduced Sarah to the works of published authors to help her

reach for these higher levels of excellence. She also

suggested that Sarah might want to conduct background research

on the topic of her story, a strategy that professional writers

use when they are writing on an unfamiliar topic. Mrs. B.

referred to books written for adult writers (Murray, 1968;

Zinsser, 1985) for ideas for her better writers. Through

surveys and informal interviews, a researcher might conduct a

study on the professional training received in writing of upper

elementary teachers. This information could be compared to the

amount and type of writing observed in their classrooms. Also,

there is an assumption among some writing process advocates

(Graves, 1983; Calkins, 1986; Atwell, 1987) that the teachers

of writing should, themselves, write. Although the teacher in

this study was a published writer and there was some reference

to this fact by the students, I made no attempt to measure what

influence her being a writer had on the class. Other

researchers could attempt to evaluate this assumption by

describing and comparing the writing programs of teachers who perceive themselves as writers with those of teachers who do not. Another method of beginning to analyze this assumption would be to develop a course on personal writing for teachers and observe the teachers' writing programs before and after such a course.

A further implication from this study concerns the classroom writing teachers' observational skills. The teacher in this study spent a great deal of time observing her students, reading their writing folders, and conferring with them. She could consider peer responders an integral component of her writing program because she had observed that the students were able to respond appropriately to each other in peer conferences and had validated her observations by discussing peers' remarks in student-teacher conferences. By sitting in on some peer conferences, audiotaping or videotaping other peer conferences, and continually asking students "What did your peers say about this piece?" she knew how peer conferences were working in her classroom. She was also acting as a teacher-researcher (Atwell, 1982). She observed her students, interacted with them, and based her individualized writing program on what she learned from them. Her classroom was a little different this year from last year, not just because she had changed grade levels, but because the students' needs were a little different this year than last

based on her observations of those needs. An exploratory study to investigate the observational skills a teacher uses to set up an individualized writing process classroom would lead to a better understanding of the training classroom teacher-researchers need to develop those skills.

This dissertation was developed in the spirit of a teacher and researcher working together to conduct classroom research. Mrs. B. and I had long worked together and frequently spent hours discussing our classrooms. We had established a good rapport, essential for the openness needed to work in someone else's classroom. She provided the flexibility I needed to conduct my research, and I helped her reflect on her classroom writing instruction by sharing my notes and transcripts with her. As a teacher and researcher working together, we developed insights into the students' writing development that neither of us could have recognized alone. A classroom teacher often gets caught up in the minutiae of day-to-day classroom life. The researcher helps the teacher to stop and reflect on the important occurrences in the classroom, while the classroom teacher reminds the researcher of the other events in the children's life and classroom day. With administrative support, other teachers could pair up as "peer researchers" to help each other collect data about some aspect of their writing programs. Other teacher and researcher teams such as Donald Graves and Mary Ellen Giacobbe, Jane Hansen and Ellen

Blackburn, and Lucy Calkins and "Mrs. Howard," have provided excellent models to follow.

By design this study was primarily descriptive; I reported what I observed within one particular classroom. The students in this study were selected for their unique characteristics. Most of the students in this classroom had several years of experience in writing process classrooms, and throughout that time they had been encouraged to share with peers in peer conferences and during author's circles. It would be interesting to know if other groups of students in other situations would have the same level of skills at responding to each other's writing. It would also be interesting to know if the students in this study could handle even more responsibility in the areas of editing others' writing and suggesting alternative genres. There may be an upper limit, developmentally or instructionally, on students' ability to respond to their peers' writing, but I did not find one in the data from this study. Another descriptive study conducted in a similar classroom may find that students can assume other roles and responsibilities as peer responders. Particularly at the upper elementary, middle school level there is a dearth of studies on peer conferences and the role they play in a classroom writing program. Another researcher working in a classroom with the classroom teacher might design a program to train students to extend their proofreading skills into those

of an editor. The same format used by the teacher in this study of mini-lessons, modeling, and mediated conferences could be used to implement such a program.

This study suggests another area for research. Students can serve as peer responders, but this study did not investigate how these skills develop. Because she felt peer responders were an important element in a classroom writing program, the classroom teacher in this study used a variety of on-going activities to increase and reinforce the responding skills of the students in her class. These included mini-lessons, room arrangement, mediated peer conferences, author's circles and modeling. I did not measure the effects of these on-going activities on the maintenace of students' responding skills. An observational study of the way teachers organize their classroom writing programs to support peer writing conferences and the effects that this support has on peers' conferring skills could be useful.

Students' Revision Process

The second important conclusion from these findings is that students' revision process is as idiosyncratic as the process of writing itself. Length of peer and teacher conferences; types of conference questions, suggestions or comments; topics of mini-lessons; responses during author's

circles; exposure to the writings of other authors; choice of peer conference buddy, all were variables that influenced students' revisions. These variables had implications for the kinds of revisions certain students made but not for others, and, in many cases, the effects of any one of these variables were not consistent from text to text of the same writer. Jason helped me to clarify what leads to this idiosyncracy. In his comments on his revision process, he stated that his friends gave him "good ideas, and they asked me to take more time to describe it. I was thinking of <doing> it." Not clearly understanding what Jason had said, I probed further.

```
Researcher:  So you were thinking
             about it?
Jason:       Yeh.
Researcher:  But,
        (Jason interrupts.)
Jason:       They're <peers> the ones
             that confirmed it, that I
             should do it because it was
             a good idea.
```

In this writing classroom where students were encouraged to retain ownership of their written pieces, they were the final arbiter of any revisions in their pieces. They selected from the changes suggested by others those that most closely fit with the idea of the story they had in their head. Jason used other students' suggestions to confirm his own ideas of the revisions his writing needed. What emerged from my data

was a picture of each writer acting on those suggestions that best represented the author's internal image of his or her piece of writing.

When I reviewed the transcripts, it appeared that each student expressed some rudimentary idea of what his or her story should be and measured others' suggestions for revisions against it. These "measuring sticks" changed from story to story. Chris stated that his story, "Lost in the Woods," was true, and for Chris it seemed that there could be no deviation from what really happened in a true story. Thus, the revisions he made following others' comments were ones that triggered his memory of some detail that happened to him on the day he was actually lost in the woods. In "The Broken Brakeline" Chris wanted to make a suspenseful, exciting story. Sarah's question, "What happened to the boss?" coupled with the whole class mini-lesson on mystery stories provided Chris with the impetus to make his story more suspenseful and more exciting. Chris's statement that Sarah's question had stimulated his revisions led me to my next observation.

It was the author's interpretation of others' comments that led to revisions rather than the comments themselves. "We do not understand words by deriving meaning from them, but by bringing meaning to them" (Smith, 1982). The students "interpreted" others' comments based on their experience and prior knowledge. Thus, experience and prior knowledge

influenced students' language in both spoken and written form and caused students to place more or less emphasis on one person's comments over another's. These conclusions on students' revision process emerged from my data, but the timeline for my research precluded a more in-depth look at the exact nature of either one of them.

Implications for Writing Teachers and Researchers

The idiosyncratic nature of the writing-revision process means that no one lesson or activity meets every student's needs. In this study some students responded differently to peer conferences, teacher conferences, mini-lessons, and large group author's circles, picking and choosing comments and suggestions from one or several of these to use to make revisions in their writing. If this is the case in this classroom, then other writing teachers need to provide similar types of activities from each category to insure that all of their students have the resources they need to develop as writers. Further research needs to be done on the nature of individual student responses to mini-lessons, conferences, and author's circles. Components found in other writing classrooms such as peer response groups, an on-going, small group of students that meet regularly to help each other with writing, also need to be studied.

Because individual students were at different points in their writing development, Mrs. B. responded to each one uniquely and helped peer responders to be aware of the uniqueness of each author. Some students needed help primarily with content, while others' needs were in the design area, looking at new ways to reformulate a piece. The classroom writing teacher, through her careful study of her students, seemed to know that some of them were ready for tough "questions that cause a temporary loss of control" (Graves, 1983, p. 116). Individual student variability meant that students might write confidently with a strong voice on one topic, then timidly, fearfully present themselves in their next piece. For multiple reasons, students did not invest the same energy in every piece of writing that they created. The teacher in this classroom understood, accepted, and supported individual student differences. In this study I documented some of these student differences and listed some of the possible causes. A more in-depth study might focus on the differences between students in their writing development or focus on the differences between one writer's development over several different topics or genres. Researchers also need to investigate teachers' responses to individual student differences in an attempt to determine the effect these responses have on individual student's writing development.

The statements I have made about students' revision processes have been closely tied to the classroom that I studied and with good reason. This classroom was carefully selected because of the students' past learning histories, the teacher's knowledge and skills, and the classroom writing program. Few classrooms would be comparable. I also primarily studied children's revisions from the perspective of changes made following peer and teacher conferences. Many more studies are needed to document how individual students revise their writing. I am intrigued by the tentative observation that emerged from my data: individual students measure their peers' suggestions against an internal idea of what the story should be. Researchers looking at students' revisions might want to search for statements that reflect this internal idea. Also, because students' responses to peer and teacher comments were highly individual, researchers need to ask the writer to paraphrase or state in his or her own words what the peer or teacher said and/or what that statement meant to the writer.

A Final Note

Calkins (1986) firmly states that "I recommend taking what I have to say with a grain of salt. I do not have the statistical data to support my generalizations. My hunches

come from closely studying several children and from working with many others. As teachers you have the same data base available to you" (p. 88). I echo Calkins' statement. My study found that the students in this particular classroom, with this particular teacher, could serve as peer responders and revise their pieces in response to their peers' suggestions. The students in this study assumed many of the roles traditionally held by the classroom teacher. Peer responders could discuss the content of a piece, help authors with topics and titles for their pieces, proofread their peers' texts, and help each other follow the steps of the classroom writing program. Peer responders did not help students rewrite part of their texts or suggest alternative forms for the texts. Therefore, the classroom teacher in this study developed strategies to reinforce and extend peers' comments on the content of a piece of writing, introduced new genres to her students, and asked students to reformulate their texts.

Conducting this study has caused me to look at my own students with fresh eyes and to contemplate strategies to increase their participation in our classroom writing program. Other classroom teachers may find their own teaching enhanced by closely observing their students and classrooms and evaluating the roles of their students within their classroom writing program. Each teacher's classroom is unique. No one study will provide all the answers for any writing teacher. A

writing teacher must first understand what occurs in his or her own classroom to compare it accurately to the one in this study.

My hope is that the description of the teacher and the young writers presented in this dissertation will help other teachers to create, with the assistance of their students, their own writing program.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX   A

GRAVES' CONFERENCE

CODING SYSTEM

Figure 2

CONCEPT DESCRIPTIONS

CODE FOR CONCEPT COLLECTION

SD <u>Standard</u>

The speaker judges or asks for a judgment of a piece of writing.

> Examples: "I <u>like</u> the way you set this up."
>
> "Which do you think is the <u>best</u> draft?"

SD is often found with other concepts when those other concepts
are being used as standards. The statement "I like the way you
set this up" would be coded SD O, meaning that the concept of
<u>organization</u> is being used as a judgement standard.

P <u>Process</u>

The speaker discusses the steps taken to produce a draft. These
may be specific:

> Examples: "This is my fifth draft."
>
> "Did you copy this out of the
> encyclopedia or make it up
> yourself?"

or general:

> Examples: "What will you do next?"
>
> "Was it hard to write this draft?"

<u>P is probably the most prevalent symbol</u> in the system and is often
found in combination with other concepts. Use of the <u>future tense</u>
in a teacher or researcher question is often a cue that process is
being discussed as in the statements "What <u>will</u> you do next?" and
"How <u>will</u> you change the organization in the next draft?"

I Information

Many of the concepts in this system include what most of us consider the concept of information. For example, our concept O for organization means organizing information. We've decided to allow the O to stand for <u>organizing information</u> so that the I symbol can stand for something more specific. That is, although we know that a statement like "I'm going to put all the stuff about dogs in Chapter I" includes an understanding both of information and organization, we will use the O alone to symbolize that understanding. The same applies for the symbols MO, FE, AC, T, EX and AU.

The "something more specific" that we want I to stand for is defined as follows:

The speaker discusses or cites content, refers specifically to a piece of writing.

> Example: "I'm going to write how the man got down here. The shark is going to touch the sailboat..."

The above example would be coded both I and P because the writer cites specific information while describing her planned writing process.

Is Selection of Information

The speaker refers to selection of information, distinguishes suitable from unsuitable information but does not speak specifically of adding or deleting information. (See next two categories).

> Example: "What kind of information do you need?"

Ia Addition of Information

The speaker suggests adding to a draft.

> Examples: "Revised means adding some tips."
>
> "I think you should put in more about the car ride."

Id Deletion of Information

The speaker refers to deleting information.

Examples: "I didn't think it was that
important and it was just a
waste of time having it there."

"Do you think you really need
that part?"

Some other categories which include (implicitly) the concept of
information follow.

EX Experience

The writer describes his experience, or the reader discusses the
writer's (off the page) experience.

Examples: "The chickens were hard to catch."

"Was there a roller-coaster there?"

Discussions of experience as defined here may be stimulated by
what appeared on the page but are not about the writing or what's
on the page. Often, the writer seems to talk about the experience
(or the reader expresses curiosity) with no indication that the
speaker thinks the writing should be changed as a result of the
discussion.

EXv Experience verfication

Speaker compares information on the page with the writer's
experience.

Examples: "Is that really true?"

"That's exactly what happened."

"I can't remember whether the doctor put
the needle in my left or my right arm
so I don't know what to write."

AU Audience

Speaker refers to reader response to writing or to a conference.

Example: "What do you think Billy would say
about this story?"

AUi   Audience general response

Speaker notes that writing is (is not) interesting, exciting, appealing, or entertaining.

>   Example: "I like it because it is the exciting
>   part."

AUio   Audience response with regard to others

Speaker notes that writing is (is not) interesting, exciting, appealing, or entertaining to others.

>   Example: "Well, I like it but the other kids
>   would say it's boring."

AUc   Audience feels writing needs clarity

Speaker suggests that the writing be clarified.

>   Examples: "What did you mean by...?"
>
>   "I'm having trouble with this
>   page. It doesn't make sense
>   to me."

AUco   Audience requests clarity with regard to others

Speaker suggests writing be clarified for other readers to better understand it.

>   Examples: "It is important so they know she was
>   wasting food by dumping it on the floor."
>
>   "It sounded like he didn't care about
>   your sister."

AUn   Audience not considered important to writer

Speaker explicitly expresses no concern with reader response.

>   Examples: "Your Woodsy Owl book doesn't
>   make any sense."
>
>   "That's all right. I can write
>   whatever I want."

F Feelings

Speaker refers to emotion in the writing or the experience behind the writing.

> Examples: "Now what I have to figure out is how with that same feeling I could bring my father to the sofa."
>
> "Were you unhappy when you didn't find your luggage?"

MO Motivation

Speaker discusses writer's or writer's characters' motives in the experience behind the text or in the text.

> Examples: "Why did you ask for more potato?"
>
> "I walked to the window because I wanted them to notice me."

AC Action

ACa refers to sequence of events in narrative.

> Examples: "What will happen next in your story?"
>
> "I just wanted to start at the action."

ACf refers to frequency of event in story.

> Examples: "I like your story because it has a lot of action."
>
> "The robbing in my story has a lot of action."

O Organization

Speaker refers to content arrangement. Includes any reference to grouping, ordering, chapters, division into parts, etc.

Examples: "I wanted each chapter to be about
just one thing."

"Why did you make chapters?"

T Topic

Speaker refers to what the whole piece is about, defining message
or intent and reference to titles.

Examples: "This whole thing is about my
trip to Canada."

"Is this about red squirrels?"

L Language

Speaker refers to writer's choice or arrangement of words for
meaning.

Examples: "Why did you call the lion 'ferocious'?"

"What should I call the box cars?"

LG Length

LGm

Speaker refers to how long a piece is. Emphasis is more is
better.

Examples: "This is a good story 'cause it
tells more and it has a lot of
pages."

"This is the longest story you've
ever written."

LGs

Speaker refers to how short a piece is. Emphasis is less is
better.

Examples: "I don't want a super long story
because I don't need all that
much in."

"You've told a lot in a short
space."

N Neatness

Speaker refers to the work's appearance.

Examples: "Don't look at this. It's too
messy."

"You wrote this very neatly."

M Mechanics

Speaker refers to grammar, punctuation, spelling or handwriting.

Examples: "Is that how you spell much?"

"If I send a love letter, I use
cursive."

Graves, D.H. 1982b

APPENDIX   B

FINN'S CONFERENCE

CODING SYSTEM

Figure 3

Concept Descriptions

Behavior of Writers During Peer Conferences

Codes   Conference Behaviors

WCL Writer's Conference Lead

Statement used to draw peer in; causes peer to attend; occurs most
often at the beginning but may also be used during conference to
re-focus attention of peer; writer may use a lead to state purpose
of conference.

Examples:

1. WCL   —Joe! I really have something to say here.
I'm gonna make this the comic, believe me.
Well, anyway, ya wanna listen to what I have
to say on Rube Goldberg?

————————

2. WCL, WSP —These are just leads and I want you to pick
one.

————————

3. WCL, WSP —I need to find a topic and right now I may
not be thinking right.

WSP Writer Shares Process

Writer shares specific problem, current struggle or mere awareness
of problem; may be unable to fully verbalize problem; writer may
discuss options or how he/she is going about the process of
writing.

Examples:

1. WSP, I,   —This is going to be one of my last drafts.
   WFC   So-that's why it's good to have a conference.

————————

2. WSP, I   —I'm going to write this over with all the
changes. Then I'm going to edit it and then
I'm gonna probably write it over.

SPJ <u>Seeks Peer Judgment</u>

Writer asks peer for opinion as to text, meaning or options being considered.

Examples:

1. SPJ, WCL --How's this sound?

_____

2. SPJ, WSP --Ya think I should scratch it out?

_____

3. SPJ   --Do you think every word is clear so far? Every word? Every single word?

_____

WET <u>Writer Explores Territory</u>

A search of the experience behind the text, but not a reference to the text itself; may result in consideration of options or discovery of future topics; serves to help writer find voice and "turf".

Examples:

1. PET   --Did you have any experience with horses?

   WET   --Yes.

   PET   --Well, what kind of experiences?

   WET   --Last summer I went out to Lake George, NY, for our vacation and there was this place and they had ponies and you could ride the ponies and everything...

_____

2. PET   --I thought this doggy was yours. How do you know all this about this doggy?

   WET   --Because I'm there almost every day and I babysit and I hear him. I live two houses away. You can hear him howl...

WEM <u>Writer Explores Meaning</u>

Writer explains, affirms or justifies meaning of text; usually in response to peer probe for clarity; may help writer realize ambiguities or gaps in text.

Examples:

1. PEM   --"The wolf grabbed him and he woke up." Do you think it's really clear and what do you mean by it?

   WEM   --I told you what I mean. He woke up. It was a dream.

---

2. PEM   --When the marble rolls, how would it knock down the net?

   WEM   --It doesn't. See, ya have a bucket here and a bucket here. That water pours into this bucket and it's a scale. So that end hits a lever. The lever pushes up and that opens a hatch and the net comes down. I'm explaining it. <u>It even says that here</u>. "I'll hit a lever which causes the net to fall."

   PEM   --But how?

   WEM   --It explains how. It hits the lever knocking the net. It's <u>obvious</u> how. The lever's like this. The net's up here. It goes up. It's obvious. That's like saying I put a peanut to my head to smash it. Well, I put it in my hand, force it towards my head and push against my head, which crushed the peanut. You don't <u>have</u> to write that!

WEO <u>Writer Explores Organization</u>

Writer explores structure of piece, sequence of events or ideas.

Example:

1. WEO, WSP   --Well, I think that I have 1-2-3-4-5 paragraphs. I wanna take the second and third and I wanna rearrange them.

WPV <u>Writer Explores Point of View</u>

Writer discusses point of view taken in piece of writing.

Example:

1. PPV   --Okay.   By commentary, do you mean <u>you</u> watching the game?

   WPV   --Ya. I'm commenting it - like the announcer.

WEL <u>Writer Explores Language</u>

Writer discusses repetition, sound, options or choice of words.

Examples:

1. WEL   --I used `"damaged" here also. I don't wanna use it twice.

----

2. WEL   --I was going to put "scuffled" and then I was going to put "kicked".

   PEL   --Kicked?

   WEL   --Yeah, you know, kick the sand. But that didn't sound right. I think I'm going to keep trudged. "I trudged up the soft sand and up the stairs and then I went home."

WEA <u>Writer Explores Action</u>

Writer discusses or explains action, pace or recurrence of action.

Example:

1. WEA, WET   --This story is <u>supposed</u> to be a fast story. Everything is going on at once. You know what I mean? Because basketball is kinda confusing if everything is going on at once. And that's kinda what I wanted to do. So I had to make it - fast like.

WEI Writer Explores Information

Writer considers inclusion or exclusion of information; may discuss details, relevance of information to topic or audience; options, not decisions.

Example:

1. WEI   —Oh, ya – maybe I should say "John Thompson is the coach of the Hoyas", or something like that.

D Writer Defines Topic or Focus

Writer stakes out boundaries for topic, states focus, genre, or explains title.

Examples:

1. D   —I'm telling a mystery.

2. QF   —What's the main idea of your story?

   D   —How the attic looks, and what you hear up there, and how you always get interrupted in your thoughts.

R Writer Reads Text

Writer reads own piece, sometimes very dramatically; may even sing parts.

Example:

1. R, CL   —Okay. This is my story: As I sit on my undersized desk, my oversized pants droop over my worn out sneakers. She has <u>some</u> nerve...(continues to read)

I Writer States Intent

Writer states intention, next step; revision may take place immediately, during conference.

Examples:

1. I   —I guess I'll just work on making it clearer.

2. I   --I'll look it up in the Thesaurus.

WM Writer Discusses Mechanics

Writer refers to spelling, punctuation or neatness.

Examples:

1. RM   --Anything else that you think you should change?

   WM   --No. - Yeah - Change my handwriting.

_____

2. WM   --How do you spell that?

A   Writer Refers to Audience

Writer expresses perception of audience needs related to topic, content or mechanics; overt reference.

Examples:

1. A   --I didn't want to mention any proper names so I wouldn't offend anybody.

_____

2. A   --I want them (the audience) to find out what it is.

_____

3. PSP   --Would ya like to write that?

   A   --I don't know 'cuz maybe some people wouldn't understand.

WE Writer Evaluates

Writer makes judgmental statement regarding particular aspect of piece; may support with criterion, or may state opinion without standard.

Examples:

1. PF   --How come you like it?

   WE   --Because it describes a lot of things.

---

2. PSP, PF   --Okay. Do you like this piece? Do you - were you happy with it?

   E   --It's not my best piece, but -

   PF   --Why isn't it your best piece?

   E   --I know I can write better.

WP1 Writer Engages in Playfulness

Writer banters playfully either with peer or alone.

Example:

1. WP1   --I'm gonna play "Wet Diaper Attack" (giggles; reads). Listen to this. This is ridiculous - I can't stand it.

M   Writer Explains Motivation

Writer states reasons for decisions as to topic, content or process; may be criteria, opinion or feelings.

Examples:

1. M   --I like it a lot, so I just wanted to put it in.

---

2. M   --I don't want to be gross in the story.

CA   Writer Conferences Alone

Writer reads piece aloud for self, often with gusto; may be a performance of obvious delight.

Example:

    1. CA   —Joshua tapes a dramatic reading of "Myroomia" — a spoof on his messy room.

Feelings of the Writer

O   **Writer States Ownership**

Writer defends topic, content or process decisions; resists suggestions or statements of peer, often "just because I want to".

   Examples:

    1. PSP, PEI   —In your first draft you were talking about putting boots on. I didn't know if you wanted to have boots in there or not.

     WEI, O   —I did. It's at the end.

_____

    2. O   —Nah - I like that better. I don't care what you say, Joe. I like that better.

_____

    3. PET   —It sounds kinda far out and it really...

     WET, O   —Rube Goldberg's things _are_ far out. Don't you know that?

EPS **Writer Expresses Personal State**

Writer shares feelings of delight, satisfaction, frustration or dissonance toward text or process; can also be an expression of feelings toward reading the piece aloud.

   Examples:

    1. PSP   —Is there anything you wanna change?

    2. EPS, WSP —Not that I know of. I mean, I'm dissatisifed. It needs lotsa change in it. I know I can write better.

_____

    3. WE, WEL, —I liked when I said, "Wave after wave banged
       EPS   against the rocks. I could hear the gulls calling." I like that and I also like how the

waves collapsed against the glimmering sea. I
like "glimmering" as a word.

V **Writer Expresses Voice**

Writer expresses authority on topic; demonstrates energy, strong
desire to tell about topic.

Examples:

1. PET   --What kind of operation was it? How serious
              was it?

   WET, V   --It was a very serious one and he couldn't
              get a second opinion. If he didn't get it
              this year, then he woulda died, 'cause the
              artery was pumping slower and slower.

——————————

2. V   --People say I look like my mother and I don't
              want to look like my mother. I want to look
              like me.

WFC **Writer Expresses Feelings Toward Conference**

Writer states appreciation or need for peer assistance; may
express annoyance with conference perceived as unproductive.

Examples:

1. PSP   --Are you happy with the jumps that you make,
              or ...

   WSP, WFC   --Well, kinda. That's why I kinda am, but I
              need ya - somebody to help me with my writing
              - like these classes.

2. WSP, WFC   --Okay. I'm about to copy this whole thing.
              This is going to be one of my last drafts, so
              — that's why it's good to have a conference.

——————————

3. WSP   --But - what'll I put in the other draft?

   PSP   --I dunno.

   WFC   --Then why did you conference with me, you
              beep, beep, beep.

Behaviors of Peers During Writing Conferences

PCL <u>Peer Conference Lead</u>

Peer occasionally initiates conference; indicates willingness to attend to writer.

Example:

1. PCL   --All right. Now read <u>your</u> story to me.

RP   <u>Peer Receives the Piece</u>

Peer restates content of piece; tells writer what meaning has been conveyed.

Examples:

1. R   --(Writer reads piece.)

   RP   --All right. He likes to wander and explore. Sometimes you think he's like Columbus the Second. Is that it?

---

2. RP, PET,   --Okay. You said you felt sad. In what ways
   PEM   did you feel sad?

PSP <u>Peer Shares Process</u>

Peer discusses process of writer; explores <u>how</u> the writer is going about the task of writing; may raise options or question process; often affirms decision or process: "I do that too"; may also be ambivalent.

Examples:

1. PSP, QI,   --Do you expect to change this? If you're not
   QM   satisfied, why are you just leaving it that way?

---

2. R, WM   --Writer reads leads to "Monster". I made a mistake. I didn't finish a sentence.

   PSP   --In a draft that doesn't matter. We're looking for ideas now.

PET Peer Explores the Territory

Peer expresses curiosity about topic; asks about experience, not text; may suggest spin-off, or future topic; helps writer to discover what he/she knows; encourages word flow; may help writer to discover options as to text or process.

Examples:

1. PET   —How do you feel about your Dad?

_____

2. PET   —When you go roller skating do you go in the middle? And does it get everybody dizzy?

PEM Peer Explores Meaning

Peer probes for clarity; questions meaning of text; may point out dissonance between text and writer's retelling of the experience; text-specific as opposed to WET-PET codes which may digress considerably; means: Can you clarify what is right here? - rather than - What else do you know? (PET)

Examples:

1. PEM   —You're saying here in the last line there's ponies and there's horses. Well-what are you talking about, ponies or horses?

_____

2. PEM   —I'm not sure if I get this part right here - "He called the police as the howling filled his mind." As if it haunted him. What do you exactly mean by that?

PEO Peer Explores Organization

Peer discusses structure of piece or sequence of events; may indicate lack of clarity caused by problem in organization of information.

Examples:

1. PEO   —Are you going to keep all these parts?

_____

2. PEO   --I don't know how these two fit together in the same paragraph.

———————

3. PEO   --What happened to the first quarter?

PPV Peer Explores Point of View

Peer discusses writer's point of view; questions perspective from which text is written.

Examples:

1. PPV   --Okay. By commentary, do you mean you watching the game?

———————

2. PR, PPV   --It says, "As I looked across the room, I saw it standing on the shelf all by itself. I wondered what it was all about. I drew closer." You're talking about yourself, in other words.

PEL Peer Explores Language

Peer discusses choice of words, repetition, word options.

Examples:

1. PEL   --What makes you choose the word "grouch"?

———————

2. PEL   --Can you write something else beside "stinking" or is that what it's called?

PEA Peer Explores Action

Peer explores the pace of events, action in text.

Example:

1. PEA   --You jump, you jump a lot. You jump from -- One minute -once he has the ball, then suddenly the other team has the lead.

PEI Peer Explores Information

Peer discusses inclusion or exclusion of information based on text, not experience behind the text; may question relation of information in piece to title or writer's stated focus; may raise options.

Examples:

1. PEI, QM   --Why should you include the score?

_____

2. PEI   --In, I think, your first draft, you were talking about putting boots on. I didn't know if you wanted to have boots in there or not.

QF Peer Questions Focus of Writer

Peer asks writer to state or clarify focus, explain title or genre.

Examples:

1. QF   --What do you think--what are you telling in the story?

_____

2. QF   --Okay, what are you talking about? What's your main idea?

PM Peer Questions Motivation of Writer

Peer questions reasons for writer's decisions as to topic, content or process.

Examples:

1. QM   --If you're not satisfied, why are you leaving it that way?

_____

2. QM   --So, why write about just this one game? Why not write about another game that UNC played in?

PE   <u>Peer Evaluates</u>

Peer judges, may be opinion or may support statement with criterion; often in response to writer's query.

Examples:

1. PE, RA   --I like your title and your lead.

---

2. PE, RA   --I like the part where you say you always get back together again after you quarrel because that's honesty. You're an honest writer!

QI   <u>Peer Questions Intent</u>

Peer questions writer's intent; "What next?"

Examples:

1. QI   --Will it (the carnival) come into the story?

---

2. QI, PSP   So-do you want to change any parts of it or do you want to keep on writing?

RM   <u>Peer Refers to Mechanics</u>

Peer refers to spelling, punctuation, neatness.

Examples:

1. RM   --Do you think it's clear to put it all in one sentence, like a compound sentence? One, comma, he grabbed him, comma, then he woke up?

---

2. RM   --All right. Remember-two p's in popped.

SAu   <u>Peer Suggests Audience</u>

Peer suggests consideration of audience. Overt statements.

Examples:

1. SAu   --Can you make it realer to the people?

2. SAu   --Okay. Your reader has to know that.

PP1 <u>Peer Engages in Playfulness</u>

Peer brings humor into conference; plays on words.

Example:

1. PP1   --I think I'm going to write this way. (I'll
never make it till I'm twelve!)

RA   <u>Peer Responds Affectively</u>

Peer responds overtly to process, topic, language, organization; says what he feels about the piece; may not give reason; may be ambivalent. Praises.

Examples:

1. RA, PPI,   --Mm-You put a lot of specifics in. I got the
QI   <u>exact</u> idea 'cause you said he's a whatever
kind of dog to be exact, and you said his name
is whatever, and you said he looks like
whatever-and do you want to make any changes?

2. RA, PP1   --I really enjoyed this-and that's that!

PF   <u>Peer Probes Feelings of Writer</u>

Peer probes writer's own response to topic or text.

Examples:

1. PF   --Do you like this piece? Were you happy with
it?

2. PF   --Oh-You're not satisfied with it then.

TO   <u>Peer Takes Ownership</u>

Peer tells writer what to do; says "You should...;" gives

unrequested directives.

Example:

1. TO   --I think it would sound better if you put "chocolately", or something like that.

RO <u>Peer Respects Ownership</u>

Peer overtly acknowledges writer's control over process and piece.

Examples:

1. RO   --It ain't up to me--it's up to you, Michelle, It's your piece.

_____

2. RO, PSP   --It's what <u>you</u> want. Maybe you could use "she questioned." But don't write it down. It's my idea--"she questioned" Do you like that or do you-or you can think of one that you want. You can look up 'asked' maybe in the Thesaurus.

Finn, J. A., 1985

APPENDIX   C

FINN'S COMPARISON

OF GRAVES' CODING

SYSTEM AND

FINN'S CODING SYSTEM

Figure 4

COMPARISON OF CONCEPTS - GRAVES, D. AND FINN, J.

Concepts Identified in All Utterances of Graves' Subjects				Concepts of Writers and Peers Identified in Peer Conferences - Finn	
Concepts		Writer Behaviors		Peer Behaviors	
SD	Standard	WCL	Conference Lead	PCL	Conference Lead
P	Process	WSP	Writer Shares Process	PSP	Peer Shares Process of Writer
I	Information	SPJ	Writer Seeks Peer Judgment	RP	Peer Receives the Piece
Is	Information - selection	WET	Writer Explores the Territory	PET	Peer Explores the Territory
Ia	Information - addition	WEM	Writer Explores Meaning	PEM	Peer Explores Meaning
Id	Information - deletion	WEO	Writer Explores Organization	PEO	Peer Explores Organization
EX	Experience	WPV	Writer Explores Point of View	PPV	Peer Explores Point of View
EXv	Experience - verification	WEL	Writer Explores Language	PEL	Peer Explores Language
AU	Audience	WEA	Writer Explores Action	PEA	Peer Explores Action
MO	Motivation	WEI	Writer Explores Information	PEI	Peer Explores Information
AC*	Action	D	Writer Defines	QF	Peer Questions Writer's Focus
ACa	Action - sequence of	R	Writer Reads	QM	Peer Questions Writer's Motivation

Concepts	Writer Behaviors	Peer Behaviors

ACf Action
    - frequency of
	I Writer States
	    Intent
		PE Peer Evaluates

O Organization	C Writer Confirms
	    Peer Response
		QI Peer Questions
		    Intent

AUi* Audience
    - interest self
	WM Writer Discusses
	    Mechanics
		RM Peer Refers to
		    Mechanics

AUo Audience
    - interest
    (others)
	A Writer Refers to
	    Audience
		SAu Peer Suggests
		    Consideration
		    of Audience

AUc Audience - clarify	E Writer Evaluates	Pl Playfulness

	WPl Writer Engages in
	    Playfulness
		RA Peer Responds
		    Affectively

AUco Audience
    - clarify
    (others)
	M Writer Explains
	    Motivation
		PF Peer Probes
		    Feelings of
		    Writer

AUn* Audience
    - no need to
    consider
	CA Writer Confers
	    Alone
		TO Peer Takes
		    Ownership

N Neatness	O Writer States
	    Ownership
		RO Peer Respects
		    Ownership

M   Mechanics
    Drawing
	EPS Writer Expresses
	    Personal State
		CP Peer Refers
		    to Conference
		    Process

F Feelings	V Writer Expresses Voice	

T Topic	WFC Writer Expresses
	    Feelings Toward
	    Conference	

L Language		

LGs* Length
    - needs to
    be shorter		

LGm* Length
    - needs to
    be longer		

APPENDIX   D

PARTIAL LIST

OF CLASSROOM

MINI-LESSONS

FIGURE 5

PARTIAL LIST OF CLASSROOM MINI-LESSONS

Date	Topic
September 9	What is Writing?
September 10	Fantasy Trip--Using Visual Imagery and Movement to Develop a Piece
September 13	Model Peer Conference-- David and Ian
September 17	Recording Peer Conferences with Tape Recorders
September 23	Catching the Reader's Interest Developing Leads
September 30	Sharing Leads
October 3	Introduction of "Newsroom" Computer Software
October 11	Developing a Newspaper Article
October 17	Interviewing
October 18	Writing without Words-- Using Pictographs to Tell A Story
October 29	Developing Suspense in a Story
November 1	Evaluating Writing
November 4	Comparing Stories Written This Year (This is the end of the first marking period.)
November 12	Introduction of Peer Conference Form
November 22	Coming to Closure--Developing An Ending to a Story

December 2	Describing a Character
December 9	Using Dialogue and Description
December 11	Developing Clues in a Mystery Story
January 13	Using Similes and Metaphors
January 16	What Have You Learned As A Writer?
February 3	Creating Fantasy Stories
February 25	Describing the Setting of A Story
March 4	Choosing a Research Topic
March 7	Selecting an Ending for A Story
March 11	Taking Notes

APPENDIX   E

SAMPLES OF

STUDENT WRITING,

PEER CONFERENCE FORMS,

AND

SELF EVALUATIONS

David's First Draft
of Mountain Goats

My family and I had ~~Ti~~
~~We were way up in the~~
~~mountins.~~ I was eating supp~~er~~,
I looked over and saw so~~me~~
mouting gouts ~~sitting~~ running
~~towred us.~~ I stared in awe, They
stoped to eat grass 50 feit
away from us, ~~and ate some~~
~~grass.~~ My Dad took some
pitchers. Click click click. Then
they ran away.. We picht arc
Tent and went to bed. The
next morning we hicked up
a ~~high mountan peak.~~ It was a
great view. Then we ~~*~~
and ~~~~

David's Revisions

for Mountain Goats

We were
* ~~I was~~ sitting on a rock
eating the soup. We had
just coocked on a stove
* They had big shaggy
  fur coats. There was a
  mother, father and baby.
  They ~~stood on a rock~~ and
  ~~stared at us~~

~~From the top of the moun~~
~~we saw all sorts of Natives~~
~~and all~~ ~~mountains.~~ The view
~~was spectacular~~
* It was a ~~tough climb~~
  ~~Beacause it was racy.~~ I was
  tired, ~~but~~ thats okay
  beaause the air was fresh
  and cold.

   From the top of the
mountin. You could see all
sorts of lakes and rocks.
Below us was a steep
fall. We started walking

grass then
on ^ rocks Then ~~we~~ on
snow. We saw all sorts
of va..... and cliffs ....
and rivers. The view wa.
tack y...r.

Slid down the m....in
on or but I got going
prety fast ny han.....
g..ing n...Then we ha..
ou and roac the ....r..

* Because ~~I~~ w didn't have
gloves on.

* Next to a lake at the foot
of the mo..tin we were going
to climo the next day.

My Dad's Birthday

My dads birthday is tomorroc the
22 of July. My dad called Bread & Cir-
cus to order a carob birthday cake.
"Ding-a-ling-a-ling, Ding-a-ling-a-ling
hello Bread & Circus may I help you.
"Yes please may I order a carob
cake. "yes but it will take two weeks"
"oh well my birthday is tomorrow"
"well I guess you have a prablm"
"I guess I do." "Dad whats the
matter." "oh nothing its just that I
don't have a birthday cake!" "oh."
I felt a little sorry for dad because
whats a Birthday without a
cake, I started to look in the
cook book under Deserts my
dad likes: oatmeal - carob - and other
nutritious things. I finally found a
recipe that had oatmeal in it. It
was a oatmeal cake. I told my mom
she did we could make a
surprise. ok I said. Next Day
we were going to take my Dad
out for Braktfast

My Dad's Birthday

(continued)

We were in the resturant near the Christmas shops. My dad had eggs and hasbrowns I had pancakes toast so did my brother. My mom had the same as my dad. soon it was time to leave. We went back home it was a no day so we just wanted to it. At noon I. D. was going to open up hes presents Finally it was noon Dad starte to open hes pesents. My mom alired gave him alot of presents before hes birthay so he was only opening the ones I gave him. My dad first opened the card I gave him then he opened the he liked bothof the gifts. My dad thanked me.

The End

Peer Questions

Draeing Quetions

how old is your dad?
what did you give your dad?
did he like kis gifts?

<u>MY</u> <u>DaD's</u> · <u>BirthDay</u>

Revisions for

My Dad's Birthday

P.3
① he is turning 41
② I said
③ then I relized I never had baked a cake
befor and I wasen't alowd to use
the stove too.
④ the bifthday cake, together and give it to him
when he opens his presents and we
could make it a.
⑤ as one of hes birtday presents.

Final Copy of

My Dad's Birthday

MY DAD'S BIRTHDAY

My Dad's birthday is tomorrow, the 22nd of July.   He is
turning forty-one.   My Dad called Bread and Circus to   order
a carob birthday cake.

    Ding-a-ling.   Ding-a-ling-a-ling.
    "Hello, Bread and Circus.   May I help you?"
    "Yes, please.   May I order a carob cake?"
    "Yes, but it will take two weeks."
    "Oh, well, my birthday is tomorrow."
    "I guess you have a problem."
    "I guess I do."

    "Dad, what's the matter?" I said.
    "Oh, nothing.   It's just that I don't have a   birthday
cake."
    "Oh."
    I felt a little sorry for Dad because what's a birthday
without a cake?   I started to look in the cookbook under
desserts my dad likes: oatmeal, carob, and other nutritious
things.   I finally found a recipe that had oatmeal in it.
It was an oatmeal cake.
    Then I realized I had never baked a cake before, an
wasn't allowed to use the stove.   So I told my Mom.   She
said we could make the cake together and give it to him when
he opens his presents.   We could make it a surprise.
    "OK." I said.
    Next day we were going to take my Dad out for breakfast
as one of his birthday presents.   We were taking my Dad to a
restaurant near the Christmas shops.   My Dad had eggs,
toast, and hashbrowns.   I had pancakes; so did my brother.
My Mom had the same as my Dad.
    Soon it was time to leave.   We went back home.   It was
a hot day, so we just wanted to sit.   At noon Dad was going
to open his presents.   Finally it was noon.   Dad started to
open his presents.   My Mom already gave him a lot of
presents before his birthday, so he was only opening the
ones I gave him.   My Dad first opened the card I gave him.
Then he opened the medal.   He liked both of the gifts.   My
Dad thanked me.

Fun Town

1

Today we're going to go to
Fun Town. I was excited. I went
downstairs everyone was waiting.
Quwickly I went upstairs to
get dressed. When I came back
every one was in the car.
I rushed out to the car of we
went. About 5 min later we
were there. I got out. Everything
was so big I felt small. We
all walked down the parking lot
toward the bax ball ___.
my father wanted to play.
He had trouble theaiing which
speed he wanted. He could
choose how fast the balls would
be thrown toward him slow
medium, fast and real fast.
He chose Medium. He pided up
a bat, stood over the player
about 10 se later a ball spit
out of a machine about 100'
feet away from him.

Draft of Fun Town

(continued)

He hit the ball. It flew into
one of the three nets surrounding
him. The next ball he hit in
the large opening in front of
him. He got about 2 more
balls. When he was done
we went towards the home.
It is a ride that you go in
boy you go up a big hill and
go down very fast. You get
splashed by water. I was waiting
in line. When it was my turn
I jumped in the log with my
father and a man pushed the log.
We where swerling around
corners and bumbling around.
It seemed like a long time
befor we got to the big hill.
We where being pulled. At the top
of the hill we where jerked down.
We went down my stomach went
up we got splashed it was fun
The log took us around a
few more corners. We where back,

Draft of Fun Town

(continued)

3   3

I got of so did my father,
we went on a few more
rides then we left.

The End

Sarah's Final Draft

of Three Separate Ways

Three Separate Ways

As I walked along in foot deep snow a sharp wind struck my face. Around me lay dead bodies of unlucky soldiers. I was now deep in British enemy lines. Today was one of the coldest days in the war and my thin army boots could barely keep out the cold. After I had walked about a mile I got real tired so I found a thick pine tree and crawled near the stump. There I must have dozed off because when I awoke it was darker and the sounds of guns and cannons were closer so I decided to move on. As I walked along, the forest grew thicker and dead bodies fewer. As thoughts of my two kids and wife back home in Pelham went through my mind I wondered what day it was. I hadn't seen life in six and I had little food left in my sack and ⅓ or so water in my canteen. I didn't think I'd see any life until or if I ever made it to the U.S. naval base which is about 20 miles aways. All the sudden there was a loud noise. I cocked my rifle and was ready to shoot. Then I recognized the sound. I looked up in the sky; sure enough there was a war plane and it had the Nazi sign on it. Quickly I dashed in a nearby brush hoping I hadn't been spotted. I waited about ten minutes to make sure the plane had passed. I looked up in the sky but didn't see anything. Out of the corner of my eye I caught a glimpse of gray smoke coming from the right. I slowly started walking to the right; the woods got thicker. Then I came to a clearing.

CHAPTER II   A SPECIAL NIGHT

My eyes glittered and twinkled at the sight I saw. There standing in the clearing was a little brown and white type of Swiss Alps house.

The sight of the house felt so good it was like a glass of water to a man who had been in the desert three days. "There have to be people in there", I said to myself. There's smoke coming out of the chimney. I slowly, cautiously, walked toward the house with my gun perched in my hand. When I approached the door I stopped to think, should I go in it could be dangerous. I reassured myself that I'm in more danger out here. I took my rifle and tapped lightly on the door. Inside I heard heavy footsteps coming to the door! I picked up my rifle just in case of danger as the door opened "Ok Don't shoot", yelled a fat woman with a German accent. I put down my rifle sensing there was no danger. "Would you care to come in and have a warm brusky", said the woman. Since I was numb with cold I accepted her offer. When I got in she motioned me to a chair next to the fire place, which had a blazing fire in it. "What side you on?" asked the woman. I simply replayed, "America". "That's different, I rarely get any visitors around here", "Why is th..." Knock, knock! My question was interrupted by someone at the door. "Excuse me a minute." said the woman. She heavily thumped to the door and slowly creaked it open. "I come in peace" said a stern firm low toned voice. "Come in", said the woman. In walked a husky man who had a Russion accent. "Hi", he said. "My name is Strado, what's yours?" "I forgot", I said because I was so stunned of his massive size. Strado took a seat next to me and the woman gave him a brusky. We started to talk about our war adventures for about 30 minutes. We were starting to talk about our families when there was a large thump at the door. The woman waddled over to the door and opened it. "I'm cold and need a place to stay", said a man with a German accent. "Join the party", replied the woman. "Hi my name is Schultz. Then he to sat by the fire.

Final Draft of Three Separate Ways

(continued)

We talked, laughed and told about our families. Then the woman said "O.k. time to eat." We all sat around the table and had smoked deer venison. It was the best meal all us soldiers had had in days. It was a jolly good dinner! After dinner we talked and told jokes. Even though we were fighting on different sides we shared the same sides that night. About 12:00 o'clock everybody was tired. The lady offered us some blankets and let us use her living room. We all slept peacefully that night. In the morning, I was awaken by a fresh aroma of bacon and eggs. As I opened my eyelids I saw the woman running around the kitchen in a blue apron. I got up and asked her, "Do you need any help?" she answered "If you'd like you could set the table." "sure" With that she neatly handed me some plates, glasses, and silverware. By the time I finished setting the table the other two soldiers were up. The woman plopped all the eggs and bacon on our plates. She poured us each some goat milk and sat down to eat. During breakfast there was very little conversation. When I finished I got up and put on my hat, coat and gloves. "Where are you going?" said the woman. "I have to leave now," I said. "So do we" said the two other soldiers. So we all got ready. Before we left we thanked the woman then trudged out the door into the snow. We all shook hands and said, goodbye. We were now again on opposing sides each other but we were still good friends. With that we turned around and walked our separate ways. Two days later I arrived safely at the naval base but I never told my story. I asked the captain what day it was. He said "December 27".

Ian's Second Draft

of Journey Through the Door

JOURNEY THROUGH THE DOOR

Bang! The door that Eli Fanning just shut could change his life.

Swish! "I am so grate, I can beat anybody in a game of pig."

"Eli, time to eat," my mom yelled upstairs. As I was walking, and I swished the nerf hoop hanging on my door.

After dinner I went back upstairs to watch PM Magazine and so I didn't downstairs have to do my homework.

"Eli, come down here and do your homework." yelled my Mom.

I opened the door.

"Hi, Hi, Hi, Hi." said four little people. "Oh no," said the little people, "Come quickly before the monster gets us."

I could hear a roar in the distance. The four little people took me through a triangle door. with green space on the other side there was different from ours. It was green like lemonade. beep ha! watch out. theres an arrow The 4 little people jumped through the door. headed for your head; I said to one of the four little people. "Wait look at the arrow, it's not going fast, as a matter of fact it's almost slowing down. The arrow looks like, it floating," said one of the little people. "Hey what's that on hit the button, one of the little people said on his finger the ground. Look it's got buttons" and faster then a racing car. one of the pressed a button and little people, all of a sudden every stoped. It was like freeze stage on earth. "What is it?" asked one of the little people. "I know," I said "but before I tell I want to know your names."

"I am Stew, I am Gew, I'm New, and he's Clutz. He's the most clutziest person in the journey program." "Whats the journey program?" I asked.

Second Draft of Journey Through
the Door (continued)

its place you when you get out smallage "Whats smallage?" "its a school,"
said Clutz, "What were we talking about "oh ya the journey program. See
what we do is travel helping different places, "ya you could say we were
the voyagers "who are they," I asked "they help things along in history on a
planet earth, thats where I live as I said they back off like I was a moron.
"you have a disease, they said "What kind disease? I ask, "you to smart, "i am
smart," I gasp I am not smart at all," "Oh good, they said your stupid just
like us. One more question how did I get here "you must have steped into
triangle when was traveling thro the atmosphere "How does the triangle
bring you places like here — it is what X call a g'zing "The Voyagers told us
you call it time machine so what happens It brings us places that need
help by throing us thro space "

Come on we have find camp for the night, "Look I said theres a tent over
there, We all went in and went to ship

The next day they set of to find the Master of the Remote Control, When I
stepped outside I saw path which had dark forest beyond it, I looked around
their anything but forest. So we started walking into the path, when a
little man stepped out and asked us where we are going.

To find the owner of this. And "I showed him the remote control. The little
man jumped away in fright, The little man started running into the forest
Come on, we have to go on.

A few minutes later we came to a corner with bushes and the path beyond.
These bushes are murder, "Ah, finally they're over,"

"Look " I said and what stood in front of me was a castle bigger than life.
We all ran for the colossal castle We ran up to delicately made grooves in

Ian's Final Copy of

Journey Through the Door

JOURNEY THROUGH THE DOOR

Bang! The door that Eli Fanning just shut could change his life.

Swish! "I am so great, I can beat anybody in a game of basketball."
"Eli, time to eat,my mom yelled to me upstairs" As I was walking and I
swished my nerf hoop hanging on my door.

After dinner I went back upstairs to watch PM Magazine so I
wouldn't have to do my homework.

"Eli, come down here and do your homework." yelled my Mom.
I opened the door.

Hi, Hi,Hi, Hi, said four little people. "Oh no," said the little people
,"Come quickly before the monster gets us."
I could hear a roar in the distance. The four little people took me
through a triangle door. With green space on the other side of it the
space was different from ours. It was green like lemonade.The four
little peoplejumped throughthe door .Beep ha!, "Watch out theres an
arrow headed for your head," I said to one of the four little people.

            " Wait !cok at the arrow ,it's not going fast. As a
matter of fact it's almost slowing down. The arrow looks like it's
floating," said one of the little people. "Hey what's that on the
ground?" Look it's got buttons" and faster then a raceing car. one of
the four little people pressed a button it all of a sudden everything
stoped. It was like freez stage on earth.   What is it?"asked

one of the four little people "I know ,"I said ,"but before I tell I want to know your names."   "Iam Stew, I am Gew, I"m New, and he's Clutz. "He's the most clutziest person in the journey program .

"Whats the journey program ?" I asked.

"Its a place where you go when you get out smallage,"siad clutz. "Whats smallage?" "Its a school," said Clutz "now What were we talking about ,Oh ya the journey program." See what we do is travel to   different places helping people.444" "ya you could say we were the voyagers"   "who are they ?"I asked.

" They help things along in history on a planet earth."   " Thats where I live as ,"I said that they backed off like I was a moron. "You have a disease," they said .   " What kind of disease?" I ask. " Your too smart"   " I am not smart," I gasp," I am not smart at all"   "Oh good," They said ,"your stupid just like us."

One more question how did I get here .

" you must have steped into the triangle door when it was traveling through your atmosphere."

"How does the triangle bring you places like here."

"It is what called a g'zing,"siad Cew "The Voyagers told us you call it a time machine." " So what happens It brings us places that need help by throing us thro space," said New

"Come on we have to find camp for the night."

Final Copy of Journey Through the Door

(continued)

"Look," I said , there's a tent over there." We all went in and went to sleep.

The next day we set of to find the Master of the Remote Control, When I stepped outside I saw a path which had a dark forest beyond it, I looked around there wasn't anything but forest. So we started walking into the path , When a little man stepped out and asked us where we were going.

"To find the owner of this", I showed him the remote control. The little man jumped away in fright. The little man started running into the forest "Come on, we have to go on."

A few minutes later we came to a corner with bushes and the path beyond." These bushes are murder," Ah, finally they're over."
"Look, " I said . What stood in front of me was a castle bigger than life. We all ran for the colossal castle, We ran up to delicately made grooves in the door. I opened the door in excitement . We all step in to a room with doors all over the wall. "Which one should we chose?"
"Hello" I turned around to see a robot "What is your destination."

were looking for the Master of this,"I said as I handed her the remote control. She rubbed it for a while and pointed to the fourth door starting from the right. "Go through that one." I grabbed the remote and we ran for the door.   I grasped the handle and I opened it and jumped through. We landed in what was the begining of a maze. I looked over on the wall to a see a pitchure of a man with king's hat on standing over a pitchure of the remote control. " The owner of the remote must be at the end." We started

Final Copy of Journey Through the Door

(continued

Into the maze. We got to a corner and went down it.(what was funny was I could see a man sitting in a chair.)

All of a sudden my feet started raising from the ground So did Stew,New,Glew, and Clutz

We started moving toward a man, "Hello, I hear you want to change the city of Mode back to its old self. Well I'll tell you what," he said in a loud voice,"If you can figure what this riddle," as he dropped a scroll that said (A horses instrument)

But all of a sudden the time door appeared. "Quick our time is runing out and we only have 30 seconds." "If you figure out riddle I will change the town." " Quick only 15 seconds." After a that word popped out of Clutz' mouth, <u>"violin"</u> , "I can't believe it, he's right." "Then come on let's go, there's only 5 seconds." I jumped in to the door and landed on my bed. The remote disappeared out of my hand. I am back. My parents must be worried. I ran downstairs to find my mom looking at my homework. I asked my Mom what day it was. "Tuesday." I left on Tuesday. My mom said Whats that Dear?" Oh, nothing," I said "Boy !", I said to myself, "I never knew how smart I am.

Ian's Self-Evaluation
of Journey Through the Door

Writing – Self Evaluation

① Name: **I a n**

② Title Journey through . the Door

③ Time spent on this paper 1 Month .

④ What are the strengths of this story? On your
rough copies, mark the passages you feel are very
good. :

⑤ What are the weaknesses, if any? Place an X
beside passages you would like to have made better.

⑥ What were you try'to do for the first time, or
trying to improve upon? I Was trying to Make
a good fantsy. I thing to = improve
a poloph takeing helf anal frotte ⌒

⑦ What do you want to try for your next story?
Are you trying to improve upon something or tryin
something for the first time? Would you like more
information? I want to try a mystery.
writing a Mystery. NO

Nantuck_ ~~iast~~ east ⟶ Maddaket

THis summer I went to
Nantuck I lived out in (maddkt)
Near a beach. With big
Wave. ~~And we also lived~~ Near by there
was a frsh water brige that we
could fish off of. ~~You~~ ✗ we ~~some~~ ~~wth~~
~~p~~ickerl there ~~fl~~ I don't like the
tast of pickerl. sow I don't
fish there. When we ~~dive~~ drove our
car down the ~~dir~~ road and we usuly
~~sew~~ raddits runing back and torath.
There is a restant called the
AC. It has delish fud an it
is very! expesuv like every
thing elce in Nantuck. ~~①~~ he
houses ar all gray ani
thes streets aur still brick
and cobe stone ~~this~~
~~sumery crity B up~~
~~Ber Jully when there~~ nx
~~Full me away w~~
with his brauglit boat.

another day

'Got to

After we rented a boat ar went
on beach my dad let me steer the boat.
Then we went to a desert
beach and had a pick nic there.
The water was relly warm
and as we ate watched water skiers
coming by. About an our rter
We went to look at the
dock. There was some relly
big boats there. We went our
boat and went home.
After we went home I went
to the game room nearby.
played a game. Then I went
back in.

The next morning my mom
went shopping with my dad
and I went to the Nantuck
football game. And Nantuck wontime
won as — Nantucket is one
of the best high school football
teams. Because they starte in the boys clobe
most every year.

when they are about nine

at the age of

Final Copy of Nantucket

NANTUCKET

This summer I went to Nantucket. I live out in Madelaket near a beach with big waves. Nearby there is a freshwater bridge that we could fish off of. We could catch pickerel there. I don't like the taste of pickerel, so I don't fish there. When we drive our car down the dirt road, we usually see rabbits running back and forth. The houses are all gray, and the streets are still brick and cobblestone. There is a restaurant called the A.C. It has delicious food, but it is very expensive like everything else in Nantucket.

Another day we rented a boat and went to a beach. My dad let me steer the boat. Then we went to a different beach and had a picnic there. The water was really warm, and so we watched waterskiers going by. About an hour later we went to look at the dock. There were some really big boats there. We returned to our boat. I went home and went to a game room nearby and played pool.

The next morning my mom went shopping while my dad and I went to the Nantucket football game. Nantucket won 28-7. Nantucket has one of the best teams, because they start in the boys' club when they are about nine. Almost everybody comes to the games when they are playing.

Everytime we go to Nantucket, I have a fun time.

Sleep Over

My brother and I had just picked up Wylie and Jahnava. We had invited them to sleep over the day before.

When we got back to our house Jahnava and Wylie put their bags down. We decided to play nerf basketball. The teams were Wylie and David verses Jahnava and me.

After awhile we got loud so we decided have a sleeping bag fight. David emerged from the kitchen, swung the sleeping bag at Jahnava and hit him. Jahnava lost his balance stumbled and fell into the couch. Wylie swung at me. He got me in the stomach. The impact through me into the plaid covered chair.

It was eight o'clock and we decided to watch television so I turned it on. When it was time for a commercial we got up and laid our sleeping bags down on the cold wooden floor. I propped my pillow up on the wall.

It was already eleven o'clock now, David turned the T.V. off and we went to sleep.

At seven thirty we all woke up, switched the television on and watched cartoons. When my Mom and Dad woke up we had breakfast. Wylie turned around to look out the window and his elbow knocked his bowl of cold and soggie Rice Krispies into his lap. I stared at him for a couple of seconds and then I laughed. Wylie had already started laughing. He was all stiff from getting wet. I yelled for my Mom. She came and smiled at Wylie. She said, "I'll get some towells." As she wiped up the floor my brother was getting Wylie some dry pants.

After breakfast each of us grabbed one of Jahnoua's walkie talkies out of his green, blue and gray bag and walked up the old pebble packed road. When we were next to the Powells house we could hear someone on the Walkie Talkie, he sounded like a trucker but we didn't know so we started talking to him. We couldn't get through to him. When it was twelve O'clock

When it was twelve O'clock we went back to our house and had

Final Copy of Sleep Over

(continued)

lunch. After lunch my mother gave me eleven dollars for admission, skate rental and food and she drove us to Interstate ninety-one.

At ten of five we started to take our roller skates off. When I got to my right foot the strings had worked there way into a knot and couldn't untie it. After about 20 minutes a lady cut the strings. We went out to my mothers car and she drove each of us back to our own homes.

Peer Conference Form
for Laundry Day

WRITING CONFERENCE AND REVISION FORM

Writer: _____ TOM

Story Title: _Laundry Day_

Date of Finished Piece _Jan. 31._

PEER READERS	WHAT SPECIFICALLY DID THE READER LIKE?	WHAT SPECIFICALLY DID THE READER SUGGEST TO DO
JASON	he liked when I said that _(unclear)_ clothes until he dry broke	aspirin commercial
G3 _(unclear)_	they said it was funny	_(unclear)_ make the laundry _(unclear)_ little boy more _(unclear)_
JASON	He liked when Chris said the boat.	Have Corey put Mike's sisters Barbie doll use _covered_ in a coat story.

LIST, SPECIFICALLY, WHAT YOU DID TO REVISE THIS PAPER.

I used _Laundry Day_ for a title and made the laundry water overflow.

1. How have the revisions you made improved the quality of this piece?

I think the revisions helped the story get more exciting and funny.

2. What aspects of this paper do you still feel "not quite right" about?

3. What DO YOU LIKE about your story and why?

I like how the story is funny because I've always wanted to make a story that everybody thought funny. I think I achieved that.

Chris's First Draft

of Lost in the Woods

One day I went
over to the haricu's house.
With my brother Andrew Potter
and Grham Gill Jhonava Heller
was allready there.
We decided to play hide and
Go seek me and Johnava
alwase hide together The
first game we were it
We tagged (Grahm,Andrews
and my Brother We hid
On the other side of the
garden. They saw us. We
ran back in the woods
we were cracking twigs
and dodging trees as fast
as we could till we theaut
we lost them we only
hoped they wenet as
lost as us. We started
cutting back twoed the
houses we were nervus
after a while When

First Draft of Lost in the Woods

(continued)

nothing happened. We were
u neasy. finally we came
out a few houses downtir
(oad. we ran down the   )
road and got to base.
then I went home
and my dad came.
the end

Final Copy of

Lost in the Woods

One day I went over to the Harlow's house. My brother, Andrew Potter and Graham Gill went along. Jahnava Heller was already there. We decided to play hide-and-go-seek. Jahnava and I always hide together.

The first game we were it. We tagged Graham, Andrew, and my brother. They were it. We hid on the other side of the garden. We waited . . .98. . .99. . .100. Ready or not! We were seen. We ran back in the woods. We were cracking twigs and dodging trees as fast as we could till we thought we lost them. Only we hoped they weren't as lost as us. We started to cut back to the houses like a compass. We stopped every minute to see if we were being followed. We were nervous. We heard the birds and the wind--nothing else. Leaves were crunching as if there were a fire. The smell was of pine. Finally we came out a few houses down the road. We trekked down and got to base. We told them we were here. They came running. They said it was time to go home.

Chris's First Draft

of The Broken Brakeline

Hmmm boss wants me too advurise this motorcycle shop said mac a darkharia teengger who worked at a motor cycle shop. just then a customer drove up can i help you said mac the customer was thin and shot a motorcycle helmet coverd his face.

My motorcycces russed he said with a western accent whats the problerm dont know ok ill check it they walked out it looks like you have a broken brakeline itll take a few days to replace ok he walked out of sight they watched the he was it was old and russed it had a bent right handlebar as he called a few auto part stor he wondered why the man had been in such a

hurry suddenly he herd
somthing he saw a man
with a suit on he had
a beard misstach he had
pretty big tan he came
to mac and said
what motercycle is that
why should I tell you
I asked suddenly
the man lashed out with
a knife mac got away
and said I didint think
he was that ugly
just
then he saw a gun
it had fallen from
the motercycle he piked
it up bammmmm
he killed the man a police
man came up and
asked mac quesstions well
ill be you just killed a
criminal wanted in every
state but alaska

First Draft of Broken Brakeline

(continued)

31.

somy d think you just
earnd yourself 10,000 dollar
and whats motorcycle
might that be uh that
the same thing the examin
asked oh hmm this
name here Herbert Catrna
Wrebben thats a duma
name hes gonna come back
mac was so happy he
could Ill call him
i hi your motorcycles ready
ok he said as he
hung up a faint tap
tap broke up the convr
sation the policeman
hid the body and himself
Hey whats are you doin
this guys wanted the suspense
was apalling he slipped
up the policemanjetimped out
dress the man put his
hands up // hoas but how
whas // the policeman

First Draft of Broken Brakeline

(continued)

asked am suppaired
to take this matercycle to
someone and was that
didnt mith that he was
into I'm callin when
mac ginned the matercu...
he told his bail I'm
boss was writing on
a dus dilguse It look...
like the owner off the
matercycle bubylt the pawn
on was still there he's
arrested the boss and
mac made his notes...

Final Copy of

The Broken Brakeline

"Hmmm," said Mac, a dark-haired
teenager. "Boss wants me to make an
advertisement for the shop. I bet he
likes me." Then he heard someone
riding up to the shop.

The man was fairly tall and he
had on a leather jacket and a motorcycle
helmet that covered his face. "My
motorcycle's busted," he said with a
western accent.

"What's wrong?" replied Mac. He
thought to himself, "Boss has a western
accent, too." As Mac scanned the motor-
cycle, he said, "You have a broken brake-
line."

"Oh." He walked out of sight.

Mac brought the bike in and
started working on it. Then he heard
another customer at the door. He went
over to the door. There was a man there.
He stood about six feet tall, he had a
moustache, and a beard.

He said, "Who's motorcycle is that?"

"Why should I tell you?"

"Because I asked."

"No!" The man lashed out with a
knife. Mac dropped his wrench in fright.
He dived behind the motorcycle. The man
knocked the motorcycle over. Mac threw
the bulletin board at him.

Final Copy of The Broken Brakeline

(continued)

It hit him, and he dropped his knife.
Mac picked it up and killed the man. Mac
sighed with relief and called the police.
Lieutenant Thompson and five over men came
and asked question after question. It
was boring. Mac couldn't answer most of
them, but still he tried.

Then Lt. Thompson said, "Who's
motorcycle is that?"

"That's the same thing the criminal
asked. Look at this name, Edmond Wilbur
Cosmo."

"He's wanted!"

"I'll call him," Mac said. As Mac
hung up, he said, "In 10 minutes he'll be
here."

As the policement hid themselves and
the body, the suspense was appalling. Finally,
he came. The police shot. It was boss!

Mac filed his report at the police
station. He lived happily ever after.

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