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APPROVAL-GUIDED LEARNING: ITS IMPACT ON SELF-ESTEEM AND  
WRITTEN EXPRESSION SKILLS

A Dissertation Presented

by

STEVEN R. GREENBERG

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

September 1990

School of Education

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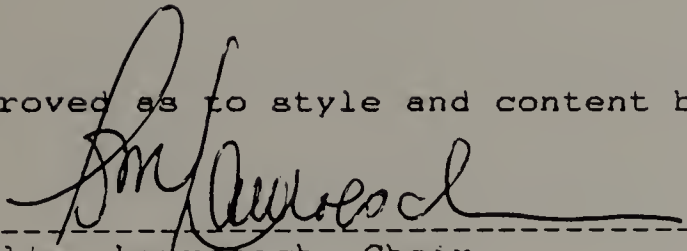
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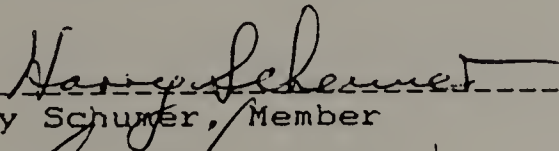
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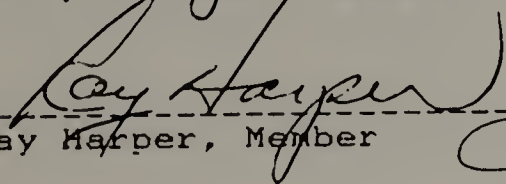
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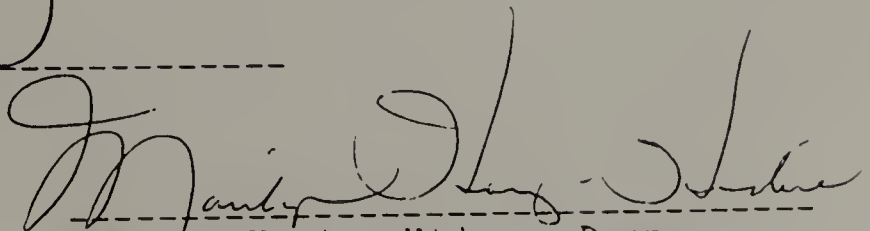
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To my loving wife, Patricia, for her inspiration, confidence, patience, assistance, and love. With her special touch, anything is possible.

ABSTRACT

APPROVAL-GUIDED LEARNING: ITS IMPACT ON SELF-ESTEEM AND  
WRITTEN EXPRESSION SKILLS

SEPTEMBER 1990

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The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of an approach which emphasized the use of approval-guided learning to teach written expression.

Using a quasi-experimental, non-equivalent control group design, the experiment took place during the first six months of the school year. The sample was originally comprised of eighty-four students in grades three through five in southeastern Massachusetts. Two classes (experimental group) were instructed using the IPA writing approach which used approval-guided learning (providing praise for correct responses while not calling attention to errors or incompletions). The remaining two classes (control group) were taught writing skills using an approach where approval was not emphasized. Data from one class of the control group were not reported due to flawed test administration.

The subjects were pre- and post-tested for written expression skills (assessing vocabulary, thematic maturity, spelling, style, and word usage) using a nationally normed, standardized test (TOWL). To determine self-esteem as writers, subjects were asked to report how they felt about themselves as writers using a writing survey developed by the researcher.

Analysis of the data revealed no significant difference at the .05 level between the results of the experimental and control groups in written expression skills. The significance of  $t$  was at the .09 level. Examining the effects of gender on writing skills revealed females in the experimental group recorded significantly higher gains than females in the control group. Gender made no other significant differences.

The data from the writing survey measuring self-esteem of students as writers resulted in the experimental group performing significantly better (at the .05 level) than students in the control group. Gender had no significant effect on results.

Although results were not significant at the .05 level, the data suggests a trend towards the experimental group



making greater gains than the control group in written expression skills and the experimental group reported greater gains in self-esteem as writers compared to control group students.

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# C H A P T E R I

## BACKGROUND

### The Problem

Written expression is the highest form of language and communication. It is a complex human act. For most of a student's school career, writing is one of the primary avenues for him/her to demonstrate knowledge and for teachers to assess how well the student has performed [Cooper & Odell, 1977; Hopman & Glynn, 1988; Mather, 1989]. The centrality of this activity notwithstanding, written expression skills of adults and children in the United States have been described in numerous articles in professional journals as needing improvement [David, 1982; Fader & Howard, 1979; Gorrell, 1987; Neill, 1982].

There are a number of approaches currently employed in schools to teach written expression. One approach teaches many of the components of written expression (grammar, capitalization, punctuation, vocabulary, fluency, thematic development, spelling, and penmanship) in isolation. Another uses a whole language approach, which emphasizes teaching the components of written expression within the context (synthesis) of the student's writing. Regardless of

which approach or combination is used to teach written expression, teachers should consider other dimensions of student learning.

The affective dimension of teaching writing is important because there is reason to believe that self-esteem, which is germane to all learning, is of especial importance in learning to write [Hillerich, 1979; Schwartz, 1972]. Self-esteem should be more central to the process of critical review of the young student's writing than a focus on grammatical construct and other matters of form [Ray Harper, personal commentary, October, 1988]. Some researchers have suggested that if the teacher spent more energy recognizing what was good about what children wrote and less energy telling them their errors, the teacher may find that students are more willing to experiment with new vocabulary, themes and styles, thereby expanding upon their written expressive skills [Ashbar & Trump, 1985; Hillerich, 1979].

Studies of teacher evaluation of student writing have stressed the need for alternatives to traditional approaches [Hall, 1988]. For example, Lyles [1982] called attention to the lack of positive comments made by teachers for correct student work. Positive comments tend to be brief such as "Good Job" or "Terrific." Students are baffled with respect

to what qualifies their work for such accolades when no specific positive feedback is offered.

The current state of affairs is that teachers risk eroding the basis of students' self-esteem as writers by creating pupil expectations that only errors will be highlighted [Coleman, 1980; Collins, 1985; Ginott, 1972]. Against the background of knowledge we have about the relationship of positive reinforcement to learning, these practices would appear to be counterproductive. A student's sense of real or perceived incompetence is a strong negative motivational factor in all learning. This is especially true of the young student who may become so discouraged that all future attempts at success are obviated [Coleman, 1980; David, 1982; Maslow, 1968]. Consequently, this process allows pupils to reach the conclusion early in their school careers that they are incapable of good writing [Graves, 1983].

There is at least one approach for teaching written expression that is deliberately and centrally concerned with positive reinforcement for the enhancement of student self-esteem. The IPA (Invitation, Publication & Appreciation) approach uses a whole language approach but differs from other whole language approaches in its (IPA's) emphasis on approval-guided learning, using positive

reinforcement paired with not calling attention to errors (extinction) [Harper, personal communication, October, 1988].

Approval-guided learning has been characterized by teachers who use the IPA approach as the component most responsible for student gains in writing. These teachers believe approval enhances the students' self-esteem as writers. While there are undocumented testimonials attributing achievement in written expression to deliberately using positive reinforcement (approval) on the part of the teacher, no standardized evaluation has been conducted to establish any significant difference in the effectiveness of writing approaches and corresponding results.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine if the level of achievement in written expression skills of children in grades three through six is greater using the a writing approach that emphasizes approval-guided learning than traditional writing approaches, and if it is greater, to determine whether or not it can be attributed to the deliberate use of positive feedback. Since enhancing self-esteem through the use of approval-guided learning is paramount in the IPA writing approach, this approach seems



promising. If it is determined that the IPA approach produces higher levels of written expression achievement than other writing approaches, can this improvement be attributed to the deliberate use of positive reinforcement (approval)?

#### Research Questions

To determine the effectiveness of approval-guided learning, some questions that should be explored include:

1. Do students' writing skills improve at an equal or greater rate using traditional writing approaches or by using approval-guided learning as measured by a nationally normed, standardized test of written expression skills?

2. If the use of approval-guided learning is found to improve students' written expression skills at an equal or greater rate than traditional writing approaches, then what attribute(s) may account for the results?

3. If a student's writing improves using approval, has the approval-guided learning approach enhanced students' self-esteem about their writing skills?

#### Assumptions

1. As a group, teachers who use the IPA approach will usually employ more approval when teaching writing than the general population of classroom teachers. The appreciation

component with its emphasis on approval is unique to the IPA approach.

2. Children can reliably report how they feel about themselves as writers.

3. Progress in written expression skills can be measured.

#### Definition of Terms

Approach behavior: A willingness on the part of the subject to attempt a task. To approach and speak positively about the targeted task.

Approval: For the purposes of this study, the term Approval may be interchanged with the term Positive Reinforcement. It is not intended to encompass the full scope of positive reinforcement as defined by behavioral psychologists but rather limited to its use in Approval-Guided Learning.

Approval-Guided Learning is a process whereby the teacher provides the student with public positive reinforcement for correct work. The teacher does not call attention to errors for the student whose self-esteem as a writers would be jeopardized. This process promotes a positive learning environment where the student feels secure that his work will not be criticized and as he

becomes more comfortable about his writing, he may be willing to explore ways to expand and improve upon his written expression.

Attitude: An outward manifestation about how one feels about a set of events. An observer infers attitudes subjectively based upon statements, body language, etc.

Avoidance behavior: Engaging in another behavior in an attempt to avoid the behavior which resulted in an aversive or punishing stimulus.

Contrived format: Assessment of written expression which require little writing on the part of the student and quantitatively measures skill knowledge of rules of writing (also referred to as indirect format).

Direct format: See spontaneous format.

Extinction is the removal of the reinforcing consequences for a specific behavior or set of behaviors.

Indirect format: See contrived format.

IPA is the writing approach developed by Professor Ray Harper currently of Bridgewater State College,

Bridgewater, Massachusetts. It uses a holistic approach to teaching written expression. The focus on approval makes this approach unique. Further detail of the IPA approach and its attributes can be found in Chapter two.

Positive Reinforcement: A procedure which follows desired behavior with positive consequences in order to strengthen the behavior [Gardner, 1974].

Punishment: An aversive consequence given in response to a given operant behavior in order to weaken or decrease the future occurrence of that behavior.

Self-concept: The list of attributes an individual believes to be true about himself. For example, a person may believe he is tall, fat, a writer, etc. No quality is assessed to the attributes [Beane & Lipka, 1986].

Self-esteem: The value an individual places on the attributes of his self-concept. For example, a person may have the self-concept that he is tall. How pleased he is with his height will frame his self-esteem (ie. I'm pleased I'm as tall as I am). Piers [1984] suggested self-esteem can be identified at two levels. The first is the conscious perceptions of self (i.e.,

"I look good today"). The second is the individual's inferred feelings of self based upon his own behaviors or the perceptions of others. This is observable as his attitude. Coopersmith [1986] refers to two levels of self-esteem. The first is referred to as the "specific and transitory" assessment the individual has. This can change with the time and circumstances. The second is the "relatively enduring" assessment of the individual's overall self. A person can have very different appraisals of self-esteem for different circumstances. For example, a student could have a high self-esteem as a basketball player, a moderate self-esteem as a musician and a low self-esteem as a math student [Coopersmith, 1981].

Self-perception: The combination of self-concept and self-esteem as one global descriptor.

Spontaneous format: Subjective assessment of written expression which requires the student to write a composition. The teacher may assess the composition and basic skills within the writing sample (also referred to as direct format) [Mather, 1989]

Traditional writing approaches are ways to teach written expression that do not emphasize approval-guided

learning. Traditional writing approaches can teach written expression skills in isolation or in a whole language approach.

Written expression is communication in writing. The interrelated skills (grammar, capitalization, punctuation, vocabulary, fluency, thematic development, spelling and penmanship) are included within written communication.

#### Outline of Dissertation

The remainder of this dissertation is divided into four major chapters. Chapter two reviews the literature on the relationship between improved academic achievement and the use of approval to improve written expression skills. Chapter three describes the sample of students who were involved in the study. A list of instruments used are included as well as a description of the design of the study. Chapter four reports findings, and chapter five draws conclusions and note implications for practice and for further study.

## C H A P T E R    I I

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

It is the purpose of this literature review to synthesize research on how positive reinforcement can be used to improve self-esteem as a prelude to inquiry into the influence of positive reinforcement in the teaching of writing in the early years.

#### Operant Conditioning and Self-esteem

The literature suggests that following a response with a reinforcing stimulus will teach new behaviors or responses or strengthen existing ones. There are two types of behavioral responses. The first is respondent or reflexive. This involves a reflexive action of the smooth muscles or glands and is controlled by an eliciting stimulus [Becker, Engleman & Thompson, 1975; Machan, 1974; Skinner, 1974]. Getting goose bumps after feeling a cold blast of air is an example of this type of response [Williams, 1973]. The second is operant or voluntary. These behaviors require an action by the voluntary muscles and are controlled by reinforcing or punishing stimuli. Picking up a telephone after it rings is an example of this type of behavior [Williams, 1973]. If an operant behavior is followed by no reinforcement, the behavior is likely to decrease or

disappear. This is referred to as extinction [Gage & Berliner, 1975; Machan, 1974; Skinner, 1974; Thorndike, 1931, 1932; Williams, 1973].

A stimulus which increases an operant behavior is referred to as a reinforcement. A positive reinforcer is a rewarding stimulus which encourages an individual to repeat the action which resulted in the rewarding stimulus. This leads to a strengthening of that behavior [Gage & Berliner, 1975; Skinner, 1974; Thorndike, 1931]. The effectiveness of a positive reinforcement upon a specific behavior is contingent upon several variables: the rate at which reinforcement is provided, the type of reinforcer used and the number of responses which are reinforced [Gage & Berliner, 1975; Hull, 1943]. Behavior which has been reinforced frequently is highly resistant to extinction when the reinforcer is withdrawn [Harris and Nygaard, 1961]. A negative reinforcer is a stimulus which encourages the individual to engage in a behavior that results in the removal of that stimulus. This also strengthens that behavior [Skinner, 1974; Thorndike, 1931].

A punisher is an aversive stimulus or withdrawal of reinforcers which follows an operant behavior and weakens or decreases the probability that the behavior will be repeated [Becker, Engleman & Thomas, 1975]. There is conflicting



evidence regarding the value of punishment as an agent of behavioral change. Estes [1944] examined the effect of punishment on rat behavior. He determined that while punishment suppresses behavior, the behavior will return to its pre-punishment level once the punishing stimulus is removed. Azrin and Holz [1966] reviewed the research on punishment and found that a punishing stimulus has an effect on behavior opposite of a reinforcing stimulus. Thorndike [1932] determined that the use of a punishing stimulus yields inconsistent results and may lead to task avoidance in order to avoid the aversive stimulus. Punishment has the effect of weakening the behavior but is less effective than reinforcement strengthening desired behaviors, and may in fact reinforce (negatively) an avoidance behavior [Becker, Engleman & Thomas, 1975]. A child who is engaged in an avoidance behavior is often described by his teachers as having a "bad attitude" about school or school related tasks, e.g., being a reluctant writer.

How a child "feels" about a task is often inferred through subjective observation of his/her attitude. A "bad attitude" is inferred when a child makes a negative statement about a task or demonstrates task avoidance. A "good attitude" is inferred when a child makes positive statements about a task or demonstrates approach behavior. Attitudes evolve as a consequence of interactions with

reinforcing or punishing events which can lead to approach or avoidance behaviors. Self-esteem and self-confidence relate to the attitude that a child has about his /her own competency on a task and are a consequence of the reinforcing or punishing events related to that task [Becker, Engleman & Thomas, 1975]. Positive reinforcement increases self-esteem while negative reinforcement produces the opposite effect [Christensen, 1983; Collins, 1985; Dinkmeyer, 1963; Gradner, 1974]. When self-esteem and self-confidence are viewed as a product of reinforcing / punishing events upon operant behavior, they can also be seen as subject to behavioral manipulation and environmental influences.

The impact of environmental influences on the development of self-esteem is well documented in the research on child development [Erickson, 1973; Maslow, 1968; Munsinger, 1971; Skinner, 1971, 1974; Sutton-Smith, 1973]. A very young child's perceptions of self are usually based upon the feedback provided by his parents or significant others (such as teachers) in his environment and provides the foundation upon which his self-esteem is built [Beane & Lipka, 1936; Musinger, 1971].

The nature of these interactions is an essential component in the development of a child's self-concept and

self-esteem. Children identified as having high levels of self-esteem were found to have parents who took an active role in providing consistent structure and expectations while providing positive support and encouragement to the child for his/her accomplishments. These parents had high expectations for themselves and for their children [Erikson, 1968; Sutton-Smith, 1973]. Children identified as having low self-esteem were found to have parents who used negative reinforcers or punishment as a form of discipline, and were inconsistent in their demands and expectations and in their responses to their child's accomplishments [Sutton-Smith, 1973]. Similarly, feedback from teachers in the classroom influences the development of self-esteem as it relates to achievement.

A number of studies have suggested a relationship between improved self-esteem and achievement in academics [Coopersmith, 1981; Miller, 1981; Whelan, 1988]. One such study sought to determine if there was a relationship between elementary students' academic performance and self-esteem. The researcher concluded from the data that when students' self-esteem increase, they succeed at the task [Whelan, 1988]. Other researchers have collected data regarding the relationship between achievement and self-esteem and concluded that when student self-esteem decreases, task success decreases [Christensen, 1983; Hopman

& Glynn, 1988). A good strategy for increasing students' academic achievement may be for teachers to focus their energies on improving students' self-esteem [Coopersmith, 1981]. School-aged children who have high levels of self-esteem have a lot of confidence in themselves. This translates into an assertiveness which helps them succeed [Sutton-Smith, 1973]. If self-esteem can be modified or changed and is sensitive to environmental influences, it is important to note what impact self-esteem has on achievement of different tasks and to structure the environment accordingly.

For children to succeed in academics, they must develop positive self-perceptions. Children who perceive failure in meeting task expectancies develop a lack of confidence in their ability to be successful in the future on that task [Coopersmith, 1981; Daly & Winston, 1980; Miller, 1981; Millisan, 1980]. Their prior experiences with that task has led them to expect failure. Failure often functions as punishment [Becker, Engleman & Thomas, 1975]. They avoid the task which they associate with punishment. Children who avoid the task will be unable to develop confidence in their own competency as they avoid opportunities to succeed [Baxter, 1987; Christensen, 1983; Coopersmith, 1981; Quandt, 1970; Sutton-Smith, 1973]. They avoid participating in activities or expressing their opinions about a topic if

they feel it may lead to negative criticism. These children are in need of some external intervention which will provide them with encouragement and success experiences to reverse the avoidance cycle [Becker, Engleman & Thomas, 1975; Miller, 1981]. As these children experience success, their self-esteem increases and they become more willing to try other tasks instead of refusing to even try [Schwartz, 1972; Stevens, 1973; Ziegler, 1981].

A systematic approach which globally applies operant conditioning principles in the classroom may provide a model for teachers to use to improve academic achievement while enhancing student self-esteem and confidence. Attention from adults is potentially a powerful reinforcer for children and as a consequence, it becomes a powerful agent which teachers can use to promote academic or behavioral changes from students [Beaven, 1977; Gardner, 1974; Hopman & Glynn, 1988]. Attention can take the form of positive or negative reinforcement.

The withdrawal of attention from a student's response decreases the probability that the response will be repeated [Gardner, 1974; Skinner, 1971]. Therefore, it is imperative that encouragement and attention continue to be provided to children's responses in order to preserve the response [Butler-Adam, 1982; Skinner, 1971; Gardner, 1974; Harper,

personal commentary, November, 1988]. Teachers should continue to provide a level of encouragement and attention to successful students. Children need teachers who can acknowledge a student's success and help build upon that success [Beaven, 1977; Dinkmeyer, 1963].

The teacher is central to the process of cultivating and sustaining the continued growth of self-esteem in children. To build self-esteem as a precursor to achievement often requires significant changes in teacher behavior. Teachers frequently provide instruction based upon their own childhood memories of how they were taught [Graves, 1983; Lyles, 1982; Spencer, 1978]. Historically, teachers have been autocratic. They commanded and pupils performed. Students who performed to teacher expectations were rewarded by good grades, stickers, "smiley faces," etc. They were encouraged by their success and continued to strive. Students who made errors or failed at a task were viewed as violating a demand by the teacher. These students had their mistakes circled in red, received "sad faces," poor grades, etc. These students became discouraged, lagged in performance, and were labeled unmotivated or reluctant by the teacher [Beaven, 1977; Stevens, 1973]. As a consequence, any new encouragement was withheld [Dinkmeyer, 1963]. Alternative ways of responding to student products such as using positive reinforcement to guide students

toward closer approximations of teacher expectancies result in improved student self-concept. Self-concept can be improved but many changes are not immediate. These changes are slow in evolving but do come quicker and easier for children at earlier ages [Christensen, 1983].

Teachers can enhance the self-esteem of their students by being respectful towards them in a variety of situations. They can ask students for opinions on topics of discussion and encourage the students to express ideas which are different from the teacher's. This indicates to the student that the teacher values the students' ideas. This can improve the students' self-esteem. Comments by teachers on students' papers can be used to encourage and re-direct student energies. The teacher should carefully avoid negative comments which may be interpreted by a student as "punishment" [Staples, 1985]. Teachers should have high expectations of their students and communicate these expectations to the students. Teachers who expect their students to perform better in learning situations tend to get better academic results from those children [Brookover, Erickson and Joiner, 1967; Good, 1970]. These strategies can help students in developing confidence in their abilities and raise their self-esteem.

## Writing

Writing is developmental [Ashbar & Trump, 1985; Douglas, 1975; Fadiman & Howard, 1979; Hall, 1988; Harper, personal commentary, October, 1988; Graves, 1983; McCaig, 1981]. Beginning writers seek acceptance, recognition, and encouragement as they first learn how to write because they are unsure of themselves [Harper, personal commentary, October, 1988; Simonds, 1964]. Students who are confident about their written skills can accept correction. Less confident students need to be reassured that what they are trying to communicate is valued by the teacher.

Teachers who impose negative critical opinions on a beginner writer's work risk eroding that writer's perception of his/her ability to be a successful writer [Millisan, 1980]. Donald Graves noted the relationship between children's writing and their feelings of self-esteem.

Children want to write. They want to write the first day they attend school. This is no accident. Before they went to school, they marked up walls, pavements, newspapers with crayons, chalk, pens or pencils ... anything that makes a mark. The marks say, "I am." "No, you aren't," say most school approaches to the teaching of writing [Graves, 1983].

Developmentally, children who are just learning to write or who have low self-esteem as writers are not able to learn comfortably if their teacher highlights their errors frequently.



Children tend to make numerous errors due to their inexperience as successful writers [Baxter, 1987; Collins, 1985; Harper, 1970; Hall, 1988]. As teachers highlight these children's errors, the children begin to perceive themselves as failures as writers. Failure can be perceived as punishment and the teacher's critical comments help to verify that committing oneself to paper, as in writing, is a punishing experience [Becker, Engleman & Thomas, 1975]. Many "poor" students stop reading teacher's comments about their written work because it is painful [Holt, 1969]. The children learn to expect negative criticism and as a consequence, they avoid committing to paper, anything which will subject them to more criticism [Millisan, 1980].

When criticism results in student avoidance of writing, the opportunity for that student to improve writing skills decreases [Hall, 1988; Harper, personal commentary, November, 1988; Millisan, 1980; Neill, 1982]. Instead of incorporating the teacher's suggestions into his writing, these students may become less fluent and descriptive, often repeating the same errors that the teacher had previously highlighted [Ashbar & Trump, 1985; Christensen, 1983; Hopman & Glynn, 1988; Lyles, 1982]. Upon seeing repeated written errors, the teacher should try to determine if the student is developmentally ready to accept and/or understand the criticism. If the student is not at a developmental level

where he can productively utilize teacher correction of his written work, the teacher should provide instruction which is consistent with the student's development. As the child becomes more comfortable as a writer, the teacher can then begin to increase his suggestions for improvement of the child's written work [Harper, personal commentary, October, 1988; Millisan, 1980; Ziegler, 1981]. Clearly, the evidence demonstrates that if the teacher moves too quickly without regard for the student's developmental level, he/she risks contributing to the student's developing negative self-esteem as a writer [Schwartz, 1987]. This can lead to decreased student performance and productivity as a writer.

The developmental level of a writer is not related to age. Selfe, in her work with college students identified as high apprehensive or at an early developmental level, reported those writers:

1. feared starting to write.
2. lacked confidence in their ability to write.
3. felt their training as writers was inadequate.
4. spent less time planning their writing because their primary concern was to get that first sentence on the paper and their next concern was how to complete the writing task.
5. feared negative evaluation of their writing by the teacher.

6. tried to avoid writing unless it was required at school.

She identified low apprehensive or at a higher developmental level, writers who:

1. were confident of their writing skills.
2. took advantage of many opportunities to write.
3. spent significantly more time planning their writing [Selfe, 1984].

As their confidence increases, developmentally mature writers are able to accept the identification of some errors in their work and can get involved in the process of revision as a part of improving their written product [Coleman, 1980; Dussel, 1955; Klein, 1985; Lyles, 1982; Shutes, 1970]. It is imperative that it be presented in a supportive manner and that a balance which is consistent with the developmental level of the writer be maintained between positive comments and corrective suggestions [Coleman, 1980; Dinkmeyer, 1963; Lally, 1983].

In consideration that written expression is a form of language and communication, the teacher must determine how to guide learning for the student in a positive manner once the risk-free writing environment has been decreased. It is important that the teacher make a clear distinction between the criticism of the author and criticism of the author's

written work. This means that suggestions for improvement ought to clearly be directed toward the author's work and not the author [Ginott, 1972; Miller, 1981]. Freedman quoted a student, "Criticize my writing and you criticize me as a person." Children who feel under attack will not invest themselves in their writing. They will instead seek ways to avoid the attack; in this case, avoid writing. The pre-requisite to succeeding is to feel safe as a writer [Baxter, 1987; Freedman, 1987; Hopman & Glynn, 1988]. Negative statements such as, "You did not put a capital letter here," are often perceived by the student as a personal attack. An alternative approach to providing the same feedback would be, "The first word in the sentence needs a capital." In this case, it is the lack of a capital which is the issue and not the failure of a student to use a capital. Students rarely seek opportunities to place themselves in a position where they are vulnerable to attack. They will express themselves as little as possible on paper to minimize chances for attack. Students need teacher approval to feel safe and to have continued success [Hall, 1988]. The student's developmental level as a writer will determine the degree of approval needed. How safe (and how good) people feel about themselves as writers can have a significant impact on their lives.

Children decide early in the writing process if they are capable writers. If they do not believe they are capable writers, they rarely choose to make writing an integral part of their lives as adults. One study found students who had low self-esteem as writers generally selected careers as artists, athletes, and dancers where writing is not emphasized. Students who had high self-esteem as writers generally selected careers as lawyers, authors, or reporters where writing is important [Birnbaum, 1980; Miller & Daly, 1975]. The impact on how people feel about themselves as writers extends beyond career choices.

A study of eighteen college students enrolled in a writing course was conducted by Denman. The purpose of the study was to examine if personality changes occurred in students as they become more successful as writers. By administering the California Psychological Inventory to these students as a pre and post test, Denman found that positive personality changes had occurred in 13 of the 18 students. For these 13 students, their self-confidence had improved. As a group, they were also more adventurous, adaptable, and individualistic and less pessimistic, conforming and inhibited. Denman concluded from the study that there may be long lasting personality changes which accompany students' learning how to write. The study found

that learning to write had the added benefits of increased self-esteem and expectations of success [Denman, 1981].

The literature highlights a number of strategies designed to enhance the student's confidence as a writer. In one strategy, tasks are presented to the student in small, success oriented increments. Students are encouraged by their success at each step and continue to progress to the next level [Graves, 1983; Harper, personal commentary, December, 1988; Schwartz, 1987; Ziegler, 1981]. Another strategy suggests that the teacher determine the most common errors made by many of the students in the class and provide large group instruction to remediate these [Collins, 1985, Harper, 1970; Klein, 1985]. Teachers should not focus on errors during the first few weeks of instruction. Instead, they should assess how each student reacts to correction [Coleman, 1980; Ziegler, 1981]. Students write more creatively when the teacher accepts and values their efforts unconditionally and encourages them to experiment when writing [Ashbar & Trump, 1985; Millisan, 1980; Ratner, 1985]. Individual comments to each student regarding the positive aspects of their written work was noted to be an effective strategy to encourage continued writing [Ashbar & Trump, 1985; Beaven, 1977; Collin, 1985; Hall, 1988; Hopman & Glynn, 1988; Lyles, 1982; Neill, 1982]. Positive feedback with specific teacher comments encourages students to expand

their writing with more detail [R. Harper, personal communication, November, 1988; Stevens, 1973; Ziegler, 1981]. It is noteworthy that students value the time that teachers invest to comment on their work. Coleman illustrates this in his description of what happened in an English composition class. A student teacher of this class observed what school papers students regularly threw away. When the discarded papers were examined, none had teacher comments written on them. Papers upon which the teacher had written comments had been taken from the classroom by the authors [Coleman, 1980]. These students had invested in their written work and valued their teachers' opinion of this work. Written expression is a high level of communication. These students sought out teacher comments because it assured them they were heard by their teacher.

In summary, the literature suggests a relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement of students, especially in writing. A number of studies have indicated that as the self-esteem of the students as writers increased, their written expression skills improved. Students need to have teachers who can help them improve their self-esteem as writers by identifying the desirable and correct attributes in their writing [Ashbar & Trump, 1985; Baxter, 1987; Hopman & Glynn, 1988; Lewis & Lindaman, 1989; Lyles, 1982; Neill, 1982; Schwartz, 1987]. One method

of enhancing students' self-esteem as writers involves the use of approval-guided learning (praise or positive reinforcement paired with extinction) by recognizing correct attributes of their written work and not calling attention to errors or omissions.

### An Approach to Approval-guided Learning

One approach to using approval-guided learning is incorporated in the IPA writing approach. The purpose of this section is to provide a description of the IPA approach for teaching written expression skills. IPA is an acronym for Invitation, Publication, and Appreciation. The first goal of the IPA approach is to develop fluency of written expression. Fluency, as it relates to written language refers to the ability of the writer to feel comfortable and express his thoughts on paper. Correctness is secondary to fluency and follows it. The teacher does not provide feedback about incompletions (errors) until the student is developmentally mature as a writer and able to be receptive to critical feedback.

#### Invitation

Invitation is the first component of IPA writing approach. The term "Invitation" evolved from a concept



developed by Purkey at the University of North Carolina in Greensboro which he referred to as "Invitational Learning." Purkey structured his lessons as invitations to learn.

The IPA approach begins with an invitation to writing. The teacher selects passages from children's literature to illustrate one skill that is to be presented in the lesson. Often, only one paragraph or less is needed to highlight the desired skill. This provides the targeted concept and the word rich environment to get the students started on writing. For example, if the focus of a lesson is to improve students' ability to recognize and use adjectives when writing, the teacher provides a passage which illustrates the correct use of adjectives. The students are asked to identify the adjectives from the selection. The students then collectively generate a list of adjectives not included in the children's literature. The teacher writes these on the board for reference during the publishing and writing phase. The slow starting or less confident writer can also refer to and use the list of words or phrases generated by the class. Since the list is generated by the classmates, there is a sense of ownership and teacher acceptance so students can safely use these words as they begin to write.

## Publication

Publishing is the second component of the IPA approach. Publication is the act of putting one's writing on public display. It differs from writing in its intended audience. Writing is for the writer, another, or a group of others to read. Publishing is intended to be read by the entire class. One fifth of the class is invited to volunteer to compose and thereby publish on the chalkboard while the remainder of the class compose at their desks. The teacher focuses the first few minutes during this writing phase recognizing and accepting the work of the children publishing on the board. This ensures they get off to a good start. The students at the board serve as examples for those seated and their writing suggests ideas to those who may have difficulty getting started writing.

Publishing is not a novel concept to education. It dates back many decades. Historically, publishing on the chalkboard put the student at risk for criticism. Teachers highlighted what was wrong with the student's written work for the entire class to view. As a consequence, many students became reluctant writers. IPA was designed to eliminate the reluctant writer through the enhancement of confidence and self-esteem as a writer.

## Appreciation

Appreciation is the third and most important component of the IPA approach. The teacher invites each author who publishes to read his written work to the class. Members of the class are encouraged to identify specific attributes of the written work which are correct, focusing on the skill modelled in the invitation. The teacher can also use this time to provide public recognition of specific attributes of written expression such as good penmanship, proper spelling of words, correct usage of capitalization, punctuation, etc. Each student is able to compare what he has written to what is being publicly recognized, making private mental corrections to his work. The teacher guides the student by using successive approximations to get closer to the desired product. The teacher publicly reinforces what is good so the student will learn what attributes of the writing to repeat. This is referred to as Approval-Guided Learning. Extinction of the incompleteness comes when the pupil comfortably and correctly uses the particular writing skill.

The IPA writing process emphasizes the use of approval to improve students' self-esteem. A study has been conducted to determine if a difference exists in the products of students' written work using the IPA approach and traditional approaches. Although public approval may be used to varying degrees by individual teachers using

traditional approaches, its application is generally not a major emphasis of the traditional approach. Chapter three will discuss the design of this study.

## C H A P T E R    I I I

### RESEARCH DESIGN

To address the research question(s), a study will be conducted to determine if there is a significant difference between improvement in written expression and self-esteem levels of children taught using the IPA writing approach (approval) and other approaches used to teach writing where approval is not the major emphasis.

#### Instrumentation

Writing is multi-dimensional and its assessment is complex [Mather, 1989]. The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) defined writing as, "The process of selecting, combining, arranging and developing ideas in effective sentences, paragraphs, and, often, longer units of discourse [What do we, 1979]. Isaacson provided a comprehensive definition of the aspects of written work teachers should consider.

When various theories of written expression are compared, five principal components seem to emerge: fluency - the amount written (number of words in the composition); syntax - complexity of the sentences; vocabulary - degree of sophistication in the student's choice of words; content - originality of ideas, organization of thought, maturity of style; and conventions - the mechanical aspects, such as margins, verb endings, spelling, and punctuation, that teachers expect students to use [Isaacson, 1984].

The evaluation of written expression should profile the student's strengths and weaknesses within each attribute which makes up written expression.

Hopman and Glynn [1988] suggest that the qualitative and quantitative aspects of written behavior can be measured objectively. There are two basic test formats used to evaluate the various components of written expression. One is a "Contrived" or indirect format in which each element of written expression is evaluated in isolation. Lloyd-Jones [1977] refers to this as "Atomistic." This format requires a limited amount of writing on the part of the student and quantitatively measures a student's specific skill level of writing. A spelling dictation test is an example of a contrived or indirect test format. Scoring tends to be objective. An answer is either correct or incorrect and style or appearance is not evaluated in making this determination. Most standardized achievement tests that claim to assess writing skills involve contrived formats and do not give the student an opportunity to write. The student is presented with a problem and asked to select the best answer of several choices provided or to fill in a blank with one word or a short phrase answer [Hall, 1988; Mathers, 1989]. Although considered by some to lack validity, since writing skill is measured without having the student write any substantive text, this format provides

high rater agreement and high reliability and has been demonstrated to be moderately to highly correlated with general writing proficiency [Lloyd-Jones, 1977; Mathers, 1989].

In a "Spontaneous" or direct format, the student's work is viewed holistically or analytically. Lloyd-Jones [1977] refers to this as "Holistic." In holistic scoring, the rater reads the paper rapidly and assigns a score based upon his total impression of the style, content and appearance of the work. In analytic scoring, the rater uses an explicit guide or scale to evaluate selected components of the written work. This format provides lower reliability than the indirect format because of its subjective nature.

The literature does not support the exclusive use of one test format over the other. Each format has its advantages and disadvantages and neither is superior to the other [Breland & Gaynor, 1979; Mathers, 1989; Stiggins, 1982]. Given that writing is multi-dimensional with all the separate elements contributing to the final product, a test which combines both formats in order to assess both basic skills in writing and the ability to apply these skills in written composition should be considered [Hammill, pp. 4-5; Mathers, pp 85-86].

The criteria for selecting an instrument to measure student performance in written expression for this research was established. The test will:

1. evaluate written expression skills.
2. not be overly time consuming for the classroom teacher to administer. To find teachers willing to participate in this field-based research project, the researcher needed to assure them that the time requirements for this research would not greatly impact on their existing schedules and teaching responsibilities.
3. be formatted so that each subtest could be separately scored to provide more specific information about student achievement in each component of written expression.
4. be group administered to minimize the time needed by the teacher to administer the instrument.
5. be designed for use with the targeted sample of children in grades three through six. These grades were selected because grades three through six are generally considered intermediate elementary school aged children.
6. have contrived and spontaneous components. This is to evaluate all aspects of written expression.



7. be nationally normed. The importance of criteria numbers 7, 8, and 9 is to insure the results are an accurate assessment of the student's written expression skills and can be properly compared to the greater population of students in school.
8. have validity and reliability information.
9. be standardized.
10. be designed for standard English and not bilingual assessment to remain within the scope of this study.

To determine if an instrument had been published that met the established criteria, the researcher examined Buros [1985] Ninth Mental Measurements Yearbook and found it listed 106 tests in the category of English. Tests of written expression are listed within the broad category of English tests within Buros. Tests which were not designed for use with children in grades three through six, the targeted sample levels, were eliminated from consideration. This left 28 tests. Of these remaining 28 tests, all tests which were targeted for bilingual populations or designed to measure only oral language were excluded from consideration. This left 13 tests. These 13 tests are:

1. Basic Inventory of National Language
2. Diagnostic Screening Test: Language

3. Language Inventory for Teachers
4. Multi-level Academic Skills Inventory: Reading and Language Arts
5. Porch Index of Communicative Ability in Children
6. Rhode Island Test of Language Structure
7. Syntax One
8. Syntax Two
9. Teacher Assessment of Gramatical Structure
10. Test of Written English
11. Test of Written Language
12. The Token Test for Children
13. Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery

Tests which did not have information about norms, reliability and/or validity were eliminated from consideration. This left four tests for consideration. These were:

1. Basic Inventory of Natural Language
2. Rhode Island Test of Language Structure
3. Test of Written Language
4. Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery

Of these four, only the Test of Written Language (TOWL) was designed to be group administered. The TOWL was examined in greater detail and found to consist of six sub-tests. The six sub-tests are word usage, spelling, style, handwriting,

vocabulary and thematic maturity. Three of these sub-tests use a contrived format and the other three use a spontaneous format.

Using a contrived format, word usage, spelling, and style are evaluated in isolation. The word usage sub-test evaluates the students' knowledge of syntax. This sub-test consists of twenty-five sentences from which one word is missing. The student is asked to fill in the blank with a word which makes the sentence grammatically correct. No word list of potential answers is provided to the student. In the spelling sub-test, twenty-five words are dictated and the student is asked to write each word dictated. The style sub-test evaluates the student's knowledge of the rules of capitalization and punctuation. The student is presented with twenty-five sentences which lack capitalization or punctuation. The student is asked to re-write the sentences, using correct capitalization and punctuation. The assessment in this section is objective. The test manual provides the answers which are correct. The student receives one point for each correct answer.

Using a spontaneous format, thematic maturity, vocabulary, and handwriting are evaluated holistically within the context of a sample of the student's written work. The student is shown three related pictures as a

stimulus and asked to compose and write a story which relates to and joins all three pictures. The test manual provides criteria for judging thematic maturity. These include giving names to the main characters, having a definite ending to the story and integrating all three pictures within the story. In the scoring of the vocabulary sub-test, a student earns points for correct word usage in the story. Only words which contain seven or more letters are scored in this section. Cursive handwriting is evaluated by comparing the student's work to samples provided in the manual. No scoring criteria has been established for manuscript writing. Students who do not use cursive writing are not evaluated in this area of the TOWL.

#### Norming Information

The Test Of Written Language (TOWL) is a standardized test of written expression, nationally normed for children ages seven to eighteen. The norming information is based upon 3,418 students from ages 7.0 to 18.11 in fourteen states [Hammill, 1983]. A review of the TOWL by Mitchell [1985] found the distribution to be reasonable in the areas of geographic area, sex, state, and grade for levels two through twelve.

## Reliability

Reliability of the TOWL is reported in four categories. They are internal consistency, stability, inter-rater reliability, and standard error of measurement.

Internal Consistency. Internal Consistency is used to measure the homogeneity of the items within the test and is used to assess the contrived areas of the test (spelling, style, and word usage). The test authors used the split-half method, corrected using the Spearman-Brown formula, with 50 students from a randomly selected standardization sample of 432 students at eight different age levels. The authors do not specify if the split-half procedure was used for each sub-test or for the entire test. All age groups exceeded the .80 level at  $p < .01$  [Hammill, 1983].

Stability. Stability measures the test / re-test reliability of the instrument. Three studies were completed involving 116 students and the results of these three studies were combined. A review of the TOWL in Buros reported the spelling, word usage, handwriting, and style sections were statistically stable. The thematic maturity section was reported as having borderline stability and the vocabulary section had questionable stability [Mitchell, 1985].

Inter-rater. Inter-rater reliability assesses how consistently different people score the same tests. This is important because the scoring of three TOWL sub-tests are based upon subjective evaluation. The handwriting, vocabulary and thematic maturity sub-tests were administered to fifteen subjects. Each sub-test was evaluated by fifteen scorers, for a total of 225 separate scores. The results of the scores were compared. They agreed in the following sub-tests:

Thematic maturity	93%
Handwriting	76%
Vocabulary	98%

Word usage, spelling, and style sub-tests were not assessed for inter-rater reliability because the scoring of these subtests is objective.

Standard Error of Measurement. The standard error of measurement is used to, "establish the zone within which the true score probably lies" [Hammill, 1983]. The standard error of measurement scores for test scores of students age eight through twelve (the common age range for grades 3 - 6), ranged from 0.7 to 4.4 overall. Below is the range for the standard error of measurement of each sub-test of the TOWL.

Thematic Maturity	1.5 to 1.5
Handwriting	0.7 to 0.7
Spelling	1.6 to 1.7
Word usage	2.5 to 2.7
Style	1.4 to 1.5
Vocabulary	2.7 to 4.4 [Hammill, 1983].

Lower reported values indicate the sub-test is more reliable in presenting precise scores. These values increase as the age of each grouping of students increase. The vocabulary section has the highest standard error of measurement values.

#### Validity

Validity is reported in two areas. These areas are content validity and criterion-related validity.

Content validity . Content validity involves the issue of confirming that the test is made up of items that evaluate what it purports to evaluate. Mitchell [1985] indicated the test authors made strong arguments within the documentation of the test to suggest the content validity is satisfactory. Although Mitchell did not clearly state that he concurred with the authors' contentions, he did not disagree.

Criterion-related Validity. Criterion-related validity is important to determine if the test does

evaluates attributes of written expression. For the TOWL, criterion-related validity is determined by establishing correlations among other tests designed to evaluate written expression. These tests included the Picture Story Language Test, the Language (writing) Total from the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills, the Writing Quotient for the Test of Adolescent Language, and teachers' ratings of written stories from the TOWL's spontaneous format section. A high statistical correlation for criterion-related validity is indicated for the TOWL. Mitchell [1985] suggests these results should be viewed with caution as two of the three tests compared to the TOWL were written by the same authors. Only the CTBS was developed by different authors. The coefficients spread from .47 to .71.

In sum, the TOWL was selected for use in this study because the instrument evaluates the components included in written expression and provides information on norming, reliability and validity. Three of the six sections of the test are evaluated within the context of the student's work and the other three are evaluated in isolated components. Additionally, each sub-test can be scored separately.



The authors of the TOWL have now published the TOWL-2. The new test has two new equivalent forms for the spontaneous formats. The researcher decided against using the TOWL-2 in its entirety because of the amount of time needed to administer the new test. Since it would increase administration time by approximately thirty percent, the TOWL with some modifications is the test of choice.

1. One problem inherent with using the same test for pre, interim and post-testing is a learning factor. The TOWL-2 has equivalent forms for the story component of the spontaneous format of the test. The pictures for the story in forms A and B of the TOWL-2 was used in place of the story in the original TOWL. This provided two different pictures for pre-test and post-test thereby decreasing any learning factor.

2. The cursive handwriting sub-test of the TOWL was be scored. This did not alter the administration of the test. In the different versions of the TOWL and TOWL-2, this sub-test was twice included and twice removed and currently is not included as part of the TOWL-2. This sub-test was the subject of criticism from numerous test evaluators. The test manual makes provisions for prorating the score so a WLQ can be determined. The standard scores of the five sub-tests evaluated will be added, divided by five and multiplied by six. This will provide the sum of the standard scores and the means to then convert to a WLQ.

The literature suggests that children who have higher self-esteem tend to achieve in school better than children with lower self-esteem [Coopersmith, 1981; Miller, 1981; Whelan, 1988]. This conclusion was also supported in the area of writing [Klein, 1985; Millisan, 1980]. As the self-esteem of students as writers increased, their written expression skills also improved. To determine if the IPA approach does improve the self-esteem of students, an instrument is needed to evaluate self-esteem as related to written expression.

The criteria for selecting an instrument which measured self-esteem for this research project was established. The test should:

1. be directly relate to self-esteem of the student as a writer. Since the research project focuses on writing, an instrument is needed to assess the self-esteem of the student as a writer.
2. be easily administered by the classroom teacher during a short period. The reasons for selection of criteria numbers two through six for a self-esteem instrument are the same for the respective criteria in the written expression instrument selection section.

3. be age appropriate for the targeted sample (grades 3 through 6).
4. be group administered.
5. be standardized.
6. be nationally normed.

To determine if an instrument has been published that met the established criteria, the researcher examined Buro's [1985] Ninth Mental Measurements Yearbook and found it listed 343 tests in the area of personality. Tests of self-esteem are listed in the broad category of personality in Buros. Of these, 28 directly related to self-esteem or attitude towards self or school. After eliminating those instruments which were not designed for the targeted sample of ages 8 through 12 (grades 3 through 6), only 8 tests were left for consideration. These tests were:

1. Attitude Towards School, K-12
2. Behavioral Academic Self-Esteem
3. Coopersmith - Self-Esteem Inventories
4. Estes Attitude Scales: Measures of Attitude Towards School Subjects
5. Martinek - Zaichkowsky Self-Concept Scale for Children
6. Measures of Self-Concept
7. Self-Observation Scales
8. Self-Perception Inventory

After examining the profiles and reviews of each of these eight tests in Buro's, none were found which directly related to self-esteem of the student as a writer. This made it necessary to design an instrument intended to measure the self-esteem of students as writers.

The researcher developed a survey (see Appendicies C & D) designed to assess self-esteem of the student as a writer. It can be used at the targeted grade levels three through six. The child is given eleven statements about himself as a writer and asked to respond true or false to each as it relates to himself. Asking young students to assess their own self-esteem is not novel to data collection. Whelan sought to determine if there was a relationship between elementary students' academic performance and self-esteem. Over a three week period, students were asked to chart how they felt about themselves by circling a smile face, straight face, or frown face before beginning an academic task and after completing it [Whelan, 1988].

The writing survey developed by Greenberg can be quickly and easily administered by the classroom teacher. It was field-tested on fifty grade three students. Statements and format were modified based upon student and teacher feedback.

The survey was given at the start of the study and again at its completion. The researcher compared the responses of the experimental and control groups to see if there are any significant differences. A sample of the instrument and related administration directions can be found in Appendices C and D.

**Strengths:** The use of a pre and post test design provides for documentation of changes in attitudes of the experimental and control groups. Another strength is that no other instrument is published that evaluates self-esteem of the student as a writer. The instrument is also quick and easy to administer.

**Weakness:** The instrument lacks any established validity or reliability information.

#### Design of the Study

A sample consisting of four classrooms of children in different grades between grades three through six in

southeastern Massachusetts were randomly selected for this study. For each pair of classes used in the study, one class received instruction using the IPA writing approach (using approval) and the other class received instruction using a writing approach in which approval is not a major emphasis. The researcher selected four classrooms as the number participating because he believed this would be a substantial enough sample to be statistically valid. Grades three through six were targeted because these children are generally considered the intermediate elementary school aged students in this area of the state.

The process of sample selection was initiated by mailing a questionnaire (see Appendices E and F) on May 1, 1989 to teachers who have been trained in the IPA writing process since 1975. The first list included those teachers who were formally trained and currently use the IPA writing approach (emphasizing approval) and the second list included teachers who were not trained to use IPA and use other writing approaches where approval is not the major emphasis. Teachers on either lists were assigned a number. The teachers were randomly selected from the two lists. Each teacher's class will be kept intact as one of the experimental or control group (depending upon the teacher's instructional approach).

Demographic data of participating teachers and their communities can be found in Table A.1. Each teacher sent home a notice (see Appendix H) to parents of their students describing the research project. Attached to the notice was a permission slip that was to be signed, authorizing or preventing participation in the project.

The students who made up the classes included in the experimental and control groups could not be assigned at random. Class lists were completed by each district designed by its own policies and/or procedures. Because of this limitation, the researcher must consider a Quasi-experimental non-equivalent control group design.

The Quasi-experimental design has certain flaws as potential threats to external validity such as maturation, instrumentation and history. Maturation should not be an issue because the control group should mature at the same rate as the experimental group. The nature of the instrument should not be an issue because the same instruments will be administered to both control and experimental groups. History could be an issue but, because each student and class will have a different background, however, their histories have an equal chance of being different for both control and experimental groups.

Threats to external validity include the non-matching of the control group in a Quasi-experimental design. Additionally, the variability of the teachers involved can not be factored out. This factor would include style, discipline, experience, and consistency of the teachers.

#### Design Limitations

1. The design is limited to grades three through six inclusive. It does not account for students who do not fit into this category.
2. Geographical area where the research will be conducted is limited to southeastern Massachusetts.
3. Teacher selection for the experimental groups is limited to teachers responding to the questionnaire (Appendicies E & F).

#### Procedures / Timeline

During the week of September 11-15, 1989, both experimental and control samples were administered the TOWL as a pre-test to establish a baseline. All tests were scored by individuals trained by the researcher. Demographic information were covered to prevent identification by the scorer. The tests from all classes were then randomly ordered for scoring. This procedure is to insure a double blind approach for evaluation of the results. After the results were scored, the cumulative



score for all sub-tests, referred to as the Written Language Quotient (WLQ) were listed for each student. The standard score distribution of the WLQ was designed to have a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15. Students names were placed on one of three lists, for each class, based upon their WLQ. The lists represented students scoring at three levels. The first group was for students scoring greater than one standard deviation above the mean (115+ score) and is be designated the high performance group. Students scoring greater than one standard deviation below the mean (85 or less) is referred to as the low performance group. Students who have been identified as having special education disabilities where their disability would interfere with the accurate assessment of their written expression skills will be excluded from the list for interim testing purposes only. All other students (scoring between 86 and 114) are referred to as the average performance group.

From each class, three students were selected for interim assessments (see Appendix J). One student from each performance group was randomly selected from each class. These students were administered the spontaneous format sections of the TOWL. These interim assessments occurred during the weeks of November 13-17, 1989, and January 29 - February 2, 1990 (see Appendix I). The classroom teacher

forwarded the interim assessment documents to the researcher for scoring and interpretation. The purpose of the interim assessments is to note if there are any growth patterns throughout the duration of the research project. The interim assessments were in addition to the pre and post-test data collection for the entire sample.

The experimental group was taught using the IPA writing process with approval-guided learning and the control group taught using an approach where approval is not a major emphasis. During the week of March 5-9, 1990, the TOWL was administered as a post-test to experimental and control groups. Scoring and analysis of results are reported in Chapter Four.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

#### Written Expression Results

To determine if the level of achievement in the written expression skills of children in grades three through six is different using an approach to teaching writing that emphasizes approval-guided learning than traditional writing approaches, the Test Of Written Language (TOWL), was administered to eighty-four students as a pre-test and eighty-one students as a post-test. Only students with pre- and post-test data are reported in the results. The data were collected and analyzed. For reasons to be delineated later, sixteen students were excluded in the final analysis.

The TOWL uses a standard score called the Written Language Quotient (WLQ). It is calculated by adding together the standard scores of the sub-tests administered. The summed value is converted to a standard score with a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15.

The original TOWL test included six sub-tests. For the purposes of this study, only five sub-tests were administered. The TOWL manual indicates that with a five

sub-test profile, a WLQ can be pro-rated by calculating the mean of the five sub-tests scores. For students absent during the administration of a specific sub-test, the standard scores of the tests taken were summed and divided by the number of tests taken and multiplied by 6 (the number of sub-tests in the complete TOWL). These scores were then converted to WLQ scores using the table in the examiner's manual.

The data were organized into pre- and post-test mean Written Language Quotient (WLQ) scores for both individual classes and combined classes (control and experimental groups). The results are presented in Table 1. Individual gain scores are reported in Table 2 in WLQ values.

TABLE 1

Mean WLQ scores  
for pre- and post-test results  
of the TOWL  
for individual classes and groups

		Classes				
		Experimental			Control	
		A		B		C
Indiv. Classes						
Pre- Mean WLQ		91.90		110.09		110.73
-----						
Indiv. Classes						
Post- Mean WLQ		105.89		115.70		115.77
-----						
Combined Group						
Pre- Mean WLQ		101.43				110.73
-----						
Combined Group						
Post- Mean WLQ		110.92				115.77
-----						
Difference						
Mean WLQ		+9.49				+5.04
-----						

TABLE 2

## Analysis of gain scores

Gain Score	A	B	C
G 1	122-106= +16	122-121= + 1	105- 93= +12
G 2	102- 91= +11	116-118= - 2	115-129= -14
G 3	111- 86= +25	107-106= + 1	129-130= - 1
G 4	102- 80= +22	101-102= - 1	99-100= - 1
G 5	114-106= + 8	122-116= + 6	118-120= - 2
G 6	105- 91= +14	122-100= +22	84- 64= +20
G 7	113-101= +12	109-101= + 8	117-107= +10
G 8	84- 84= 0	102-118= -16	128-120= + 8
G 9	105- 87= +17	128-108= +20	111- 95= +16
G10	101- 82= +19	139-125= +14	115-103= +12
G11	107- 89= +18	139-137= + 2	136-136= 0
G12	115- 93= +22	126-120= + 6	115-109= + 6
G13	95- 84= +11	91- 92= - 1	121-114= + 7
G14	108-102= + 6	130-132= - 2	126-133= - 7
G15	118- 99= +19	94- 92= + 2	129-129= 0
G16	111- 80= +31	100- 82= +18	139-124= +15
G17	#- 79= #	82- 80= + 2	106-107= - 1
G18	87- 87= 0	#-107= #	140-130= +10
G19	86- 91= - 5	#-102= #	105- 85= +20
G20	121-120= + 1	129-129= 0	92- 93= - 1
G21		122-114= + 8	106-111= + 5
G22		133-120= +13	123-113= +10
G23			126-114= +12
G24			104-105= - 1
G25			113-108= + 5
G26			108-109= - 1
Total			
Gain	+247	+101	+139
Mean			
Gain	+13.00	+5.05	+5.35
S.D.	9.11	9.01	8.50

# = subject did not complete post-test TOWL

Post-testing, using the results of the Test Of Written Language indicate the control group recorded a gain of +5.04 mean WLQ score points over the pre-test results. The experimental group gained +9.49 mean WLQ score points. This is a +4.44 point gain greater than the control group's increase. An analysis of variance was performed comparing both groups' pre- and post-test scores. The results indicated a coefficient of 4.04 and a standard error of 2.37. The t value of 1.70 equated to a significance of t at .09. Using a confidence interval of .95 with an upper limit of +8.77 and a lower limit of -0.69, the results indicate there is no significant difference in the gains made by the experimental group compared the the control group.

Although there was no significant difference in the scores of the two groups, the researcher examined the data to determine if gender had any impact on the results. Conducting an analysis of variance using gain scores of the WLQ of the TOWL for each group, the results indicated there was no significant difference (at the .05 level) when males in the control group were compared with females in the control group. When males in the experimental group were compared to males in the control group, there was no significant difference. Additionally, no significant

difference resulted when comparing males in the experimental group to females in the experimental group.

There was a significant difference (at the .05 level) in the gains made by females in the experimental group compared to females in the control group. Females in the experimental group had a mean gain of 12.14 and standard deviation of 9.78 compared to the females of the control group who had a mean gain of 4.93 and standard deviation of 9.74. The analysis resulted in a coefficient of 7.21 with a standard error of 3.30. The T value was 2.18 with a confidence level lower limit of 0.50 and upper limit of 13.92. This indicated the females of the experimental group made significant improvement over the duration of the experiment when compared to the females of the control group during the same period.



TABLE 3

Mean WLQ scores  
for pre- and post test results  
reported by groups and gender

		Classes					
		A		B		C	
		(exp.)		(exp.)		(cont.)	
Males							
Pre-test		913		106.77		122.00	
Post-test		1038		110.00		117.58	
----- -----							
Females							
Pre-test		91.45		113.82		109.64	
Post-test		106.55		119.45		1121	

## TOWL Sub-tests Results

To analyze the results of the Test of Written Language, the researcher next examined each sub-test, what it evaluates, and how each class and group scored. Mean standard scores are reported for experimental and control groups. The data in the 'difference' column of Table 4 is computed by subtracting the pre-test mean scores from the post-test mean scores. Using an analysis of variance, the results indicated no significant difference (at the .05 level) for experimental and control groups in any sub-test.

The vocabulary sub-test is designed to evaluate the level of sophistication of words used by the writer. The authors of the TOWL cited research that indicated that more sophisticated vocabulary usage was generally found in the more skilled and mature writers. The vocabulary sub-test is scored by assigning one point for each word of seven or more letters used in a story generated by the student. The control group recorded a gain of +0.27 (see Table 4). The experimental group recorded a gain of +2.27. Teachers from both groups reported they encouraged their students to use more sophisticated vocabulary in their writing.

TABLE 4

Mean standard scores for pre- and post-test results of the  
TOWL sub-tests

	Experimental				Control		
	Pre-	Post-	Diff.		Pre-	Post-	Diff.
Vocab.	8.76	11.03	+2.27		11.42	11.69	+0.27
Thematic Maturity	11.38	11.38	0.00		12.73	12.54	-0.19
Spelling	10.00	11.24	+1.24		11.62	12.96	+1.34
Word Usage	11.33	12.64	+1.31		11.60	12.53	+0.93
Style	9.74	11.46	+1.72		11.23	12.69	+1.46

\*Scores represented as standard scores as defined by TOWL.

The thematic maturity sub-test is designed to evaluate a student's ability to write in an organized, logical format. It assesses how well the student can write in a way that will "easily and efficiently convey meaning." For this sub-test, the students were given a picture of a pre-historic scene (space scene for the post-test) and asked to write a story about the scene. One point is assigned for each element of the story which meets the criteria specified in the examiner's manual for a maximum of 25 points. A story title receives one point. Other elements earning credit included giving personal names to characters, sequencing the story, paragraphs, reason for the attack, etc. The control group recorded a post-test difference of -0.19 (see Table 4) when compared to the pre-test results. The experimental group scored exactly the same indicating no difference between pre-test and post-test results.

The spelling sub-test is designed to evaluate the use of correct patterns of letters necessary for accurate and efficient written communication. The sub-test consists of twenty-five dictated words. The examiner dictates the word, uses it in the sentence specified by the manual, and repeats the word. Each word correctly spelled is assigned one point. The control group recorded a gain of +1.34 (see Table 4) as compared to the experimental group's gain of +1.24.

The word usage sub-test is designed to evaluate students' understanding of the rules of grammar when writing. Examples included in the sub-test involved double negatives, past tenses of irregular verbs, and possessive pronouns. There are twenty-five sentences, each with a blank to fill in a word which would complete the sentence. Students are given one point for each correct response. There are twenty-five items in the sub-test. Each sentence is presented in isolation and not within the context of a story. The control group recorded a gain of +0.93 (see Table 4) comparing post-test to pre-test results. The experimental group recorded a gain of +1.31.

The style sub-test of the TOWL is designed to evaluate student ability to use punctuation and capitalization rules properly. Students are presented with twenty-five sentences from which capitalization and punctuation are omitted. They are asked to re-write the sentences incorporating any necessary capitalization or punctuation. A sentence re-written with all corrections incorporated earns one point. The control group gained +1.46 from pre-test results to post-test results as compared to the experimental group's gain of +1.72 (see Table 4). The experimental group recorded a gain of +0.26 mean standard score points higher than the control group's gain.

## Interim Testing Results

The research design called for three students from each class take the contrived format of the TOWL in November and January. The results of the TOWL pre-test were used to identify students performing at average, low, and high performance levels. The data were reported for vocabulary and thematic maturity sub-test (see Table A.8).

The interim test results for the vocabulary sub-test indicate the experimental and control group recorded similar gains from pre- and post-testing of +4.50 and +4.34 mean standard score points respectively. The larger study sample for the vocabulary sub-test reported the experimental group's gain of two points greater than the control group (see Table 3).

Interim results for the thematic maturity sub-test indicate the experimental group recorded a +1.00 mean standard score gain compared to the control group's +3.34 gain from pre- to post-test (see Table A.8). The larger study sample reported both groups making similar gains (see Table 3).

Interesting to note is that most interim test scores were higher than pre- or post-test results. This may be attributed to the students not being subjected to the full test battery during interim testing. Therefore, the students may have been less overwhelmed or frustrated due to the limited interim testing situation.

### Self-esteem Results

The writing survey (see Tables A.3, A.4, & A.5), designed to evaluate the self-esteem of the students as writers, (as described in Chapter three) consists of eleven statements to which each student is asked to indicate that they agree or disagree (i.e., I enjoy writing). Responses were scored +1 if it reflected a positive self-image as a writer and -1 if it reflected a negative one. For example, a student whose response indicates that he agrees with the statement, "I enjoy writing," would receive a score of +1 on that item. If he disagreed, he would receive a score of -1.

The responses of each student were summed to represent the collective responses of each class. The sums were divided by the number of students participating in each class, yeilding a score the researcher refers to as HIFAW Index (How I Feel As a Writer). This index score is represented by a positive or negative number which reflects

the overall positiveness or negativeness of the classes' responses. These results are shown in Tables A.3, A.4, and A.5. A comparison of the individual classes and combined groups (experimental and control) are presented in Table A.6.

The results indicate that at the start of the six-month experiment, the control group had a slightly higher mean HIFAW index score of +29 when compared to the experimental group's mean of +3.95. At the completion of the study, the control group had a gain score of -1.16, registering a mean HIFAW index score of +3.46 when compared to the experimental group's gain of +2.08, registering a mean HIFAW index score of +6.03. This indicates that children in the experimental group self-reported feeling significantly better about themselves as writers as compared to the reports of children in the control group at the conclusion of the experiment (with  $t = 3.60$  and  $t(.05) = 2.04$ ).

To determine if there was a quantifiable difference in the number of public positive comments to students in control and experimental groups, each teacher participating in the study was asked to audio record a "typical" lesson on writing. Each tape was transcribed by a college student who was trained to identify positive and negative comments. The results of the audio tape are reflected in Table A.7.



Teacher C asked to not have the audio tape as part of the research done. She felt it would make her feel too self-conscious. For this classroom, an independent observer was invited by the classroom teacher to sit in the back of the classroom and tally the number of positive and negative comments provided as feedback to students during a writing lesson. Since the results recorded by the observer for Teacher C can not be standardized for comparison with the other two classrooms, they are not recorded on Table A.7. Therefore, there is no quantifiable data to document the degree of positives and absence of negatives within each of the teaching approaches.

#### Summary of Findings

An analysis of variance on the results of this study indicate no significant difference between gains made by experimental and control groups in written expression skills as measured by the Test of Written Language. Females in the experimental group scored significantly better (at the .05 level) in mean WLQ values than females in the control group.

Examination of the results of the writing survey designed to measure self-esteem of students as writers established a significant difference in results. Students in the experimental group reported their self-esteem

improved significantly over the duration of the study compared to the gain in self-esteem reported by students of the control group.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A six month experiment was conducted using a quasi-experimental non-equivalent control group design. One purpose of the study was to determine if the level of achievement in written expression skills of children in grades three through six is greater using a writing approach which emphasizes approval-guided learning than traditional writing approaches. Another purpose of the study was to determine if the self-esteem of students as writers improved at a greater rate using a writing approach which employs approval than students instructed by a traditional approach. The study included two classes in the experimental group with 42 students and two classes in the control group with 42 students (later, 16 control students were excluded from the final analysis of results).

Written expression skills were evaluated using the Test of Written Language, a nationally normed, standardized test. Students' self-esteem as writers was assessed using a writing survey designed by the researcher. The writing survey lacks standardization or norming data.

## Discussion of Findings

Analysis of the TOWL data revealed no significant difference in gain of WLQ scores of the experimental or control groups. The data were examined to determine if gender impacted on test results. An analysis of variance indicated females in the experimental group made significant gains over the females in the control group at the .05 level. Gender made no additional significant difference in the results.

One factor which may have contributed to the experimental group's slightly less than significant difference in results was that teacher A (experimental) was absent from the first day of the school year in September through mid October. The September pre-test was administered by the long-term substitute teacher assigned to the classroom. The students in this class were not instructed using the IPA approach until the start of the seventh week of school. Consequently, these students received approximately 25% less exposure to the use of approval-guided learning than called for in the original design.

Data from the TOWL sub-tests results were analyzed and no significant difference was found between experimental and

control groups. The greater gain for the experimental group in the vocabulary sub-test may be due, in part, to the IPA approach of implementing approval-guided learning. IPA encourages students to increase fluency by providing public recognition for attributes which are correct while not calling attention to attributes which are incorrect or incomplete. There is no penalty for incorrect usage or spelling. Therefore, children are encouraged to try to incorporate more sophisticated vocabulary into their writing. Once students use more sophisticated vocabulary in their writing, they are provided opportunities to see these words published on the chalkboard.

The control group used the Open Court Language and Reading program to teach language arts which focuses on vocabulary development through examining vocabulary words related to stories in their reading basal. The class would focus on definition, use of the word, synonyms, antonyms, etc. Any errors made by the students would be identified for correction. The students risked teacher criticism if they used or spelled new vocabulary word incorrectly. The vocabulary sub-test assesses vocabulary within the context of students' writing. Students instructed through approval-guided learning had learned there was no risk and only opportunities for praise when they incorporated new or more sophisticated vocabulary into their writing, the

researcher hypothesized the experimental group would yield greater gains than the control group. This hypothesis proved correct based upon the results of this study.

The experimental group did slightly better (see Table 2) than the control group in the Thematic Maturity sub-test. The instruction of writing used in the control group involved having the student write a draft of a story, revising that story into a new draft and repeating this process several times before the final product was accepted. This process encouraged the development of logical, sequential patterns of writing. The IPA approach had students write one draft per assignment. Once the assignment was completed, there was no requirement to continue to work on the draft. No second, third or other draft was done unless the student decided he wished to do one. The IPA approach teaches that writing is a "Now" activity. The process encourages the creative development of a story without extensively stressing thematic development. Each time children write, they are allowed to write what interests them now and not what they worked on yesterday or last week. Since the control group was experienced in writing and revising drafts of written work, the researcher hypothesized the control group would produce greater gains in thematic maturity than the experimental

group. This hypothesis was disproved based upon the results of this study.

The control group's gain of +1.34 in mean WLO scores was 0.10 higher than the experimental group's gain of +1.24 in the spelling sub-test. Words not spelled correctly in the control group students' written work were routinely noted as incorrect by the teacher or peer editors. Spelling was taught both in isolation and within the students' writing. The experimental group teachers used approval-guided learning. Within the context of the students' writing, the teacher would call attention to correctly spelled words that had more sophisticated spelling patterns. Misspellings did not have attention called to them. Often, public recognition was provided for correctly spelled words. During the appreciation component of IPA, the teacher would publicly recognize words spelled accurately when they related to the spelling pattern being presented that day. Because the spelling sub-test is administered in isolation (contrived format), the researcher hypothesized the control group to perform with a greater gain. This hypothesis was disproved based upon the results of this study.

The style and word usage sub-tests were formatted in a manner similar to the "fill in the blank" exercises often

used in workbooks or worksheets. The IPA approach is a holistic writing approach. The experimental group did not have practice in working with sentences in isolation, such as those commonly found in workbook type exercises. The control group had more experience with workbook like tasks as new concepts were usually presented in that format in isolation. Lessons would be introduced with a target skill or concept within isolated, non-related sentences and reinforced with worksheets or workbook exercises. On occasion, the control group would be taught concepts within the context of the students' writings. Because the control group would be more familiar with "fill in the blank" formatted tests, the researcher hypothesized the control group to perform better than the experimental group in the word usage and style sub-tests. Yet, the experimental group gained 0.38 higher in standard score mean points in the word usage sub-test and 0.26 higher in the style sub-test than the control group.

No significant difference could be statistically established between the results of teaching written expression skills using the experimental group's approval-guided learning approach and the control group's traditional approach. The experimental group reported themselves as significantly improving self-esteem as writers, as measured by the writing survey, as compared to



the control group reported by the termination of the study. The literature suggests a relationship between improved self-esteem and improved academic achievement. The experimental group reported significant gains (at the .05 level) in self-esteem as writers may provide a foundation for continued academic achievement. If both groups of children did equally well in written expression skills, the teacher may consider using the approval-guided learning approach because children reported feeling better about themselves as writers.

#### Design Change

The design of the study originally specified the use of two classrooms in the experimental group and two classrooms as a control. Two classes were selected to compensate for any socio-economic differences in the make-up of the classes. The experiment was carried out to the design specifications described in Chapter Three. At the conclusion of the experiment, the researcher examined the scores of the TOWL. One control group (classroom D) recorded mean increases in their WLQ scores in excess of 19 points. The standard deviation for WLQ scores is 15. This control group's results improved by approximately 1 1/3 standard deviations. Since this was a substantial gain for a class to make within a six month period, the researcher

sought additional information from each participating teacher to confirm test administration procedures.

A follow-up conversation with the teacher of control group D revealed information which led the researcher to invalidate and exclude the results of this class. The design called for three students of different performance levels in writing, as measured by the TOWL pre-test, to take the spontaneous components of the test at interim points in the study in November and February. The teacher of classroom D of the control group administered the test to the entire class which meant the students in this class had taken the spontaneous component of the TOWL four times. In contrast, the design intended non-interim students to be tested two times (pre- and post-test only). A "learning the test" factor may have entered into the results of class D.

The second problem in classroom D involved the TOWL post-test. The teacher told the researcher that the class had spent nearly a full week taking the test. The TOWL manual describes administration time of all six sub-tests as less than one hour. When asked by the researcher, the teacher described how the spontaneous section of the TOWL was used by her as a lesson topic. The class collectively discussed the topic of the story. Students were asked to map out the story, use teacher-made suggestions and peer

tutoring ideas to write the story. Consequently, most of the stories contained similar elements of information. For example, most stories gave personal names to characters, spoke of "breaking a code," provided a timeframe of when the story occurred, named the planet, etc. No such common elements were found in the stories of students in any of the other three classrooms.

By eliminating classroom D, there remained two classes in the experimental group and one class in the control group. The control group had 26 students participating in the study and the experimental had 42 students.

### Conclusions

Analysis of the findings has led the researcher to the following conclusions:

1. In general, approval-guided learning affords no significant advantage over traditional approaches in fostering improved written expression skills among students in grades 3 - 5. Although approval-guided learning yielded no significant improvement over traditional approaches, these same results do not indicate that using traditional approaches such as highlighting student errors is a more effective approach to teaching written expression skills.

2. Female students subject to approval-guided learning will make significantly greater progress in the improvement of written expression skills than do females subjected to traditional approaches.

3. Students taught written expression skills through approval-guided learning will show improvement in their self-esteem as writers when compared to students subjected to traditional approaches despite the fact that no significant difference in improvement in written expression skills was established. Those students who were instructed using an approval-guided learning approach reported significantly better self-esteem as writers. Teachers may wish to consider using approval to improve self-esteem.

4. Approval-guided learning may indirectly contribute to improvement in writing skills by enhancing student self-esteem. The literature suggests students who have improved self-esteem tend to perform better academically than students with lower self-esteem. This may provide the necessary foundation to improve academic skills.

These conclusions are cautious and tentative, especially when the design and execution of the study are examined in retrospect. The acknowledged limitations of the

study are, therefore, woven into the discussion and impinge upon the conclusions drawn.

### Limitations of the Study

1. This research examines only one approach to approval-guided learning, IPA. Other approaches which incorporate the use of approval may yeild different results.

2. The study involved students in grades three through five. Approval-guided learning may have different results with children who are older or younger than the sample examined.

3. Forty-two students were included in the experimental group and twenty-six were in the control group. A larger sample may yield results more closely representative of the population.

### Further Research Considerations

1. A study which uses a similar design as the one described in Chapter Three but using a larger sample of students may help produce statistical significance. The results of the WLQ scores of the two groups indicate a difference at the .09 level of confidence. Since levels of

confidence are impacted by the sample size, similar results with larger sample size may provide the necessary significance at the .05 level.

2. Another variable to consider changing in future studies is the duration of the experiment. The study was designed to run for six months. A study of a full school year may yield results that intensify the differences. Additionally, classroom A recorded the greatest gains of all classes participating in the study. This classroom had 25% less exposure to the IPA model due to the teacher in classroom A being on disability for six weeks at the start of the school year. With a full dose of IPA, the results may be different.

3. To minimize any historical or socio-economic influences, future research should involve experimental and control groups at the same grade level and within the same school. Some questions that need to be addressed in any study involve the influence of socio-economic and/or historical influences on the samples. It is desirable to minimize any impact these factors may have on the results. Additionally, learning using approval compared to traditional approaches should be analyzed to determine if gender is impacted differently.

4. Research should be conducted on other approaches which incorporate approval-guided learning. This study utilized the IPA approach to teaching written expression skills. It is possible other approaches which use approval would yield different results.

5. Any future research on approval-guided learning should quantify the "positiveness" and "negativeness" of each teaching approach examined. Teachers using approval-guided learning are trained to use praise for correct responses coupled with extinction for incorrect or incomplete responses. Many teachers not trained in approval-guided learning use praise for correct responses but do not incorporate them into their deliberate teaching approach.

Each of these research considerations would enhance knowledge about teaching written expression skills. Approval-guided learning should be explored further to determine if its impact on student learning is substantially positive to consider as a teaching approach for writing and other curriculum areas.

APPENDIX A

FIELD-BASED RESEARCH ON WRITTEN EXPRESSION - TIMELINE

SEPTEMBER, 1989

During the week of September 11- 15, the TOWL and writing survey should be administered. The TOWL can be administered in its entirety or in parts so long as all four sub-tests are completed by September 15, 1989 (to insure standardization for all groups in research). Student packets for TOWL and writing survey documents should be returned to me in the postage-paid, self addressed envelope as soon as possible but no later than Friday, September 22, 1989. DO NOT MAIL BACK THE DIRECTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATION. THESE WILL BE USED AGAIN!

Included with this document is a packet labeled "September, 1989." It includes the following:

1. Thirty (30) Test Of Written Language (TOWL) student packets.
2. One set of instructions for TOWL administration.
3. Thirty (30) Writing Survey documents.
4. One set of instructions for writing survey.
5. One self-addressed, postage paid envelope.

OCTOBER, 1989

By October 27, 1989, you will receive the names of the three students chosen to participate in the interim assessments. These students will have been randomly selected.

NOVEMBER, 1989

During the week of November 13 - 17, the story sub-test of the TOWL should be administered to the three students selected for interim assessments. The student story papers should be returned to me in the self-addressed, postage paid envelope as soon as possible but no later than Wednesday, November 22, 1989.

Included with this document is a packet labeled "November, 1989." It includes the following:

1. Three (3) TOWL story sub-tests.
2. One self-addressed, postage paid envelope.

(OVER)



JANUARY, 1990

During the week of January 29 - February 2, 1990, the story sub-test of the TOWL should be administered to the same three students selected for interim assessments. The student story papers should be returned to me in the self-addressed, postage paid envelope as soon as possible but no later than Friday, February 9, 1990.

Included with this document is a packet labeled "January, 1990." It includes the following:

1. Three (3) TOWL story sub-tests.
2. One self-addressed, postage paid envelope.

MARCH, 1990

During the week of March 5-9, the TOWL and writing survey should be administered. The TOWL can be administered in its entirety or in parts so long as all four sub-tests are completed by March 12, 1990 (to insure standardization for all groups in research). Student packets for TOWL and writing survey documents should be mailed in the postage-paid, self addressed envelope as soon as possible but no later than Wednesday, March 14, 1990.

Included with this document is a packet labeled "March, 1990." It includes the following:

1. Thirty (30) Test Of Written Language (TOWL) student packets.
2. One set of instructions for TOWL administration.
3. Thirty (30) Writing Survey documents.
4. One set of instructions for writing survey.
5. One self-addressed, postage paid envelope.

Results of each student's scores will be sent to each teacher. Additionally, a report of the findings of the research will be mailed to each participating teacher at the conclusion of the study. If you have any questions or need to contact me, please feel free to call me at the numbers below. Thank you very much for your assistance and cooperation in this field-based research.

Education

Steven R. Greenberg  
Assistant Professor of

Bridgewater State College  
(508) 697-1315 (Office)

## APPENDIX B

### TOWL ADMINISTRATION DIRECTIONS

#### Notes to teachers:

The TOWL is normed based upon age. Please be sure to include the date of birth on each student's answer sheet in the space provided. The November and January story sub-test does not have a formal place to put the student's name. Please be sure the students put their name at the top of their story.

Please inform the students, prior to taking EACH section of the instrument, of the following:

1. The scores for these exercises will not result in a grade or be reflected in their report cards.
2. The purpose of doing these exercises is to see how well each student can do.
3. Each section begins with easier items and progresses to more difficult examples. They should do their best but realize this same instrument is used for higher grades.
4. They should do as many items as possible. If they get stuck, they can skip the item and go on to the next item, being certain to leave that item blank on the answer sheet.

#### DIRECTIONS (from TOWL manual) THE STORY

Give the student the appropriate student response booklet. Open it to the page with the picture ("Pre-historic" or "Futuristic"). Say, THIS EXERCISE IS DESIGNED TO SEE HOW WELL YOU CAN WRITE A STORY. LOOK AT THE PICTURE BEFORE YOU. YOU ARE TO WRITE A STORY ABOUT THAT PICTURE. TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO THINK ABOUT YOUR STORY. YOU MIGHT WANT TO MAKE AN OUTLINE, BUT AT THE VERY LEAST TAKE SOME TIME TO ORGANIZE YOUR THOUGHTS TO MAKE THE MOST INTERESTING STORY YOU CAN. WHEN YOU HAVE ORGANIZED YOUR IDEAS COMPLETELY, BEGIN WRITING. YOU CAN WRITE THE STORY AS SOON AS YOU WANT TO; AND IF YOU NEED MORE PAPER, JUST LET ME KNOW.

YOU WILL HAVE ONLY 15 MINUTES TO THINK ABOUT YOUR STORY AND TO WRITE IT. WRITE THE BEST STORY YOU CAN. WRITE ONLY IN YOUR BOOKLET. IF YOU NEED MORE PAPER, LET ME KNOW. READY ... BEGIN. When 15 minutes have elapsed, say STOP. Continue testing with the first contrived sub-test, Vocabulary.

#### WORD USAGE

The student is asked to turn to the part of the Answer

Booklet labeled "Word Usage" and to read the instructions. THE SENTENCES WRITTEN BELOW HAVE ONE WORD MISSING. READ EACH SENTENCE AND FILL IN THE MISSING WORD. BE SURE TO WRITE OR PRINT NEATLY.

Then, the examiner reads the instructions aloud and tells the students to begin with the first test item. They should be helped with any unknown words, but care should be taken to not give cues to the correct answers

#### STYLE

Have the students turn to the section in the Answer Booklet labeled "Style" and ask them to read the following directions silently.

THESE SENTENCES ARE WRITTEN WITHOUT ANY PUNCTUATION OR CAPITAL LETTERS. REWRITE EACH SENTENCE IN THE SPACE PROVIDED. BE SURE TO USE CORRECT PUNCTUATION AND CAPITALS. PLEASE WRITE OR PRINT NEATLY.

Next, the examiner reads the instructions aloud to the students and tells them to begin with item 1.

#### SPELLING

Have the students find the section of the Answer Booklet labeled "Spelling" and ask them to read the following instructions silently:

WRITE THE WORDS YOU HEAR IN THE SPACE BELOW. TRY TO SPELL EACH WORD CORRECTLY. BE SURE TO WRITE OR PRINT NEATLY.

Next, the examiner reads the instructions aloud to the students. After this, the examiner proceeds to administer the sub-test by (1) saying the word in isolation, (2) using the word in a sentence, and (3) saying the word in isolation a second time. The student is to write each word in the space provided as neatly as possible. The spelling words and their associated sentences are listed below.

(Note: The TOWL manual provides a list of 25 words and accompanying sentences).

## APPENDIX C

### WRITING SURVEY DIRECTIONS

This survey has been designed for whole group administration. During the test administration, teacher explanatory remarks should be kept to a minimum. This will help prevent biased responses. If a student is having difficulty, the teacher may assist the child to understand the statement or the directions.

All directions for the teacher are typed in upper case letters.

Directions to be given to your students:

SAY: Today, you will get a paper with some statements printed on it about writing. You will be asked to decide if the statement is true or false. This will help me to learn more about your feelings about writing. Do not start to write anything on the paper until I ask you.

### DISTRIBUTE THE SURVEY

SAY: At the top of the page, please fill in the section labeled "Name" by printing your first and last name (PAUSE AND CHECK PAPERS).

SAY: Next, fill in your teacher's name on the blank labeled "Teacher's name" (PAUSE AND CHECK PAPERS).

SAY: Next, fill in your grade on the blank labeled "Grade" (PAUSE AND CHECK PAPERS).

SAY: This paper has eleven numbered statements about writing. When you see the word "Writing" on the paper, it means all kinds of writing such as creative writing, descriptive writing, letter writing and so on.... not just penmanship. Read each sentence to yourself and decide if you agree. If you agree, color in the "Agree" box. If you disagree, color in the "Disagree" box. If you are not sure, decide which box is more correct.

Look at the sample at the top of the page. It says, "There are many colors in a rainbow." Since you agree, you should color in the "Agree" box next to the sample. Do this now. (PAUSE AND CHECK PAPERS).

SAY: If you thought the statement was false, you would have colored in the disagree box. You may only color in one box for each statement.

You are now going to decide if each of the statements on this paper is true or false and color in the box that matches your opinion.

Are there any questions? (PAUSE AND ANSWER ANY QUESTION)

SAY: You may begin.

PLEASE CHECK TO INSURE EACH CHILD RESPONDED TO ALL 11 STATEMENTS.

AFTER ALL STUDENTS HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY, COLLECT ALL SURVEYS.

-----  
Please return all completed surveys in the self-addressed, postage-paid envelopes to:

Professor Steven R. Greenberg  
Bridgewater State College  
Burnell Campus School  
Bridgewater, MA 02324

Thank you again for your participation and cooperation in this important field-based research project

APPENDIX D

WRITING SURVEY STUDENT FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Agree Disagree

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| Example: Rainbows are colorful                   | _ | _ |
| 1. I enjoy writing.                              | _ | _ |
| 2. I can write well.                             | _ | _ |
| 3. I make many mistakes when I write.            | _ | _ |
| 4. I believe my teacher thinks I write well.     | _ | _ |
| 5. I like having other people read what I write. | _ | _ |
| 6. Writing is my best subject.                   | _ | _ |
| 7. I am proud of what I write.                   | _ | _ |
| 8. Writing is easy for me.                       | _ | _ |
| 9. The teacher makes us write too often.         | _ | _ |
| 10. Writing is fun to me.                        | _ | _ |
| 11. I look forward to writing in school.         | _ | _ |

APPENDIX E

QUESTIONNAIRE COVER LETTER

Bridgewater State College  
Burnell Campus School  
Bridgewater, MA

name & address

April 17, 1989

Dear ,

I was given your name by Professor Ray Harper of Bridgewater State College. You took a course with Professor Harper on Language Arts and/or writing that had as one component, approval guided learning (the use of praise for correct student work). The process may have been referred to as the IPA (Invitation, Publication, and Appreciation) writing process.

As part of a research project in affiliation with Bridgewater State College and the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, I am trying to identify people who have been trained in the IPA writing process. The purpose of the study, in part, is to create a network for educators and provide a vehicle for sharing information about implementing the IPA writing process.

Your help in completing this brief, but important set of questions is most appreciated. Please return it in the enclosed postage paid, self-addressed envelope. Thank you very much for helping this important project.

Sincerely,

Steven R. Greenberg  
Assistant Professor of Education  
Bridgewater State College



APPENDIX F  
QUESTIONNAIRE

Please circle the appropriate responses.

1. Do you recall taking EE373  
"Helping Children Write  
Creatively" course with  
Bridgewater State College  
Professor Ray Harper?  
Yes            No
  
2. Do you recall (within the course)  
the topic of teaching writing  
through the use of appreciation,  
approval and/or encouragement for  
correct student work? The process  
may have been referred to as IPA  
(Invitation, Publication, and  
Appreciation).  
Yes            No
  
3. Do you currently use the IPA  
writing process?  
Yes            No  
If no, go to question #5
  
4. Do you find the IPA writing  
approach successful?  
No    Somewhat    Very  
If yes, go to question #7.
  
5. Did you ever try to use all or  
part of the IPA writing approach?  
Yes            No  
If no, go to question #7.
  
6. How many times did you try using  
it?  
None    1-2    3-6    6+

7. Do you currently publish on the chalkboard or overhead projector and then use some form of approval for students' correct written work (IPA)?
- Yes      No
8. Do you know of anyone who tried or is using the IPA writing approach?
- Yes      No
9. How often do your students write each week?
- 0    1-2    3-4    5+
10. How often do you use children's literature as a model for children's writing?
- Never    Some    Often
11. How often do you put children's written work on display for instructional purposes (ie. children do their writing on the blackboard or overhead projector and teacher uses this writing as an example to teach the class)?
- Never    Some    Often

12. Would you be interested in receiving (at no cost), periodic newsletters on the topic of using the IPA writing process (using approval and encouragement for correct student work)? The newsletter is intended to disseminate information about the writing process, its successes, areas needing work and what teachers are doing in the area of writing.

Yes            No

13. Would you be interested in receiving information about how your classroom can be considered for inclusion as part of a field-based research project on the writing process? The study will be conducted from September, 1989 to April, 1990 in elementary school classrooms in grades 2 - 6.

I'd like to know more  
Not interested.

14. Would you be interested in participating in a study group devoted to support educators using the IPA writing process?

Yes            No

15. Do you have ideas you would like to share with others regarding the writing process? Would you like to help other teachers?

Yes            No

Thank you for completing this form. Would you kindly return it in the enclosed postage paid, self-addressed envelope no later than May 10, 1989. All returns are anonymous. If you wish to be included on a mailing list of interested educators for the newsletter, study group and/or research project, please fill in your name and address below. OR if you prefer, send the form in anonymously and send a note (mailed separately) indicating your interest to:

Steven R. Greenberg  
Assistant Professor of Education  
Bridgewater State College  
Burnell Campus School  
Bridgewater, MA 02325

OPTIONAL:

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
School \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX G

LETTER TO SUPERINTENDENTS REQUESTING PARTICIPATION IN THE  
RESEARCH

June 23, 1989

Dear Mr. ,

I am writing to request the participation of Mrs. 's class (at the Elementary School) in a research study which will take place in the 1989-90 school year. The purpose of the study is to examine different teaching processes and their effect upon student achievement in written expression. A secondary aspect of the study will explore how students feel about writing. This study is designed to use very little student and teacher time. Additionally, the teacher will be asked to teach written language skills as they have in the past, without altering the content or methods they have previously used.

The Test Of Written Language (TOWL) is a standardized, nationally normed instrument which measures the major components of written expression. The TOWL will be administered to the class and the results given to the teachers at the terminaton of the study. A survey for students to indicate how they feel about their writing will be given at the same time.

Additionally, three students will be selected from the participating classroom based upon their test scores on the TOWL. Each will be given one sub-test of the TOWL at two intervals which requires 15 minutes each for students to write. This will be used for interim growth measurement. This will be the only contact outside the ones in September and April. Of course, the teacher may call me if she wishes at any time.

(OVER)

In summary, the participating class will be asked to:

September: Take TOWL - 40 minutes

Take writing survey - 10 minutes

-----  
April: Take TOWL - 40 minutes

Take writing survey - 10 minutes

Involvement for the entire study is limited to 100 minutes of whole class time and 30 minutes for three students.

I would like to share the results of the study with you. The results and interpretation of the TOWL will be sent to Mrs. , providing her with a standardized profile of each of her students in the area of written expression. This could provide additional information so she may better serve the children of her class.

If you have any questions or if I can further clarify, please feel free to contact me at (508) 697-1315 or (508) 339-7275 (Home). I appreciate your consideration and cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Steven R. Greenberg  
Assistant Professor of Education

APPENDIX H

PERMISSION SLIPS FOR STUDENT PARTICIPATION

September 6, 1989

Dear Parents,

Mrs.           's classroom has been selected to participate in a study in cooperation with Bridgewater State College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. The purpose of the study is to evaluate children's writing skills.

Your child's involvement in the study is limited to taking a nationally normed, standardized test and completing a survey about how he or she feels about writing. It would involve a total of 50 minutes in September and 50 minutes in April. Additionally, three children from the class would be asked to write two stories during the year.

(OVER)

Mrs.                    will retain control over her teaching style and the content taught during the study. No curricula changes are involved. Your child's teacher will be provided with the results of the test which will aid her in determining your child's strengths and weaknesses in written language.

Please take a moment to fill in and return the slip below by September 11, 1989.

Sincerely,

Mrs.  
Classroom Teacher

Steven R. Greenberg  
Assistant Professor of Education

-----  
I give my permission for my child to participate in the study to evaluate children's writing.

-----  
date

-----  
signature

-----  
I do not want my child to participate in the study to evaluate children's writing.

-----  
date

-----  
signature



APPENDIX I

POST CARD REMINDERS TO CLASSROOM TEACHERS  
REGFARDING NEXT PHASE OF RESEARCH

Dear ,

Thank you for participating in this field-based research project evaluating student writing skills. During the week of September 11-15, you should administer the Test of Written Language (TOWL) and the writing survey. You should have an envelope labeled "September." Please open it and check to insure you have enough materials. A timeline and packing list should be enclosed. Please place the completed forms in the envelope. I will be by to pick them up no later than 9/22/89. If you need more materials or have any questions, please call me at (508) 697-1315 work; or (508) 339-7275.

Steven R. Greenberg  
Assistant Professor of Education

APPENDIX J

LETTER TO TEACHERS LISTING STUDENTS FOR INTERIM TESTING

October 25, 1989

Dear

I want to thank you for your on-going support and assistance in the field based research project evaluating student written expression skills. The TOWL and writing survey have been scored and recorded.

The next phase is to inform you of the three students who were selected randomly within their performance group to participate in the interim testing of November and January. The names appearing below the heading "PRIMARY" are the children selected. If for some reason, the child selected should not be used for the interim testing, a name of a student within the same performance group can be substituted. These "backup" students will be listed next to the primary list of children and will be identified by being listed in [brackets]. The major reason why a child should be excluded from the interim testing is if they have a learning disability that would prevent them from learning the written expression skills as presented in the classroom.

PRIMARY	BACKUP
1.	(1) [       ]
2.	(2) [       ]
3.	(3) [       ]

You will be receiving a postcard reminding you of the upcoming interim testing (only for the three students selected) for the week of November 13 to 17, 1989. Please check to confirm you have the necessary materials within the envelope labeled "November."

Again, thank you for your help. Please feel free to call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Steven R. Greenberg

APPENDIX K

FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO TEACHERS AFTER POST-TEST

814 Maple Street  
Mansfield, MA 02048  
(508) 339-7275 Home  
(508) 697-1315 Work

March 17, 1990

Dear ,

I want to thank you very much for your participation in the research project on written expression skills this school year. Your cooperation and assistance has made this project a success. Although the results of the data are in the process of being analyzed, I wanted to get you copies of the student profiles. Each profile presents scores in five categories of the Test Of Written Language for individual students in your class. Also enclosed is information on how to interpret the scores. I hope this proves useful to you. If you would like any additional assistance, please feel free to contact me at the numbers above. When the data has been analyzed and the results interpreted, I plan to send you a summary of my findings.

Again, I sincerely appreciate your participation.

Very truly yours,

Steve Greenberg

TABLE A.1

Demographic data of participating teachers and the  
communities they serve

	Teachers			
	A	B	C	D
Years of teaching experience	21	9	15	11
Highest earned degree	B.A.	B.A.	B.A.	B.A.
Number of students participating	20	22	26	16
Size of school population (appx)	350	750	250	450
Number of elem. schools in system	7	3	3	3
Role in research study	Exp.	Exp.	Cont.	Cont.
Grade level	3	4	5	3
Grades levels housed in building	K-5	K-4	K-5	1-3

All teachers have been described by their building administrator as being above average or better.

Community of Teacher A - White collar, upper middle class, professional.

Community of Teachers B & D - Historically, blue collar community in transition. Within last ten years, town experienced substantial influx of professional, middle class families.

Community of Teacher C - Middle to upper middle class. Generally professional.

TABLE A.2

Results of pre- and post-testing - TOWL

Teacher A		Teacher B		Teacher C	
Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
106	122	121	122	93	105
91	102	118	116	129	115
86	111	106	107	128	129
80	102	102	101	100	99
106	114	116	122	120	118
91	105	100	122	64	84
101	113	101	109	107	117
84	84	118	102	120	128
87	105	108	128	95	111
82	101	125	139	103	115
89	107	137	139	136	136
93	115	120	126	109	115
84	95	92	91	114	121
102	108	132	130	133	126

Continued next page

TABLE A.2 continued

99	118	92	94	129	129
80	111	82	100	124	139
79	*	80	82	107	106
87	87	107	*	130	140
91	91	102	*	85	105
120	121	129	129	93	92
		114	122	111	106
		120	133	113	123
				114	126
				105	104
				108	113
				109	108
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
1838	2012*	2422	2314*	2879	3010

\* = post-test not completed by subject

Note: table represents WLQ scores

TABLE A.3

Writing survey - class A responses

(EXPERIMENTAL) GRADE: 3

	Pre-test		Post-test	
	Agr	Dis	Agr	Dis
1. I enjoy writing.....	+17	-3	+18	- 1
2. I can write well.....	+17	-3	+17	- 2
3. I make many mistakes when I write.....	-12	+10	- 7	+12
4. I believe my teacher thinks I write well.....	+19	-1	+18	- 1
5. I like having other people read what I write.....	+11	-8*	+15	- 4
6. Writing is my best subject.....	+7	-13	+ 4	-15
7. I am proud of what I write.....	+18	-2	+18	-0*
8. Writing is easy for me.....	+12	-8	+16	-2*
9. The teacher makes us write too often.....	-8	+12	- 3	+16
10. Writing is fun to me.....	+12	-8	+18	- 1
11. I look forward to writing in school.....	+12	-8	+16	-3
	---	---	---	---
HIFAW Index mean	+3.65		+6.84	

Note(s):

- 1) \* = response(s) left blank.
- 2) Agr = Agree and Dis= Disagree



TABLE A.4

Writing survey - class B responses

(EXPERIMENTAL) GRADE: 4

	Pre-test		Post-test	
	Agr	Dis	Agr	Dis
1. I enjoy writing.....	+15	-7	+15	- 4
2. I can write well.....	+17	-5	+15	- 4
3. I make many mistakes when I write.....	-12	+10	- 9	+10
4. I believe my teacher thinks I write well.....	+21	-1	+18	- 1
5. I like having other people read what I write.....	+16	-6	+15	- 4
6. Writing is my best subject.....	+5	-17	+ 4	-15
7. I am proud of what I write.....	+20	-2	+18	- 1
8. Writing is easy for me.....	+10	-12	+12	-6*
9. The teacher makes us write too often.....	-4	+18	- 4	+15
10. Writing is fun to me.....	+17	-8	+16	- 3
11. I look forward to writing in school.....	+14	-8	+13	- 6
	---	---	---	---
HIFAW Index mean	+3.77		+5.22#	

Notes:

- 1) \* = response(s) left blank
- 2) # = survey not submitted for one student
- 3) Agr = Agree and Dis = Disagree

TABLE A.5

## Writing survey - class C responses

(CONTROL) GRADE: 5

	Pre-test		Post-test	
	Agr	Dis	Agr	Dis
1. I enjoy writing.....	+24	-2	+24	- 2
2. I can write well.....	+20	-6	+17	- 9
3. I make many mistakes when I write.....	-14	+12	-16	+10
4. I believe my teacher thinks I write well.....	+20	-6	+19	- 7
5. I like having other people read what I write.....	+15	-11	+15	-11
6. Writing is my best subject.....	+10	-16	+ 3	-23
7. I am proud of what I write.....	+23	-3	+23	- 3
8. Writing is easy for me.....	+17	-9	+15	-11
9. The teacher makes us write too often.....	-4	+22	- 2	+24
10. Writing is fun to me.....	+20	-6	+19	- 7
11. I look forward to writing in school.....	+20	-6	+19	- 7
	---	---	---	---
HIFAW Index mean	+4.62		+3.46	

## Notes:

- 1) \* = response(s) left blank
- 2) Agr = Agree and Dis = Disagree

TABLE A.6

HIFAW Index - pre- and post-test

		Pre-test results				
		summed scores writing survey	number of participating students	mean HIFAW Index		
Class A	(Exp.)	+91	20			
Class B	(Exp.)	+83	22			
-----						
Total	(Exp.)	+174	42	+3.95		
-----						
Class C	(Con.)	+120	26			
-----						
Total	(Con.)	+120	26	+4.62		
		Post-test results				
		summed scores writing survey	number of participating students	mean HIFAW Index		
Class A	(Exp.)	+130	19			
Class B	(Exp.)	+ 99	19			
-----						
Total	(Exp.)	+229	38	+6.03		
-----						
Class C	(Con.)	+ 90	26			
-----						
Total	(Con.)	+ 90	26	+3.46		
-----						
HIFAW index - pre-test post-test gain						
		pre-test		post-test		gain
Experimental		+3.95		+6.03		+2.08
-----						
Control		+4.62		+3.46		-1.16

TABLE A.7

Level of positive feedback to students during writing lesson

	A	Teacher B	C
Lesson time (minutes).....	20.75	22.75	*
Commenting time (minutes).....	15.25	7.25	*
Child made positive comments.....	26	23	*
Child made negative comments.....	0	0	*
Teacher made positive comments....	29	13	*
Teacher made negative comments....	0	0	*
Total positive comments.....	55	36	*
Total negative comments.....	0	0	*
Positive comments per minute of lesson time.....	2.65	1.58	*
Positive comments per minute of commenting time (where feedback was provided).....	3.61	4.97	*
Negative comments per minute of lesson time.....	0	0	*
Negative comments per minute of commenting time (where feedback was provided).....	0	0	*
Child positive comments per minute of lesson.....	1.25	1.01	*

Continued, next page.

TABLE A.7 continued

	Teacher		
	A	B	C
Child positive comments per minute of commenting time.....	1.70	3.17	*
Teacher positive comments per minute of lesson.....	1.40	0.57	*
Teacher positive comment per minute of commenting time.....	1.90	1.79	*
Child negative comments per minute of lesson.....	0	0	*
Child negative comments per minute of commenting time.....	0	0	*
Teacher negative comments per minute of lesson.....	0	0	*
Teacher negative comments per minute of commenting time.....	0	0	*

\*Commenting time was the amount of time where students received public feedback about their written work.

\*\* All times recorded on tabel A.8 are in one minute units.

TABLE A.8

Mean standard scores for interim testing

	Vocabulary		Thematic Maturity	
	Exp.	Cont.	Exp.	Cont.
September	9.33	9.66	10.50	7.66
November	13.83	13.66	13.50	12.66
January	13.00	14.00	11.83	14.00
March	10.66	11.33	11.50	11.00
Low score	9.33	9.66	10.50	7.66
High score	13.83	14.00	13.50	14.00
Mean Score	11.71	12.61	11.58	11.33
Pre- Post- Difference	+4.50	+4.34	+1.00	+3.34

TABLE A.9

Interim test results for individual students

* Student	** Test Date	Vocabulary			Thematic Maturity		
		Raw Score	Nat'l Pctile	Std. Score	Raw Score	Nat'l Pctile	Std. Score
1A	A	9	63	11	5	63	11
	B	29	99	18	11	95	15
	C	33	99	17	8	50	10
	D	6	37	9	8	50	10
2A	A	6	37	9	5	63	11
	B	6	25	8	6	50	10
	C	8	50	10	8	50	10
	D	7	50	10	6	37	9
3A	A	7	37	9	5	37	9
	B	7	9	6	11	75	12
	C	2	<1	2	6	16	7
	D	5	16	7	5	9	6
1B	A	7	37	9	2	5	5
	B	18	99	17	10	63	11
	C	21	99	17	10	63	11
	D	10	50	10	9	50	10
2B	A	13	63	11	13	99	18
	B	19	99	17	16	99	17
	C	21	99	17	15	98	16
	D	20	91	14	18	>99	18
3B	A	5	16	7	6	37	9
	B	24	99	17	15	98	16
	C	15	95	15	10	63	11
	D	21	91	14	15	98	16
1C	A	16	75	12	8	37	9
	B	16	75	12	12	75	12
	C	23	95	15	15	95	15
	D	11	37	9	10	50	10
2C	A	10	50	10	9	50	10
	B	20	95	15	7	91	14
	C	18	91	14	10	63	11
	D	22	91	14	13	91	14
3C	A	4	16	7	3	2	4
	B	12	91	14	10	91	14
	C	18	84	13	16	98	16
	D	16	63	11	9	37	9

\* Student      A = Class A      B = Class B      C = Class C  
 \*\* Test date    A = Sept.    B = Nov.    C = Jan.    D = March

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