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Integrating Writing Within the Foreign Language Classroom: Shifting Dynamics, Not the Task

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School for International Training

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INTEGRATING WRITING
WITHIN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM:
SHIFTING THE DYNAMICS
NOT THE TASK

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
MASTERS IN TEACHING DEGREE
AT THE
SCHOOL FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAINING,
BRATTLEBORO, VERMONT

BY
PATRICIA ANN EVANS

MAY 2005


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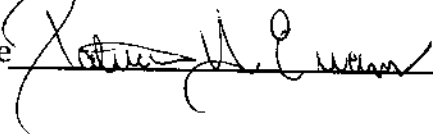
The writer thanks her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; through whom she can do all things. He has sent her a husband who has supported her in all to complete this project, a daughter that has given her love, time, and expertise unfailingly, and friends that read and undergirded her throughout and who collaborated to get her to the School for International Training and those that kept her coming back and those that made it possible for her to come back. The writer acknowledges that she has been sent to accomplish this project for His glory. Never, ever give up.

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Abstract

This classroom based research project considers the following questions: Why should my foreign language students write? From Pedagogy to Purpose; what happens when students use technology with their writing; which transitions take place with regard to the role as teacher when integrating writing into the Spanish language classroom? The project follows the shift in writing from meaningless, disconnected activities to writing. How a student-centered writing process and technology support the shift away from the perception that good writing is voiceless and mechanical. It traces the shift from learning to write to writing to learn. The project studies the shift that occurs when students come to understand that they are writers and the role of the teacher shifts from the giver of approval to a collaborator without diminishing the guidance and necessary level of knowledge of the teacher. The project seeks to evidence that shifts not only do occur when all these mutually exist in the foreign language classroom but also will transcend into other curriculum content areas.

ERIC Descriptors:

Writing (Composition)

Writing Skills

Second Language Learning

Writing Instruction

Computers

Computer Assisted Instruction

Student Attitudes

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----|
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... | ii |
| ABSTRACT..... | iii |
| INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| Why Write? Shifting the Dynamics... | |
| The Pattern of Growth of a Phenomenon | |
| Chapter | |
| 1. VYGOTSKY, THE SOCIO-CULTURAL THEORY AND L2 ACQUISITION | 7 |
| 2. SHIFTING THE STUDENTS' AND TEACHER'S INVOLVEMENT AND NOT THE TASK | 12 |
| 3. TECHNOLOGY: THE HOOK | 17 |
| 4. SHIFTING FROM THE BIGGER THE BETTER TO WRITING THAT IS HEARD | 20 |
| 5. THE SHIFT..... | 28 |
| 6. STILL IN THE PROCESS | 33 |
| APPENDICES | |
| A. SCHOOL PROFILE AND LEARNING TOOLS | 39 |
| B. FEEDBACK/REFLECTION | 68 |

Introduction

Writing cannot be integrated into the foreign language curriculum on the sole basis of pedagogical soundness. National Standards, writing programs, and countless language journal articles exist to validate this soundness. Documented studies are offered in evidence so that teachers of second languages may understand that it is important for students to write; however, until we comprehend what our “governing philosophy” (Raimes 1987, 39) is, we will integrate writing as a separate isolated skill.

The purpose of this project was threefold:

1. shifting the perception that good writing needs to be voiceless and mechanical;
2. shifting my role and not the task; and
3. shifting the use of technology from entertainment to a supportive tool.

I teach Spanish Language and Hispanic Culture at Antilles School, St. Thomas, United States Virgin Islands (please refer to Appendix A for a complete school profile). The requirement for graduation is three years of foreign language study. It is not necessary to have neither three consecutive years nor three years of the same language. The class is comprised of nineteen sophomores in their second consecutive year of Spanish. Eight are American of European heritage; four are Afro -West Indian; one is Afro-American; three are East Indian; two are Latino and one is Arab. The majority plans to continue studying the Spanish language and take the Advanced Placement Spanish Language Examination; however, fulfilling a graduation requirement was the reason for choosing to study Spanish.

Writing in my class had existed in the form of sentence writing, information gap activities, manipulation of structures, modeling, accuracy correction, and other such activities. Through these activities, the students learned grammatical structures of the language and vocabulary in isolation. Most of the composing that was being done targeted a specific grammatical point. The paragraphs read like fill in the blank activities. Students did not need to explore a purpose for their writing; it was given to them: write a paragraph about _____, use the chapter's vocabulary, and make sure to use _____ prepositions and the _____ tense. They were to fill in the blank activities posing as prompts. I wondered when the ability to write an essay happens. When do the students write at discourse level?

When given a writing assignment, the students would write in English then frantically look up words in a dictionary. As this is tedious, they would either choose the first word given or resort to an online translation site. Some of the choices ended up being humorous to me, the reader. For example: in looking up the word 'bowl', a student chose the word for toilet bowl instead of mixing bowl for his recipe. Humorous on the surface, yet I had a nagging feeling. After looking up all those words, the students did not have the time or the energy to read their piece for creativity, voice, organization or sentence flow. They just wanted to hand it in, have me grade it, get the grade, forget about the writing piece and go on to the next assignment. Writing this way was very frustrating for all of us. I kept thinking that if writing were to continue to be frustrating, the students turn off to the language and worse yet, to the people from whence it came.

'Please don't make any grammar corrections. Just tell me what you understand when you read my essay. Can you tell how I feel about this issue?' (K. Nimmo. Level 4

student). Under the guise of reading, the red pen was squeezing the voice out of my students' writing. There was not a need for attention to purpose and audience; the red ink sired the reality. When I did all the correcting, it was my voice in the writing. My role had to shift. The students did not learn the correct grammatical forms that I had written in red. They just counted up the marks. They figured out how many would equal an A. Using different colors to point out what type of error was made was perceived as elementary not academic. To be good, writing had to be academic. To my students that meant voiceless and mechanical. They could not comprehend the concept of a portfolio of their work. No one was going to read their work and they did not want their writing pieces after the grade was recorded. The challenge before me was how to get them not to want to clean out their folder. Who could read their writing besides teachers? How to get them to take responsibility for revising and editing? What was the hook? On what do the majority of high school students spend their time? Computers.

Every student in a college preparatory school knows that they must possess a certain level of technological proficiency before their first college class. Yet they are teenagers and will choose to suffer rather than admit to their peers that they are lacking in a technological skill. The easiest way to do this hiding is to use the computer for entertainment. Log on in class and start playing around if you do not understand the activity. Create a distraction, waste class time, and then struggle at home to figure it out.

Why should students write in the foreign language classroom? Why do they write? Integrating writing is pedagogically sound. Ann Raimes titles her article "Why Write? From Purpose to Pedagogy." This project could be "Why Write? From Pedagogy

to Purpose.” The original premise for this project was that at the end of the process, the aforementioned shifts would occur, and the students would enjoy writing.

These were my assumptions. Upon reflection, I realized that even though they are valid, the students would still only complete the writing pieces for the grade or to turn them in. In this format, the students would not write to learn. The type of question needed to be freer. A difficult proposal for a teacher. What resulted are the following research questions:

- Why should my foreign language students write? From Pedagogy to Learning.
- What happens when students use technology with their writing?
- What transitions take place with regard to my role as teacher when integrating writing into the Spanish class?

Since writing for learning is my governing philosophy (Raimes 1987), I had to hold firm to my belief that learning would occur without me dictating it nor when or how it would happen.

My teaching shifted from the all-knowing dictator to fellow writer. One who would listen to them as they struggled to find the right word or to think about the action in the past. My teaching shifted from “this is the way to express that idea” to being there as a collaborator in finding out what was the idea and how the student wanted to express it. Integrating writing into the curriculum has to be real. To have my students see themselves as writers, the plan to reach that goal had to be real.

Our school has been analyzing students’ writing in English, the majority’s native language. Based on the data analysis, we have adopted the Six Trait Writing Program.

Based on this, I assumed that my students were familiar with concept maps, a writing process, creativity, organization, voice, audience, flow, and transitions. My assumptions were not the reality. The enormity of the task was almost overwhelming. If I had not held onto my governing philosophy, my students would have continued not making connections and not writing the way that they really wanted. Not for lack of desire but lack of knowledge.

We took steps together; sometimes we had to go around to take another step forward; sometimes we moved sideways, but our learning kept driving the instruction. This shift in my teaching, from the students sometimes moved sideways to we moved sideways keeps gaining strength. They have trusted me with an inner desire. They have given of themselves through their writing.

As teachers, we constantly analyze, rethink, and reflect upon what happens in the classroom. Are the students completing the assignment to please me or has the shift occurred? Sometimes they come back and tell us. Sometimes we just have to trust.

For data analysis and curriculum planning, our school has the students write. They are given a prompt and a length of time over two days to write. Suggestions are given along with the prompt with respect to revising and editing. This piece is written in English. This year I proctored a group of sophomores. Most of them are in my Spanish class. After reading the prompt, my students began talking. I reminded them that the instructions were to write in silence and isolation. I listened to what they were saying. They were brainstorming topics. I overheard someone asking, "What topic are you going to write about?" Then the room grew quiet. As I walked about the room I observed that my students were listing details. The other students were writing. Then they started

talking about which details were needed for what they wanted to say. They wanted to know who was the audience. One of the other students wanted to know; “what are the components of a good essay?” Before I could answer, one of my students told her to look up at the bulletin board. When she finished reading, she said, “It is all there.” My students told her that it has always been there. It has only been there from the last writing piece. At the end of the first session, the other students were finished with their rough draft, which they copied onto neat, clean paper during the next session. The students were permitted to discuss their writing out of class. I could hear them discussing ideas, word choices, details, et cetera. During the next session, the Spanish language students were revising, re-reading, then editing. They were reworking words and phrases. They asked me about content, “Read this, can you tell what my position is on this.” One of other students asked why they were writing so much as it wasn’t for a grade. And I thought, “and this isn’t even Spanish class.”

Chapter 1

‘I was aware of my reader because I knew that they might not understand the entire story. So to help them understand I used pictures based on the subject.’

-Robert Smith (Student)

To score a ‘9’ on the Advanced Placement Spanish Language Exam (referred hereafter as ‘AP Exam’) the composition ‘demonstrates *excellence* in written expression

- Relevant, thorough, and well-developed treatment of the topic
- Very well organized
- Control of a variety of structures and idioms; occasional may occur, but there is no pattern
- Rich, precise, idiomatic vocabulary; ease of expression
- Excellent command of conventions of the written language (orthography, sentence structure, paragraphing, and punctuation)’ (College Entrance Examination Board 2004).

Traditionally foreign language teachers wait until we believe enough grammatical concepts are mastered before having the students write an essay. As foreign language teachers we assume that the students come to us with the necessary skills to do this writing. How could students retain all the grammatical concepts until the time for writing arrived? On the AP Exam the students would not be turning in their essay for me to correct. They would need to know that their essay fulfilled the requirements for a ‘7-9’ score. Then would their writing be just for the score or would it be for learning?

Lantolf (1994, 418) stresses that Vygotsky’s theoretical insight is that higher forms of human mental activity are always, and everywhere, mediated by symbolic means. In Vygotskian terms, language. To appropriate new knowledge, learning must transit from

intermental to intramental activity. The process of internalization is not the transferal of an external activity to a preexisting, internal 'plane of consciousness.' It is the process in which this plane is formed (Leontiev 1981,57). Other regulation through self-regulation mediated by language. Learners can be involved in the same task from without but in different activity. Herein the goal is referred to by Vygotsky as "orientation" or "directionality" so that the object of the task is not a goal. The goal can be changed in the process of reaching it.

Why do participants perform the task? Students can be involved in collaborative tasks with realizing the metacognitive and metalingual benefits that come from these tasks when they are not authentic. Without authenticity, communicative competence cannot be expected to improve (Hall 1996). The teacher's responsibility is to ensure meaningfulness and authenticity. Then students will be engaged in collaborative tasks and meaning will be negotiated even though not one individual possesses all of the skills. Freeman & Freeman (1992, 7) state, "learning takes place as groups engage in meaningful social interaction." This area is the *Zone of Proximal Development* (referred to hereafter as 'ZPD'). Vygotsky defines this as "the difference between the child's developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the higher level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (1978, 85).

Before interaction takes place it is necessary for the teacher to have an understanding of the subject. Without this knowledge, it is practically impossible to categorize those tasks into goals or possibly sub-goals. The learner may not comprehend the parts of the task or how they are connected at the onset. Through questions the

learner becomes increasingly capable of changing the task. This process rouses the teacher's assistance. Since the process is recursive, it cannot be attained in isolation. The responsibilities that were formerly divided between the teacher and learner have now been taken over by the child. The definitions and patterns of activities which formerly allowed the child to participate in the problem solving effort on the interpsychological plane now allow him/her to carry out the task on the intrapsychological plane (Werstch 1979, 18). Does this mean that automaticity has been reached? No.

Vygotsky addresses microgenesis, ontogenesis, sociocultural history, and phylogenesis. Traditional studies would administer assessment at the onset, prescribe an educational solution based on the results, allow time for it to be implemented, then return to it for post-assessment. With technology it is now possible to study what happens in between Piaget's Four Stages of Child Learning. The shift would be to the children and how they manage the task. Microdevelopment permits us to study how appropriation occurs. There is a view that this is a real paradigm shift in developmental learning (Granott 2002, 2). Within this view is the understanding that learning is not linear. Learning, when examined at the micro level looks a little more like a roller coaster (Viadero 2002, 2). Vygotsky's theory speaks to these regressions as recursion. These ups and downs historically have been viewed as negative; however, it is evident that through them the learner is emerging from his/her ZPD to automatization, where the lexical item is internalized. The opinion of the teacher in regards to recursion is vital. If the view is that learning is linear, then the ups and downs are rated as negative. Just as private speech is vital towards automaticity as it is to restore it in the lifelong learning cycle, repetition of lessons should not be viewed as failures on the part of the teacher and

student but a continuation, redirection of learning. On the other side of balance, the overall goal cannot be forsaken at any point. Balance of the type of assistance and the timing are crucial. The adult graduates the assistance, responsive to the child's performance levels: The more the child can do, the less the adult does (Wertsch, Minick, Arns 1984).

So much of successful learning in Vygotsky's theory rests on the shoulders of the teacher. Balance, meaningfulness, constant connections to the learner, balanced scaffolding activities of I+1, understanding their students' ZPD. It is valid to require teachers to come to the classroom profoundly prepared in Spanish, yet we are not to be left alone. Even though we are our best resource, the collaborative nature of the Sociocultural Theory should propel us to seek assistance with our teaching. Once our students internalize this, they will trust us and recognize that our development as teachers is social.

In an intriguing study by Beatrice Gibbons (2004) it is stated, "a pressing need exists for dramatic changes in the way that teachers deliver instruction to schoolchildren . . . how to educate all children well" (Gibbons 2004). She refers to Cochran-Smith's (2001) and Sleeter's (2001) research of the inadequate education of communities of culturally and linguistically diverse children. Not only addressing learning of individuals but also of cultural groups. This learning theory (Vygotsky) proposes that when learners actively engage in learning, rather than passively receiving knowledge from experts, comprehension of content occurs because students can demonstrate conceptual understanding. From this perspective, effective teachers structure learning experiences

that facilitate this active learning (Carin & Bass 2001). Vygotsky's theory is gaining acceptance because it allows for the existence of these differences.

Chapter 2

‘My metaphor about writing before was—a stain on paper that people find amusing. Now it has changed. Writing also expresses people’s feelings better than they can say it. Technology helps us everyday to live yet helps us die everyday.’

-Dhymond Nicholls (Student)

Initial Considerations:

I knew that my students wanted to write well but did not like to write because they did not know where to start. Most of the students were in Directed Technology classes and could not live without their computers. If the two could be combined, the students then might be willing to start. In Ten Easy Ways to Incorporate Technology in the Classroom (Firek 2003, 62-66) the concept of Interactive Writing was intriguing. Technology would be the hook.

The initial activity is a story map. The students could use technology to create a story/concept map. The first obstacle was that the students did not know what a concept map was. There was not any schema to activate! The First Concept Map Conference was held in September 2004 in Spain, and their site is interactive --- a perfect combination for a Spanish class (please refer to Appendix A). The students thoroughly enjoyed the site but still did not comprehend the idea of a concept map. Websites have proved to be a valuable resource for a handout on concept maps. At first, the students could not connect the writing and the technology. They were comfortable and knowledgeable with the slides of a Power Point presentation. ‘The software (Power Point) was offered up as an ideal educational solution and it turned out the problem that it fit for most teachers was simply a new format for their same old transparencies and slides’ (Lear 2003, 543). This is the result of limiting students and Power Point. Many students were

quite comfortable at the onset with this limitation. Their writing at this point was just for a grade. They viewed the computer work as additional and stressful. Once the concept of writing was understood, their technology juices were soaring. Until then, interactive writing coupled with writing was out of their ZPD. To keep the focus, writing prompts were given and choices of topic were limited. The expected negative reaction to my limiting their choices did not come. The reason, I believe, was that they were not familiar with a writing process, as expressed by one student's comment, "This writing process is retarded. It is just more work." Really the birth pangs of becoming autonomous. At this juncture, it would have been easier to just have them write and have me use the red pen, give the grade and go on to the next structure and its related composition. However, we persevered with the following steps of the Student Centered Writing Process, hereafter referred to SCWP (Cassidy, please refer to Appendix A).

Process Steps

Pre-Writing Activities. We focused on cultural projects, Latino heritage and influence in major U.S. cities. Several lessons included brainstorming, discussions, and library research. One of the interest areas was artwork by Spanish speaking artists in the U.S., which led to discussions where we could find examples. This led to discussions of different venues for displaying art. This in turn led to murals, Mexican muralists, and the purpose of murals. Another venue discussed was international festivals which celebrate artists and their work. This led to discussions of artists hanging out in cafes, and being teenagers, the students thought of food, which led to another whole range of topics. These activities were coupled with lessons in language structure.

The writing prompts used in class were the following taken from their text:

- Con unos compañeros escojan un tema para un mural. Luego hagan un dibujo de los que quieren expresar. Píntenlo en una pared de la clase. Expliquen la importancia e influencia de estos murales en la cultura latina.
- Describe un festival internacional o una fiesta (real o imaginario) que tuvo lugar en _____.
- Escribe sobre tu restaurante favorito. ¿Cuál es la especialidad de la casa?

Once these prompts were introduced, the steps of the SCWP were followed.

Step 1: Brainstorming topics—they just wanted to talk. Collaboration was furthest on their mind.

Step 2: Brainstorming details—the students used their blue cards but they did not want the input of the partner. They wanted me to assure them that their details were good and sufficient. After all, I was giving the grade. Major issues came up about classmates giving grades. They had internalized that the partner's comments/suggestions/reactions were their grades.

Step Three: Discovery draft—the issue here was reading something that was not polished and their peers knowing it. They wanted to edit at this point. Something had been written, and it was time to correct it. There was almost open revolt when I did not, but ushered them on to

Step 4: Revising. “I worked hard on my discovery draft, there isn’t anything to add or change—just tell me any errors and my grade.” An underlying current was, if I help you, you would get a better grade! On this first piece most of the above steps were seemingly disastrous.

Step 5: Editing—“How am I supposed to know what changes are needed?” My mistake was allowing them to take the piece home. Instead of using dictionaries, they were using online databanks for translation and not telling me. Their use has been prohibited in Spanish class. This issue reached its zenith with the next piece. Major resistance was happening when I handed back the writing without corrections but rather instructed them to reread and pencil edit.

Asking students to look over their work another time and use a pencil to correct it created problems. “It will make my paper look messy.” A valid point but one I had not considered. How often have teachers taken off points from the final grades for messy papers? What habits/expectations/challenges had we imprinted on our students? Pencil editing itself becomes a shift that needed to go through a process. I needed to assure my students that after the pencil markings, they could re-type. Some wanted to know why I was making them do more work.

Writing had taken place, but it was voiceless, pedantic and mechanical. The audience for this piece was their classmates. The sentences came across as a bankteller’s “next.” Through the interactive writing, I was able to conference with each student, and many gave up their lunchtime and after school time; however, they were mainly

interested in grammar. It was not that they wrote this way on purpose, it was what they knew to do. The decision was made not to focus on voice/audience as a post writing activity. Their need was the springboard for the next writing piece.

Writing Piece No. 1–Feedback.

Two questions were given for the students to reflect upon as paraphrased by a student:

“In your interactive writing piece, how were you aware of your audience?”

“What did the writers use that hindered you as a reader?”

An immediate observation of the students’ comments reveals a preoccupation with technology. Not one student addresses the question of audience in terms of their writing; it all focuses on technology. This further supported the observation of their need and the direction the learning should take.

Chapter 3

“Writing is the diamond and technology is the setting. Writing is where you get your ideas and information but technology is what we use to lay it down.”

-Giresh Mirpuri (Student)

In his article, “I Had No Idea: How to Build Creative e-Learning Experiences,” Michael Allen sets forth an “Anatomy of Good Interactions” or a framework for e-learning designers. These designers are to create software for students. He calls for “creative application design. developing meaningful and memorable learning applications that fully engage the mind” (Allen 2003, 20). That goal cannot be achieved as long as students rely on mass produced software/e-learning scenarios. Students’ minds become fully engaged in interactive writing when they are the authors of the application designs. E-learning designers are trying to create meaningful learning scenarios by eliminating the learner and reducing technology to a gimmick. When the learner is the author of not only the writing piece but also the instructional design, technology becomes a supportive tool. The student then uses technology to know this content. With Allen’s approach what has shifted is the delivery system of the content, from teacher and chalkboard to computer screen and software. The learner does not become involved because he/she is working with someone else’s creation. This is an artificial learning environment in which the students become passive. They go through the program to complete it and when it is finished, it is finished. Constructs are not retained because there is no need for it in the students’ understanding. Again, this keeps technology in the realm of gimmicks.

One of the shifts out of this realm transpired for my students when the writing task was not eliminated nor its importance reduced. The student as writer is the creator of learning scenarios for himself and his peers. It is at this point that technology supports

the writer in conveying his/her purpose to his/her audience. Employing technology in this format helps eliminate the self-consciousness of a young writer. It also creates opportunities for collaboration and sharing. Technology becomes digital "Wite- Out". Mass produced software does not recognize that technological competence develops at different rates. This format does not support the writer and actually heightens his self-consciousness. It encourages self-aggrandizement, not collaboration.

Final Share of a Writing Piece

As they are teenagers, the topic of this piece was a trip to a restaurant and what happened during that visit that made it their favorite restaurant. I asked one of the students to project his piece on the screen. Students who normally do not want to speak in class were asking if they could read aloud. They helped each other with pronunciation. As this was an interactive piece, the author has embedded choices in the piece. If an error occurred, the author redirected his classmates to these choices. When he projected the ending, one of the most quiet students got up out of his chair and stood in front of the screen and said "that's...and it can't be done." The ensuing excitement could not be contained. Students were up out of their seats pressing the author for the details of this design. As they were pulling it apart they did not realize that they were using Spanish. The need to know this application transcended previous stumbling blocks. There was nothing artificial in this e-learning scenario.

For now, time constraints and my school context make individual conferencing about writing ineffective. Students still perceive that one-to-one conferencing with the teacher translates into having done something wrong. However, conferencing one-to-one digitally is extremely effective in my context. A shift occurs when a student sits with

me at the computer. Students will come back multiple times on their own time to sit with me and work on their writing. They are secure that they can make changes. Again, technology becomes a supportive tool and not a gimmick.

Arriving to this point has not been linear. The concern for the product became so overwhelming that some students went to extraordinary lengths to get there. Given the opportunity to take their work home, some students went to electronic and human databanks for translations. These students felt justified in doing so because the ideas were theirs and the databank was translating into Spanish. I did not anticipate this. In addition, some students added to their piece after editing it. These additions were completed by databanks. These occurred out of the perception that length equals quality and the perceived need to have the piece be written on the level of their L1. The driving force was the polished product for the better grade. The end result of these occurrences is a new school policy regarding the use of electronic databanks and native speakers. The students now comprehend that using a databank showcases one's use of technology, not one's writing in Spanish.

Technology is not the cure for writing in the foreign language classroom. Even though it remains the hook, it can also be a hindrance especially when one tries to open a file and the floppy is bad. We have learned to back up our work. Also, they have learned to go to the excellent tech team that we have at our school. This provides another opportunity for collaboration across the curriculum. They have learned that I am not the technology expert but rather one who celebrates their technology creativity and innovations.

Chapter 4

“The way she explained her article, it sounded like I was actually there. Dhymond had good examples and ideas. I was able to know it was Dhymond because it sounded fun and exciting and that is the kind of person she is.”

-Catherine Hancock (Student)

The first writing piece established the tasks for the next piece. What would happen if Power Point were not an option? Could my students see the images? If they could not see the images, how could they comprehend the voice, hear the author? “When Toni Morrison spoke at the Harold Washington Library, she was distraught by the fact that her granddaughter couldn’t “see” the images in a story she’d read to her” (www.twc.org). Why did my students read? For most, reading and writing existed to demonstrate comprehension to the teacher. I do not recall seeing anyone in this class ever sitting around campus reading or sharing something they wrote. I did see one girl doing this who was not in my Spanish class at this time. In fact, she would bring in books that she had read to talk with me about them. This year, she is in my Civics and Latino Cultures Classes. I observed that she always has a book and picks it up whenever there are a few minutes. Her classmates are all socializing, but the din does not bother her. I decided to begin reading to my class every day. I chose pieces that had touched me. The first time, some of them did not settle in until about the end. Sometimes it is difficult for this instant generation. This generation that thinks a microwave is too slow. When I brought in a piece by Sandra Cisneros, they told me that they had already studied her and read one of her books. I read the piece anyway but they felt they had mastered this author and that she had nothing left to offer, or had the study of her been so academic/pedantic that they never heard her? Some pieces so caught the students that they could not hold in their

reaction. We played with the language through rhymes and riddles. There was a connection between the structure activities and these readings.

At this point we were ready to center in on the second writing piece. We again followed the steps of the SCWP. I felt that my students were not ready to engage in all of the six traits so I chose one: voice.

Step 1: Generate a list of events that happened during spring break

Tasks:

- Purpose—describe an event that took place during school break;
- Audience—magazine readers;
- Subject—school break event;
- Structure—description. Describing an event or personal experience means more than giving out a few facts. Share how you feel about what is happening—about the people, places, and objects that make an event memorable. Bring your subject to life by using sensory details in your writing.

Step 2: Brainstorming Details

We collaborated on an idea tree that contained the five senses and examples. At this point my students were still not convinced about the academic usefulness of the SCWP let alone an idea tree. I was the only teacher using these methods.

The use of technology was different for this piece. Because of the reaction to Sandra Cisneros, I chose authors that they did not know. They did not know Pablo Neruda or Langston Hughes.

The technology lesson on Voice unfolded in this way: As was our custom, I read to them ‘I’ve Known Rivers’ first in Spanish and then in English. Then we had an

interactive session on voice. The school utilizes the Six Trait Writing Program (please refer to Appendix A) so the section on Voice was handed out. In it was a “6-point scale for VOICE.” There was silence when level 6 was read. “I love this topic—and it shows in every line.” To “I don’t usually think about the audience—I just write” to “I don’t care that much about the topic -- and I don’t really care if anyone reads this, either. I feel bored, I’m glad it’s over with!”

After the giggling stopped, it was explained that the scale was for self-regulation at this point. To help further understand voice/audience we went to several sites to read Hispanic magazines and newspapers. This was the only technology component for this piece.

Before Step 3 we had a guest speaker, Mr. Fred Wolff from the Six Trait Writing Program adopted by the school. He began the workshop with an example of a college application essay. The majority thought that it was well written. If I were an admission’s officer, I would have said, “Next.” The students were impressed by the level of the vocabulary and organization. They were very surprised to hear that the student who wrote it had not been accepted at that college. The presenter then spoke about voice. The students collaborated in finding sentences where he could have written something about himself.

He then asked how many students had ever been in a class that uses a writing process? Everyone said “Never,” until I stood up. Clarity was rendered not only to the question but also to me. To them, writing only takes place in writing class.

His next activity was to have students list as many places they could that brought strong images to mind—you could close your eyes and see them. Step 1, I thought. Some

students looked confused so I whispered, “Step one”; they smiled in recognition and began to write. Pick one topic and write as many multi-sensory details that you can. I thought, Step 2. Our writing piece was on the very same view. We had just completed concept maps of the five senses in Spanish. As we left the workshop, one student shared how curious it was that we were using the Writing Process in Spanish class but not in English class.

In the last writing piece, a student informed me that the Writing Process was ‘retarded’ and asked why was I creating so much work? Just give me a topic and I’ll write. Now I could hardly wait for the next class. We were going to mirror F. Wolff’s workshop. Immediately there was a reaction. With great relish they informed me that I was doing the same thing as Mr. Wolff. “Why did the school spend the money to bring him to our school and take us out of class?” The author of the ‘retarded’ statement wanted to know.

Since awareness has occurred even the author of the ‘retarded’ comment is engaged and wanting to write. The students shared that they could not put any personal information in the writing piece they were working on. In the attempt to “get it right” they had concluded that personal information was the right and only way to express voice. I smiled and asked them to think back on some of the writing I had read to them. Did the pieces have personal information? Think back to the class we had on voice. What makes the voice strong or weak? This was difficult for them to understand for they live in an academic world of absolutes and formulae. To peel back a layer and realize that there is another was scary at the least, and I was not giving the “correct” answers. I did not balk at the ‘retarded’ comment either.

Who “allows” them to be storytellers? And yet that is exactly what they have to do on a college application essay and on an AP exam essay—pull the reader in so tight that it electrifies.

No one knew the topic of Mr. Wolff’s workshop. Yet now they trust me. They trust me to take them to deep waters. The expert had done the same as their teacher. They trust me enough to take the Writing Process to their writing teacher and discuss that revising is not editing, but looking at their writing again.

Here is a fire that I had to put out: the SCWP serves the large class well by allowing time for each step to develop. Revising and editing—conventions/mechanics—revising in the sense of “seeing again.” As conventions of the Spanish language are foreign to the students when they focus on editing, their creativity is stifled. Editing for content and mechanics at the same time is overwhelming. The end result is editing for conventions with little, if any, time spent on content, voice and audience. This is where editing with a pencil is helpful.

Editing takes place over several days with a different focus each session. For example: editing just for noun/adjective agreement; placement for descriptive adjectives; use of tense. Some students share that editing in this manner makes their final copy look messy. The transformation is still in process, from writing to complete an assignment to realizing that they are writers. Here my role changes again: from the students handing in a final version for me to correct to them reading their writing piece over and over again in the hope of seeing their writing from the reader’s view. The task has not changed. Instead of the teacher using the red pen, activities are presented to scaffold the student into assuming control of his/her writing. In the case of a critical grammatical point, this

is vital. At this level, a student can focus on a singular grammatical point; asking him/her to edit for all grammatical points at one time would be I+15. Adding editing for content would be I + impossible. Therefore, the revising step is necessary before editing for conventions of the language. What I want them to realize that they can write and be aware of the needs of the reader. This step also grants the opportunity for change in terms of content.

As I write when they do, I share my revising. For example: "I was pleased with the body and ending but my introduction needed work because there wasn't one. It sounded more like a free write. I also shared that I wanted to incorporate an idea given by a student. It was a pertinent detail; yet when I brainstormed details, I had totally forgotten about it. I realized that it would enrich my writing piece." My sharing encourages some students; others are still in the process.

One observation is their faces when they read/share their writing. Some are smiling and excited; others are hesitant; some have chosen a partner, whom they perceive as better, grammatically speaking. Yet each one trusts enough to read his/her own writing.

Another observation is the shift from writing about everything that occurred during spring break to one event. To focus on multi-sensory details rather than a too broad topic -- this is happening, slowly. The students perceive good writing as massive quantity. They want the reader to know everything. The student-centered writing process and the workshop of Fred Wolff have helped in shifting this perception. Step 1 and Step 2 of the SCWP and scaffolding activities help the students to shift from listing topics as summer vacation and Christmas holiday. A visit to Aunt Virginia still makes

the list; all the things they did still get included in the concept map until the details are added; then the shift happens with the realization that “A visit to Aunt Virginia and everything we did” is turning into a novel. Students question if they may really write only about one event. One of the reasons is that they have given their piece a broad title and feel obligated to fill up the page to cover the title. Creating an outline as a post-writing activity is proving effective, as it becomes a visual of their writing.

‘Research has suggested that peer editing aids students’ writing by making them more aware of their audience and gives them a sense of text ownership by presenting their work to others besides their instructors’ (Byrd 2003, 434). In theory I agree. In comparing the SCWP with the Six Trait Writing Program, the SCWP provided the extra revision time needed in the foreign language classroom.

My students are too competitive and they have known each other since kindergarten. They had determined who had what talents before they were my students. Editing, revision suggestions would enable the other student to quite possibly get a better grade -- they also thought that the other student, by giving feedback, was perceived as grading their work. Since they could not always choose their partner, they felt that they could not guarantee a good grade. They could not work with the same partner for all pieces. Constant assurance by me did not work. Even when the grading policy changed from individual writing piece grades to a grade that would demonstrate improvement, students still sought me out to speak privately about their writing piece grade. I choose not to grade peer editing. In other classes students felt obligated to change their writing as per the peer editor’s comments. Some students expressed that because of the grade, they felt obligated to make edits even if they did not feel that they were necessary.

Herein lies the problem of editing and revising at the same time. The Cassidy model allows for the author to accept or reject the partner's suggestions.

My role has shifted from giving praise and making comments such as "that detail would make a good story" to "what detail do you think would make a good story?" The writing now shifts from pleasing the teacher, ergo a good grade, to the writer thinking about his/her writing and what he/she wants the writing to convey, ergo a good grade. In a grade conscious curriculum, students perceive that pleasing the teacher will lead to academic success. Therefore, another shift is necessary for the student to become autonomous in his/her learning. If the student shows progress, would not the grade be an A? If an A were dependent upon the progress and not the quantity of grammatical errors, would the shift occur? Would the errors in grammar decrease as the writing increased? Would the errors decrease if the focus shifted from writing for a grade to writing to communicate with a real audience? To writing to learn?

Chapter 5

“Writing is a wave on a vast ocean that carries you to your destination in the future, technology is board that helps me catch the wave that carries me to my destination in the future.”

–Robert Smith (Student)

Students were asked to write two metaphors: Writing is/ Technology is They were asked to reflect upon them after the second writing piece. The governing thought was that the students could express themselves more profoundly using metaphors. They could reflect upon their writing and their use of technology. The reflection would indicate any shifts that had occurred. These writings, the databank incident, and the fact that some students were not engaged in writing other than to get it done laid the foundation for the next writing piece.

Technology was still proving to be a hook and a hindrance. A small group of students was completely reliant on the school's facilities, and the hardship of not having a computer at home was interfering with interactive writing. Based on these facts, the decision was made to have this piece interactive or in solid book form.

My observation of the Student Centered Writing Process was that some of the students were not helping each other as partners. I thought that if they worked in groups and each had a role to fulfill then true collaboration might happen. These roles were based on Harvey Daniels' Literature Circles (Daniels 1994, 12-14). For this piece the roles would be for Ideas, Organization, Sentence Fluency, Conventions, and Voice as per the Six Trait Writing Program (please refer to Appendix A). Instead of working with just a partner the writers would be collaborating in a group. Each member of the group would assist within the context of his/her role. The purpose of each role was discussed, and most students were comfortable with their assigned roles. Competition would be

eliminated because the individual writing piece would not be graded but rather the overall progress of the student. Their writing would not be held up to scrutiny by a standardized rubric.

A real audience was needed so that the students could be serious in their approach to writing. Additionally, they need to master the usage of the two past tenses, the Preterite and the Imperfect at this level. Traditionally textbooks refer to activities that students participated in when they were young to convey the meaning and usage of the Imperfect Tense. The text suggested that the students write children's stories. Why not write stories for children and read to them? In collaboration with the elementary Spanish Language teacher we were able to choose the purpose of the project, its execution, her role for field research, and the two third grade classes as the audience.

Prewriting activities: The focus was reading children's stories

Step 1: The class compiled a list of their favorite stories

- Working in groups, they chose a story and constructed a visual story map. The negotiations of how they wanted it to look were heated. Some were frustrated that they only had paper and pencil and a limited amount of time. The artists in the class reminded everyone that these were just preliminary sketches.
- Sharing of story maps

Students brainstormed possible topics and shared with their group

Step 2: Class activity of writing down details of what made the main characters memorable

Students created a concept map to assist them in their writing to include:

- Main Character (s)
- Setting
- Situation/Problem
- Series of events that make up the plot
- Ending

We negotiated a list of areas for focus. One criterion that was not negotiable was a happy ending.

As we progressed through the writing, scaffolding activities were incorporated, such as vocabulary builders and active verb tense practice. Other scaffolding activities included consideration of the following questions: Do the characters' words and actions make sense? Were there real problems or situations that move the story along? Does the story come to a natural or interesting stopping point? Students were encouraged to thoroughly develop their ideas for characters and plot. Group work was vital for the students to fulfill their roles. Because the school has provided classroom resources the students cooperated on the editing, coming to me when they really could not reach a consensus. I did not grade the stories before the Final Share.

The first Final Share was in the Upper School Library. My role was pairing the third graders with the sophomores. My observations were quick and encouraging. Time flew by except for a few technology bumps, which turned into learning opportunities that addressed the best practice for saving/protecting one's work.

The second Final Share was either in the computer laboratory or outside on the picnic tables. Elisa Williams describes the setting in her reflection: "The fresh air, birds flying in the sky, trees rustling in the wind, and lizards scrambling in the gravel was the

perfect environment for storytelling. Being outside with nature relaxes one's mind enabling them to open up to the third grade class. Reading outside is more appealing to the youngsters than sitting in a classroom or library. My experience today with the students was more memorable. I used more Spanish today than on Friday. For example, I was trying to explain to Dazzle, Nadine's lil brother, what 'fuera de' means. I said to him 'otros estudiantes están dentro de la clase de computación. Tú estás fuera de la clase de computación.' From my explanation (in Spanish) and the hand motions or gestures helped the student understand what was being said, besides, I used my Spanish, yeah. I was so delighted after reading my story to Dazzle and I think that we should interact with other students on a regular basis."

As the students were reading their stories, they started to notice errors. They pointed out these errors to the other teacher and gave the corrections. They were amazed that another teacher told them to pencil edit. This learning was happening in a sociocultural environment within their ZPD.

The reflection question was purposely ambiguous—what was it like to be the author of a story and read it to a real audience? The second mirrored the first. Personal feelings and amazement at the third graders proficiency levels comprised the content of their reflections. Please refer to Appendix B for samples of the reflections and the third graders' feedback.

Post Writing Activity- could they negotiate the content from collaboration?

Samples were taken from the students' writing for this activity. As they sat in random groups, I passed out the samples from their classmates' work. Some of the sentences did not have any errors. I was available if they could not agree. We reviewed the original

and the suggestions for correction. Some of the suggestions addressed the content and not just the form. To this point, the students did not know who the authors were. I handed the samples to the authors and told them that they could revise and/or edit using these suggestions or they could disregard the suggestions of the group.

In order to analyze this data properly a description of the class is necessary. It was a double block period. Before I handed back their reflections, they were asked to revise and pencil edit. They were asked to consider their metaphors. Were they the same or had they changed? I commented on their prior reflections in which they addressed their personal feelings as an author. Now I asked them to consider their writing as an author. How has it improved? What were the strengths/weaknesses of the Student Centered Writing Process? Beethoven played quietly in the background and not one student looked around or socialized. We stopped writing, engaged in other activities, took a break, and then came back to the reflections.

Chapter 6

My students still ask me for answers. “You want us to find out for ourselves, but you do know the answer, don’t you?” “Second Language Learning research has produced descriptive accounts of the course of interlanguage development, which show that learners follow relatively invariant routes of learning, but that such routes are not linear, including phases of restructuring and apparent regression. Such accounts have helped teachers to understand patterns of learner error, and its inevitability, and more generally, to accept the indirect nature of the relationship between what is taught and what is learned.” (Mitchell and Myles 1998, 195).

Writing had been relegated to a lowly position on the pedagogical ladder, wedged in rather than integrated. The ladder really does not exist. One skill is not more than another, not one can function alone. The project is finished, not the process. Students are at different levels; learning has taken its path. Some of the paths have been rocky, as is microgenesis. This led to the decision to engage and not run.

Contemporary approaches to assessment require the examinee to function in relative isolation. “Dynamic Assessment prescribes mediation of the examinee’s performance as an integral part of the assessment process” (Lantolf 2004, 1). How many examinees have failed because of isolation? Tarone and Liu state that the context of situation is recognized for its immense impact on language use and language learning. The new focus is on ongoing interaction (Kleifgen 1995, 1). Within the other contexts, seemingly minimal learning occurred. Learning occurred within the context of childrens’ stories when the authors repeatedly interacted with their audience.

Teachers may employ activities taken from ‘Practical Tips for Implementing Peer Editing Tasks in the Foreign Language Classroom’ (Byrd 2003) with the understanding that ‘L2 utterances may be deviant by comparison with the target language norms, they are by no means lacking in system. learners development follows a common route, even if the rate at which the learners actually travel along this common route may be different’ (Mitchell and Myles 1998, 10).

What common routes do student writers follow? Technology may offer assistance through the digital taping and viewing of interviews with authors. I still hold firm that mass-produced software programs try to move students along linearly and compartmentalize learning. What if my students could teach others who were traveling along the same route? ‘The part of the software I most appreciated was the use of video clips; in these clips students talked about the problems they encountered while writing a particular essay. I liked these clips because students were teaching students, and students could refer to these clips whenever they needed the information’ (Stover 1998, 1).

As stated, learners follow invariant routes, common routes of development, yet the rates are different. Teachers have the responsibility to be aware of these routes and rates. With this awareness, scaffolding to the students’ Zone of Proximal Development is essential and accepted.

In Spanish there exists ‘duende’. If one were to look it up in a dictionary, it would simply say goblin or charm. Yet duende cannot be defined, it has to be felt and on those rare occasions that it does occur, it can be felt. I watched my students as they revised their last reflection. There were not any ‘rambling monkey noises’ as they were cocooned in their writing, the very air seemed to know, and so I wrote with them, again. I asked if I

could share my observations. “I have a truly wonderful group of young people; full of life and energy and a profound sense of humor and curiosity. Creativity that runs longer than the Congo. How I honor and cherish the trust they have given me to be their teacher—to take them on this writing journey. I believe that they do want to write and reflect, yet time is pressing in on them as it is on me to cover material. We needed time to just sit and write; I shall do this more often during the rest of this year and the next. How it saddens me that I won’t be in the classroom with them just as I am confident that they will blossom and continue to write and remember so that we can all remember and the next generation can be lifted.” I did not look up while I was reading, I couldn’t. While I was reading I kept wondering, “Have they internalized what they have achieved?” Their shouts and spontaneous applause affirmed that Vygotsky was right: Language is the symbolic tool.

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Appendix A

SCHOOL PROFILE AND

LEARNING TOOLS

Jason Dane
Spanish II
Sra. Evans
2/9/05

Storybook Reading Feedback

I liked this project. It was nice to have one specific real audience we were writing for and to get to have that sort of interaction. Being able to design our pieces for these children and see their reactions was most likely the best part of the whole exercise. After being able to present to this group of kids I think we all have a better idea of what worked and what didn't in our writing. Now personally just from the reactions of the students I think I can improve my story greatly. The only thing that didn't work about the whole thing was that our stories were not written on a 3rd grade level in terms of the Spanish we used. There is no way these kid's are going to understand preterite vs. imperfect when only half of our class does. It is sort of hard to enjoy a story when you can't understand it. If I was to do it over I would most definitely add some sort of translation or at least more hints to what specific words mean. I felt compelled throughout the whole reading to translate for these kids and ended up doing so. Over all I thought this was probably the best writing piece we have had to date.

Feed back.

1. My writing has most definitely improved since the beginning of the year. For one I feel it has become much stronger. I'm definitely a bit more voice conscious when I write now. Also throughout the year we have learned a lot more variation in our writing. We now know several tenses, when we started we knew only one. With all the new grammar and vocab I certainly feel I have a greater knowledge of how to use the language. However I definitely could use to focus on applying ^{new} things we learn in class more to my writing.
2. I really didn't like the set writing process you gave us. For me it seemed to confuse me more than it helped. The only real plus I saw is that it was fairly organized. However I must stress again that it definitely didn't allow us sufficient time to work.

Nicole Stanton

[42]

Español

Es el 13 de febrero

dos mil cinco.

Role Feedback

My role was accuracy. I helped Amit with his story and Amit helped me with organization.

I don't think that I helped him much with accuracy as much as I helped him with his content and story plot and conflict. However there were obvious mistakes that I saw and corrected. Honestly, I did not like having a role, as much as just ~~being~~ helping anyone with anything.

Amit Kanusing
Español
Hoy es el 15 de febrero
dos mil ~~cuatro~~
cinco

2nd 3rd Grade Reflections

[43]

The 3rd Graders were really amazing. Some of them knew the Spanish. I felt good making them laugh and learn. They kept focused on my story b/c each slide had good pic and one sentence.

My Role: My role as organizer was good. Ms. Evans gave me a role I'm good at and I read peoples like Nicole. Her story went in good order and had a happy ending. Nicole for accuracy helped me between imperfect and preterite where I had to use imperfect ~~was~~ when writing my story.

Yahia Suid
Spanish II
Hoy es el 14 de febrero
Dos Mil Cinco
Mrs. Evans

Reflection

The role that I had in my group was organization. I made sure that when reading over my group member stories the sequences were placed in chronological order. I also made sure that the stories made sense. I pointed out where details and clarification should be made. However, this was difficult for me. For some stories when I stated suggestions, that person disagreed with me because that was the way he wanted the story to be set up. Over all I enjoyed doing this project. It helped me to understand how to write sentences in Spanish.

Direesh Mirpuri
Español II
Sra. Evans
El ocho de febrero
Dos mil cinco

Writing Feedback

I enjoyed this project a lot because of the reaction from my audience. Many of them smiled a lot and laughed throughout this project. It also taught me as a writer what exactly I need to do in order to entertain the audience. For example, many times throughout the presentation when I was reading it, I could feel the repetition and it did not flow as well as I would like it to. Therefore, I need to work on transition lines and try to make my sentences more complex and "juicy" to captivate the audience's attention. One aspect of my writing that I saw worked was that I used many pictures and graphics to express larger ideas. This helped many of the children understand the words and the story. It also helped me a lot with the preterite vs. imperfect because I had control over it. I could change the story to what I wanted to say. This taught me the different uses of both and the use of both of them in the same sentence. Overall, this project was a unique, yet enjoyable way to practice my writing. The little children's response to my piece made me feel good about myself. I saw some of the good aspects of my writing and some aspects that could be improved.

Chrystal Cooper

2-3-05

Spanish II

[46]

I felt good, ~~being~~ being the author of the story. It was fun. I didn't feel anyway about people whether it was their teacher or the kids criticizing my work. That was my first in a long time, I actually verbally presented something. I think the kids enjoyed my story. I thought the whole experience would have been bad but it was not!

Savannah Wesley
Es el 3 de febrero
dos mil cinco
Español II
[47]

Story Feedback

Today when I read my story to the 3rd graders I was surprised at how many some of them knew Spanish. At first I thought that a majority of them would ignore the story while I was reading it to them, but they all paid attention and were looking at the pictures to get a better understanding. Also, I felt that the girls I read to gave me better comments on my story and illustrations than the boys did, except for one boy, Nicholas. I was also nervous at first to read my story to the 3rd graders because I was scared of what they would say, but their positive feedback boosted my confidence.

My metaphors stayed the same because I hate writing and technology helped me in this project. With a computer I was able to acquire pictures for my writing piece and change the spell check to Spanish. This helped me spell some of the words I didn't know.

The form of my writing sucked. It was too simple. This is because I hate writing and writing it in Spanish doesn't make it any easier.

From reading other people's work I learned many things. I see mistakes that they made are the same mistakes I make in my writing. I learned that I am not alone in this world. I learned that I am not the only one who sucks at Spanish.

Project ReflectionsEssential II

I feel this project was a creative way for us to learn the predicate and imperfect tenses. I also feel that a very good idea on your part were the ideas for having separate people in your group perform different roles. I also feel that you had wisely chosen certain people for roles in which he or she would probably be good at. The best of the matter is that I was not here for a majority of this project. For the time that I was here for this project, I was able to help the members of my group with the flow of their stories. Since I was not here to receive the assistance from the other members of my group, I feel my project would lack a little than if I did have their help. Overall, I feel the role playing idea for this project was very well thought out, and it also helped take a certain load off of the backs of us knowing we would have some help including that of the teachers.

Metaphors

writing is how I express my ideas.

technology is my way of finding facts^{or other ideas} to support my ideas

I believe that my writing has improved. I have become more organized with my ideas. The context of my writing may not have improved but it will. I never was very creative. Writing was never a strong point for me. I always had trouble with coming up with ideas + how to support them + I still do, but I believe I have made improvements. Being able to use a computer has helped a lot. Not only can I get pictures I can also find a ton of facts that will help^{me} organize my writing + support it.

I feel like I should look over my writing pieces + have other people look over it + correct it. That way there won't be anything wrong with it when I turn it into the teacher.

Metaphors

Writing is like reading, it sucks.

Technology is like a new born baby, it's important.

My metaphors didn't change.

My writing improved because I started using a dictionary.

I have weaknesses in every part of writing that I need to improve.

Tip PG.

Reflection on Writing Piece For 3rd grade:

The weaknesses of my writing was ~~that~~ that it was too simple.

It was all in the present tense and it was short simple sentences. There weren't many details at all. One time, the other teacher was standing behind me while I read a sentence. Luckily, it was a simple sentence that was perfectly written so there were no mistakes. If I knew she was standing behind me I probably would've stumbled up.

The kids didn't seem very intrigued by my writing at all. My strong points were the words. I used a dictionary for the entire thing so I knew the words were correct. My goal is to write better pieces. I should be able to put more details in to make the writing more interesting. Maybe I would be able to use some of the grammar rules we learn in class if I improve my writing.



Los Cuentitos del Décimo Grado

por Estudiantes del 3er Grado ☺

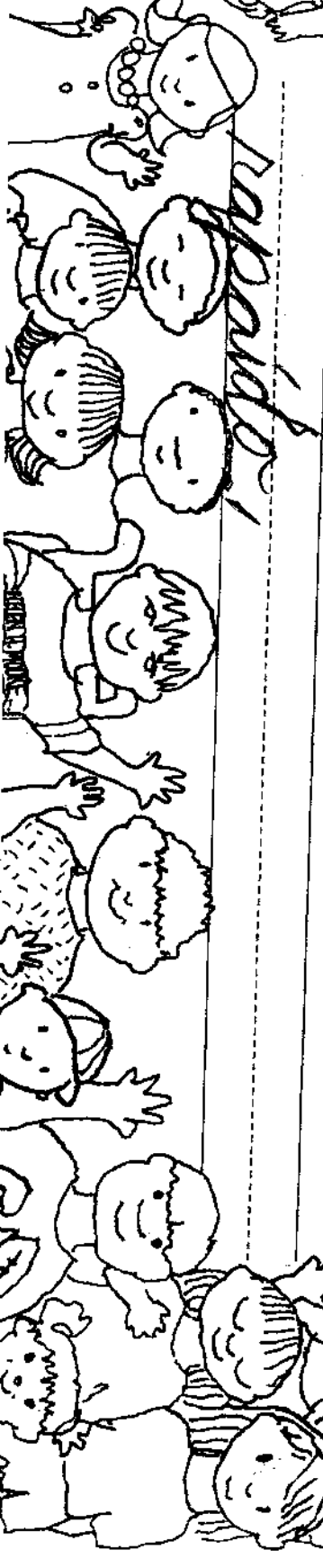
El hada Juan Robinson

to thois stois, el leam

to say fast in

español and it is

rapido!



Antilles School

Nombre: Maria

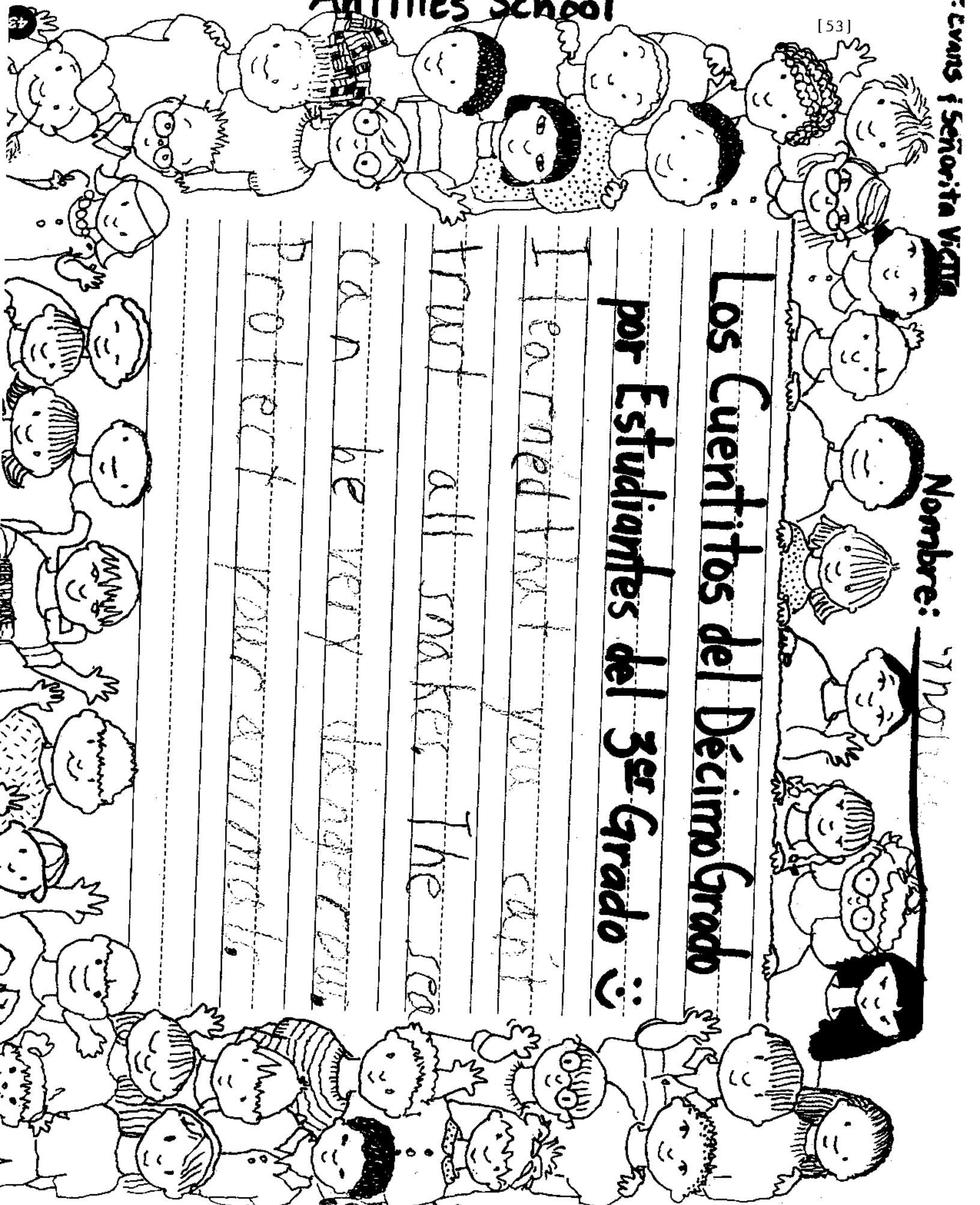
Los Cuentitos del Décimo Grado
por Estudiantes del 3er Grado ☺

I earned that you cup!

Trust all snakes. The sea

can be very dangerous.

Project for a month.



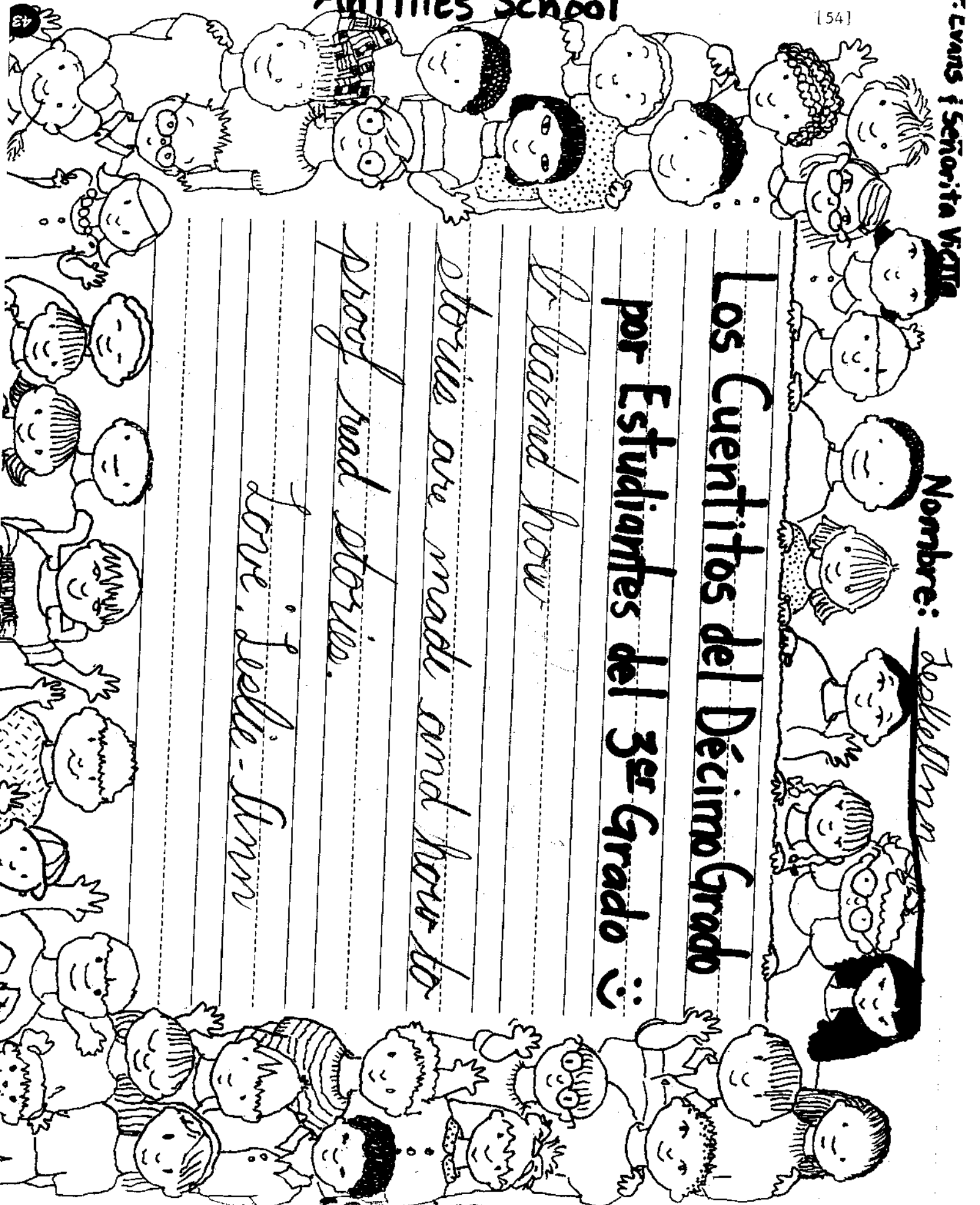
Los Cuentitos del Décimo Grado
por Estudiantes del 3er Grado :)

I learned how

to write and how to

read stories.

Jocelyn M



Antilles School

Los Cuentitos del Décimo Grado

por Estudiantes del 3er Grado ☺

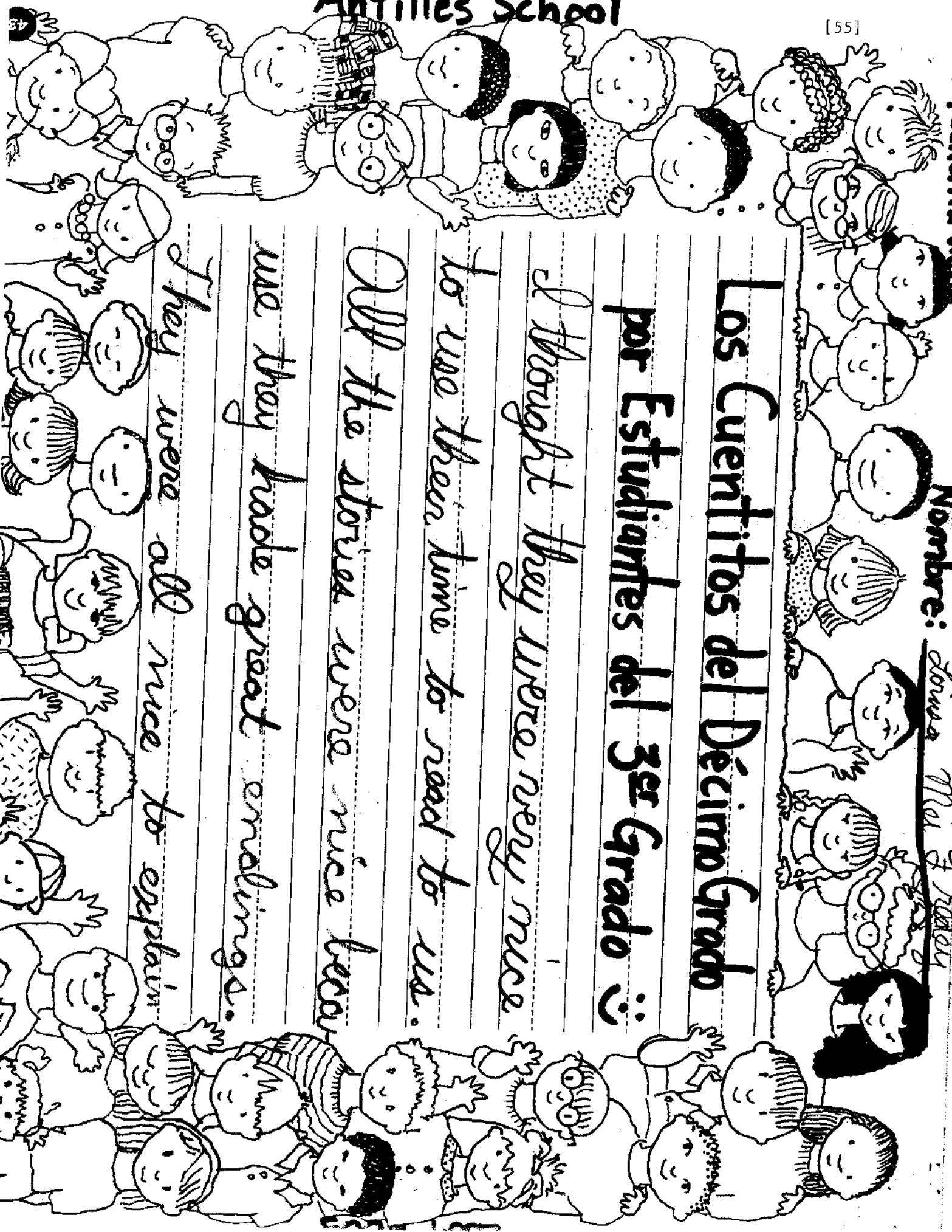
I thought they were very nice

to use their time to read to us.

All the stories were nice because

we they made great endings.

They were all nice to explain



Nombre: Jorusa

Los Cuentitos del Décimo Grado por Estudiantes del 3er Grado :-)

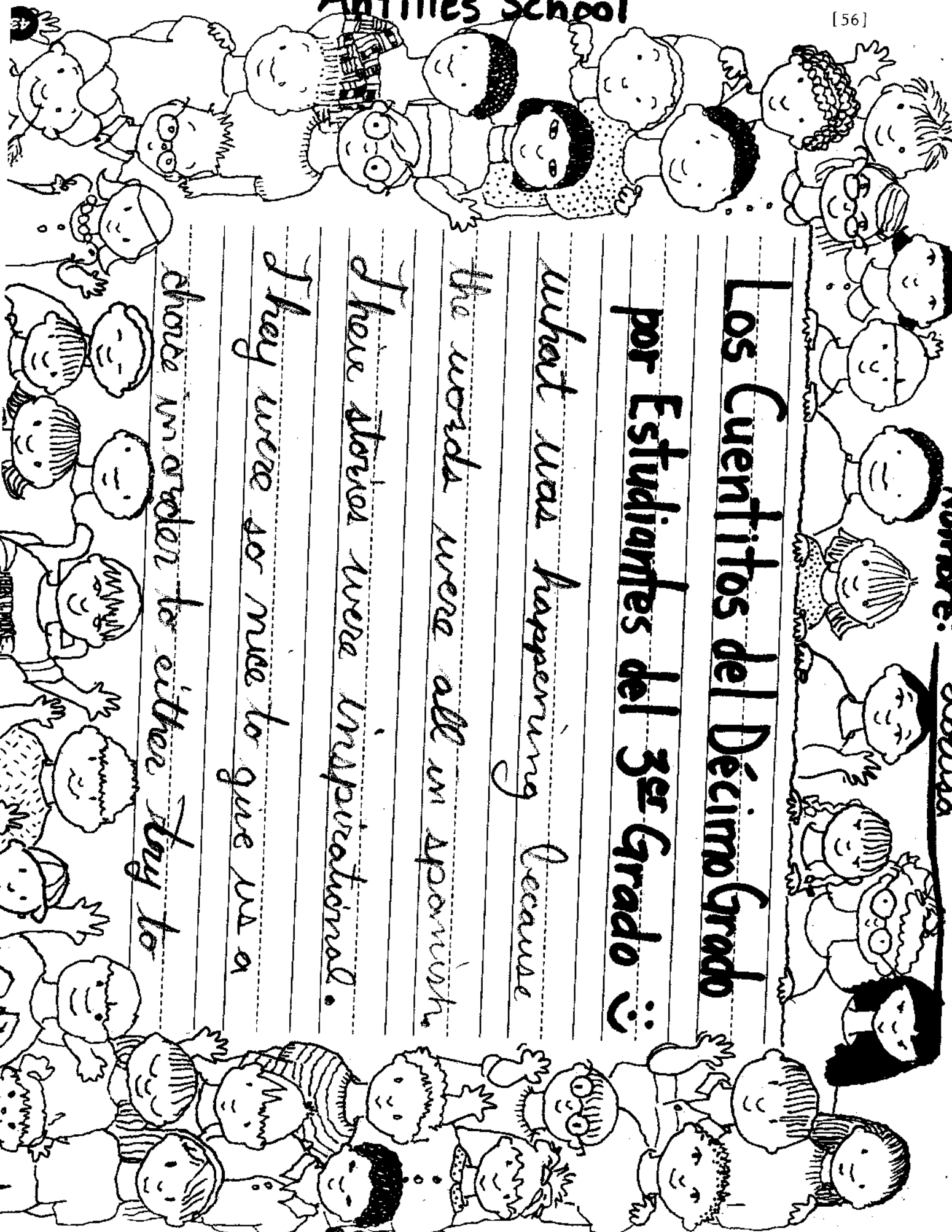
what was happening because

the words were all in Spanish

There stories were inspirational.

They were so nice to give us a

chance to order to either they to



Los Cuentitos del Décimo Grado
por Estudiantes del 3er Grado :)

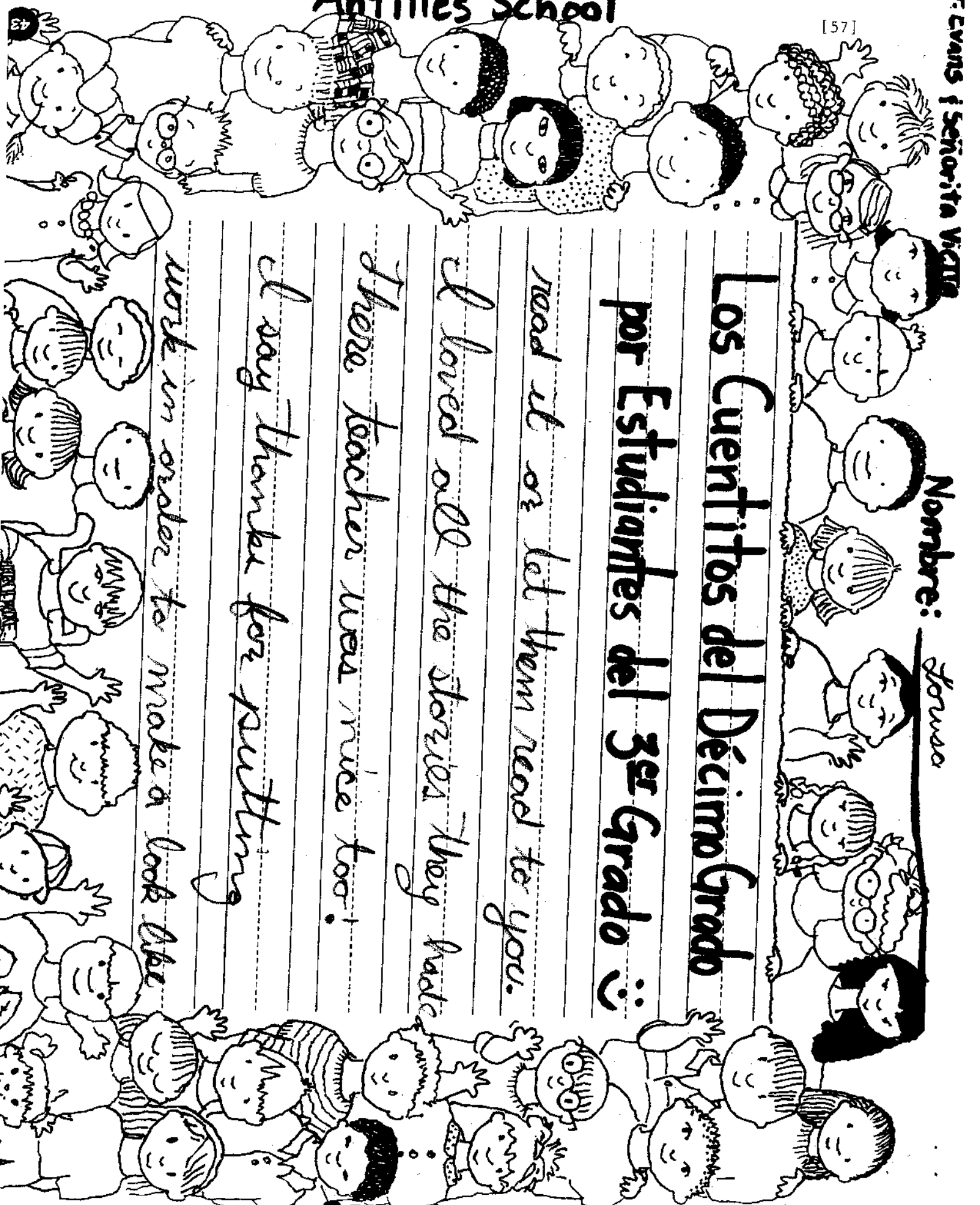
read it or let them read to you.

I loved all the stories they made

There teachers was nice too!

I say thank for putting

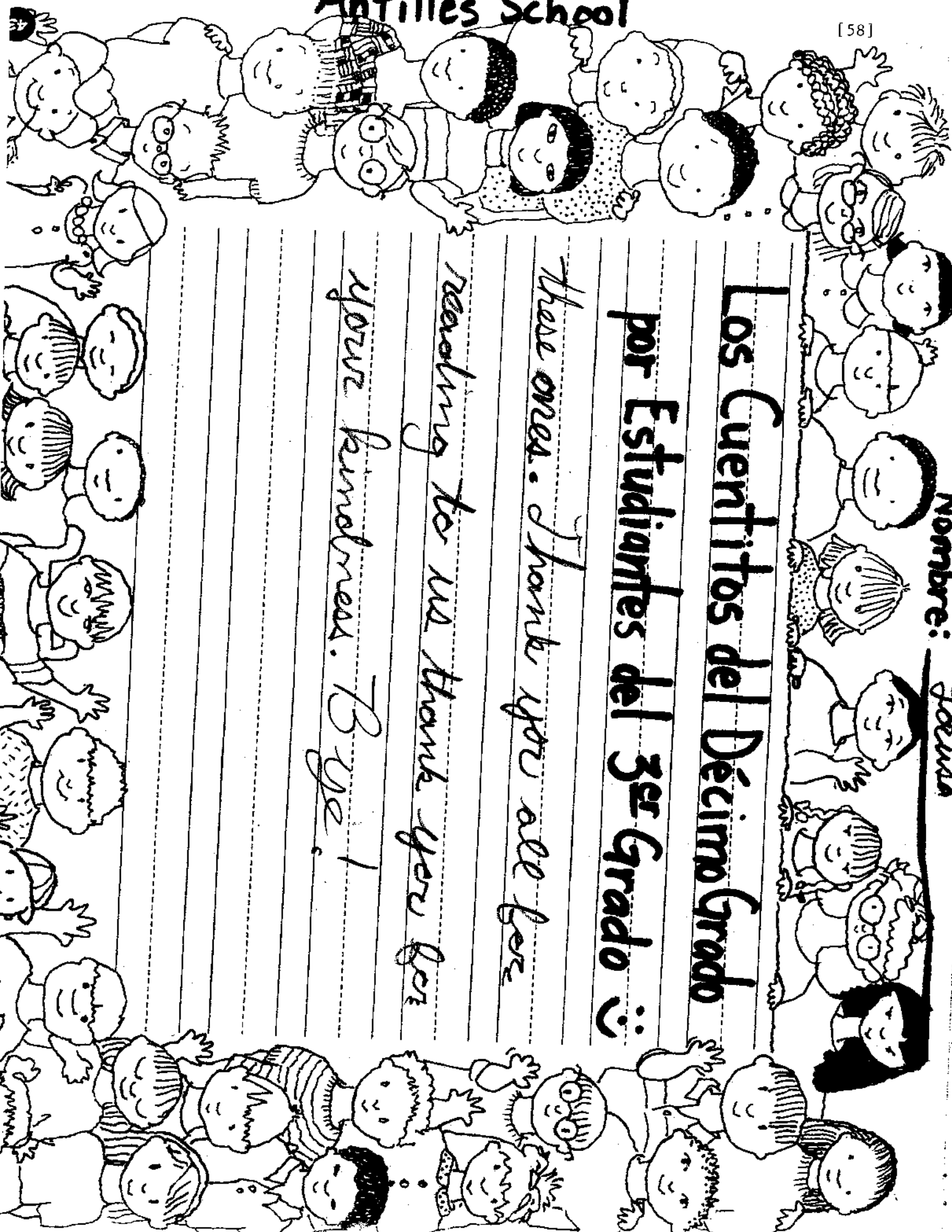
work in order to make a book like



Nombre: Socra

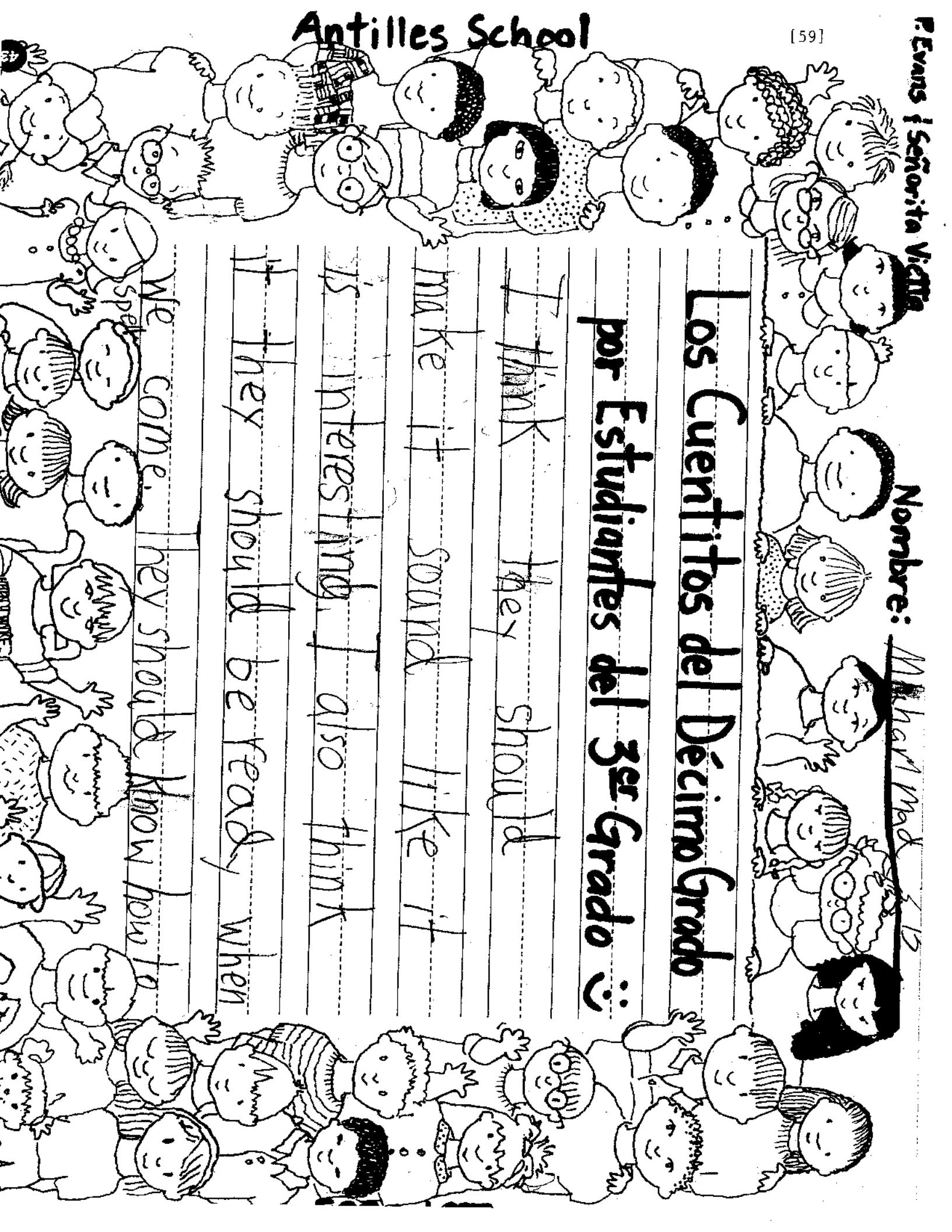
Los Cuentitos del Décimo Grado por Estudiantes del 3er Grado ☺

these ones. Thank you all for
reading to us thank you for
your kindness. Bye!



Nombre:

Michael Mad 3/10



Los Cuentitos del Décimo Grado por Estudiantes del 3er Grado ☺

I think they should

make it sound like it

is interesting I also think

they should be ready when

We come, they should know how to

spell

HERBERT WINE

Antilles School



Los Cuentitos del Décimo Grado

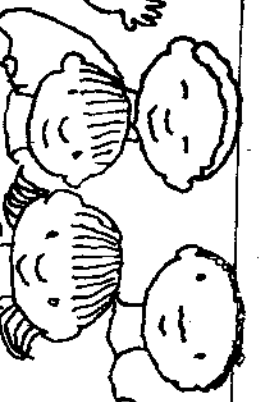
por Estudiantes del 3er Grado ☺

I think they should color it properly.

I say don't know how to keep there

books in the proper order I say should

know how to read it properly.



Handwriting practice lines with dashed midlines for letter height guidance.

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Los Cuentitos del Décimo Grado

por Estudiantes del 3er Grado ☺

The stories were very good, but

some of your students could

have been more interesting.

It was the dogs. They some

VERY VERY VERY



Nombre: Alexia

Los Cuentitos del Décimo Grado

por Estudiantes del 3er Grado ☺

I had a fun time!

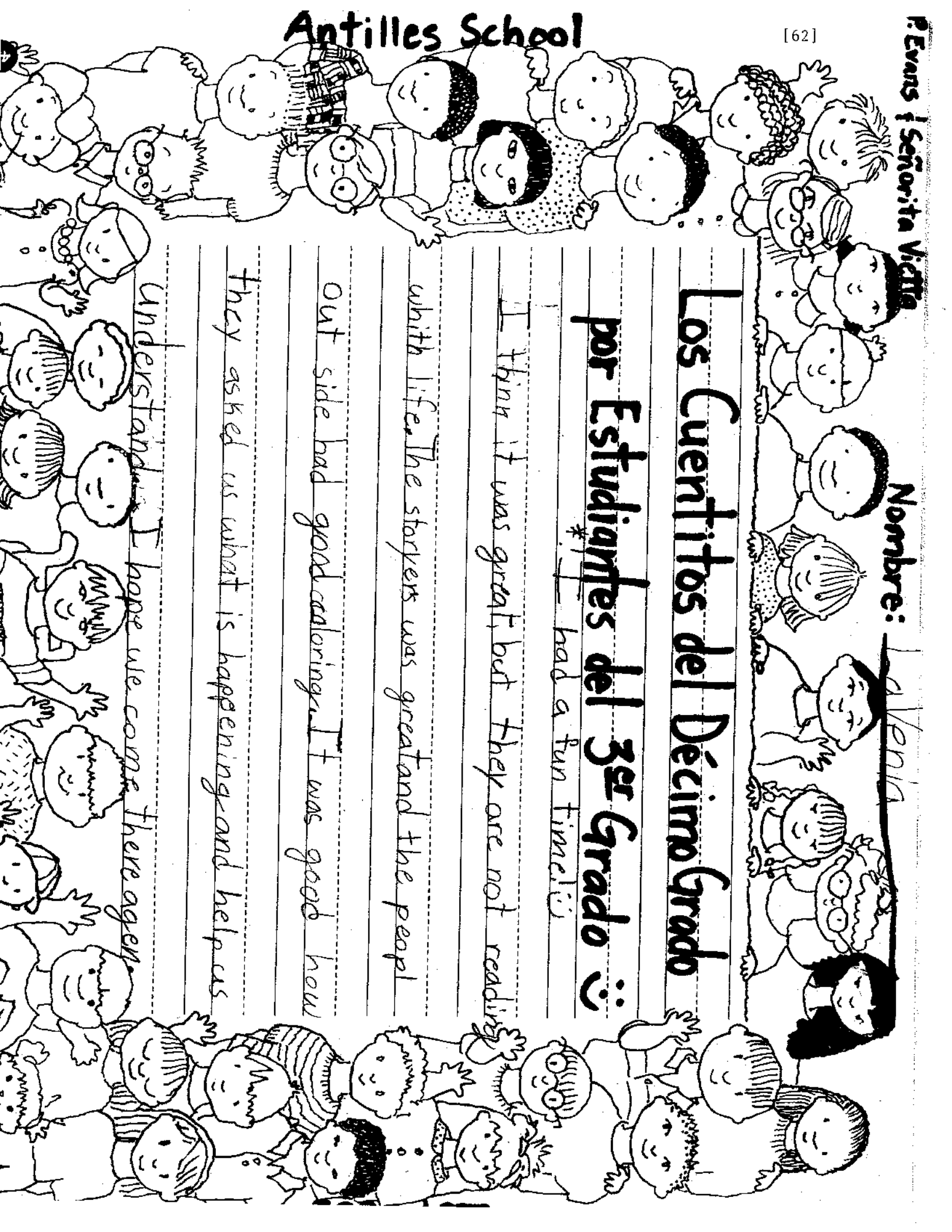
I think it was great but they are not reading

with life. The story was great and the people

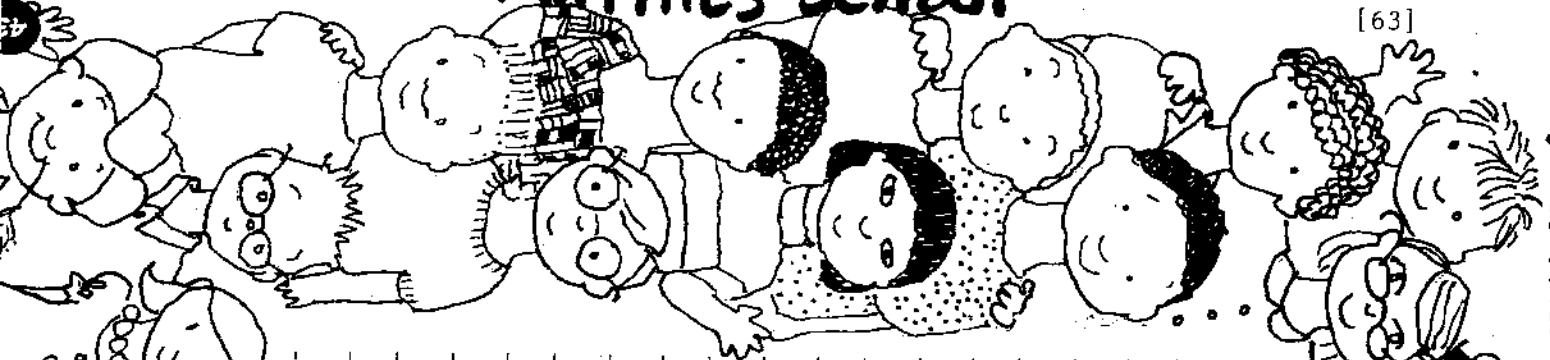
outside had good coloring. It was good how

they asked us what is happening and helps us

understand. I hope we come there again.



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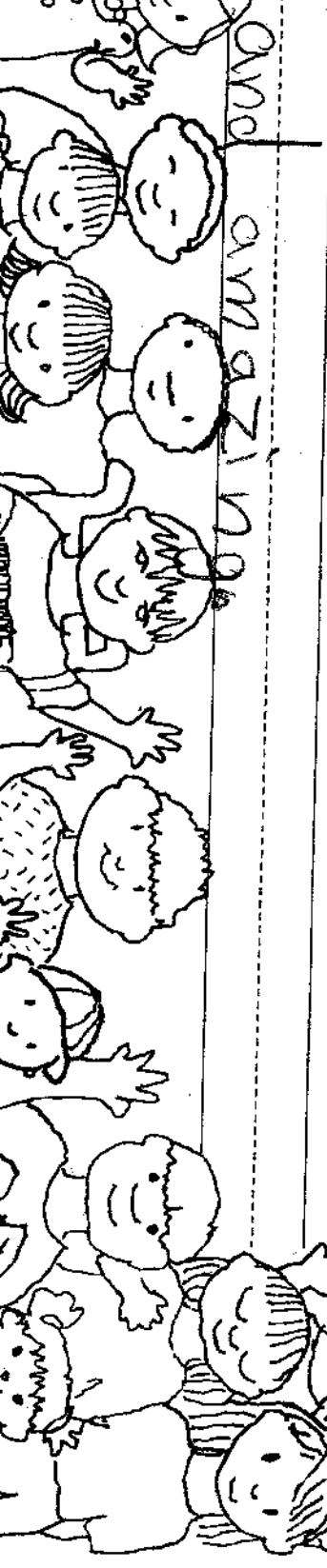


Los Cuentitos del Décimo Grado

por Estudiantes del 3er Grado ☺

In the Computer Lab I had a
great time. The 0th graders
did good stories. I enjoyed
their stories. We were fun

and amazing



Nombre: _____

TRVNY

Los Cuentitos del Décimo Grado

por Estudiantes del 3er Grado ☺

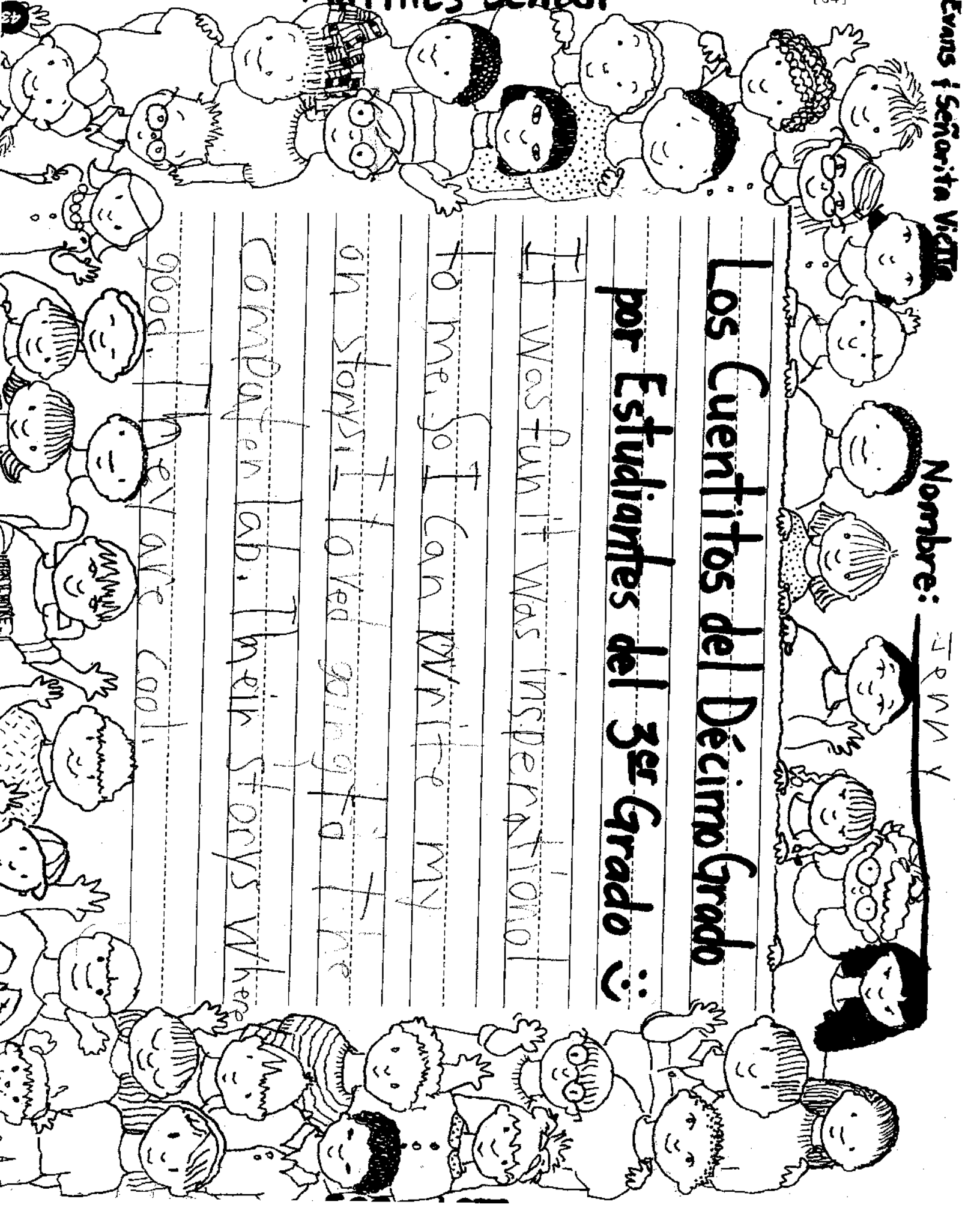
I was fun! I was inspirational!

To me, so I can write my

own story! I loved going to the

computer lab. I like stories where

good, they are cool.



Nombre: Soberia

Los Cuentitos del Décimo Grado

por Estudiantes del 3er Grado ☺

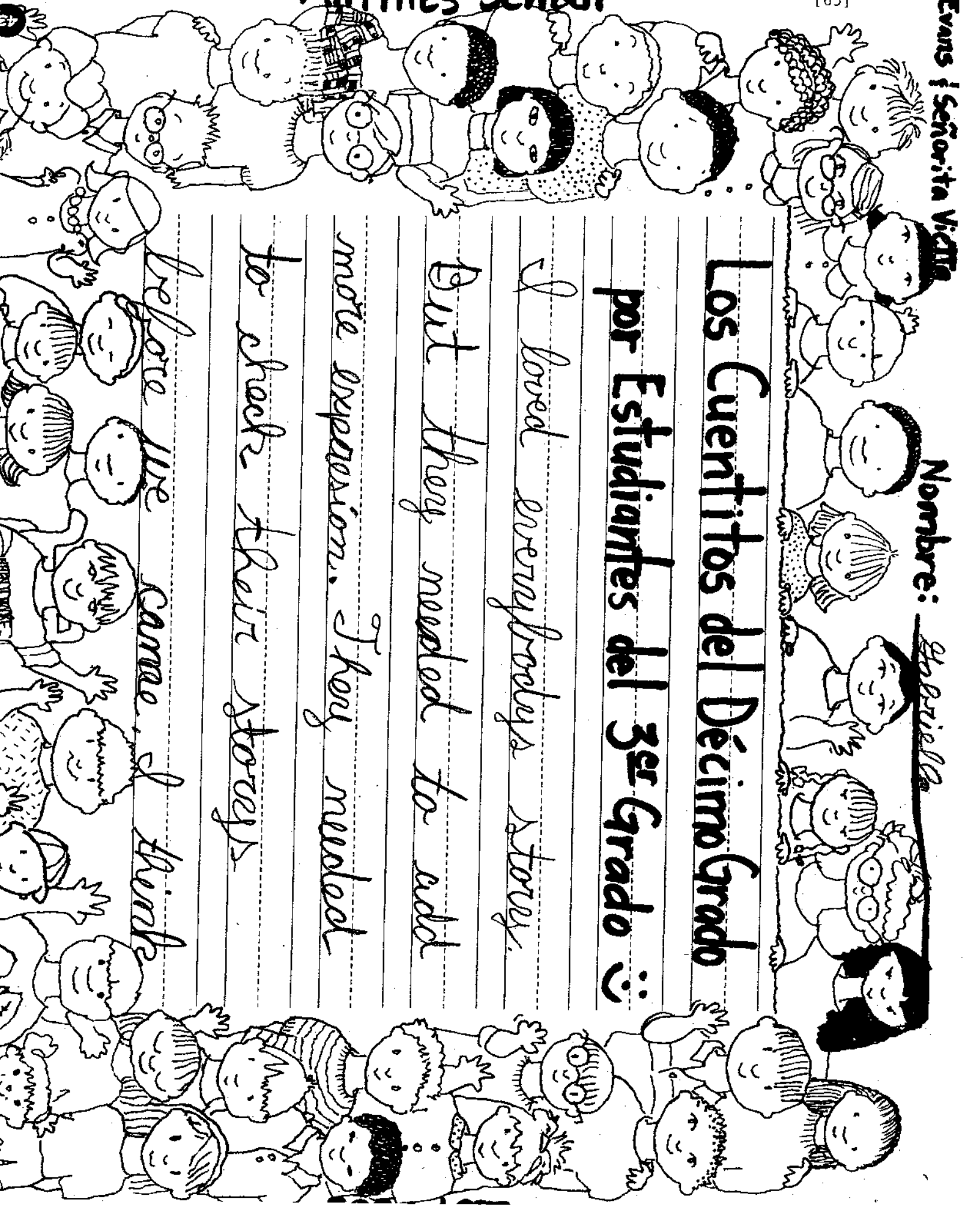
I loved everaybody's story.

But they needod to add

more expresion. You needod

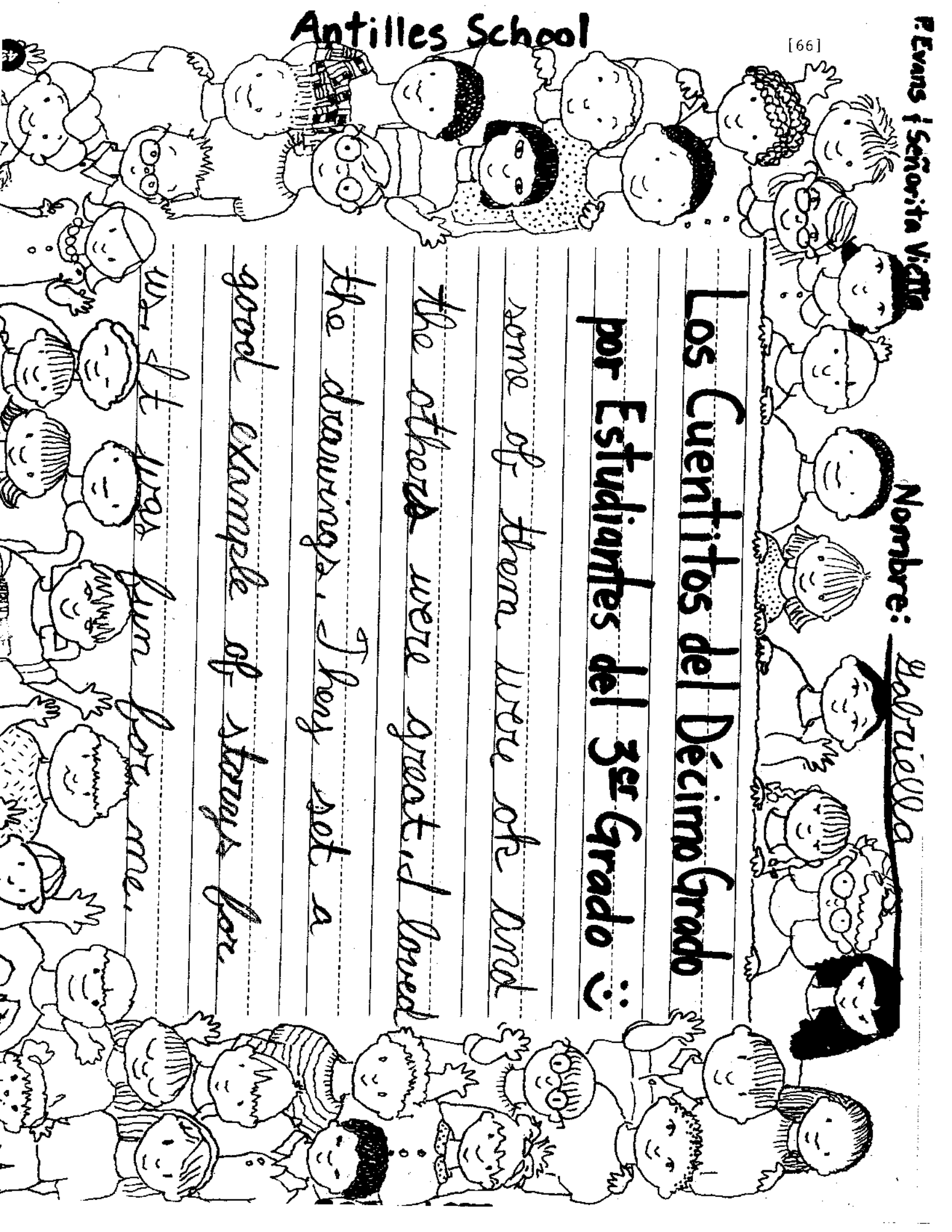
to check their storys.

before we canoe & thimk



Nombre:

Valquiella



Los Cuentitos del Décimo Grado por Estudiantes del 3er Grado ☺

some of them were of and
the others were great. I loved
the drawings. They set a
good example of strays for

us. It was fun for me.

Nombre: _____

Los Cuentitos del Décimo Grado

por Estudiantes del 3er Grado ☺

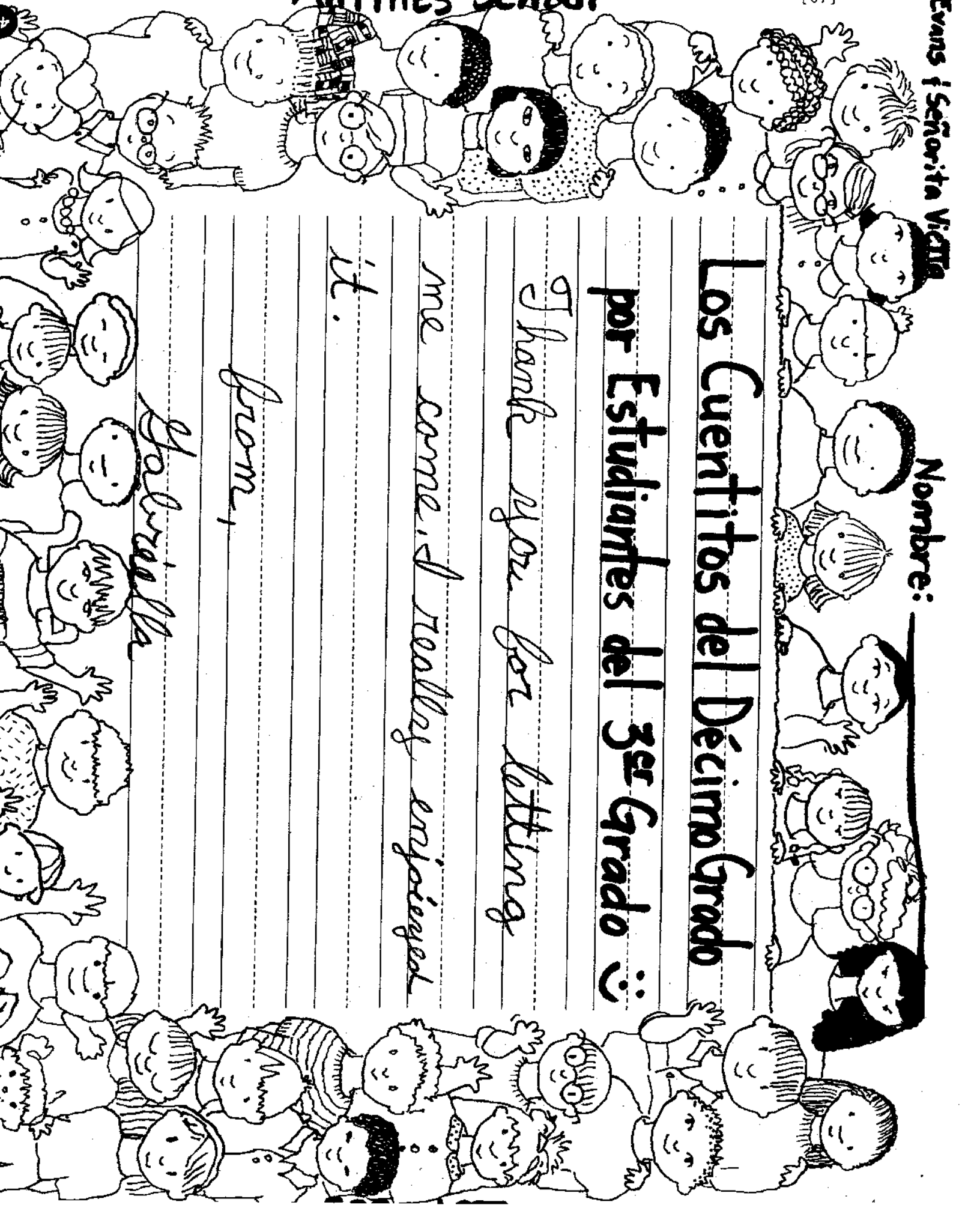
I thank you for letting

me come & really enjoyed

it.

from,

Salvadora



APPENDIX B

SCHOOL PROFILE

LEARNING TOOLS

ANTILLES

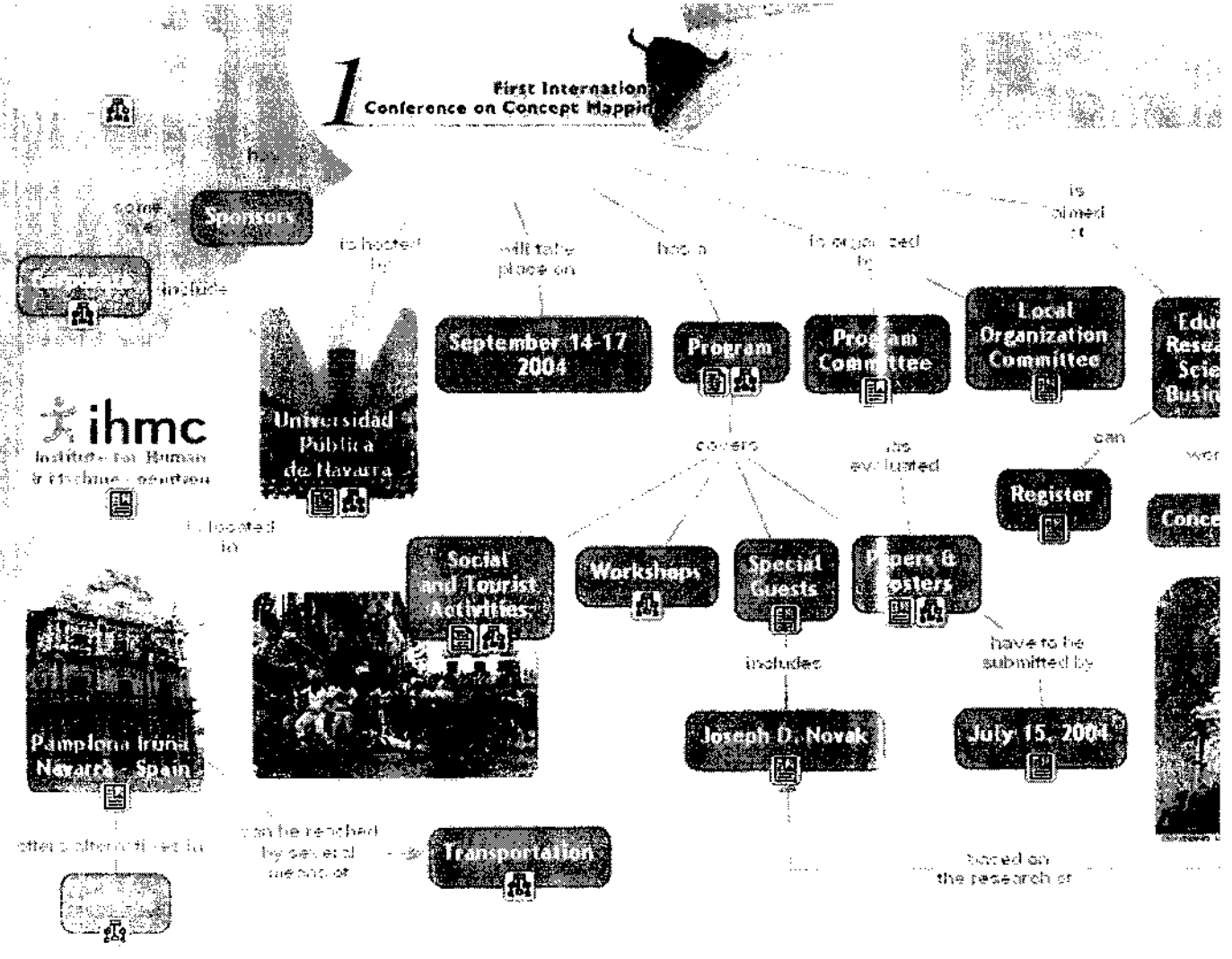
Profile 2004-05

Antilles School
 Frenchman's Bay 16-1
 St. Thomas, USVI 00802
 (340) 776-1600/FAX: 776-1019
www.antilles.vi

Ted Morse, Headmaster
 Chris Teare, Assistant Head/College Counselor
cteare@antilles.vi or (340) 776-1600 x235

CEEB Code Number: 550-280

- The School:** Antilles School, a fully accredited college preparatory coeducational day school for grades Pre-Kindergarten-12, was founded in 1950. Antilles emphasizes the traditional studies of English, mathematics, history, science, and foreign language with a strong commitment to the Advanced Placement Program of the College Entrance Examination Board. All students have experience in community service and student leadership activities, while the school's small size ensures that each student is an essential part of community growth. There is also a spirited commitment to extracurricular activities, including athletics. Antilles School is a member of organizations such as the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS).
- Enrollment:** Antilles School has a very diverse, gender-balanced annual enrollment of approximately 500 students, up to 50% of whom are students of color.
- Costs:** Tuition costs range from \$10,850 in the Pre-Kindergarten to \$13,000 for grade 12.
- Faculty:** There are 60 faculty members, with 33% holding advanced degrees. Fifty-two percent have taught at Antilles more than 5 years, and overall teaching experience averages 10 years. The student/faculty ratio is 9:1 and the average class size is 16.
- Curriculum:** All courses are college preparatory. In addition, Advanced Placement courses are presently offered in Biology, Calculus (AB & BC), Chemistry, Economics, English Language, English Literature, French Language, Psychology, Spanish Language, & U.S. History.
- Merit Scholars** From 1997 to 2004, Antilles School has had 17 National Merit Semi-Finalists. In the Class of 2004, one of three Semi-Finalists was selected as a National Merit Scholar.
- Graduation Requirements:** Twenty-two credits hours are needed for graduation. The year is two semesters of 18 weeks each. One credit is awarded for full-year academic courses, and .5 credit for one-semester courses. Minimum requirements: four years of English; three years of Math, to include Algebra and Geometry; three Lab Sciences; three years of Social Sciences, including U.S., European, and Caribbean History, as well as Civics; two years of the same Foreign Language; one year of Fine Arts. 50 hours of community service are also required.
- Grading System:** A = 90% and above; B = 80-89%; C = 70-79%; D = 60-69%; below 60% is failing. A through D grades are awarded credit. The college recommending grade is 70%.
- Class Rank:** Antilles School does not rank its students. Instead, in an effort to provide a meaningful context for an individual student's transcript, please see the back of this profile for a grade distribution for junior and senior year courses.
- Matriculations:** The Class of 2004 enrolled at American, Barnard, Barry, Bentley, Boston University (2), Charleston, Chemeketa CC, Columbia, Dartmouth, Dickinson, Eckerd (2), Emory, Florida Atlantic, Florida Tech, George Washington, Georgetown, Harvard, Haverford, Johns Hopkins, Johnson & Wales (3), Knox, Loyola-New Orleans, Marist, Miami (FL), Nevada-Las Vegas, Northeastern, Penn, Rollins, Savannah Art & Design, Springfield, Stanford, Tampa (2), Temple, Tulsa, Catholique de Lille, Univ. of the Virgin Islands, Wellesley
- Disclosure Policy:** In accordance with the National Association of College Admissions Counselors' *Principles of Good Practice*, Antilles School discloses disciplinary action to colleges and universities.



This Concept Map was created with IHMC Cmap

From On Our Way: A Student-Centered, Process Approach to Language-Learning by Maggie Cassidy with Kathleen Whallon. Copyright permission granted by author.

Process Writing in the Foreign-Language Class

The following suggestions for structuring writing assignments are based on the process approach to writing, as taught by Donald Graves and others. The principle underlying this approach is that as teachers we must establish the link between students and their writing. For many teachers and students, mechanical skills (spelling, "grammar," punctuation, and so on) are what writing is. Those aspects of writing are really more like the wrapping on a gift -- an important part, but not the gift itself. The process approach puts editing in perspective, as only one step in the process of writing a piece and readying it for publication.

An important component of this approach is the role of the teacher, who functions as resource and coach rather than critic. It is important that the teacher writes along with the students: in this way teachers face the same self-consciousness and problems as writers that their students face, so they are forced to keep their expectations realistic; at the same time, teachers can model the steps in the process for the class.

The process is essentially the same for all kinds of writing, though you will want to develop other questions for the various steps in the process, and other formats for the sharing; see the Bibliography for ideas. The process is also basically the same for beginning and upper-level classes; the difference is that beginning students will probably write more slowly and their pieces will be shorter; they may write only in the present tense. You can probably give all directions in the f.l.; ask students to paraphrase for their classmates in English if necessary.

Step one: Brainstorming topics

Students write a list of all the topics that they might wish to write about. If you wish to limit or define the topics in some way, say so; at the same time, be sure to make the assignment flexible enough to give students a choice of topics within its limits.

Example:

"Traveling:" A trip students have taken.

"My Family and Me:" A letter of a friend; an introductory letter to a pen-pal.

"At Home:" Something that happened at home.

They can do/make this list for homework or in class; if they do it in class, limit them to 10 minutes. If students have trouble coming up with topics, sometimes it helps them to do a group brainstorming; students suggest topics and you write all of them on the board.

Remember to make your own list at the same time.

Cassidy

Process Writing

Sharing

Writers (including you) find a partner. Each writer reads his/her list aloud. Then his/her partner asks:

"Which topic would you like to write about, and why?"

-- and the writer answers. (You may wish to write the question on the board, in the f.l. and perhaps in English, so that students can refer to it as they share.) Upper-level students can ask and answer this question in the f.l.; beginning students may need to use English, and you can encourage them to try to express their answers in the f.l. as well. The pair repeats the procedure with the other partner reading his/her list of topics and answering the same question.

Step two: Brainstorming details

Writers (including you) write down all the details they can think of about the topic they've chosen to write about. They can write the details in the form of notes or phrases, or another list, if that's more comfortable than writing complete sentences. They can use both the f.l. and English; the idea is to write down as many details as possible, so they'll have them to draw on as they write. Particularly in beginning classes, you may want to allow some time at the end of this step for vocabulary questions.

Sharing

Working with the same partner, writers read the list of details aloud. After the first writer reads his/her details, the other person asks:

"Which details communicate what you want to tell the reader?"

-- and the writer responds. (Again, you may wish to write the question on the board for the students.) Then the partners switch roles and repeat the procedure. You can allot a bit more time at the end of this step for vocabulary questions. At the same time, encourage students to work with the vocabulary they already know as much as possible, so that their classmates will be able to understand what they write.

Step three: Discover Draft

In the same pairs, writers read their discovery drafts -- however rough, however incomplete -- to their partner, who asks:

"What do you think about this piece?"

"What else does the reader need to know?"

Again, the writer responds.

You can see that these questions, like the previous ones, turn the usual order of things on its head. Here it is the writer who gives an opinion about the piece; the writer determines what the reader needs to know. After all, only the writer really knows what the piece is about.

It is likely that the writer's partner will also have an opinion and an idea of what else the reader needs to know. The partner should

Cassidy

Process Writing

contribute an opinion only after the writer has given his/her response to the questions and only if the writer wants that contribution. In any case, by now it should be plain to both writer and partner that the writer is free to accept the partner's suggestions, adapt them, or even disregard them.

Step four: Revising

Inexperienced writers can confuse revising with editing, and sometimes with recopying. It may help students if you remind them that "revision" means "seeing again" -- that it's the step when the writer tries to look at the writing from the reader's point of view, and make the writing speak directly to the reader.

There are almost as many revision techniques as there are writers, but here is a list of suggestions for getting started. Suggest that students begin by picking one thing to work on. It helps to brainstorm a few versions of the part in a question and then to test them out on a sympathetic listener.

- lead: Does it draw the reader into the piece?
Does it fit neatly into whatever follows it?
- adding details: Are there enough details to hold the reader's imagination?
- subtracting details: Does every detail add something to the piece? Writers often have difficulty cutting details; encourage students to keep the details on file in their notebook to use in another piece.
- sequencing words, sentences, paragraphs, events: Can the reader follow the events easily? Are words and sentences arranged in the most effective order? Are verb tenses consistent with the actions they report?
- transitions: does the piece move easily and smoothly from one part to the next -- or if the transitions are abrupt, is it because the writer wanted them that way?
- dialogue: If someone is speaking, does the writer use dialogue to capture the person's voice? Dialogue adds a special liveliness to writing.
- endings: Does the ending give the reader the information he needs? Does it wrap the piece up neatly -- or if it's ambiguous, is that intentional?

Sharing

Students read their revised pieces to their partners, who ask: "How is this revision different from the first version?"

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Process Writing

The writer responds and then the partners exchange roles.

Step five: Editing

As we mentioned above, many teachers evaluate student writing only on the basis of mechanics. Knowing this, students will ask for help: "Could you go over this?" they ask. What they really mean is, "Will you fix this up and make it perfect?" We know that students learn to speak by speaking, and we do not expect them to speak perfectly each time they open their mouths; and yet there is a terrible temptation to take the paper, indicate all the places that need fixing, and return it to the student for more work. Unquestionably, the paper would be better when the student handed it in the second time -- but what would the student learn? If showing students all their mistakes on every paper worked as a teaching technique, then students would not continue to make the same mistakes on composition after composition. What matters, after all, is not whether any one paper is perfect, but whether students care enough about their writing to want to put it into acceptable form and whether they are learning ways to do that.

Resist the temptation to do students' editing for them. Help them learn to edit: ask them to look hard at their own papers for mechanical errors. Sometimes it helps to have them look for one thing at a time: "Go through the whole piece and look just at verb forms." They should indicate problems on their own papers (words they're not sure how to spell, punctuation problems, etc.), and then they should look for help with those problems. Show them how to use a dictionary, encourage them to ask each other for help. You should be the resource of last resort -- and then only for specific questions.

Final sharing: Publication

There are two basic ways writers can represent their writing to an audience: the writing can be read aloud, or it can be given to the audience to read.

Students who want to read their pieces aloud can rehearse for the presentation in small groups. Especially at first, students may be too shy to read their pieces themselves; another student, or even you, could read them instead. The reading itself can be formal, with the presenters behind a podium in front of the class/audience; or it can be very informal, with both readers and audience sitting in a circle.

Publication in writing can also take a variety of forms: students can make a few copies of their pieces to pass around, or they can run off enough copies for everyone; or the class could make a book of pieces from everyone in the class; or you could post some pieces on a bulletin board and the class could take time to read them.

All of this is very different from assigning a composition today, to be handed in tomorrow. This approach is certainly more difficult and more time-consuming for both students and teachers, but as you try the approach several times, with a variety of pieces, both teachers and students will find writing easier and more rewarding. Not every piece

Cassidy

Process Writing

of writing will click with every writer, or every class; there is no reason why every student must bring each piece through all the steps to publication, especially if there are enough assignments to allow students to choose one or two to publish.

Resources

Presentation on the Writing Process for MAT Program

Dear MAT's,

Some of you may be going into teaching situations -- in the Peace Corps, in other countries, and in programs in the U.S. -- in which you will be expected to teach writing, and you may not know what resources will be available. These books could form the nucleus of a library on writing and the teaching of writing: They are the first books I would choose as resources for a teacher of writing.

Books about Writing

-The Manual of Style, published by the University of Chicago Press, and also known informally as the Chicago Manual. This and a good dictionary are the essential reference materials when writers arrive at the editing stage. It is quite expensive, but very comprehensive: it not only treats questions of grammar, capitalization, etc., but also explains in great detail the process a book goes through from manuscript to publication.

→ -The Elements of Style, by William Strunk and E.B. White. I think the reason this little book is so essential is that it treats questions of style with such good humor and common sense, showing how style is often a matter of courtesy. Its subliminal message is that good English is accessible, important, and even fun.

-On Writing Well, by William Zinsser (Harper & Row). This book deals with essential aspects of writing that most authors don't address: leads, simplicity, and -- especially -- audience. Moreover, Zinsser delivers his ideas clearly, with an informal and yet businesslike tone; the book itself is a model of good writing.

Books on the Teaching of Writing

-Writing: Teachers and Children at Work, by Donald Graves (Heinemann).

- The Art of Teaching Writing, by Lucy McCormick Calkins (Heinemann).

Both Graves and Calkins have studied children writing (in fact, at one point they worked together at the University of New Hampshire); both

Cassidy

Process Writing

have worked with teachers on using the process approach to teach writing. Though both books focus on elementary-school students, most of their observations and techniques are equally valid for secondary students.

A Student-Centered, Process Approach to Language-Learning

Process Writing in the Foreign Language Classroom

Step One: Brainstorming topics – yellow card (5mins. each)

Students write a list of all the topics that they might wish to write about.

_____ homework _____ class work (10 mins.)

Sharing – writers find a partner. Each writer reads his/her list aloud.

Then the partner asks **“Which topic would you like to write about and why?”**

TRY TO ASK AND ANSWER THIS QUESTION IN SPANISH. If you need to use English that’s ok but try to give the list in Spanish.

Step Two: Brainstorming Details – blue card (5 mins.)

Don’t worry about the other topics. Concentrate on the topic you chose.

Writers write down all the details they can think of about the topic that they have chosen. They can write the details in form of notes or phrases, or another list, or concept map. They can use both the English and Spanish; the idea is to write down as many details as possible, so they’ll have them to draw on as they write.

Sharing - (10 mins. – 5 mins. each)

Working with the same partner, writers read the list of details aloud. The other person asks: **“Which details communicate what you want to tell the reader?”** and the writer responds. Then the partners switch roles and repeat the procedure.

Step 3: Writing Discovery Draft – two green cards (!2 mins.)

Sharing – (10 mins. –5 mins. each)

In the same pairs, the writers read their discovery drafts – no matter how rough or incomplete – to their partner who asks:

“What more does the reader need to know?” and **“What do you -the writer – think of this piece?”** The writer gives an opinion about the piece; the writer determines what the reader needs to know. The partner contributes an opinion only after the writer has given his/her response to the questions and only if the writer wants that contribution. The writer is free to accept the partner’s suggestions, adapt them, or even disregard them.

Step 4: Revising – seeing again (20 mins. -- 10 mins. each)

This the step where the writer tries to look at the writing from the reader’s point of view, and make the writing speak to the reader.

Writer reads to the partner, the partner asks: **“ What changes did you make and why?”** **How do you feel about this piece now?”**

“How can I help you further?” The writer responds, switch roles, you can revise again!

Here’s a partial revising list:

- Lead –does it draw the reader into the piece? Does it fit neatly into whatever follows it?
- Adding details – are there enough details to hold the reader’s attention?

- Subtracting details – does every detail add something to the piece?
Keep the details that you cut in your notebook to use in another piece.
- Sequencing words, sentences, paragraphs, events – can the reader follow the events easily? Are the words and sentences arranged in the most effective order? Are verb tenses consistent with the actions they report?
- Transitions – does the piece move easily and smoothly from one part to the next – or if the transitions are abrupt, is it because the writer wanted them that way?
- Dialogue – if someone is speaking, does the writer use dialogue to capture the person’s voice?
- Endings – does the ending give the reader the information he needs? Does it wrap up the piece neatly – or if it is ambiguous, is that intentional?

Step 5: Editing (10-mins. solo/share)

- **Writer** circles any editing questions (word choice, spelling, punctuation, mechanics)
- **Writer** uses appropriate resources to assist in editing –e.g. dictionary, partner, etc.
- **Teacher** is the resource of last resort and only for specific questions.

FINAL SHARE/PUBLICATON

Voice

A Definition








Voice is many things: individuality, perspective, expressiveness, sensitivity to audience, enthusiasm for a topic, confidence—and so much more. Voice has the power to hold a reader's attention and to make the reading more enjoyable. It also reveals something of the writer, and the stronger the voice, the deeper the revelation. Even informational pieces can (and should) have strong voice, the kind of voice that resonates from a writer's knowledge of and respect for his/her topic, along with the desire to bring that topic to life for the reader.

Teach voice by

- Reading aloud from works that have strong voice.
- Sharing numerous voices, from humorous to somber.
- Helping students learn to develop an appropriate voice for the situation—a whimsical, playful voice in a poem or a professional voice in a business letter.
- Helping students identify an audience and write for that audience.
- Giving students an opportunity to practice different voices through different forms of writing, from creative/narrative to technical/informational.
- Identifying, describing, and comparing the voices of professional writers.
- Letting students hear your voice as you share your own writing.



Voice

-  Individuality
-  Liveliness
-  Enthusiasm for topic
-  Confidence that comes from knowledge
-  Tone fits audience, purpose
-  Sensitivity to audience needs
-  Appeal to keep readers reading



SIMPLE 6-POINT SCALE FOR VOICE

6

- * This is *me*. It's as individual as my fingerprints.
- * This paper *begs* to be read aloud—you will want to share it.
- * I love this topic—and it shows in every line.
- * I don't over-write, but I use my voice to keep readers hooked.
- * You'll find this paper tough to put down.

5

- * I think my voice is lively and expressive; it shows enthusiasm.
- * The tone and flavor are right for my topic, audience, and purpose.
- * I want my audience to like this topic and to tune in.
- * Would you read it aloud? I think so.

4

- * Spontaneous? Enthusiastic? Sure—now and then. Not *all* the time.
- * The tone is acceptable for my topic, audience, and purpose. It's fine.
- * My voice comes and goes. I get tired now and then—you know?

3

- * I have a sincere, *functional* voice. It's an OK topic and an OK paper.
- * My tone might not be *perfect*. Well, *nobody's* perfect. So what?
- * I don't usually think about the audience—I just write.

2

- * Sometimes I sound like an encyclopedia—other times, I'm too chatty. Can't seem to hit the right note.
- * I think there could be a *moment* of voice here or there. Maybe.
- * My audience? Well, who *are* they anyhow?

1

- * I can't think of a word to describe this voice.
- * For that matter, does this even *have* voice? It's kind of ho-hum.
- * I wouldn't read this myself if I didn't have to.
- * I don't care that much about the topic—and I don't really care if anyone reads this, either. I feel bored. I'm glad it's over with!

6

Tips for Success in

Voice

1. Be yourself.

Fingerprints on the page. *Immediately* identifiable. You—the one, the only.

2. Match voice to purpose.

A mystery story told round the campfire with long shadows flickering all around has one kind of voice. A business letter your firm sends out to recruit new clients has another. Know the sound you're going for.

3. Think of your audience.

Who are they? Write *right to them*.

4. Read.

When you get stuck, whip out one of your favorite books and let the voice wash over you. *Now*, write. Write as if you were writing to that author. Feel how naturally your own voice flows.

5. Know your topic.

Do your research. There is no substitute for knowledge.

6. Think of everything as a letter.

Almost nothing—except perhaps poetry—can match the voice of a good letter. So, imagine you're writing a letter even when you're not. You'll be surprised at the difference.

TEACHING VOICE

Just Listening

Choose your favorite books—or editorials, journal articles, poems, whatever. Read them aloud. You don't have to do the whole piece, either. A segment often makes the point. Just let students hear the voice.

Encourage Them to Read Aloud, Too!

Ask students to read aloud, also. This is often less intimidating in small groups, so you might ask them to bring a favorite passage to a response group, in which everyone will share. Ask them to first, spend some time making their selection—something that could be read in five minutes or less—and second, to put plenty of feeling into it, almost as if they were trying to wake someone up. Liveliness is the key. Some students may wish to perform their readings for the whole class.

Voice Through Music

Each piece of music has a kind of voice of its own. To see how true this is, create a voice collage through a collection of highly diverse music—e.g., Willie Nelson, Mozart, the Beatles, Luciano Pavarotti, Aretha Franklin, Andrew Lloyd Webber, Beethoven, etc. See if students can come up with a one-word description for the “voice” within each piece of music.

Dressing With Voice Day

Have a “dress with voice” day in which students have freedom to choose something original—a hat, shoes, tie, special shirt, socks, or whatever. If your dress code allows, you may wish to experiment with make-up or costumes, too. Show that voice is a form of personal expression, and shows up in many forms—including dress.

Bring In Other Voices

Wonderful recordings by professional actors and writers abound. These people may have nothing on you when it comes to reading aloud with expression and flair, but there is much to be said for bringing another voice into the classroom to be heard.

Whose Voice Is It?

Play the “Whose Voice Is It?” game with your students (see the Activities section in this notebook). Keep it simple at first, focusing on voices your students are likely to know. You might begin with just one or two voices—one might be Jerry Seinfeld, one Edgar Allan Poe. Can they tell which is which? As this task becomes too simple, add one or two more voices, but always focusing on those your students are *likely to know*. Don't forget to look at such sources as song lyrics, TV or film scripts or poetry.

There's another way to play the game, too. You don't always have to name the *author*. You might ask students to identify which piece came from a newspaper, which from an encyclopedia, textbook, best seller, advertisement, business letter, etc. The voice in each piece will be a little different—because the purpose and audience are different. And remember—even if you cannot identify a voice, you can describe it. What kind of voice is it? Businesslike, philosophical, serious, humorous, sarcastic, or—? Describing voices is an important skill, too.

Imitation

Take a short passage from any writer whose voice is distinctive, and re-write the passage in another voice: e.g., Jerry Seinfeld as Hamlet, Winnie the Pooh as Edgar Allan Poe, an encyclopedia article as David Letterman or Toni Morrison or the Beatles might do it. Let your imagination run wild.

What Voice Is Appropriate?

Ask your students to do a little role playing. They might write a letter to a business requesting information—or making a complaint (letters written for an invented situation, of course, need not be sent). One interesting way to do this is to divide students into groups, then have each group invent a situation for which a memo or letter response or request would be necessary. Groups can then exchange "situations," spend some time discussing the best way to handle it (Who is the audience? What kind of voice is appropriate?), and drafting a letter they think would be appropriate. Let each group that came up with the original situation assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of the letter they received. Discuss results.

Shifting Voices

Different audiences and different situations require different voices. You might ask your students to create one short piece for two completely different audiences: e.g., an introductory brochure to the new aquarium in town for an audience of children 6-10, and one that would be mailed to overseas visitors coming to your city for the first time. Or, do different pieces that reflect different perspectives. For instance, do a traffic accident report as a police officer on the scene would describe it, and a news summary of that same accident that could be read by a TV anchor. Older students might try something a little more difficult: How to install new software as you would write it for computer-savvy adult users, and as you might write it for young computer beginners. Or—an account of a Civil War battle by a Confederate soldier—and another written by a Union soldier. Be creative in thinking about how factors like age, experience, knowledge or perspective influence voice.

Moments of Voice

Voice, like personality, tends to have ups and downs, even within a short piece. Choose a piece to assess for overall voice; then see if students can identify those moments when voice is strongest. You may even wish to graph the voice with a horizontal line graph, showing with the rises and dips how voice—like the DOW Industrial Average—has its ups and downs.

IDEAS**6**

- Clear, focused, and compelling—holds reader's attention.
- Marked by insight, in-depth understanding of topic.
- Takes reader on a journey of understanding.
- Satisfyingly rich with significant, intriguing details.

5

- Clear and focused throughout.
- Strong main idea, thesis, or story line.
- Authentic, convincing, based on research, experience.
- Main idea expanded, well supported by detail, evidence.

4

- Clear and focused more often than not.
- Identifiable main topic, thesis, story line.
- Quality detail outweighs generalities and filler.

3

- Clear, focused moments outweighed by fuzzy, underdeveloped, rambling text.
- Main concept, thesis, story line can be inferred.
- Generalities and filler outweigh quality detail.

2

- Predominantly fuzzy, confusing, loosely focused.
- A hint of a thesis or story line to come (*just a glimmer*).
- Factlets wandering in search of a main idea.

1

- Notes and random thoughts.
- The reader must guess what this is about.
- Reader must fill in virtually ALL blanks.
- Main idea as yet unknown, even to the writer.

ORGANIZATION**6**

- Thoughtful structure guides reader through text.
- Design smoothly embedded in text—never too obvious.
- Structure enhances reader's understanding, enjoyment of the topic.
- Unforgettable opening—enlightening, provocative conclusion.
- Satisfying, well-crafted transitions.

5

- Order works well with topic, purpose.
- Structure evident, but not overpowering.
- Main ideas, turning points stand out.
- Strong lead, appropriate sense of closure that "feels right."
- Strong, thoughtful transitions.

4

- Order functional—reader never feels lost.
- Structure supportive—occasionally too predictable.
- Functional lead and conclusion.
- Transitions present—usually helpful.

3

- Out-of-place or unneeded information—needs re-ordering.
- Re-reading sometimes required to follow thought or story line.
- Lead and conclusion attempted—one or both need work.
- Transitions unclear or too formulaic, predictable.

2

- Hard to follow—even with effort.
- Connections unclear.
- Lead and/or conclusion missing, misleading, or confusing.
- Transitions bewildering or missing.

1

- Disjointed list/collection of details, events.
- No "big picture"—nothing goes with anything else.
- No real lead or conclusion—it just starts, it just stops.
- Transitions not attempted.

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Write Traits 6-Point Scale
CONVENTIONS

[89]

6

- Only the pickiest editors will spot errors.
- Conventions cleverly applied to bring out meaning.
- Complexity of text lets writer showcase a wide range of conventions—semicolons, ellipses, dashes, italics, etc.
- Enticing layout.
- Virtually ready to publish.

5

- Minor errors that are easily overlooked.
- Text appears edited, proofed.
- Sufficient complexity to show off a variety of conventions.
- Pleasing layout.
- Ready to publish with minor touch-ups.

4

- Noticeable, but minor errors that do *not* obscure meaning.
- Readable—but lacks *close* attention to conventions.
- Basics (e.g., periods, cap's, simple spelling) are OK.
- Acceptable layout.
- A good once-over needed before publication.

3

- Noticeable, distracting errors that *may* affect meaning.
- Errors even on basics: periods, simple spelling, cap's, etc.
- More attention to layout needed.
- Thorough editing required for publication.

2

- Noticeable, frequent, distracting errors.
- Numerous errors even on basics.
- Limited attention to layout.
- Line-by-line editing required for publication.

1

- Serious, frequent errors make reading all but impossible.
- Even patient, attentive readers struggle.
- Errors so numerous that meaning is ambiguous, unclear.
- Extensive, word-by-word editing required.

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2-39