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The Interpretation and Value of the Six Analytical Traits of Writing by Sixth Grade Students

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The Interpretation and Value of the Six Analytical Traits of Writing by Sixth Grade Students

A Thesis

Presented to the Teacher Education Department

and the

Faculty of Graduate College

University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

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Sara B. Kriesel-Hall

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The Interpretation and Value of the Six Analytical Traits of Writing by Sixth Grade Students

Acceptance for the faculty of the Graduate College, University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

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Abstract

This research study's purpose is to interpret and describe the extent in which children define, and value the Six Analytical Traits of Writing within their own work. Data was collected through several sources; observational notes, pre and post surveys, writing group activities and self scored pieces of writing. The research question guiding this study was do children understand and what do they find valuable in relation to the Six Analytical Traits of Writing.

Sixth grade students who participated in the study completed assignments over a nine week study and were observed in several different situations. The data analyzed found children were able to define each trait by the end of the study; mainly in generalities. Only a few children demonstrated the ability to internalize the traits and use them in discussing their work. The majority of the children were unable to communicate how the traits were applied in their writing effectively. They also were unable to convey specifically how they evaluated their writing. This was supported by the data from the surveys. Hence, the traits were not internalized for many students.

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Chapter I
The Problem

<u>Introduction</u>

How children value and assess their own writing is a question that continues to be discussed. The complexity of writing assessment is only compounded by the individuality and style of each writer. English and writing instruction continues to be debated in the educational and public forums. The debate primarily surrounds itself between what kind of instruction is suitable and what is the most useful type of writing instruction. Some educators believe a more traditional focus in the classroom is needed in order for children to understand our language and apply that knowledge proficiently. This kind of instruction includes a more technical pedagogy of our language. Daily activities involve grammatical instruction through isolated sentences and paragraphs and spelling lists which focus on particular rules of structure. In this setting, the teacher is the expert in assessing and evaluating writing. The student is the recipient of this information. At no time, is the child asked to participate in determining her own understanding or comprehension of her writing process.

Another accepted theory of instruction is provided through the whole language approach first introduced by Ken Goodman (1976, & 1979). This theory incorporates writing instruction through observation and analysis of each child's writing. In this environment, the teacher assesses the development level of the child's writing and uses this information to direct and nurture her instruction. Children control their writing but infrequently are directed to assess their own work. It is the responsibility of the educator to determine the developmental level of each child in terms of language development and then individualize instruction to meet the needs of the child. Many educators weigh the strengths of both models of instruction and choose the theory they believe best supports and nurtures the development of writing.

A current trend in education is to incorporate both methods in the classroom by using mini lessons in conjunction with a writing workshop approach to strengthen children's understanding of the grammatical structure of our language while still encouraging children's choice in writing topics and self directed growth in writing patterns. A writing workshop sets aside predictable time for engagement (Calkins, 1994, p. 185). When scheduled time is set aside for writing, children are more engaged in writing by being able to plan in advance what they will work on. A mini lesson is a forum for making suggestions or reinforcing a strategy to a whole class before or after scheduled writing time (p. 189). Mini lessons can be thought of brief lectures or discussions where pertinent information in regard to writing is shared with students (p. 193- 195). A writing workshop is a approach which incorporates writing and instructional time to promote meaningful writing.

The Six Analytical Traits of Writing written by Vicki Spandel (1990, 1997), theorizes good writing is accomplished through specifying what good writing is. This method incorporates specific analytical traits of writing such as organization and word choice in writing. During class discussions the traits are used to exemplify what good writing includes. The belief of this method is if children and teachers are using a common language and common expectations in writing, the outcome will be more proficient writing by children due to a clearer understanding of expectations. However, the question becomes how do children interpret and apply these traits into their own writing? Do they understand and reflect upon these characteristics of good writing in way that allows them to see their strengths and areas in need of improvement? This study explores and describes how children interpret, and value these Six Analytical Traits of Writing.

Background and Significance of the Problem

Literacy competence today is concerned with each child being an active, critical, and creative user of written language as defined in contemporary terms with the use of technology; computers and film (National Council of English Teachers, 1996). Recently national standards for English and Language Arts have been established because of the need and concern to define the outcomes and goals of public education. The standards are based on current research and theory as to how children learn language. The standards emphasize the need for each student to be able to evaluate and assess the purpose and process of their writing, gain information, and communicate clearly to their specific audience (National Council of English Teachers, 1996). Students are encouraged to gain self awareness and understanding of written language while staying true to accepted formats and styles in regard to audience.

The movement from "other" regulated, "teacher" regulated, to "self-regulated" understanding and expectations is critical in the development of written language (Dixon-Krauss, 1996). In order for this movement to be successful, a shift in language instruction also has to move from the transmission of knowledge to a model of inquiry and self reflection (International Reading Association, 1994). Writing instruction can no longer be artificial instruction which teaches the English language in isolation. It must be turned over, so child centered instruction becomes the instructional method preferred. This will increase reflective understanding of individual needs by a teacher during meaningful writing, which is needed to gain learner centered instruction (Dixon-Krauss, 1996).

Purpose of the Study

Children may be confused and disenchanted with the subjectivity and lack of understanding in the language of good writing. The purpose of the study is to describe and interpret the meaning and value of the Six Analytical Traits of Writing by children in the classroom.

Operational Definitions

The following terms are defined for the purpose of this study.

1. **The Six Analytical Traits of Writing**- were first developed in 1984 to score prose writing. It is now used by many states and districts and classrooms for assessment purposes. They traits are voice, sentence fluency, ideas and content, conventions, organization, and word choice (Spandel, 1997, p. 209).

Voice is the presence of the writer on the page (p. 54). It is the genuine thoughts and feelings of the writer than no one else but the writer can be credited for.

Sentence fluency is finely crafted construction of sentences combined with rhythm and grace. It is achieved through logic and creative phrasing, alliteration, absence of redundancy, and variety in sentence length (p. 56).

Ideas and content is the main thesis, impression, or story line of the piece, together with documented support, elaboration, anecdotes, images or carefully selected detail which build understanding or hold the reader's attention (p. 51).

Conventions includes punctuation, spelling, grammar and usage, capitalization and paragraphing (p. 57). It is the editing and refining stage of writing.

Organization is the internal structure of the piece of writing (p. 52). It includes a strong beginning which engages the reader and directs the writing, the linking of ideas to

create a flow of information, and a closing which leaves the reader with a sense of satisfaction or provoking thoughts.

Word choice is precision in the use of words (p. 55). It sets the mood, paints a picture, or leaves the reader with an impression.

The Six Traits of Writing are a performance based assessment used holistically or by primary trait to establish competence in writing. Holistic scoring considers the whole piece more than the sum of the parts and relies on the whole affect of the writing piece (p. 32). Primary trait scoring also considers the whole as an important part of assessment but recognizes the need to define components of good writing so children can better understand the necessary parts of a good writing piece (p. 33). These traits were written by Vicki Spandel, Richard Stiggins and Ruth Culham from the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory; Portland, Oregon .

2. **Training-** children will be taught each trait in isolation through whole group instruction, assignments geared toward the isolation and use of each trait and through small group discussion.

3. **Student work-** consists of teacher directed assignments and writing pieces students will accomplish during class.

Delimitations

The following statements were accepted factors of this study that may affect the study which the researcher controlled.

Students were assigned to writing groups. Factors that influenced group assignments were personality conflicts, similarity in personalities, and being able to complete directed activities collectively.

The amount of time students had to finish an assignment to be turned in was another factor. On average, students prepared a piece of writing for two days during class time and then a final draft was expected in two days. The final copy was assessed using a rubric for that trait by the teacher and then given back to the student prior to the post survey. Other assignments completed in class were allotted approximately twenty to thirty minutes during class.

Chapter II

Review of Related Literature

Introduction

The purpose of this review of literature is to provide a basis of understanding to establish the significance of this study. In a qualitative research design, the historical perspective and review of current trends is used to justify and acknowledge the importance of the topic. The intent is to use this information as a guide for the study. Analysis of the study will not be affected by the review of literature. Areas of relevance to this study are: theoretical context of the study, origins and beliefs of process writing, writing workshop and self evaluation.

Theoretical Context of the Study

Language is a highly organized systematic means of representing experience and assists us in organizing all other ways of representing our thoughts, ideas, and emotions. It is our principal way of classifying and categorizing behavior and experience. When we commit our language to paper the process of shaping experiences is likely to be sharper than the process of sharing information verbally (Britton, 1970). It is not surprising then, that through the school years, children's writing becomes a means of discriminating, understanding, and classifying the human experience.

Metacognition

During the years when children switch from oral to written discourse a change of speech is occurring. Vygotsky interprets these changes as a movement from social speech to egocentric speech and eventually to internalized speech. The function of speech

is first social, used for contact and interaction with others (Dixon-Krauss, p.11). The next

stage of development is egocentric speech. Egocentric speech is observed by children

talking aloud to themselves (p. 192). This speech is the connection of the social actions

and conscious signs (Davydov, 1995). It is when egocentric speech turns inward that

language acquires a new intellectual function; the child's awareness of the structure of

thought (Dixon-Krauss, 1996). Inner speech is the soundless language of oneself. Inner

speech is the intellectual process of self realization and actualization that develops written

language. It is during the development of inner speech that metacognition begins.

Metacognition is thinking about your thinking (Swiderek, 1996). The fundamental

structure of process writing encourages metacognition As a successful author moves

through the stages of writing, he/she is knowledgeable and thinks through each process

(Welch, 1992). Hence, metacognition may be thought of as a writer's awareness and

implementation of their cognitive processes (Welch, 1992).

Zone of proximal development

Vygotsky stresses the importance of the zone of proximal development of written

language. In an effort for each child to reach the next level of development/ learning an

awareness of one's self and actual level of development needs to be recognized (Dixon-

Krauss, 1996). This process of stretching a learner to a new level is accomplished through

a collaborative effort of the student and the teacher. Vygotsky termed this *obuchenie*.

The English translation of this word would be "teacher student instructional learning and

interaction"

(Wertsch and Sohmer, 1995, p. 333). It is through this collaborating effort that written

language develops. This effort builds on prior knowledge to reach a new domain of social

and internal consciousness (Allen, 1995). A writing teacher assumes a role of facilitator in

the process of writing (Welch, 1992). It is his/her responsibility to collectively engage the writer in metacognitive process through the use of such activities as conferences (Allen, 1995). It is important to understand that Vygotsky believed through social interaction, the development of oral and written discourse is enhanced and influenced by the natural and cultural maturation which coincide and influence one another (Wertsch and Sohmer, 1995). Hence, written language is developed through social discourse and interaction with peers and adults/ teachers.

Origins and Beliefs of Process Writing

The theory of process writing was developed out of the assertion that writing is a mode of learning. It is through the author's intent to contemplate her thoughts, find direction, and interpret the meaning that learning takes place (Britton, 1970). Writing is an activity which is meant to be experienced and engaging. The process of writing is social and collaborative in nature. Communication and revision of pieces of writing builds the knowledge and metacognition of the author (Zemelman, 1988). Through writing, a student is able to create thoughts and ideas on paper, and then re-evaluate their meaning (Tate &Corbett, 1988, p. 103).

In process writing, focus is placed on each stage which eventually leads to producing a final copy. The first level is typically viewed as a prewriting or brainstorming stage, where thoughts and ideas are first formed. The second level is to write a first draft and then solicit feedback. The student should consider the recommendations made and then revise her work several times. The last level involves the author editing and proofreading the writing piece before producing a final copy (Willis, 1997).

Writing however is not a linear process, but a process which steps back and forth in order for meaning and clarity in thought to take place. Therefore, the process is recursive

rather than linear (p. 2). An author may make several attempts at brainstorming and drafting before being satisfied to move ahead and solicit an evaluation of the work by a peer, teacher, or an adult. After recommendations have been made, the individual may go back to brainstorming or revising; dependent on suggestions and feelings of the person giving feedback and the author. It is then up to the author to determine what phase of their writing to engage.

The role of the teacher in process writing is to help guide and direct the student through the process in order to gain a final product. The focus for the educator is instruction instead of evaluation (Willis, 1997). The teacher must guide and assist the student throughout the development of a piece of writing and provide an environment where diversity in reading and writing material is provided.

> A teacher who uses process paradigm has positive expectations for her students. The teacher understands and appreciates the basic linguistic competence for each student. She allows time for regular and substantial practice of writing which is real and holds personal significance. Instruction is given on how to work at the different phases of writing as well as guiding the student through revisions. The student is exposed to diversity through reading of published materials and peer work. The child is also involved in collaboration with peers and the teacher through conferences and small group discussions (Zemelman, 1988, p. 5).

The process writing paradigm then focuses the teacher and student as active participants in the writing environment. Each has a significant role in working through the stages of writing.

The student's role is one of an active learner. It is the student's responsibility to be an active participant in his/ her own work. The teacher is no longer the exclusive reviewer of writing pieces. The student must solicit responses from herself, the teacher and peers.

Writing Workshop and the Holistic Approach

A writing workshop approach uses a top-down, holistic model of learning (Mayer, 1990, p. 85) The holistic model, permits a child learn to write by being engaged in the task at hand (p. 85). "In a workshop, crafts people gradually, patiently create finely wrought products over time, working through a series of steps and stages (Zemelman (1988, p. 89)." To help students work through the stages of process writing, Lucy McCormick Calkins (1994) suggests three components to a writing workshop: mini lessons, work time and share sessions, and publication celebrations.

Mini lessons are an opportunity to make suggestions, introduce concepts, review skills, teach procedures or discuss issues (p. 193). It is a time to pull students together as a whole group or a small group and teach. Topics for mini lessons are chosen by the teacher dependent on what is observed in the classroom. If the teacher notices children are struggling with punctuating conversation, a teacher may teach a mini lesson on punctuating conversation (Calkins, 1994 & Zemelman, 1988). It is a time to gather and address elements of good writing through short instructional periods.

Work time and share sessions is a predictable time set aside for writing. It is the most important component of a workshop (Calkins , 1994, p. 188). If students can count on a predetermined time for writing, they will be able to plan ahead (p. 188). During this time writing is directed by the student. This writing is then authentic and purposeful (Cunningham, 1995, p. 225). Since activity is self directed, the teacher is free to conference with students individually. The first step to conferring with a student is understanding the writer (Calkins, 1994, p. 225). This is accomplished by the author sharing her writing (p. 226). The conversation may lead to the teacher offering suggestions of improvement (p. 232) or the teacher acting as a sounding board instead

(Zemelman, 1988, p. 91). The most important aspect to remember when conferring is the importance of simply listening.

The last component of a successful writing workshop is scheduled days when children can share their published pieces. "Authors' Days provide a deadline, an impetus to finish dangling pieces, a chance for students to look back what they have done and learn from it before they move on (Calkins, 1994, p. 267)." The process of publication allows children to reflect upon their writing as well as realize the significance of their work.

A writing workshop approach develops a framework for children to work through the writing process with purpose and meaning. It creates independent learning and self goal setting. The teacher directs, guides and provides the student with a predictable time for writing(Calkins, 1994). A writing workshop creates an environment for purposeful and meaningful writing to take place.

Self Evaluation

All too often, the teacher's perspective is overly represented. Comprehensive evaluation requires the evaluation of many perspectives (Anthony, 1991, p. 38). Student evaluation is essential in understanding the perceptions of children's interpretation of their writing process. A part of all education is to build a child's capacity to think critically. "Students need to be given

frequent opportunities to monitor, reflect upon, and evaluate their own progress, learning strategies, work habits, products, and achievements (p. 53)." In essence, self evaluation encourages metacognition of each child's process of learning.

When evaluating writing, a child may accomplish self evaluation through a variety of methods. The student may create a rubric which can be used to grade her own writing. The child may also grade by comparing a piece of writing against an established checklist

of criteria. A child's demonstration of growth through several pieces is another form of evaluation which can be student directed. The student's part in evaluation when using a demonstration of growth should be the answering of questions logically and with examples, and in conjunction with the accomplishment of writing goals as demonstrated through their work. The disadvantage to this form of self evaluation is it is very time consuming for a teacher because of the discourse which must take place between the teacher and the child.

The advantages to self evaluation are competition is against the self only, an established guide of evaluation has been used and students are responsible for their progress (Bratcher, 1994). Ownership of a writing piece and the worth of it is determined by the student instead of the teacher. This may lead to more motivation and self direction by the student.

The disadvantages of self evaluation are children may overlook or practice incorrect writing structure and/ or conventions. Self starters or children who are still unclear about their writing process may find it difficult to evaluate, and many may interpret the process as the teacher not fulfilling her responsibility of instructing through correcting mistakes (Bratcher, 1994). A student who is not motivated or who lacks the capability to self regulation may not comprehend the process of self assessment. Lack of confidence in one's writing may also factor into an assessment being not completed truthfully. For example, a child may not feel comfortable rating her piece highly due to the level of self confidence or the cultural issue of not bragging about one's work. Lack of confidence may also affect a child rating herself higher than what is expected due to her egocentric self concept. Self evaluation is a process which should be used as a piece of evaluation but must be closely monitored to ensure scores given are accurate for each child's developmental level.

Summary

The issue of the metacognitive process of children in relation to their writing is an issue that continues to be explored. Children's attitudes and beliefs about writing are greatly affected by the instructional materials and styles of their instructors. This chapter describes the theoretical context of writing in relation to the writers thought processes, an understanding of process writing, and the importance of self evaluation by students. Additional research in the development of adolescent writers needs to be completed for further understanding of individual differences and social interactions of writers.

Chapter III

Methodology and Procedures

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to describe and interpret the meaning and value of the Six Analytical Traits of Writing by children in the classroom. A nine week unit over the Six Analytical Traits of Writing was taught and studied. The methods of data collection will be anecdotal observational notes, pre and post test surveys over each trait and a self evaluation of a piece of writing.

The Research Question

How do children understand and what do they find valuable in relation to the Six Analytical Traits of Writing as they relate to their own pieces of writing?

Questions Guiding the Inquiry

1) How do children define each trait of writing?

2) Is the trait interpreted differently after instruction?

3) Can children apply each trait in their own writing?

4) Will students interpretation vary between the pre and post survey?

5) Can children verbalize their understanding of each trait to peers?

6) How do children value the traits?

Overview of Procedure

This chapter will discuss the procedures and methodology used in this study. Included in this chapter is explanation of qualitative research design, teacher as researcher, the study site, subjects of the study, procedures of the study, and data analysis.

Qualitative Research Design

Qualitative research concerns itself with methods of inquiry that allow for participant perspectives (Erickson, 1986). That is, this type of research looks into the assumptions and interpretations of the participants and how they interpret their world. The essence of the study is to capture an accurate portrayal and understanding of a phenomena. The questions of the researcher become points of interest in investigating but may be moved into another direction based upon the data that is collected.

In educational qualitative research the importance of research is to discover important questions, processes, and relationships (Patterson, 1992). The purpose is not to prove or disprove a research question. Rather, it is to establish a paradigm, a loose collection of logically held together assumptions, or concepts to shape reflection and research (Patterson, 1992). Questions in educational research are formed through wanting to better understand the human experience.

Ethnomethodology is the study of how individuals create and understand daily life. Qualitative studies are then concerned with the process and not the final product (Bogdan, 1992). In educational settings, the concern becomes the description of empirical data which leads us to betterment of teaching methodology.

Teacher As Researcher

Teachers as researchers seek to understand the particular individuals, actions, policies, and events that create their work and work place (Patterson, 1992). The goal of teachers as researchers is to better understand the learning and teaching techniques for the betterment of education. This is accomplished through a series of making assumptions, observing, and developing of a question from real world experiences. Educational research is unpredictable, generative, and organic in nature. The question is typically a how or what question by nature, which is modified as moments of reflection, inquiry, and new conclusions are constructed (Patterson, 1992). It is the observation and description of a life setting which the researcher wishes to capture. The ultimate goal being further understanding and improvement in teaching.

Study Site

The setting for this study is a suburban public middle school located in a midwestern metropolitan area with a population of approximately 200,000 people. The building was the first middle school built for this district eleven years ago. Sixth grade students make up about one third of the population, or 305 students.

The diversity of the school is limited at this time with ninety six percent of the students categorized as Caucasian, and four percent consisting of African American, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American heritage. Sixty one students out of nine hundred three receive free or reduced price lunch. Because the school serves a large population of students, the neighborhoods of the children range from low middle income to high middle income families.

The Classroom

The room contains enough seating for twenty-nine children. However the participating class sizes for this study ranged from twenty-four to twenty-eight children. The desks are arranged to sit at angles instead of straight rows. This allows children visibility of the overhead and black board and helps to elicit conversation and interaction among all people in the classroom. One class is assigned seats due to social dynamics. In the other two class periods, it is up to the child to be responsible for choosing. However, when students are being disruptive or inattentive due to their selection, they are assigned a seat until responsible behavior is again apparent.

The class rules are: be responsible, respectful, and resourceful. These three themes of the room fit well with the expectations and philosophy of the school's posted rules and student handbook. Detentions in fifteen minute increments can be earned by the students for not following expectations and not being prepared for class. Any major behavioral problems such as repetitive disruption in the class, abusive language, or physical violence are handled by the administrators of the building. Children are referred to the office at the teachers discretion. Children may be reprimanded by administration through parents being contacted, lengthy detention, in school suspension, or out of school suspension.

Daily schedule

The schedule for the hour is posted on the board each day. The hour starts with the teacher sharing a poem or thought of the day and an idea to write about. Children are encouraged to write about anything they choose. This activity is followed by a brief sharing time. After this initial daily activity, the lesson for the day is started. Children regularly will share in small groups or as a whole group. Talking and sharing of ideas is

encouraged by the instructor. On average the period ends with approximately ten to twenty minutes of work time.

Technology

The technology available to students is limited. The room includes one Power Macintosh PC which children utilize for word processing and one Apple IIE which is used to run a typing skill program and Logo Writer. Each child is scheduled for fifteen minutes of computer time to word process every two weeks. A computer lab is also available which can be scheduled for each English class for one week during a quarter. The English classes involved in this study are scheduled for a week per quarter. If additional time is available, it is open to all classes at the teachers discretion.

Subjects

The subjects in this study will be children enrolled in a sixth grade English class. The children who will be selected to participate in this study are considered a fair representation of the student body and of average sixth grade students. A consideration for entry into this study was attendance. Grade point average and age was not used as a factor for participation.

The students were selected from three classes. First and second hour classes were chosen because of the similarity in class size and because the classes were scheduled back to back for the teacher. Directly following these two classes the teacher had two periods of plan time which will allow for processing of ideas and culmination of notes and observations from the day. A third hour of English will also participate in this study which follows third and fourth hour electives. Several factors need to be recognized about this

section. The first two were mentioned above; students are assigned seats and this class follows two periods of elective courses. The final factor is this class being broken into two time segments due to the scheduling of lunch.

Methodology

The majority of this study was qualitative in nature. The length of this study was nine weeks. At the beginning of the study, children were assigned a writing group. The groups were carefully selected based on group dynamics. Establishing groups helped in students building strong peer relations and comfort levels to share and discuss their writing.

All children were given a pre and post survey dependent on each individual trait of study based upon the Six Analytical Trait model of process writing. For example, the pretest for the trait, word choice, asked each child to define the specific trait, explain how it fits into their own writing, and what characteristics they would need to include in their own writing to receive a score of a three or better. On average a score of three or better is considered passing using a scale of one to five; five being the highest. After the pretest was given, the class was introduced to the trait through the use of literature. For example, poetry books were utilized in instructing about word choice. In the whole group setting, children were then asked to discuss how the trait was illustrated using examples from the book to focus their point. A general question was posed, such as how was word choice represented in this book. General questions were always used to elicit and invite the students own thoughts and ideas about each trait. During the study, children were also asked the same general statement in their writing group. It was the responsibility of all group members to give input into answering the question which was handed in at the end of the hour.

The second activity was a hands-on or concrete activity to exemplify the trait being discussed. For example, when studying word choice, children were asked to work in small groups and create a word splash. The center of the wheel expressed a general word such as 'nice.' More specific words were given as alternatives to the general word; i.e., nice and alternatives for the word.

The third step, was for children to write exemplifying the trait discussed. Again, literature was used as an example of the trait and as a writing invitation for the students. For example, If you're not from the prairie. . ., by David Bouchard, was read and discussed for word choice. Then children were asked to begin writing a similar piece such as "If You're not from the Midwest." These pieces were shared and discussed with participants in their writing groups. Children were asked to share and elicit feedback from their peers specific to that trait. During writing group times, anecdotal notes of the participants in the study were taken. The researcher was looking for behavior and verbal interaction which explains their interpretation and discussion with classmates.

Each class were given a rubric of the specific trait with a scale of one to five; five being the highest. Sample papers for each trait were provided and children practiced scoring two papers with the teacher as a guide on the first piece and individually on the latter. A short discussion followed the scoring of papers to provide group feedback as far as consistency in answers and explanation of scores given.

A post test of that trait was then given . The same questions were used in the post test, as were used in the pre-test, a comparison of answers was analyzed as a measurement for comparing and understanding.

The conventions trait as discussed in the Six Analytical Trait packet, prescribed by the school district, were taught not through literature but through an example of correction of paragraphs and the learning of accepted editing notations. As in every trait, a rubric and

sample papers to score were included. The children still answered a pre and post test over this trait as prescribed by this study's design. However, instead of giving a writing sample each child was asked to make editing marks for a designated paragraph from the Write Source series 6000. This series uses a handbook approach as the main textbook and supporting materials are included for mini-lessons.

After the traits were taught and practiced the children were asked to practice their knowledge of the Six Analytical Traits. This was a four day series. The first day children were to write a draft during the hour after being read <u>Alexander and the terrible, horrible no good, very bad day</u> by Judith Viorst (1972). On the second day, children were asked to edit their own writing. The final day, day three, they were directed to write a final copy. After these processes had been completed, children were asked to rate their own pieces based upon the Six Analytical Traits. Students were assured that the number they gave their paper would not in any way be reflected in their grade for the course. It was strictly used as a piece of information for the betterment of their own writing. In addition to the scoring, each child included a statement of justification as to why they gave/ received the score they did.

Instructional Materials Used

Each child was given a packet to use in the studying of the Six Analytical Traits of Writing. The packet included one informational page, a diagram explaining what a 1 to 5 score entails for the trait, a rubric for each trait, and a page to take notes on the trait. Children were required to work with all parts of the packet over the study. Each child was responsible for keeping and bringing the packet to class daily. Each student also had several pieces of his/ her writing exemplifying the traits included in his/ her packet as they were studied.

Data Collection

The researcher used a constant comparative method of data analysis. This involves the combination of collection and analysis throughout the designated study. Analysis and collection are done simultaneously. However, formal analysis of data collected was not done until the end of the study.

Throughout the study reoccurring events such as small group discussions, and hands on activities became categories of focus for data collection. During these times the researcher looked for similarities as well as diversity in responses of the participants. By continuing to analyze data informally into categories, the researcher was essentially narrowing the scope and making the data collected relevant. At the end of the study formal data was analyzed and interpreted to describe the understanding and application of the Six Analytical Trait model.

Summary

. This chapter describes the methods and procedures used in obtaining data to describe and interpret children's understanding and meanings of the Six Analytical Traits of Writing. The research design, the description of the environment, instructional materials, and the method of data analysis were included in the discussion of the methodology of this study.

Chapter IV

Results

The data collected during this study was holistic and descriptive in nature. Data was drawn from a variety of sources: observational notes of children working in writing groups, written group assignments, pre and post surveys, and children's self scored papers. This information was gathered to establish children's understanding and synthesis of the Six Analytical Traits of Writing.

Introduction

Students were exposed to a variety of writing on a regular basis throughout the school year. Prior to the start of this study, the students had been introduced to self scoring of papers using the Six Analytical Traits of Writing during a study of Expository writing. Teacher comments to students pieces of writing incorporated ideas of organization, use of voice, ideas for writing, and word selection. Many children were previously introduced to the Six Traits of Writing as prescribed by the district outcomes starting in the elementary school years.

Word Choice

The first trait of writing to be examined was word choice. This trait was selected to begin the study because of its concreteness and clarity as a concept in writing. Word choice had been an element of writing discussed in class prior to the onset of this study.

Pre survey-question 1, In your own words, explain what word choice is.

Children's responses to the first question fell into seven distinct categories. The categories were: choosing words, descriptive words, exciting, interesting or challenging words, creative words, I don't know, and other which represents a variety of responses. Six children out of fifty-six responded they were unsure of what this trait was. Twenty-one children responded word choice were words that "you choose." The high response of this category, is a good representation of how well children have become accustomed to restating the question as a statement.

More specific answers such as "word choice is good description" were more detailed answers Seven children responded, "It was good description." Nine responded, "Word choice is choosing exciting, interesting or challenging words." Three students explained word choice as 'creative words.' Ten children responded with a variety responses, " 'How well the story interests people," to "It is how you say things." One response in this category was, "It is the author making a conscious choice for the audience."

Table I

In your own words, explain what word choice is.

Categories	Pre survey	Post survey
I don't know	6	0
Choosing words	21	17
Descriptive words	7	8
Exciting, interesting or challenging words	9	17
Creative words	3	6
Others	10	8
Specific example given	--	5

Total responses 56

Post survey- question 1

The post survey found a change in student responses. A significant increase was seen in responses to word choice being descriptive/ interesting words. Another category was added since the post survey found specific examples of word choice. One student responded that word choice is how you can improve the words in your writing. Then followed with a picture example of a rough draft to a final copy with a change of vocabulary.

Figure 1
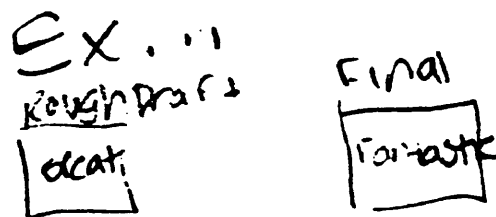
This child responded, "It was putting another word in it's place." The word "original" was crossed out and above it was written "unique." Another example, from this category was a child's response of "Word choice is putting better words in your writing rather than 'good', 'nice' or 'happy'." In these cases it was apparent the children understood word choice was exemplified by a selection of a word which would improve a statement.

Pre survey- question 2, What kinds of things do you do to find the right word for your writing?

The second question on the survey asked the students to discuss what they do to find the right word. The overwhelming response on the pre survey was looking in a 'thesaurus' or a 'dictionary.' Of the children who listed these sources, a few also mentioned their 'brains' as a place to help select the right word. However, in every instance their 'brains' were listed last. Other responses to this question included, "Thinking or reading the sentence to yourself" and "See if the word fits the best." Additional responses by two children centered on writing process techniques. One student commented,"I do prewriting and a draft to help my word choice." Another commented, "I make a web."

One child responded to the question, "I don't really. I usually just use the same words all the time. That's something I must work on." Another child responded, "I listen closely in lots of my conversations with older people so I can learn more interesting words to use in conversations later." In both instances the students responses were unique and specific showing internal thinking about word choice and what it meant to them.

One concrete activity the students did to increase their awareness of word choice before the post survey was given, was a word splash. A word splash is a poster created by a small group. Children meet in their writing groups and took an ordinary word such as nice and found alternative words to write on their poster. Group members came up with a

few alternatives on their own but also used the thesaurus to find alternatives. This activity may account for some of the high response on the post survey of resources being given as a way to find the right word.

Table II

What kinds of things do you do to find the right word for your writing?

Categories	Pre survey	Post survey
Resources listed	32	36
Process writing responses	4	3
I don't know	1	0
Reading/ thinking	15	14
Other answers	4	3

Total responses 56

Post survey-question 2

The results of the post survey were almost identical to the pre survey. The post survey also showed an awareness of peers and parents as a resource when checking pieces of writing for word choice. Several children added after their initial comment, that talking with others such as classmates and parents was a way to help them find the right word. Others commented that they might have a friend read it over or they would themselves to make sure the word fit.

Pre survey- question 3, If you wanted a score of 3 or higher in this category, what kinds of things would you need to do?

The answers for this question were very similar also. In many cases, the students restated the question with little detail or explanation during the pre survey. Others responded generally, with comments such as, "Read your work carefully" or "Look over your writing." Six students responded with lists of resources to use; "Dictionary, thesaurus, and Write Source 2,000." The most interesting response on the pre survey was, "You need to use higher vocabulary." The example given was, "Instead of saying 'Hi', you could say 'How do you do'." The high number of resources listed and the previous example exemplify children's attitude of feeling they need to use a different set of vocabulary than their own to score well in this category.

During writing groups prior to the post survey, responses to the question, "what is good word choice," showed students gaining confidence in selecting words for their writings. Students were asked to answer this question after several books were shared which exemplified word choice. One group responded by saying, "We decided that we need to be creative, specific and clear with our words. We decided that there are many steps in making our work complete." Another group explained word choice as something you need in your writing. They continued by saying, " We also learned that word choice is a kind of description writing. Word choice is also words that are acquired."

One group responded using the book, All the colors of the earth to explain how they interpreted word choice. "We liked how there were similes in All the colors of the earth. Susan liked how they used different choices of words. . . . Anna likes how they used exciting words." Each group explained word choice in generalities. The students responses indicated they have an understanding of what word choice is and can identify

general aspects of word choice but no specific examples or details were shared from any group.

Table III

If you wanted a score of 3 or higher in this category, what kinds of things would you need to do?

Categories	Pre survey	Post survey
Restated question	21	15
Resources listed	6	5
Check work	4	18
Think/ brainstorm	11	4
Other	7	4
I don't know	3	0
Use descriptive/interesting words	4	10

Total responses 56

Post survey- question 3

The post-survey showed an increased response in the area of checking over your work. Responses included: "Using self editing, peer editing, parent editing, and teacher editing." The category of use descriptive/ interesting words also gained a significant number of responses. In the pre-survey, children's responses were simplistic such as, "Use descriptive words," in the post-survey specific examples were given or explanations were used to better explain their answers. One child even specified, "The use of better adjectives to improve word choice."

<u>Conventions</u>

The second trait to be studied was conventions. Conventions included punctuation, spelling, and grammar. Handwriting was not a consideration of this trait. Again, this trait was selected because of its concreteness as a trait of writing. Conventions is an easy trait to correct but often overlooked by students.

Pre survey- question 1, In your own words, explain what conventions are.

The pre-survey showed a distinct pattern of children having showing prior knowledge of what conventions are, or no recollection or exposure to this trait. A few tried to answer the question by recognizing it as a trait of writing. A few students offered alternative answers such as, "Words put together to make one word" and "They are exciting words."

Table IV

In your own words, explain what conventions are.

<u>Categories</u>	<u>Pre survey</u>	<u>Post survey</u>
I don't know	19	0
Punctuation, spelling and grammar	20	52
A trait of writing	2	0
Other	3	2

Total responses 54

Post survey- question 1

Before the post survey was given, the children were given a list of standard editing marks as well as an example of a piece of writing to read aloud which all commas and end

punctuation were deleted. The read aloud activity emphasized the importance of commas and end punctuation in their writing. Throughout the week, children exercised their ability to edit sentences and pieces of writing. The main editing marks practiced were adding/ deleting commas, adding/ deleting end punctuation, capitalization, and correcting spelling errors. In answering "explain what conventions are," a majority of the children explicitly stated one or more of the types of editing that had been practiced. The word "editing" frequently appeared on the post-survey as well. This had not been apparent on the pre survey. During class, handwriting was emphasized as not a part of conventions, but was only mentioned on one of the post surveys. "Conventions are when you are correcting papers and you correct ending marks, capitalization but you don't correct handwriting."

Pre survey- question 2, What kinds of things do you do to check your conventions in your writing?

The second question on the questionnaire asked the children to describe what they do to check conventions in their writing. On the pre survey, the majority of the students responded, "I don't know what to do to check conventions." Out of the nineteen children who answered editing, eleven students specified 'self editing.' Six responded, "Have someone read" and two people said, "I ask an adult to check it." Of those who answered 'self edit,' two listed to also "Have someone else to check my work."

Table V

What kinds of things do you do to check your conventions in your writing?

Categories	Pre survey	Post survey
Editing by self, peer, parent, or teacher	19	52
Resources listed	6	2
I don't know	28	0
Other	1	0

Total responses 54

Post survey- question 2

An overwhelming number of children responded by editing whether it was self edit, parent/ teacher edit, or peer edit. Out of the fifty-two, forty responded their first step would be self editing, two responded to"Ask an adult or teacher to edit" and ten responded, "Ask a peer to edit their work." Ten out of the forty who responded they "would self edit first," listed "to have someone else check it" as well. Three students out of the same group listed to "Have a friend edit" as another option.

During writing group time, the students edited a piece of writing given by the teacher. It was observed during this activity most of the students worked apart, rarely asking each other questions. They were more likely to ask the teacher rather than check with their peers or use resources available to them unless directed to do so. Because of the lack if involvement by the students, the next day they were asked to share their results in small groups again. Many commented,"Why, we worked on this together yesterday?" As they began comparing their editing marks, often the students found descrepencies between each other.

Pre survey- question 3

The last question of the survey asked children what would you need to do score a three or higher in this category. The pre survey found the majority of children did not know what to do. Those who responded 'self edit,' comments ranged from general statements such as, "Check over my work" to "Check my spelling and punctuation." No child stated specific areas they would check such as a known weakness such as, capitalizing the beginning of sentences. Of those who fell in the category of other responses, one child responded, "I would not need to do anything." Three students made comments which fit with word choice, not conventions. The children responded, "Make your word choice wonderful," "Words and good writing," and "Have good word choice." One child attempted to combine their knowledge of word choice and conventions, "Check what words are conventions."

Table VI

If you wanted a score of 3 or higher in this category, what kinds of things would you need to do?

Categories	Pre-survey	Post-survey
I don't know	27	0
Self edit	16	53
Peer/ adult/ teacher edit	6	0
Other	5	1

Total responses 54

Post survey- question 3

The post survey showed all accept one student answering, "self edit" first. However, in this category children offered a wide range of responses. The majority of the students stated they would edit their work. Only three out of the fifty-three students specified they would have an adult or teacher check their work after they had. Thirteen children in this category also listed to check with some else as well. In some cases, children listed they would check their work up to three times and have another person check their work several times as well.

As students finished pieces of writing, rarely were there children being observed editing. In most instances when children met to discuss pieces of writing, most discussions centered on the reaffirming of ideas or similar thoughts or experiences. Even though the survey results suggested students incorporate editing into their process of writing, it was observed during this study that students would edit only when directed by the teacher. Discussion between students and their work was centered on the notion of ideas and content more than editing of each others pieces.

Ideas and Content

The studying of Ideas and content was conducted next because it was a trait which had been discussed throughout the year. The teacher often mentioned during class her ideas for writing and where she got them.

Pre survey- question 1, In your own words, explain what ideas and content are.

The pre survey for Ideas and content showed a variety of responses. This category was especially difficult to categorize because of the variance in responses. Eight out of forty-eight subjects responded by restating the question. Eight children stated it was

connected to thinking. For example, one child in this category stated, "It is what you thought about and how interesting it was." Another child commented, "Having an idea in your head and having a big story behind it."

Some children responded by addressing particular features or elements of writing in their response. One child answered this question by stating, "In my own words ideas and content is how your story is set up, like the main idea of the story." Robert responded, "Ideas and content involves story plots and good stories. What your writing is about is part of this." Others also mentioned key words such as brainstorming and prewriting in their responses. " Ideas and Content is what you have written in your writing and prewriting."

Other answers that were included, were on target as far as an explanation of what ideas and content are but their statements were general in nature. For example, "I think it is whether or not your composition makes sense." "Ideas and content is just basically your whole writing."

Table VII

In your own words, explain what ideas and content are.

Categories	Pre-survey	Post-survey
Restatement of the question	8	1
Thinking process	7	12
Features/ elements of writing	8	0
I don't know	18	1
Other answers	6	8
Good ideas	--	9
Details, clarity, and interesting	--	16

Total responses 47

Post survey- question 1

The post survey found a change in responses by the subjects. Instead of children answering, "Ideas and content is thinking of good ideas," responses centered on ownership of ideas with answers such as, "Ideas and content are what you think about to make your story." One student responded by saying, "Ideas and content is putting an experience or something you remember into a story." The pronouns of "my", "your", and "you" were not as apparent on the pre-survey as they were on the post survey. This suggests students understanding ownership of thoughts and experiences.

A category which emerges on the post survey was the explanation of Ideas and content being good ideas. This answer closely relates to a restatement of the question. However, further explanation by the children shows it is more closely tied to a vagueness of term rather than conscious effort of restatement. Many students responded with a variation of responses to Ideas and content. For many, ideas meant finding good ideas for stories and content was the story. The notion of word choice playing a factor in ideas and content also emerged in this category as further clarification.

A second category to emerge as an explanation of ideas and content was details, clarity and interesting. Ten children specifically mentioned these three words in conjunction with their explanation. "Ideas and content is the detail and quality of a story." "It is the details that keep you interested." "The better your ideas are, and the fresher ideas are, makes the piece have great ideas and content." Students expressed the elements to keep a reader engaged into a story. One child also mentioned "juicy words" as part of ideas and content. During the instruction phase where children scored papers for this trait, juicy bits of detail were mentioned as a positive aspect of ideas and content. One student

summarized this categorization by clearly stating, "Ideas and content is something that helps keep the story interesting. Details, details, details!"

Eight children responded with a wide range of possibilities for Ideas and content. These responses ranged from Ideas and content being "things in your story" to "It helps and makes your writing better." These children responses were too general to be able to categorize them in any other place than "other responses."

Pre survey- question 2, What kinds of things do you do to find good ideas?

The second question on the survey asked children to explain what they do to find good ideas. The pre survey found a majority of students either thought about an idea, an experience or used a pre-writing strategy such as listing or brainstorming. Three students also mentioned a key phrase the teacher had used during class time to exemplify what to write about; "the world around you." Four subjects also answered by stating they looked to "books" they had read, "dreams", and "other people." A proportionate amount of students also responded they were unsure how to get good ideas.

Table VIII

What kinds of things do you do to find good ideas?

Categories	Pre-survey	Post-survey
Look around me	3	4
Think	16	20
Pre-writing strategies	13	9
I don't know	11	1
Other responses	4	13

Total responses 47

Post survey- question 2

The post-survey resulted similar numbers in most categories. Children who responded by thinking, used more vocabulary to express what exactly to think about. Some specified "the day," "past experiences," and "things you know about." One student commented, "Look at my life, or my friends, or things I would like to happen."

The category which changed significantly was "I don't know" which was expected due to the instructional time given to the trait. The category of "other responses" also showed an increase. It gained not only more responses but also a wider range. In this category, five children responded to ask others such as "peers" and "family." One student responded by saying, "Use other stories to get ideas." Two children responded they get ideas from their "dreams." Other answers seemed unrelated to the trait, ideas and content. One example of this is the response, "Is it exciting." This may be due to the similarity in questioning from previous surveys and the lack of reading the question by the subject.

Pre survey- question 3, If you wanted a score of 3 or higher in this category, what kinds of things would you need to do?

The last question on the survey asked the subjects to describe or list things they do to score a three or higher in this category. The pre survey showed most students were unsure of what to do to insure a score of three or higher. The remaining categories showed an even distribution of explanations. Five children stated the question by saying, "Check my ideas and content." Six students responded generally by stating, "Check their work or have someone else check it." Four students comments centered on making sure to engage yourself in process writing; "Process your thoughts to an idea, and then to paper." Five children mentioned it was important to keep to the subject. One student

commented, " Make sure I like my ideas and the content and it stays on the subject." This child identified staying to the subject but leads her statement by a restatement of the question. The statement shows the vagueness and possibly uncertainty of some children in forming a clear concept which they are trying to describe.

After the pre survey had been given but before the post survey, children meet in small groups to discuss what ideas and content were and why they were important. Group statements also showed a wide variance in response.

Group 1 "What is it? It's what makes the reader want to read it, it makes it interesting and its the story."

Group 2 " Ideas and content are how ideas are put on paper. They are needed for good writing."

Group 3 "What is it? It's easy to read, holds the readers attention, good ideas. Why is it important? That's what makes the story interesting. It hooks the reader, makes them want to read on."

Group 4 "What is it? Working hard on making sure that you know about the topic. And that you have good words and you have a good topic and ideas about it. Why is it important/ If you didn't have it your writing. It would be dull."

Table IX

If you wanted a score of 3 or higher in this category, what kinds of things would you need to do?

Categories	Pre-survey	Post-survey
Restatement of the question	5	9
Self or peer edit	6	5
Process writing strategies	4	0
Stay to the subject	5	0
I don't know	23	1
Other responses	4	32

Total responses 47

Post survey- question 3

A small increase was noticed in the restatement of the question on the post survey. An example of this was a student answering, "Try to have good ideas and content." In some respect this could be interpreted as the child engaging in revising for the trait. However, no explanation of how to check was given. The outcome was general statements such as the example, were categorized as restatements.

Other categories seeing changes were process writing strategies, and staying to the subject. In the pre survey, statements were vague in nature. For example, for this question one child had responded, "Brainstorm first." The post survey showed a shift to more specific language as explanation of what is needed to score a three or better. Table ten, refers to the category, Other responses, broken into sub categories.

Table X

Other Responses

<u>Categories</u>	<u>Post-survey</u>
Interesting ideas/ phrases/ subject	3
Exciting story	3
Reference to reader's desires	2
Selection of topic	4
Makes sense/ clarity	12
description/ details	4
Take time and think	2
Other	2

Total responses 32

The variance in this category only typifies the diverse explanations given in this category. Trying to simplify ideas and content into a few key words or phrases is a difficult challenge. The overwhelming response in this category was, "Check your ideas and content by checking to see that it makes sense and is clear." Another response was, "Making sure your story, idea or subject was exciting or interesting." Two children specially directed their statements to include the reader, "Make sure the reader knows what you are talking about" and "Make the reader want to read it."

The two most genuine responses to this question were under the category of other responses. One child commented, "Use the kind of words and phrases that exemplify, you had to be there." Another child used a phrase that was discussed during class, "Have your piece of writing paint a picture." Both of these statements indirectly show the author

thinking about what to give the reader to encourage engagement with their pieces of writing.

Sentence Fluency

Sentence fluency was predetermined by the researcher to follow Ideas and content. The reasoning of the researcher was to use Sentence fluency to further exemplify Ideas and content.

Pre survey-question 1, In your own words, explain what sentence fluency is.

The pre survey found a fairly consistent number of responses, in five out of the seven categories. As seen on previous surveys, a number of children restated the question being asked, or answered, "I don't know." However, children also responded with key words and ideas used in teaching the trait, sentence fluency. The categories of short and long sentences and sentence flow are key concepts and language used when referring to this trait. Another category which described sentence fluency was the smoothness of the sentences. Even though, these comments are general in nature, they do correlate with the trait.

Three children also responded on the pre survey, mentioning word selection as a part of sentence fluency. One child responded, "Good, exciting words in a sentence." The two other responses in this category were more closely matched with sentence fluency. "Sentence fluency is how many words you have in your sentences, and how good they sound." "Maybe it is where you like use words over and over again and correct it," was the other response. These children spoke about the relationship of words and sentence fluency. One in relation to length of sentences and the other the repetition of words in sentences, respectively.

The other responses category included a wide variety of answers. "Sentence fluency is where you influence your sentences," "How your sentences are written," "The different kinds of sentences," and "Making your sentences convincing and understanding and want to be read."

Table XI

In your own words, explain what sentence fluency is.

Categories	Pre survey	Post survey
Restatement of question	10	0
Short and long sentences	11	12
Sentence flow	8	23
I don't know	14	0
Smoothness of sentences	3	0
Specific reference to word selection	3	1
Other	10	6
Reference to reading	--	13
How it is built or fits together	--	4

Total responses 59

Post survey- question 1

The post survey found the majority of students describing sentence fluency as the "flow" of writing. Out of context, this statement seems unclear but within group discussions and through individual responses, "flow" was how many of the students regarded sentence fluency. "Flow" refers to how it sounds when read aloud. Many of the responses were similar word for word; "Sentence fluency is how your sentences flow."

The category of long an short sentences received similar number of responses in both the pre survey and the post survey. The terms "long and short sentences" are vocabulary taken straight from the materials given to the students, specifically on the rubric for this trait. The specific statement dictates a good pieces of writing should include long "stretchy" sentences and short "snappy" sentences (Spandel, 1990, 1997).

Two new categories were added due to the responses in the post survey. They were references to reading and how it is built or fits together. The category which showed strong response was reference to reading. For example, a child responded, "Sentence fluency is writing sentences that read smoothly . . ." Another student wrote, "Sentence fluency is what makes something easy and fun to read." Both of these children understand sentence fluency as the way it should read aloud. A few subjects described it as how it sounds, "Sentence fluency is what it sounds like." Still others clarified their points by describing what it may sound like or what the readers experience may be, " Sentence fluency is making your sentence clear, easy to read, you don't have too stop and read something over too understand it. . . "

The second new category was constructed due to the responses on the post survey, namely "how it is built or fits together." Four students responded by commenting on the structure of sentences. One student commented, "Sentence fluency is the way your sentences are built." Another student responded by saying, "Sentence fluency is how well sentences fit together." These comments help to support the notion that the students were describing the internal structure of sentences in relation to forming pieces of writing.

Pre survey- question 2, What kinds of things do you do to check for good sentence fluency?

The second question on the survey asked each subject to describe what they do to check their sentence fluency. The pre survey results showed a majority of students did not know what they did. Eight children responded they self edit, one child said, " Double maybe even triple check work." An additional eight children responded they check the length of their sentences. This is a reference to long and short sentences which appeared in question one as well. Five children responded by "checking conventions." Answers in this category centered on checking end punctuation. Staying to the subject and having other people edit their work, received three responses.

Table XII

What kinds of things do you do to check for good sentence fluency?

Categories	Pre survey	Post survey
I don't know	24	2
Self check	8	16
Others check	3	4
Stay to the subject	3	2
Check the flow of sentences	4	4
Check conventions	5	5
Check length of sentences	8	15
Other responses	4	5
Check words	--	6

Total responses 59

Post survey- question 2

The post survey found the majority of students would check their work by reading it over themselves or look for sentence length in their writing; short and long sentences. On the pre survey, three children said they would have someone else check their work and four responded similarly on the post survey. Four students also responded, "Check the flow of sentences." This description may sound ambiguous but fits with the conversations and discussions held. Five children listed conventions to check such as "end punctuation," "capitalization," and the "use of commas." The other responses category, lent itself to a range of comments. One child in this category responded,"See if you can turn two sentences into one. You should be able to read it aloud easily." Three students responded vaguely stating, "Make sure you have good sentences."

An additional category was observed on the post survey. The category, check words, was added because of the number of subjects who responded specifically about word choice. "Mabey if they have different, unusual words in it. Just not have the same old thing. Make up my own new things, like flip-flopping weird things, or moving words to the beginning of the sentence, that are at the back." This comment reflects on activities done in class. The students discussed and practiced combining sentences and phrases in class on several occasions. Other comments included, "Checking to see words ran smoothly" and "Checking for missing words."

Pre survey- question 3, If you wanted a score of 3 or higher in this category, what kinds of things would you do?

The majority of students did not know what to do in order to score a three or higher. Eight children responded by answering to check for "long and short sentences" in their writing. Six students responded by saying to "read it" through. Five children on the pre

survey restated the question by answering, "Check sentence fluency." Still other children explained in generalities by stating, "Have good sentences," and "You would have to make sence in your sentences." As in previous questions, sentence flow was a category found. Five children returned answers such as, "Make the sentences flow together." The category of other responses, ranged from, " 'Make sure I used a variety of sentences" to "Listen and pay attention."

Table XIII

If you wanted a score of 3 or higher in this category, what kinds of things would you need to do?

Categories	Pre survey	Post survey
I don't know	20	1
Check sentence length	8	15
Read it	6	11
Restatement of question	5	3
Have good sentences	3	4
Check sentence flow	5	4
Make sure sentences make sense	5	3
Other responses	7	10
Help from others	--	6

Total responses 59

Post survey- question 3

The post survey found fifteen subjects responded they would check for sentence length including some long and short sentences. Eleven children responded in the

category, read it and ten children responded in the category, other responses. The
category, read it, focused on self editing by reading it to yourself. Other responses
category included, "Combine sentences," "Make sure they all make sense," "Have good
sized paragraphs," and "See if the sentences start with a different beginning." Four
children answered in the category, check sentence flow. Respondents in this category
answered with a reply such as, "Good flowing sentences, make sure it makes sense,
realistic." Four subjects also responded simply, "Pick good sentences that have good
words in them."

Organization

Organization was the fifth trait to be discussed and interpreted. Many children were
able to define organization because of the title of this category but were not as specific in
describing how it works in their writing.

Pre survey question 1, In your own words, describe what organization is.

The pre survey found thirteen children describing organization as,"The order of
sentences, words and stories." Fifteen children also restated the question by saying, "It is
how you organize." Ten children responded to the notion of staying to a subject; "Not
jumping around." Three children explained organization as how writing "fits" and how it
is "placed together." Three also commented it was being "prepared" and "being ready."
In the category of other responses, the children described it as "sequencing," "making
sense," and "how ideas are sorted."

Table XIV

In your own words, describe what organization is.

Categories	Pre survey	Post survey
Notion of order	13	16
Restatement of question	15	11
Staying to a subject	10	0
Placement/ fit	3	6
Being prepared	3	0
I don't know	4	0
Other responses	3	4
Makes sense	--	6
How it flows	--	3
Beginning, middle, and end	--	5

Total responses 51

Post survey- question 1

The post survey found the majority of children describing organization as being the order of your paper. A large number of children restated the question as well. However, they used some clarification. For example, one student wrote, "Organization is organizing of your thoughts." Students also responded that organization was "How it fit together" and "How you place the words and sentences." As in the pre survey, other responses included ideas of sequencing but additional descriptions emerged as well. Comments centered around the concept of grammatical structure.

As with other traits, new categories occurred on the post survey. They were: makes sense, how it flows and beginning, middle and end. Students commented organization is,

"How the story makes sense." This may refer to the sequencing of events. Three children stated, "It is how the story flows." Again, this may infer sequencing. "Beginning," "middle," and "end" were important aspects of describing organization to five of the subjects.

During a whole group discussion before the post survey, the children responded to the prompt, "What do you look for in describing good organization?" The following ideas were shared: "Is it in a sequence, Does it have details, Does it make sense, and Is it in the right order?" As the children moved into small groups, they began to share their own pieces of writing about their morning schedules. Children were given a writing invitation to observe and take notes about a morning at their house previously. They took this information and wrote a draft to share in writing group. As sharing took place, it was up to the other group members to listen and respond keeping in mind what we had discussed as a group. The following conversation took place between group members.

John (sharing his morning schedule): "I'm not done yet (referring to writing the piece)"
Laura: "Where did you look for your shorts?"
John continues story to answer her question.
Laura: "You should tell when you looked for your shorts."
Dan shares his writing.
Laura: "What did you and your mom argue about? People will wonder why did you argue."

The conversation between members indicated that they are detail oriented. Laura wants to ensure details are in place for the next reader.

The students also discussed organization as a concept not in conjunction with a piece of writing. The responses of the groups to the questions, "Why is organization important in writing and how do you organize your thoughts?" are listed below.

Group 1: "So you can understand it and so the point is clear and not mixed up. We list things and read our writing over to make sure its okay."

Group 2: "So the people who are reading the sheet won't get confused. A) sequencing, B) Most important to least important, and C) By details."

Group 3: "If you don't have organization, you writing wouldn't make sense. We organize by listing and webbing."

Group 4: "If you didn't have organization your writing would be all messed up and sloppy. You can put your thoughts in some kind of order, like sequence, etc."

Even though the students mentioned using pre-writing strategies to organize their thoughts, the majority of children were observed just writing. When they were given a writing invitation for organization, the majority of children began writing right away. A few made lists or a web but as a whole their thoughts flowed onto the paper in sentence formation.

Pre survey- question 2, What kinds of things do you do to check organization in your writing?

The pre survey showed a variety of response to this question. Fifteen children responded, "I don't know." "Check the order of either sentences or events," was the response of eight children. Another eight children said, "Read it over" or "Read it aloud." Two children would ask another person to check their work. Two children also restated the question by saying, "I would check the organization." Three stated it was important to "Keep to the subject." Six children referred to, "Checking the placement of their sentences and paragraphs" as ways they check for organization. "Make sure no sentences are out of place," was another statement made in the category, check placement. This category related closely with check order. Other responses category included, "Make sure it is all nice and neat," "Short and snappy sentences," and "What I check for is how the story is maid up." The first statement does not relate to what was discussed as

organization. The second statement seems to be making a connection to the previous trait. The last response quoted in this category gives a sense of the child at least checking his work but it is vague as to what would be checked.

Table XV

What kinds of things do you do to check organization in your writing?

Categories	Pre survey	Post survey
I don't know	15	1
Check order	8	9
Read over	8	7
Someone else read	2	11
Restatement of question	2	2
Keep to the subject	3	3
Check placement: sentences, paragraphs	6	2
Other responses	7	3
Beginning, middle, end	--	3
Makes sense	--	6
Check paragraphs	--	4

Total responses 51

Post survey- question 2

The post survey showed a rise in having someone else check your work and several new categories were also established. Three children specified checking for a "beginning," "middle," and "end." Making sure it made sense was also a new category. In this category, it seemed as if the children were trying to describe the act of checking the

sequence of events in writing but were unable to find a more specific word to communicate this. Checking paragraphs was another response found on the post survey. One child from this category specified, "Check indenting of paragraphs." Indenting of paragraphs was listed on the rubric for organization.

Pre survey- question 3, If you want a score of 3 or higher in this category, what kinds of things would you need to you?

The last question for the trait organization, found fourteen subjects answered, "I Don't know." Six children restated the question. For example, one child wrote, "Have good organization." Seven children mentioned order of their work as important to receiving a score of three or better. Six stated, "Stay to the subject." Two students responded by posing the question, "Does it make sense?" In the category of other check, one child answered,"You would just have to do what you normally do with the other traits, you would have to have someone else revise it . . ." The category of other responses included several answers: "Indent your paragraph", "Not to rush ahead in your writing", and "Check if the paragraphs are in the right spot", were a few of the responses in this category.

Table XVI

If you want a score of 3 or higher in this category, what kinds of things would you

need to do?

Categories	Pre survey	Post survey
I don't know	14	2
Restatement of question	6	7
Put in order	7	7
Stick to subject	6	7
Does it make sense	2	6
Self check	7	6
Other check	2	7
Other responses	7	5
Beginning, middle and end	--	4

Total responses 51

Post survey- question 3

The scores were scattered between many of the categories with one additional category being added. Four categories received seven responses; restatement of the question, put in order, stick to the subject, and have other people check it. Six children responded by asking, "Does it make sense?" Another category which received six responses was self check. One example from this category was, "Go back to check your work every time you write something to make sure it's right." Other responses category contained two answers which fit with organization; " Make sure there are paragraphs" and "Put out a story line and give examples of your topic, and have a good start off."

Unrelated answers given were, "I would write more," "Look in a dictionary" and "Punctuation and spelling."

Voice

The researcher selected voice as the last trait to be studied because of an early observation from the beginning of the year. At the start of the school year, each child completed a writer's inventory. When asked, "What do you know about writing?" The only trait to be mentioned was voice. It seemed this was the one trait which children had a connection.

Pre survey- question 1, In your own words, explain what voice is.

The pre survey found the subjects describing what voice was in much more detail. Twelve students described voice as, "How you put things together to make it sound like you." Eleven children explained it as,"How you read something." One child said, "I think that voice is how you say the story." Three children explained, "Voice is how much of yourself goes into your writing." One group explained voice through words. "You tell the story in your own words," explained one child. Two students commented, "Voice is kinda like what your writing has to say, you may say the point of the writing." Relationship to building of characters was also seen; "Voice is the characters of your writing." Two subjects responded to sense of story. "The way your story tells a story" and "A good story," were the answers in the category, sense of story. In the category of other responses, several children gave informed and insightful explanations. "Voice is a certain person's style and how they write," one student explained. Another stated, "Voice is the meaning and uniqueness in someones writing that makes it sound different." "It is the

strong and realistic writing in your piece. Good voice is strong and gets the message across leaving you to think more on the subject," is how one girl described it.

Table XVII

In your own words, explain what voice is.

Categories	Pre survey	Post survey
Sounds like you	12	9
Spoken aloud; how it sounds	11	4
Yourself	3	9
Words that sound like you	6	4
What you have to say	2	0
Relation to character(s)	2	0
I don't know	8	0
Relation to story	2	1
Other responses	7	10
Expression of self	--	7
Emotions in your writing	--	9

Total responses 53

Post survey- question 1

The post survey three categories being eliminated and two categories being added. As in the pre survey, children's explanations were very descriptive in nature. Nine children explained voice as it "Sounding like you." Only four children explained it as how it should be spoken or "Sounds aloud." Ten children were placed in the category of other responses. "Voice is when a story has a personality. When a story has voice you will

know because a certain feeling will come to you," commented one student. Another child responded, "Voice is the way the writer personalizes their writing." "Voice is individuality in writing," explained one boy. The two new categories which appeared were expression of self and emotions in your writing. Seven children said, "When you express yourself in your writing." "To me voice is the emotion that is shown through you work," replied one student. This statement exemplifies the category, emotions in your writing.

Pre survey- question 2, What kinds of things do you do to check for voice in your writing?

Most of the children responded they were not sure what to do or stated, "Check to see if it sounds like me." Seven children responded they would check over their work by reading it aloud while five responded to have another person check; 'parents' or 'a peer.' Five children's responses centered on the level of voice being projected. For example, "Lots of talking" and "Make sure you can hear someone" were responses in this category. The other responses category included: "I become creative and try to put myself into my writing," "I check for a style or a certain way someone writes" and "I would check to see if I could see a unique personality in each character."

Table XVIII

What kinds of things do you do to check for voice in your writing?

Categories	Pre survey	Post survey
Check words used	4	5
Relationship to checking ideas	4	0
Read aloud	7	4
Make sure it sounds like me	11	14
Someone else check	5	15
I don't know	13	0
Relationship to speaking aloud	5	0
Relationship to emotion	--	5
Other responses	4	10

Total responses 53

Post survey question 2

The post survey found fifteen children would ask someone else to check their work. "Let other people read my writing and see if it 'sounds' like me, and my opinions, and the points I am trying to make," was one child's response. Many children went on to specify what they would have them check in relation to voice. Fourteen children said, "Make sure it sounds like me." Four children responded, "Read it aloud," to check for voice. The category of other responses showed a variety of explanations. Some of them were: "Individuality in writing," "Exclamation points, details," "I make sure my characters seem real, and that I am honest in my writing," and Make sure that it has my personality." One child's explanation can best be demonstrated by his actual writing; refer to figure 2.

Figure 2

Make sure I have said what I want to say in my writing.

A new category also appeared as in question one. It was the relationship of emotion to writing. A good representation of this category is, "See if anyone shows emotion when they read your paper."

Pre survey- question 3, If you wanted a score of 3 or higher in this category, what kinds of things would you need to do?

The majority of children were not sure what to do. Seven children explained that they would make sure it sounded like them. "You would have to make your writing sound like it's you talking," said one student. Five children explained by specifying words as important. "Write from your own words," "Make sure your words make sence," and "Don't use common words," were some of the statements from this category. A few students comments were vague and almost a restatement of the question. For example, "Use good voice" and "Use voice wisely," are two responses from this category. "Have a good idea" and "You need to come up with your own ideas" were categorized under relationship to ideas in which four children responded. Two other categories also received four responses each. These were "self edit/ read a loud" and "other read/ edit." Responses in these categories stated to 'self check' or enlist a parent or peer to check by reading it aloud. Other responses category, included the following descriptions: "Always keep thinking of better ways to make a strong influence and keep changing it to the best it can be," and "I am already good at voice so I wouldn't need to do much." Two students

responded in relation to voice level, "Make sure people can hear you" and "Have a good reading voice." Another two students responded by giving examples. One stated, "Write down things like you say alot like 'cool man' and 'neato' and make the characters talk that way." Another child showed a change in punctuation to explain herself, see figure 3.

Figure 3

Table XIX

If you wanted a score of 3 or higher in this category, what kinds of things would you

need to do?

Categories	Pre survey	Post survey
I don't know	16	2
Examples	2	0
Make it sound like me	7	17
Relationship to words	5	6
Voice level	2	0
Relationship to ideas	4	0
Restatement of question	4	6
Other read and edit	4	6
Self edit and read aloud	4	0
Other responses	5	7
Relationship to emotional response	--	9

Total responses 53

Post survey- question 3

The post survey resulted in an increase in the category "make it sound like me" while four categories were eliminated and one additional category was created. The categories which did not receive any responses on the post survey were: voice level, relationship to ideas, and self edit/ read aloud. The new category which emerged was "relationship to emotional response." Nine children responded in this category with a response such as, "Make sure your writing was funny, scary, sad, etc. . ." and "I should write with strong opinions and emotions." Six students were vague in responding and attempted to restate the question. "Check for perfect voice" and "Tell about my voice," were responses in this category. Six children replied by stating to have someone else read your writing. Many of these comments were followed by, "Have someone tell you how they feel" and "See if they could hear my voice." Other responses were more personalized in nature. "I would make sure my writing is mine and no one elses," replied one child. "I am already pretty good at voice," stated one boy. Another child said, "Have a meaningful paper with your own style and had to-be-there details."

When voice was discussed with the entire class before the post survey, children responded to the question, "What do you know about voice?" by stating the following:

Child 1: "It is the way you express your writing emotionally."
Child 2: "It leaves an influence."
Child 3: "You should open yourself to your writing."
Child 4: "They (the reader) can imagine who you are."
Child 5: "It is giving characters unique personality."
Child 6: "You know it is a certain person (speaking about the written piece)."

These answers were recorded during class discussion times about voice and how it was being interpreted.

Self Scoring

After studying all the traits and practice scoring of other papers for each trait, children were read the story, <u>Alexander and the terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day</u> (Viorst, 1972). Then they were asked to write about their worst day ever. This piece of writing was completed over several days in which children wrote a draft, edited and then wrote a final copy. It was stated at the beginning of this assignment that self scoring would take place after final drafts were written.

Prior to the start of self scoring, the question arose, "Do the scores count as a grade?" Students interpreted the scoring of 0 to 5 as the grading scale used by the school district. Their assumption is a score of five for an individual trait or as a holistic score was considered outstanding and related to a one or an 'A' as far as grading standards. A four was consider above average or the same as a two or a 'B,' a three was considered average and related to a three or 'C,' and a two was considered below average, a four or 'D.' The students were assured by their teacher self scores were not used as part of their grade. However, the hesitantancy of the students in rating themselves was apparent.

The teacher put a copy of the rubric for each trait on the overhead. Students had copies from previous scoring. The teacher then read what a three paper included for a trait and were asked to make a decision if the paper was in the right category for the trait being discussed. If not, students moved up or down the scale dependent if the they felt it was higher or lower than a three based upon the information from the rubric. Each trait was scored in this manner. It was observed after the teacher went through the characteristics of a three, students moved to score very quickly. On average, most students quickly read through the rubric scale and scored themselves without reflecting about their writing. Many students found it difficult in justifying the score given as well. The following are a small sample of justifications of scores by students.

Child 1 (Organization, 3): "It was sloppy but sounded right."

Child 2 (Sentence fluency, 4): "I need a little more in a couple of words."

Child 3 (Conventions, 4): "Most of my convention are in the right spots and my capitalization isn't shabby."

Child 4 (Voice, 4): "Because it, paper, it's not very good. I don't speak my mind. I'm very cautious it sounds like I just wanted to get it done."

Child 5 (Ideas and content, 4): "I gave myself a four, because it is not perfect and not just words."

Child 6 (Voice, 5): "Because you can tell it's me. You can tell I'm talking to the reader."

Child 7 (Ideas and content, 4): "The story didn't start off great, but it got better as I went along. It is easy to tell what the story is about with a good sized topic."

Child 8 (Sentence fluency, 4): "I gave myself this score because I like how my sentences varied in size and words."

Some children demonstrated a strong ability for the metacognitive process when thinking about their writing, while others struggled with general comments for justification of scores.

Table XX

Mean Comparison of Each Trait from Self Evaluation by Students
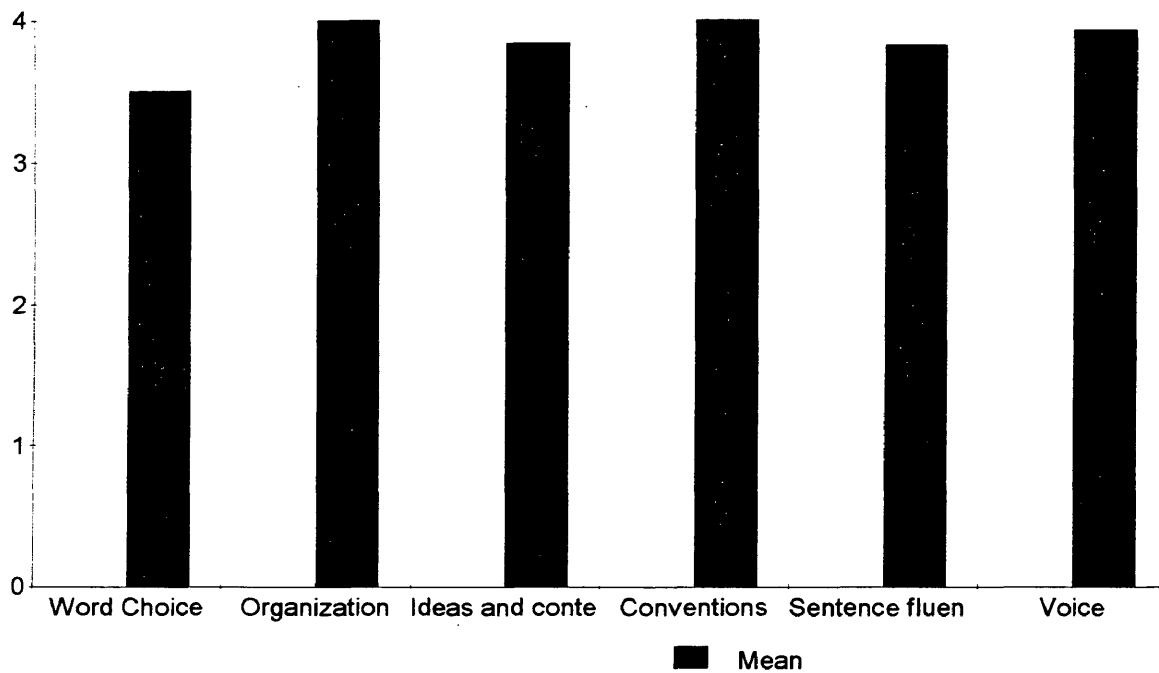
■ Mean

	Word Choice	Organization	Ideas and content	Conventions	Sentence fluency	Voice
Total	193	220	211	220	210	216
Mean	3.51	4.00	3.84	4.00	3.81	3.927

When comparing the mean scores of each trait from a sample of fifty-five students. It is easy to see the average score of each trait is a four. Many reasons can be given for this consistency of scores. The first consideration should be the students did indeed earn the scores given. A second consideration is the students are scoring based upon what they feel their teacher expectations of their work were. A final consideration was children interpreted the rubric scale as a method of grading. One in which they are not stating a superior level of competency but a level which is above average but can be improved.

Summary

This chapter describes the results and data collected during this study. The data supports the understanding of the Six Analytical Traits of Writing by students through the discussion of their surveys responses, observational notes taken during class times, small group assignments, and self scored papers.

Chapter V
Discussion

Summary

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate how children interpreted and valued the Six Analytical Traits of Writing. Analysis of surveys, observational notes, group assignments and self scored pieces of writing showed children do have an understanding of the Six Analytical Traits of Writing. However, their understanding and application of the traits is limited.

Conclusions

The data indicates that the average sixth grade student can interpret and define each trait after instruction. Pre surveys demonstrated that large sections of students were unable to define the trait or did so in very general terms through a restatement of the question or vague descriptions. Only on a few occasions were specific examples given to explain and define a trait. However, explanation of each trait did change from the pre survey to the post survey. In many cases, new categories were added as the surveys were examined for similarities in answers. Much of the vocabulary seen on post surveys can be contributed to small and large group times, when children did verbalize and discuss what each trait meant and its importance in relation to writing. A few students expressed their ideas and understandings of each trait using unique and imaginative vocabulary. However, the majority of children listed general themes or phrases used during class discussions.

How children checked for each trait in their writing was found to be answered in similar terms to the first question. The question was intentionally left open ended to see if a variety of responses would occur. However, what was seen was a movement of the trait

defined into a statement of evaluation or a general statement of editing; by self, peer, or an adult. It is unclear then if sixth grade students can internalize and apply the information gained about each trait of writing for self reflection. The researcher assumed the failure of students to express how they evaluated their own work lies in how infrequently children are asked to do so through their educational years. On occasion when they are asked to evaluate their writing, the purpose is typically for grading, in which the final outcome will be a percentage or letter grade. The children were much more comfortable in allowing the teacher to be the expert of writing evaluation rather than each student being the expert of their own writing. It seemed the children were focused on the earning of a grade for their writing rather than evaluation for the purpose of growth.

The final question on the survey asked children to explain how they checked their writing in relation to the rubric format for using the traits. Again, the question was left open ended to see the variety in response of the students. Pre surveys showed children were unable to explain what to do to score a three or higher for the trait being discussed. Most often, the answer of "I don't know" or a restatement of a definition was given. Post surveys found some change in answers but general statements were most common and examples of own work were never given.

A majority the students answered the surveys superficially. Very few answers given were original in nature. It is believed children responded in this matter for two reasons. First, children were taught through the educational system to provide "correct" answers instead of providing statements for reflection. Secondly, children use the Six Analytical Traits of Writing for what they deem 'school writing' purposes only. It is indeterminate whether children use the traits or any part of the traits of writing in a natural setting.

During class, when sample papers were being scored the children were able to evaluate and reflect on pieces of writing using the rubric as a guide. However, when

evaluation of their own work was done. It was a hardship for many. During a discussion of the traits, one student commented, "I like to check someone else's because if there's something really bad, it's easier to tell them than say something that really stinks about your own." Critical thinking about one's work is typically seen by students in a negative manner. This is supported by the average score of the self evaluation for each trait being a four. Four was a comfortable score for the students to give themselves.

The average of self scored papers for each trait confirms children's awareness to what they considered a safe score and the need to satisfy teacher's expectations of their work. It is highly unlikely out of fifty-five subjects, all could be categorized as a four for each trait. The children have been conditioned by years of schooling to recognize only what they believe to be a grade instead of an assessment process for improvement. Many of the comments validate this statement. The generalities such as,"It was pretty good but not perfect," to justify the score given indicate the notion of grading instead of progression of learning and betterment. Children are trained by our society to be competitive in the sense that average is not acceptable. The norm in our current educational system which is externally influenced by society, is to be above average in a discipline but also recognize your ability for improvement. Hence, if children interpret a four score as above average, it is a comfort level in which they feel satisfied with the quality of their work.

During instruction, children were immersed in each trait through discussions and manipulation of each trait. However, it was inconclusive how much, if any, children thought and used each trait as a tool in their writing. A few students internalized the traits and used the language of the traits to evaluate their writing formally and informally in self reflection. However, a majority of students did not. At times, it appeared the children were only using traits for evaluation and discussions about writing when directed to do so. This was observed several times during writing time at the beginning of each class. When

students were directed to share with a neighbor, conversations centered on the like or dislike of the piece in progress. At no time were students heard using the traits titles or key phrases to discuss the writing. It seemed that language was exclusively used for discussions or assignments directed by the teacher.

Reflection of the Researcher

The Six Analytical Traits of Writing are concepts children understand and can define when each trait is reviewed and discussed. However, most of the students in this study had previously been introduced to the traits, but retained little information about the Six Analytical Traits of Writing. The only trait mentioned at the beginning of the school year by a few students was the trait of voice. The fact that this trait was the only one listed by students, began my curiosity of how students understand the traits.

My informal and formal observations of the children in my classroom, suggest to me the traits of writing have little influence on their writing unless they find value and understanding for themselves through their use. A few of the students identified and used the traits for the betterment of their writing, but for the majority of the children the traits were interpreted as another rule or structure of English to learn. Further research needs to be accomplished to determine if the Six Analytical Traits of Writing provide children a valuable tool for writing.

Recommendations

The generalities and ingenuine answers of students in answering questions on the survey specifically in relation to checking own work and in relation to using the rubric in scoring indicates children need further training in self evaluation for the purpose of further learning not for the end result of a grade.

Further investigation of how and when children use the Six Analytical Traits of Writing needs to be addressed through several longitual case studies and interviews with children about their writing. This may give further insight to the actual application and synthesis of the traits. Other recommendations for further study are: what language is used by children to discuss pieces of writing in natural settings and do teacher scores using the Six Analytical Trait model of Writing correlate to children's self scored evaluations. These questions must be addressed to further validate and develop the standards of writing instruction. Continued research in process writing and analytical trait models will produce insight into the commonality of language and understanding of what good writing is between students and teachers.

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Appendix A
Survey questions

Word Choice

1. In your own words, explain what words choice is.

2. What kinds of things do you do to find the right word for your writing?

3. If you wanted a score of 3 or higher in this category, what kinds of things would you need to do?

Conventions

1. In your own words, explain what conventions are.

2. What kinds of things do you do to check your conventions in your writing?

3. If you wanted a score of 3 or higher in this category, what kinds of things would you need to do?

Ideas and content

1. In your own words, explain what ideas and content are.

2. What kinds of things do you do to find good ideas?

3. If you wanted a score of 3 or higher in this category, what kinds of things would you need to do?

Sentence Fluency

1. In your own words, explain what sentence fluency is.

2. What kinds of things do you do to check for good sentence fluency?

3. If you wanted a score of 3 or higher in this category, what kinds of things would you need to do?

Organization

1. In your own words, describe what organization is.

2. What kinds of things do you do to check organization in your writing?

3. If you wanted a score of 3 or higher in this category, what kinds of things would you need to do?

Voice

1. In your own words, explain what voice is.

2. What kinds of things do you do to check for voice in your writing?

3. If you wanted a score of 3 or higher in this category, what kinds of things would you need to do?

Appendix B
Rubrics for self scoring

These rubrics are based on the ideas and suggestions of Vicki Spandel (1997).

Word Choice

5 paper- extremely clear, visual, and accurate.
    All the words in my paper fit.
    My words are colorful and fresh. My language was original and not vague.
    The reader won't forget some of the things I have said.
3 paper- correct but not striking.
    I used everyday words pretty well but did not stretch for new ones.
    Most of the time, the reader understands what I am saying.
    My words are not very specific.
1 paper- confusing, misused phrases
    A lot of my words and phrases are vague.
    I don't create any pictures for the reader.
    I used the same words over and over again

Ideas and Content

5 paper- focused, clear and specific.
    The reader can tell I know a lot about the topic.
    I showed what was happening instead of telling.
    My paper has interesting details.
3 paper- some really good parts.
    Some of my ideas are general.
    Some of what I said is new to the reader.
    My topic was just the right amount to handle.
1 paper- just beginning.
    I haven't really shared much.
    My ideas are vague.
    I'm still looking for a good idea.

Organization

5 paper- clear and compelling.
    The start of my paper grabs the reader.
    The details add good information to my subject.
    I ended right at the right time.
3 paper- some really good pars, but still needs work.
    The beginning is there but doesn't grab the reader.
    Sometimes the reader is confused about how my details relate to my topic.
    At times, my paper drags.

2 paper- not in shape yet.
>I don't really have a beginning or an ending.
>My details don't support my topic.
>The ideas are mixed up and don't make sense.

Sentence Fluency

5 paper- varied and natural
>I have a mixture of long and short sentences.
>My paper is easy to read aloud.
>It flows well.

3 paper- routine.
>Some sentences sound good, others are awkward.
>My sentences start the same way a lot of times.
>I need to add and delete words.

2 paper- needs work.
>I can't figure out what I was trying to say.
>I can't tell where one sentence starts and ends.
>I need to read it loud to myself first.

Conventions

5 paper- mostly correct.
>I checked for capitalization and punctuation.
>My spelling is good.
>My grammar and usage is consistent.

3 paper- pretty much correct.
>I have spelled most of my words correctly.
>My paragraphs don't start at the right places.
>I have a grammar and usage problems.

2 paper- editing needs work.
>I have a lot of spelling errors.
>I have not really checked my punctuation closely.
>No paragraphs are present.

Voice

5 paper- really powerful.
>This paper really shows me off.
>The reader can tell am taking to them.
>I say what I think.

3 paper- Some personality comes through.
>The reader understands me but doesn't feel any emotion.
>My personality shows sometimes.

I told my story but didn't show it enough.
2 paper- It's not me yet.
    I can't tell I wrote this.
    I haven't said what I think.
    This is very general right now.