

# Teachers Network Leadership Institute

## Action Research Paper

### Writing Uphill by Shirley Chin

**Question:** How does “shared interactive writing” impact English language learners’ (ELLs) writing performance? As ELLs develop and use skills and strategies to compose, produce and present written work in a variety of genres for different audiences and purposes, what happens when there is explicit teaching, modeling, and sharing of the task of writing?

**Rationale for Study:** As a result of the NCLB Act, all ELLs must meet the same standards as other students and are required to take the State assessments in the subject areas appropriate to their grade levels. In New York State, only ELLs in an English language school system in the United States three years or less may be exempt from the State English Language Arts Test in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. In an effort to raise the achievement for all ELLs, New York State developed the New York State Learning Standards for English as a Second Language (ESL). This document serves as the foundation for ESL curriculum, instruction, and assessment for all ELLs in New York State in grades kindergarten through 12. This document also serves as the framework for the NYS English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT), administered annually in the spring to assess our ELLs in the four modalities: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It is also aligned with the NYS English Language Arts (ELA) standards to include the minimum requirements outlined by the NYS ELA learning standards.

I work in an elementary school located in the Chinatown-Little Italy section of New York City. We have a student population of almost 1,100 children: 88.9% are Asian, 5.0% are Hispanic, 4.4% are White, and 1.6% is Black and Other. Of these children, 76.9% are from low income homes and over 80% are from families where English is not the home language. The majority of our students enter school as English language learners. This is a Title I school because of the number of children from disadvantaged homes.

New students are admitted throughout the school year (September to June) and are generally placed in age appropriate grade level classes. If they live in a home where a language other than English is spoken, as confirmed by the Home Language Survey, they are tested with the Language Assessment Battery-Revised (LAB-R). This test identifies students who may be eligible for bilingual education or ESL services.

I teach 28 fourth and fifth grade Chinese students in a pull-out program, providing English as a second language (ESL) services in an all English immersion program. They had all been identified as eligible for ESL services from the administration of the LAB-R or NYSESLAT. There are 13 fourth graders and 15 fifth graders currently receiving mandated services. I meet with the advanced level students one period a day and I meet with the beginning and intermediate level students two periods a day. The spring 2004

NYSESLAT results identified 7 of the total number of students as having achieved an advanced level of English proficiency, 13 of the total number of students as having achieved an intermediate level of English proficiency, and 3 students who are at the beginning level of proficiency in English. Five of the students are newly arrived immigrants from China, one as recently as mid-December.

There exists the challenging task of how to teach our fourth and fifth grade ESL students, each with various English proficiency levels, to reach the performance benchmarks in the ESL standards. To meet the ESL standards, students must be able to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies in English for authentic purposes in both social and academic settings at their grade levels. This challenge is made more difficult when students are admitted year round and have had interrupted schooling. When students have not been enrolled in school continuously and received a firm educational foundation, there are gaps in their understanding of basic academic concepts. The admission of newly arrived immigrant students year round creates groups of students who always seem to need to start at the very beginning, learning the alphabet and the letter sounds, and develop basic communication skills, while others in the class are already so much ahead. The gap between the students always exists because of the wide range of academic and social language development that occurs.

With purposeful teaching in mind, and concerns about how to make instruction meaningful for my students while striving to motivate them to form a positive attitude toward learning, I thought Shared Interactive Writing would be a good entry point for the students to begin writing in their second language. The students and I would “share” the pen as we compose text collaboratively and the students write what they’re able to write on their own on chart paper. The Shared Interactive Writing experience is a language enriching component of the writing process. Shared Writing (only the teacher writes) and Interactive Writing are mostly used in the lower grades, Kindergarten to 2, as students are introduced to the Writing Workshop. However, I think they are also effective ways to teach and engage older students as well in oral and written language, especially for our English language learners. I felt their confidence in writing would increase if their attempts, responses, and efforts are valued as they figure out how written language works. A safe, collaborative learning environment would be provided to promote writing.

Using this instructional strategy, I would be able to assist the students to write words and sentences based on what they know and what they might discover as they support each other with our whole group writing. It would also aid academic vocabulary development. As a group, we would share the task of writing to create common texts for authentic purposes, use purposeful conversation to support the process, make letter-sound connections, use the conventions of written language, and connect reading and writing. Students would have opportunities to read and re-read the text independently. The text would also serve as a reference guide for locating known words and as a model for their own writing as they gradually assume responsibility for independent writing. They would be encouraged to develop as writers while transferring the strategies and skills

required for competent writing. Used daily, students would develop competence with oral language, reading and writing.

Still I wondered whether the explicit teaching, modeling, collaboration, and reinforcing of writing conventions and problem solving strategies would enable our fourth and fifth grade ELLs to meet the ESL learning and performance standards. There are so many cultural differences between the Chinese educational system and the United States educational system that have to be bridged.

Chinese students are not used to sharing their thoughts in public and they are not used to sharing their thinking with their peers. Struggling Asian students will not ask for help. Their parents train them to passively listen to the teacher and to take the words of the teachers very seriously-just as they were trained in their homeland. We need to realize that as students are learning a new language, they are learning new ways to learn. The interactive ways of learning are new concepts and valuing their peers' ideas and opinions is even more foreign. These ideas are only gradually accepted after specific instructions and groundwork have been laid. With this in mind, I hope to find out whether Shared Interactive Writing would increase the English proficiency levels of the ELLs to meet the performance benchmarks in the ESL learning standards.

**Review of the Literature:** As researchers have shown, all non-English speaking students are influenced by their first language when they begin to learn English. The older a student is when he/she learns a second language, the more language errors he/she will make because of the interference of the first language. It is critical to bear in mind that when trying to understand the needs of bilingual students, their previous literacy experiences need to be considered. As ESL teachers work in collaboration with classroom teachers to help ELLs, comprehensible and meaningful opportunities are provided for student interaction to use academic English to explore, converse, react, and to respond to new ideas.

According to Professor Yang Hu who teaches at Hunter College School of Education, for Chinese immigrant students, their cultural tradition offers challenges for instruction. Students from China are ingrained with the educational structure of the teacher lecturing and questioning from the front of the room. This structure of teaching is the result of large class sizes, little to no resources, a demanding curriculum, and yearly assessment of students. Student learning is through memorization.

Memorization is central to the process of instruction because the Chinese language is unlike the English language. The Chinese written language has no alphabet. There is no relationship between how a word sounds and how it looks. It is not a syllabic language. It consists of thousands of different pictographic and ideographic characters and every character is an image. One to three characters may make up a word and there are many homophones which can be distinguished only by the specific context in which it is used. Students need to master, memorize, 2,400 characters to be functionally literate. By the end of the sixth grade students need to master 3,000 characters which reinforces the need for instruction to focus on memorizing texts, learning new words, and composition. The

Chinese education system is driven by competitive exams reflecting students' ability to memorize. The curricula and teaching practices are driven by the competitive examination system. There is little student ownership in the learning process.

When Danling Fu worked in the middle school in Chinatown, she focused on the Chinese ELLs. She reports that when Chinese immigrant students write in English, there are many language errors because they write using Chinese syntax and their understanding of how a word is formed in Chinese. There are many differences between Chinese and English. The Chinese language does not have verb tenses and it does not change with the subject. It uses adverbial words or phrases to indicate time such as yesterday, soon, or now. There is no plural form for nouns and no capitals. The concepts of a preposition and the infinitive "to" are also difficult for Chinese ELLs to grasp because they do not exist in the Chinese language. The differences may cause confusion for listeners and readers, but it does not affect the meaning being conveyed.

Some differences in sentence structure include placement of modifiers, the omission of a linking verb, the use of double verbs, the omission of a subject, and "it" to indicate time, weather and temperature does not exist. Writing pieces will reflect first language interference as the ELLs write according to the patterns of their native language. As they learn a new language, they learn new concepts and form new habits developmentally.

In their resource book, Peregoy and Boyle (1997) elaborated and discussed research findings and implications for instruction for ELLs. The concerns of teachers who have students who are newly arrived immigrants who are new to the English language are addressed. The authors presented descriptions of programs that meet the needs of ELLs and an overview of first and second language acquisition theories. Various social contexts that maximize language and literacy development are described and the challenges ELLs may experience are examined. They offered ideas and activities to promote oral language and reading and writing development.

Like Danling Fu, Peregoy and Boyle also believed that cultural differences in teaching practices may affect students' learning. The cultural context in which students had been socialized and governed may impede communication affecting language use. In some cultures, children only speak when spoken to. These children would be reluctant to volunteer an answer. Others may not answer a question because displaying knowledge may be considered as showing off.

Peregoy and Boyle note that there has been little research on early literacy development in English as a second language with students with little or no literacy instruction in their first language. They imply that the difference in ELLs' ability to perceive and produce English speech sounds depends on the extent of their English language proficiency. If ELLs have developed literacy skills in their first (native) language, and their native language alphabet is similar to the English alphabet, skills can be transferred and applied to English. If there are similarities between the first and second language, the strategies for learning the first language are also effective for learning the second language.

Peregoy and Boyle emphasize immersing students in meaningful, functional uses of reading and writing combined with explicit instruction. Phonics instruction should be explicit and meaningful, taught in the context of whole texts such as poems, stories, and songs that develop understanding and enjoyment. Although phonemic awareness is an aspect of early reading development, the concept of language sounds and the letters in words, phonemic awareness is not a pre-requisite for literacy instruction. Students can develop phonemic awareness and be shown how sounds are divided, sequenced, and represented by letters and letter sequences as they read along during shared reading.

Since there is little research on older ELLs with little literacy experience in their primary language, Peregoy and Boyle looked at Else Hamayan's (1994) work with non-literate older Southeast Asian refugees. Since the refugees had little experience with functional print, they copied printed materials without realizing that print communicated a message. She suggested that older ELLs need to be introduced gradually to the ways reading and writing is used for communication. She also recommends explicit teaching of strategies to enable them to learn efficiently and that explicit attention is given to the rules and the structure of written language. ELLs literate in their first language know and understand functions of print. She echoes Peregoy and Boyle's recommendation to document teaching strategies and student progress over time. More research is needed on ELLs who are older when introduced to literacy for the first time.

Cummins (1986) states that ELLs are more likely to be able to communicate in English with peers in social settings much more quickly than when they need to use English in spoken and written form in academic content areas. Basic conversational language takes approximately two years to develop. It takes five to seven years to develop the skills and academic language needed to understand textbooks, follow directions, and complete reports. ELLs progress through five stages of language acquisition to become fluent readers and writers. The stages of language acquisition are preproduction, early production, speech emergence, intermediate fluency, and advanced fluency.

In the preproduction stage, students are primarily nonverbal and have limited comprehension. They mainly observe and manipulate things to communicate relying on pictures for comprehension. In writing, some students might be able to write in their native language depending on the level of their previous educational experience. Students who have learned to write in their native language understand what writing is for. They can apply the knowledge they have to the second language.

In the early production stage, the students are able to use some basic words and phrases. They would be able to express their needs and begin to comprehend stories though they still rely on pictures. They would begin to participate in language experiences, particularly shared and guided reading. In writing, they would communicate through pictures and probably write a few words. They might experience limitations because of the lack of vocabulary, syntax, and idiomatic expressions. They gain control over the language and their proficiency increases with exposure to written English and from reading and being read to.

In the speech emergence stage, students are able to participate in daily conversations about familiar topics and produce longer phrases or sentences with errors. They participate more as their comprehension increases. They do rely on high frequency words and known sentence patterns. They need scaffolded, guided writing as they write simple sentences and their spoken words appear on paper.

At the intermediate fluency stage, students are able to engage more in conversations using complex sentences. The errors made do not interfere with comprehension and they begin to use multiple strategies to construct meaning. There is active participation in reading and writing. The students are able to write complete sentences with some errors.

In the last stage, the advanced fluency stage, the students are able to produce language comparable to that of a native English speaker. They are able to use academic language and use multiple strategies to construct meaning. They actively participate in all areas of reading and writing. They are able to write a variety of sentences with few errors.

How well ELLs write is related to their levels of English language proficiency in writing. In a classroom with ELLs, there needs to be a supportive environment where students can have authentic experiences from which to write. Their diverse needs are valued and respected as they learn and they can view themselves as learners. They are willing to risk making mistakes because there's a real purpose for writing (Hudelson 1999). Mistakes made in vocabulary and grammar is a normal part of the language development process. Students will progress at different rates depending on their educational background, native language spoken, and literacy skills in their native language. Those who have learned to write in their native language are able to apply their knowledge from the first language writing to their second language learning. They need many opportunities to practice, share, and respond as they learn to read and write. They learn and understand that writing is a process and their writing pieces are works in progress that undergo multi-phases to become published pieces for an audience.

As teachers of ELLs, we need to model and provide guidance to support the learning experiences of all our students as they develop learner responsibility and move toward independence. Our ELLs require explicit instruction and scaffolded support as they decide what to write and how to make their message clear and meaningful. As they learn how to organize their writing for an audience, they develop a sense of purpose for their writing. They need to know that their efforts are appreciated and valued. They need opportunities to write about topics that are relevant to them and to participate in various writing activities as they develop the ability to communicate in different contexts and for different audiences. Comprehensible input, when the message is understood and a risk free environment will foster language learning (Krashen and Terrell 1995).

After revisiting Brenda Parkes' *Read It Again!* (2000), I felt that shared reading, using quality literature, is a good activity to introduce ELLs to a variety of texts. Modeled writing has allowed me to demonstrate the writing process while composing the text on chart paper. I am able to show students how to make decisions about content by drawing pictures and writing phrases or simple sentences. ELLs often hesitate to write when they

have a limited knowledge of English vocabulary and sometimes limited experience with writing. Through shared writing, students see the actual process of writing and they are able to share their ideas in a supportive environment. I write the text on a chart and support the students in generating the vocabulary as they create the message before they attempt to write themselves. The students have the responsibility for developing the content and composing the text. There's a gradual release from modeled writing to shared writing to interactive writing to guided writing to independent writing. Chinese students are not usually risk takers, but as they acquire more language skills, they eventually do take a more active role in the writing process and transition into interactive writing. Their errors reflect their understanding and ability to use English and inform me of their instructional needs. In the interactive phase of writing, they practice writing skills and apply spelling strategies for words they would like to use. Depending on students' needs, guided writing in small groups allows ELLs to choose a writing topic and have support for their writing pieces.

Lessons for ELLs should contain listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Freeman and Freeman, 1992). These skills develop co-dependently. Visuals such as realia, pictures, and gestures aid comprehension. Graphic organizers assist students to activate and utilize prior knowledge, record information, organize ideas, and synthesize and integrate conclusions. Organizers break down content into understandable parts. Assessments to evaluate student learning outcomes assist with planning the next steps. Classrooms should have appropriate high interest books with various entry points/levels to motivate interest and learning.

The amount of "new" vocabulary is critical for comprehension. Familiar language patterns and the experiences and knowledge students bring to the text support their comprehension of the text. As ESL teachers, we sometimes need to be reminded to model standard language structures as we teach academic language within the context of the learning task. Opportunities to work in groups or pairs increases ELLs understanding of how the second language works.

Like Danling Fu, I have found unless the pedagogy for learning at school is reinforced at home, the students' progress in language acquisition and academic learning is hindered. In as much as families reinforce study habits and value education, their cultural influences and the educational system in which they were taught hamper the academic achievement of their children. The students who immigrate when they are older have to reconcile how they were (being) taught with how they are learning in the American school system. They are also reluctant at first not only because of the language barrier, but they have great difficulty with speaking without feeling embarrassed. Their writing is also greatly influenced by the grammatical structure of their native language. Other than Danling Fu's work in the Chinatown schools and Else Hamayan's work with Southeast Asian refugees, there has been little research in the area of writing and the Chinese ELLs.

**The Study:** My ELLs are a mixed ability group. I have seven students who were born in the United States, but English is not spoken in their homes at all. The other students are immigrants from various parts of China. Sixteen students immigrated here within the last

two years. Four students were admitted into the school system this past September 2004 and one student was admitted in mid-December 2004. Their educational experiences varied depending on whether they lived in a rural or urban area in China and who their guardians and caretakers were. Some students lived with a single parent, or grandparents, or other relatives, because one or both parents immigrated first. A few students had interrupted education, with only one or two years of formal study. Some students had Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten experiences before beginning formal study at eight years old. Their educational experience did not prepare them for the academic work required in the age appropriate grade level they are admitted to. Once they arrived in New York and received the required immunization shots, they are registered and admitted to school. The parents expect their children to be obedient and they are taught that teachers are a source of authority.

For the previous two years I was the ESL teacher working in collaboration with the Kindergarten and first grade teachers. This was my first year teaching fourth and fifth grade ELLs and it was also my first year to work with four upper grade teachers. We've had numerous conversations about ELLs and which instructional approaches would best meet their needs.

I knew there might be a possibility of a wide range of abilities and that I would need to do a quick assessment of their reading and writing levels to determine their strengths and needs. I also needed to learn more about the students and their attitude toward writing. I asked the students to fill out a writing survey to find out how they each felt about their ability to write, their feelings toward writing, and their feelings about writing in school and at home. The survey was translated into Chinese and they had a choice to answer either in English or Chinese. They were asked to rate their answers from 1 to 4 as follows: 1= Strongly Dislike/Poorly, 2= Dislike/Not Well, 3= Happy/Good or 4= Extremely Happy/Extremely Good. Other questions required a short response to help me understand whether they understood the purposes for writing and whether they had strategies to problem solve for writing independently. The assessment results and student responses in the survey helped me to plan and develop my lessons for reading and writing.

As the students wrote reading responses and short pieces, I used an observation check list to record the language arts development of what each student can do in writing mechanics and what each student can do in writing tasks (from October 2004 to April 2005). For each specific skill or strategy, I used the following coding: 1= Seldom (1-2 times), 2= Occasionally (3-5 times), 3= Often (5+ times). The observation checklist helped me understand what to teach as the students made progress developing their English proficiency and writing skills.

After meeting with Kaye Lawson, the Aussie staff developer at our school, I felt confident about using the Shared Interactive Writing approach to best help teach writing with the fourth and fifth grade ELLs. What was important to remember was to consider the range of developmental levels with the curriculum standards and to start from where



they are adding one skill, idea, or strategy at a time. Writing is a continuum and ELLs progress through stages of language acquisition at varying rates.

**Data:** From the survey:

- 21 out of 28 students felt they could write well, 7 did not
- 25 out of 28 students enjoyed writing, 3 did not
- 23 out of 28 students enjoyed writing at home, 5 did not
- 22 out of 28 students enjoyed writing in school, 6 did not

Overall, approximately 82% of the ELLs had a positive attitude toward writing.

When I reviewed the individual surveys, I discovered that it was the boys (8 boys/ 1 girl) who did not feel they could write well. The girl and three of the boys were admitted this school year. Three other boys had been in school for approximately six months to a year and one boy had been in school for approximately two years. Included in this group was an American born struggling reader and writer. This prompted other questions:

- Why did these students have such negative feelings about writing and their ability to write?
- What did the students consider “writing well”?
- What did they like about writing at home and in school?
- What did they not like about writing?

I carefully read, reread, and charted their short written responses to the following open ended questions to learn about their writing experiences:

- What are two reasons that people write?
- What do you do if you do not know how to spell a word?
- What do you do when you cannot remember the words you want to use?
- What is “good” writing?

The number one reason given as why people write was “to learn to write better”; the second reason cited was “to practice” (Table 1.1). If they could not spell a word, they would ask for help either from the teacher or a friend first. Using a dictionary and trying to sound out the word were tied as second strategies to use. If they could not remember the word they wanted to use, they would again ask for help from either the teacher or a friend first before they would try to think and visualize what it was they wanted to say or substitute another word with a similar meaning (Table 1.2). The main reasons cited for what is “good writing” were writing a longer story, the story makes sense, and it is nice and neat. Other reasons given were spelling, the grade from the teacher, and using good English (Table 1.3). It seemed that their ideas were based on their experiences in a structured educational setting where writing was seen as a mechanical, formulated, procedural approach.

The students’ writing skills improved over a six month period (Table 1.4). By April there was significant improvement in writing mechanics by all the students:

- 100% of the students used of capital letters, correct ending punctuation, and wrote simple sentences using correct sentence structure
- 81% of the students were able to use “and” to join ideas

- 69% of the students were using commas appropriately
- 56% to 69% of the students improved in using contractions, verb forms, subject/verb agreement, and adding prefixes or suffixes to root words, using these skills occasionally
- 53% of the students started to use quotation marks appropriately

As I read their reading responses, summaries, letters, personal narratives, procedural writing, and informational writing, I was able to see from the check list (Table 1.4) there were improvements with writing tasks. Approximately 80% of the students had improved in the writing tasks by April. Approximately 34% of the students had improved in using story elements, adding details and dialogue. 20% of the students relied on high frequency words and known simple sentence patterns and although they were limited with a lack of vocabulary, syntax, and idiomatic expressions, they were able to produce some writing and communicate their message. Their omissions and errors did not interfere or cause confusion (for the reader) as they applied strategies to construct and convey meaning.

The check list showed me what the students were able to do, what I can build on, and what to teach next. I noticed that students seldom used skills when they were unsure of the appropriate usage and application. However, after a mini-lesson demonstrating how to use a particular skill in a shared interactive writing piece, some students experimented using the skill in small group or buddy writing. Some students became more confident and used the skill in their independent writing.

As they learned to write, I was confronted with the following questions:

- Who were the struggling students and were their needs similar?
- What was their previous educational experience in their first language?
- What can I do to help the students who had difficulties in the specific areas of writing mechanics?

The struggling students were my new immigrant arrivals and students who were born here and had been in the school system since kindergarten. Small guided writing groups, based on need, were necessary to scaffold the learning objectives. Guided writing provided support as students wrestled with understanding the mechanics of writing and English grammar. The grammatical differences between the Chinese language and English seemed problematic as they tried to do direct translations.

The buddy system and /or group collaboration were ways students helped each other, especially the newcomers, to practice and review newly learned skills without feeling embarrassed. To understand their struggles with writing, I revisited Danling Fu's book, *An Island of English*. I was reminded that writing development parallels oral language development. She informs her readers that students can learn English grammar and vocabulary in the repetitive sentences from pattern books and students master these sentence patterns at different rates. As they develop their English proficiency and writing skills, they need opportunities to write and to express themselves. Teachers need to teach them the vocabulary and sentences they need in English and allow them to progress at

their own pace. Students need to constantly read because through reading they can develop a sense of English grammar and sentence structure.

After articulating with the classroom teachers about their students' needs, in collaboration, I began to model how to write reading responses and how to make personal and text to text connections. Everyday, after a short shared reading piece or a read aloud, we discussed the reading before we wrote together. I used a graphic organizer first giving words and phrases they would need for writing. As they dictated the words, I modeled how to write using sentence structures, transitional words, and words they learned in context on chart paper. The students were always invited to read what we wrote to develop their sight vocabulary and sound symbol correspondences (Exhibit A, Shared Writing).

After shared writing, I began to use shared interactive writing, sharing the pen with the students, writing a group reading response on chart paper. The charts became reference guides as students increased their sight word vocabulary and internalized forms of English print to construct a written message. This provided a risk free environment as we collaborated together. They were able to develop their English skills and use words they knew (Exhibit B, Shared Interactive Writing).

To scaffold their learning, they also worked in small mixed ability groups. Working collaboratively in small groups offered opportunities for the new admits, who barely knew the alphabet letters and sounds, to acquire new vocabulary in context and to practice their speaking skills as well as their writing skills. They learned to be supportive of each other as the beginning students developed their oral language. They learned to problem solve together using phonics and spelling strategies to write unfamiliar words. They rehearsed and practiced their speaking parts before presenting their work to the class. The skills of reading, writing and speaking developed cooperatively and reinforced one another (Exhibit C, Small Group Writing).

Gradually, I paired students to work in partnerships before pushing them to write independently. Working from the premise that shared interactive writing enabled my ELLs to grow and acquire English proficiency at their own pace allowing struggling learners who were not proficient in their first language more time to learn.

**Case Studies:** Let's look at two students' writing samples to examine their progress in English language writing proficiency to better understand the stages of second language acquisition. Both students typified the challenges that Chinese ELLs encounter while developing writing proficiency in English. Student A, age 10, was admitted as a fourth grade student this past September, 2004, whereas Student B, also age 10, was admitted as a third grade student last September, 2003 and has been in the school system for one full school year. These two students' written work highlighted the difficulties most Chinese immigrant students encounter as they develop English language skills.

### Student A

Student A is a beginning ELL, as identified by the LAB-R, who had learned the names of the alphabet letters in China before immigrating to the United States. Student A is in an English monolingual class receiving English as a second language (ESL) services. Three journal entries and three reading responses are presented to show her progress developmentally.

In Figure 1.1, Student A's first piece of writing is a list of words copied from displays in the classroom. It is short with correct spelling and some use of writing conventions. There is an appropriate use of words next to each category. This is the preproduction stage when students are non-verbal, relies on pictures for comprehension, and observes and copies to communicate.

In Figure 1.2, about a month later, in another writing piece by Student A, we see a combination of English words and Chinese characters. There is limited vocabulary and reliance on the first language. Student A is beginning to convey a message, show voice, and ownership. She writes about a meeting between her parents and the teacher and how she thinks her parents and teacher feel. The Chinese characters used and written show me her prior experience in literacy in her first language. It is short and simple using known words, approximated spelling, and present tense verbs. This is the early production stage when students are able to use some basic words and phrases to communicate and express their needs.

In Figure 1.3, Student A wrote a reading response independently after working in groups and partnerships. The writing is minimal and shows some control of writing conventions. Although the vocabulary is basic and there are errors, it does not cause confusion. In this early production stage the student shows beginning comprehension of the story still relying on pictures. The reference charts are read and used as a guide to write the reading response. You can see the similarities of phrases and sentences used.

Between February and April, as we studied non-fiction books, I used a graphic organizer to model how to identify and list important facts which were used to generate a reading response summary (Exhibit D).

Figure 1.4 is a non-fiction reading response after a shared reading piece on erosion. There is evidence there is some understanding of the complex ideas from the shared reading. The sentences are somewhat sequenced and Student A is beginning to develop fluency in writing. The vocabulary in context is appropriate and there is conventional spelling. Student A is also beginning to use different sentence patterns to convey information and ideas. This is the third stage of language acquisition when students are participating more as their comprehension increases. Longer phrases and sentences are produced with errors. They rely on high frequency words and known sentence patterns. Students at this stage need scaffolded, guided writing as they learn to write different sentence patterns.

Figure 1.5 is another reading response that is longer in length in an attempt to describe where milk comes from after reading Gail Gibbons' *The Milk Makers* independently. Student A is beginning to gain control of writing conventions. Although there is evidence of limited understanding of the complex ideas in the non-fiction book, Student A attempts to infer the author's purpose and express an opinion.

In Figure 1.6, in April, we can see the journal writing is longer in length as the student describes the first day of school in China. A message is conveyed to the reader and there is some attempt at organization. The Chinese English or "broken English" is a result of Chinese syntax. Although there are still errors in sentence structure and mechanics with a basic vocabulary, the student is gradually developing writing skills. There is a beginning of organizational structure with a beginning and ending. Student A is moving toward the intermediate stage of language acquisition attempting to engage the audience and use complex sentences.

#### Student B

Student B was admitted from China in September 2003. Student B has had one full year of literacy in an ESL class and is now in an English monolingual class receiving ESL services. The results of the spring 2004 NYSESLAT identified him as having achieved an intermediate level of English proficiency. Presented here are three reading responses and two journal entries.

Figure 1.7 was an assessment piece of reading and writing at the beginning of the ESL program. It is a retell that is coherent and understandable, although it lacks a sequence of events with details for a better story sense. There is a general control of writing conventions and the errors in structure do not confuse the reader. The vocabulary is basic and generally appropriate. Thus, we can say that the student is in the third stage of language acquisition.

Figure 1.8 is a reading response after a read aloud story. The introduction and format follow the model we have used in our shared interactive writing. The phrases and sentence structures are from reference charts in the classroom. Student B exhibits story comprehension by identifying character traits of the main character, the problem and solution, and makes a text to self connection. The student practices using organizational structures to summarize the main ideas. It is a sufficient length and there is an attempt to use more complex sentences. The errors do not interfere with comprehension. The errors in verb forms and pronouns are common with Chinese ELLs. This is acceptable English as he moves toward Standard English. This is the intermediate stage of language acquisition as Student B begins to use multiple strategies to construct meaning.

Figure 1.9 is a journal entry about celebrating Chinese New Year. There is a general control of writing conventions and there are structure errors that do not cause confusion about the meaning. It conveys a message to the audience. Organization in writing and the use of a variety of sentence patterns will improve with increased opportunities to read and write. This piece could also be improved with an added introduction and conclusion as part of the revision process.

Figure 1.10 is another journal entry written a month later. It is a reflection of the first day in fourth grade. It is a lengthier piece with substantial fluency in English. There is logical sequencing with an introduction and conclusion. There is organization using paragraphs and transitional words or phrases. There is an attempt to use a variety of sentence patterns and although there are errors with verb forms, the errors do not interfere with the meaning and message.

Figure 1.11 is a non-fiction reading response after a shared reading piece on erosion. It shows an understanding of the complex ideas. Student B is using longer sentences and a variety of sentence patterns to convey what was learned. The vocabulary in context is appropriate with conventional spelling. Although Student B has improved in the quality of writing, writing longer pieces, using a variety of sentence patterns, developing organizational strategies such as paragraphing and using transitional words or phrases, he is only approaching the last stage of language acquisition where students are able to produce language comparable to a native English speaker, use academic language, and write a variety of sentences with few errors.

**Analysis:** My data suggests that shared interactive writing does impact ELLs' writing performance. Through analyzing the surveys, the observation check lists, and samples of student work, I can see that the students improved their skills to compose written work. They moved through each stage of second language acquisition, and my understanding of the challenges ELLs encounter has increased. As teachers of second language learners, we need to celebrate their progress in their literacy and English language development even though their skills are still below the standard of the grade in which they are placed. All teachers need to understand and realize that ESL students need time to improve their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills and opportunities with activities in meaningful contexts.

As Danling Fu and Peregoy and Boyle have pointed out, cultural differences in teaching practices affect students' learning. My students were challenged as "older" ELLs who experienced a tradition of an educational structure of a teacher lecturing in front of the classroom and memorization as learning. Seventy five percent (21 students) of the group have been here two years or less living in an insulated community which supports their native language and culture. Their previous school experiences varied depending on whether they attended an urban or rural school and whether they had interrupted or continuous schooling. Their experiences needed to be bridged with the experiences they were receiving in school now. They needed to be encouraged to learn new ways to learn while still valuing and respecting what they have accomplished in the Chinese educational system.

Although there has been little research in literacy development in English as a second language with students with little or no literacy instruction in their first language, working with the fourth and fifth grade students, I saw similarities to what Danling Fu discovered when she worked with middle school teachers and their students. I saw that their speech and writing were influenced by their first language as they learned English.

They lived in a non-English environment at home and in their community and many attended a Chinese language school on the weekends. Many of their beginning writing pieces were written using Chinese syntax which made understanding their work an overwhelming task.

A major barrier to their achievement of writing proficiency in English was the grammatical differences between the Chinese language and the English language. Their writing was influenced by what they knew in their first language. The Chinese language does not use verb forms, subject/verb agreement, contractions, or prefixes and suffixes. Writing skills continued to be a challenge for the Chinese ELLs to use and apply consistently and appropriately during their struggles with English grammar. To improve on writing tasks, students needed time and exposure to a variety of meaningful reading and writing experiences. Not every student was able to produce the same quality of work as they learned academic language in the context of reading and writing.

I struggled with not paying too much attention to their language errors and rewriting their work for them. I pushed myself to focus on the meaning they tried to express in their writing otherwise they would stop writing because they did not know how to write the “right” way. It was important that I help them develop Standard English and form new writing “habits”.

I looked at their work to see what they knew to help them improve their writing without correcting every error because it would hinder their progress as writers. I learned to accept their Chinese English and how to see the “big” problem(s) and corrected what would be manageable for my students to understand. Their errors needed to be looked at from a developmental perspective and often their errors informed me what to teach next.

Based on my work in the early childhood grades, I believed that teaching in themes or content areas immersing students in meaningful language experiences would motivate my “older” students as they developed their language skills. Quality literature would make reading and writing more interesting and meaningful. I believed that reading (in many different genres) would provide opportunities to interact with Standard English and writing about their reading would offer opportunities to experiment with the structure of the English language. All the skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, are interwoven and should be practiced together to master the language. I felt it was important to model how words and phrases are used in context and explicitly demonstrate how to write an English sentence and show how to expand a sentence.

Through shared interactive writing followed by small group writing and writing partnerships, I was able to see the ESL students move through the stages of language acquisition. Their writing improved as they worked collaboratively learning to use English words in context. Maintaining word walls with words related to themes or content areas, descriptive words, actions words, frequently used words, and idiomatic expressions provided support for their writing. Our class language experience charts were used as references as they wrote independently.

The growth and progress of both Students A and B can be seen from their writing samples. Explicit teaching through shared interactive writing followed by small group writing and writing partnerships, helped scaffold learning. Modeling the writing, then sharing the pen, helped the students understand the writing expectations. A respectful and supportive classroom environment enabled students to take risks.

Student A grew as a writer progressing from copying words to writing sentences. With the support of a graphic organizer, Student A was able to produce writing that conveyed a message. The sentences were simple and complete and somewhat sequenced. There was control of writing conventions, using conventional spelling and appropriate vocabulary. The errors reflected native language influence, but did not interfere with comprehension. Although the writing is still limited due to a lack of vocabulary, Student A is progressing through the stages of language acquisition at a pace that supports her learning.

Student B has also made progress moving from simple sentences to using a variety of sentence structures. With the support of graphic organizers, Student B was able to write several paragraphs with cohesive structure and connected sentences. There is control of writing conventions and spelling and appropriate use of vocabulary. He knows the verb tenses and subject/ verb agreement, but has not formed the habit of using them appropriately. There is still some native language influences in the writing, but generally reflects English word order. Student B is beginning to approach the last stage of language acquisition, the advanced fluency stage.

Since my students were from four different classes, I needed to plan time to meet with the classroom teachers to discuss instruction and student progress. Time was scheduled around lunch periods, prep periods, before school, and after school and I had to be very flexible with my schedule to meet with each of the teachers twice a month. It was important that we collaborated on units of study to best help the students connect what they were learning in and out of their classrooms. It was also during these meeting times that the teachers asked questions or voiced concerns about teaching strategies and approaches for the ESL students who were struggling to keep up with the English speaking students. They felt pressured to have these students who lag behind develop English proficiency as quickly as possible to meet the standards set for the grade. They felt frustration and did not understand why the parents were not more involved and voiced the need to have monthly school wide parent workshops.

As a result of this study, we are planning staff development to meet the teachers' needs to meet the needs of our ESL students. We will be exploring strategies for *differentiation* in the classroom and studying *Understanding by Design by Grant Wiggins*. Our Parent Coordinator and Adult Literacy Program teachers are planning Parent Workshops and will be conducting a survey for a day and time conducive for maximum parent participation. I will continue working with teachers to maximize student learning in and out of the classroom.

**New Questions for Research:** My study included all fourth and fifth grade students who were identified as eligible for ESL services from the LAB-R or NYSESLAT. Shared



interactive writing is only one method to teach writing. What are other methods used to teach writing to ELLs who do not have a phonetic language system similar to the English language? To refine this study, further action research might be to discover whether there is a difference between teaching writing to native English speakers and ESL students. Is there a difference teaching writing to students who have I.E.P.s who were born in the United States? How can ESL teachers know the quality of ELLs' literacy experience when they cannot read their students' work written in their first language? Research says to allow students to write in their first language to continue to value and to improve their literacy skills. It also gives us a picture of their literacy development. I was fortunate to have a colleague assist with translating their written work.

Learning English takes time as well as resources. To improve the quality of education for recently arrived ELLs, and all students, it must be realized that learning must be active and occur in a community of learners where every member contributes to the process based on their strengths.

**Policy Implications:** Early writing can provide teachers with insight into students' understanding of language and the writing process. As their writing develops, it reflects their understanding of the "new" second language they are learning.

This study suggests that English proficiency for English language learners will increase when students feel comfortable and supported. It is important to gain an understanding of the students and their families. In New York City, where the number of immigrant students is on the rise, it is critical to improve instruction by searching for the most effective ways to teach immigrant students, especially the newly arrived older students. There is a need for policy changes at all levels.

Classroom:

- 1) Students should be allowed time to progress at their own rate through the stages of second language acquisition. The newly arrived students need time to develop English language skills that would enable them to function in the classroom and school. Teachers need to understand that different cultures value different ways to support their children's education. It is necessary to cultivate a respectful and caring community to enable all students, regardless of English language abilities, to express themselves.
- 2) Students should be immersed in content rich and meaningful language experiences with opportunities to discuss topics and write daily. They need time to practice and rehearse in a risk free environment with scaffolded instruction. English proficiency increases when teachers incorporate collaborative and cooperative work groups, explicit teaching, charts and models to support writing, and lessons at the students' level of English proficiency providing meaningful input.
- 3) Writing should not be an exercise for copying print and spelling correctly.

School:

- 1) Provide enough resources and books at various levels on each grade level for appropriate entry points.
- 2) Time needs to be provided for classroom teachers and service providers to meet, collaborate, and plan to make students' learning more connected. Time should be offered to teachers to observe each other to integrate ESL methodologies and curriculum for efficient and maximum student learning.
- 3) Proper placement of students based on their educational experience, not age appropriate grade level classes, would aid their understanding of academic concepts. A more thorough interview with new students and their families would give a more accurate account of the students' educational background and literacy experience.
- 4) Staff development and support provided to help teachers improve their teaching instruction for immigrant students.
- 5) Workshops provided for parents to help them assist their children at home and to deal with frustration when their children are struggling academically.

District/City:

- 1) Better teacher preparation to understand second language acquisition and instructional approaches. The requirement currently is seven and a half hours of professional development.
- 2) Time for students to adjust to a new school system before taking a battery of assessments. The emphasis on high stakes testing, the assessment of literacy skills of new immigrant students after three years (unless there's an extension of services) dooms English language learners to failure because their English language skills are still below the standard set for the grade.

We need to value all students' writing and recognize that writing is a developmental process and that students acquire language at different rates. It takes immigrant students five to seven years to develop age appropriate academic skills in English. The accountability system and pressure pushes teaching for the tests rather than understanding the barriers the students face at school and in their new lives. Instead of building their confidence, competence, and knowledge to continue learning, teachers are pressured to overlook group collaboration and cooperation opportunities that would benefit English language acquisition. There needs to be an understanding that learning a new language is complex and although students seem to have no difficulty socializing and communicating about non-academic topics, they have not acquired the necessary skills to meet the academic standards set for each grade.

## **Resources:**

1. Cummins, J. (1986). Empowering Minority Students: A Framework for Intervention. *Harvard Educational Review*, 56 (1): 18-36.
2. Freeman, Y.S. and Freeman, D.E. (1992) *Whole Language for Second Language Learners*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
3. Fu, D. (2003) *An Island of English: Teaching ESL in Chinatown*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
4. Hu, Y. (2004). The Cultural Significance of Reading Instruction in China. *The Reading Teacher*, v.57, no.7, 632-639.
5. Hudelson, S. (1999). ESL Writing: Principles for Teaching Young Writers. *ESL Magazine*, May/June 1999: 8-10, 12.
6. Krashen, S. and Terrell, T. (1995) *The Natural Approach: Language Acquisition in the Classroom*. Hertfordshire, Great Britain: Prentice Hall.
7. McCarrier, A., Pinnell, G.S., and Fountas, I.C. (2000) *Interactive Writing: How Language and Literacy Come Together, K-2*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
8. Parkes, B. (2000) *Read It Again!*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.
9. Peregoy, S.F. and Boyle, O.F. (1997) *Reading, Writing, & Learning in ESL*. White Plains, NY: Longman Publishers.

### **What are reasons that people write?**

n= 27 students

<b>Reasons Cited by Students</b>	<b>Student Responses</b>
To learn to write better	14
To practice	7
To share idea/feeling	3
To remember something	2
A good imagination	2
Not sure why	2
An assignment	1
Writing helps reading	1
A test	1
To help someone	1
Nothing else to do	1

**Table 1.1**

### **What do you do if you do not know how to spell a word?**

### **What do you do when you cannot remember the words you want to use?**

n= 27 students

<b>Strategies Used by Students</b>	<b>To Spell a Word</b>	<b>Cannot remember the word</b>
Ask Teacher or Friend	17	8
Think, Visualize		7
Dictionary	9	4
Sound It Out	9	
Use Another Word	2	6
Write It/ Does It Look Right?	1	4
Use Computer	1	
Use Word List		1

**Table 1.2**

### **What is “good” writing?**

n= 27 students

<b>Students’ Concepts of “Good” Writing</b>	<b>Responses</b>
Write longer stories	6
Story makes sense	4
Writing is nice and neat	4
Spell words correctly	3
Teacher’s grade	3
Write an essay	3
Able to share work	3
Use good English	2

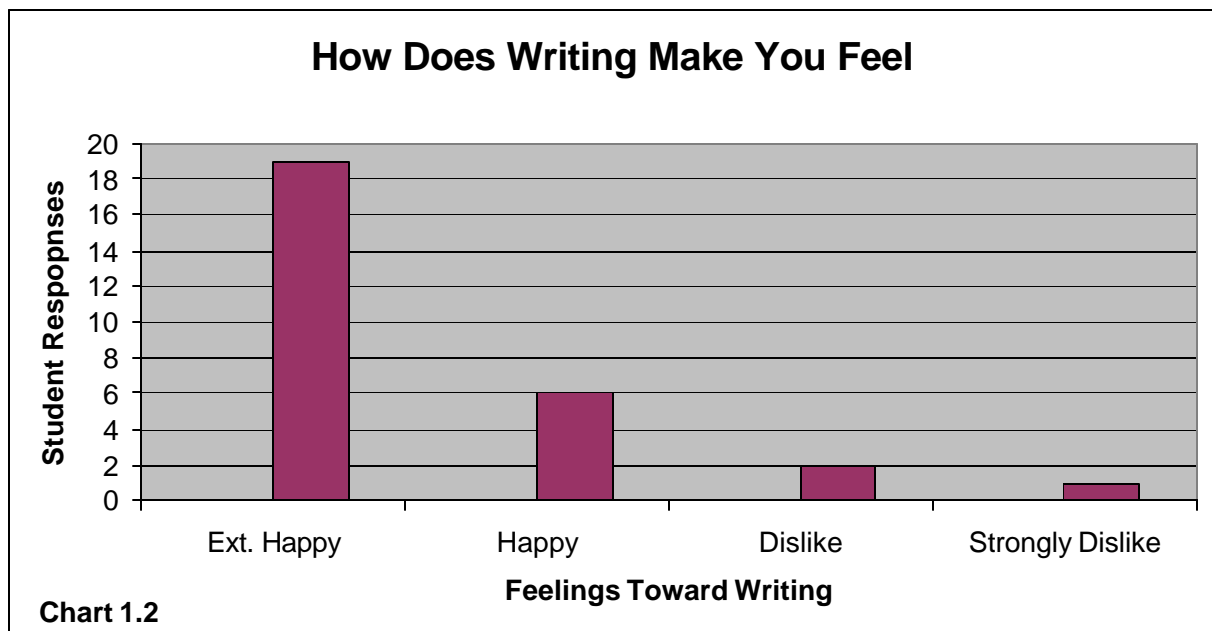
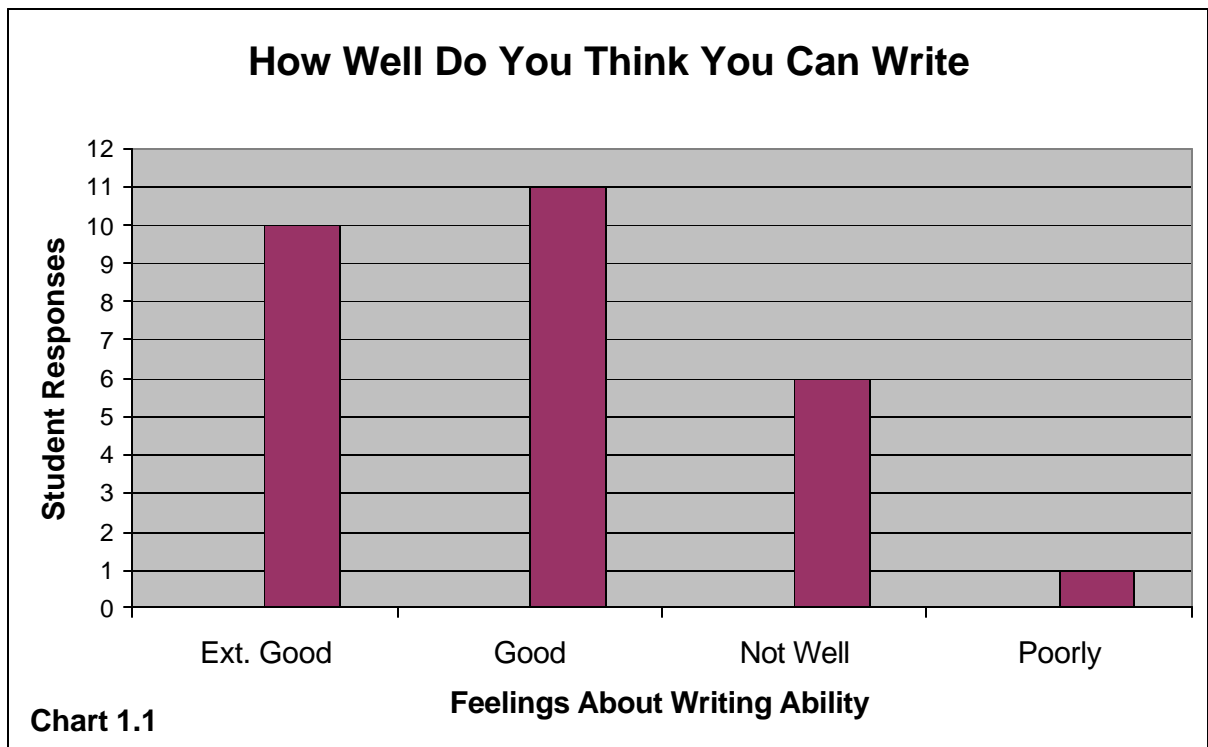
**Table 1.3**

## Observation Check List: Language Arts Development

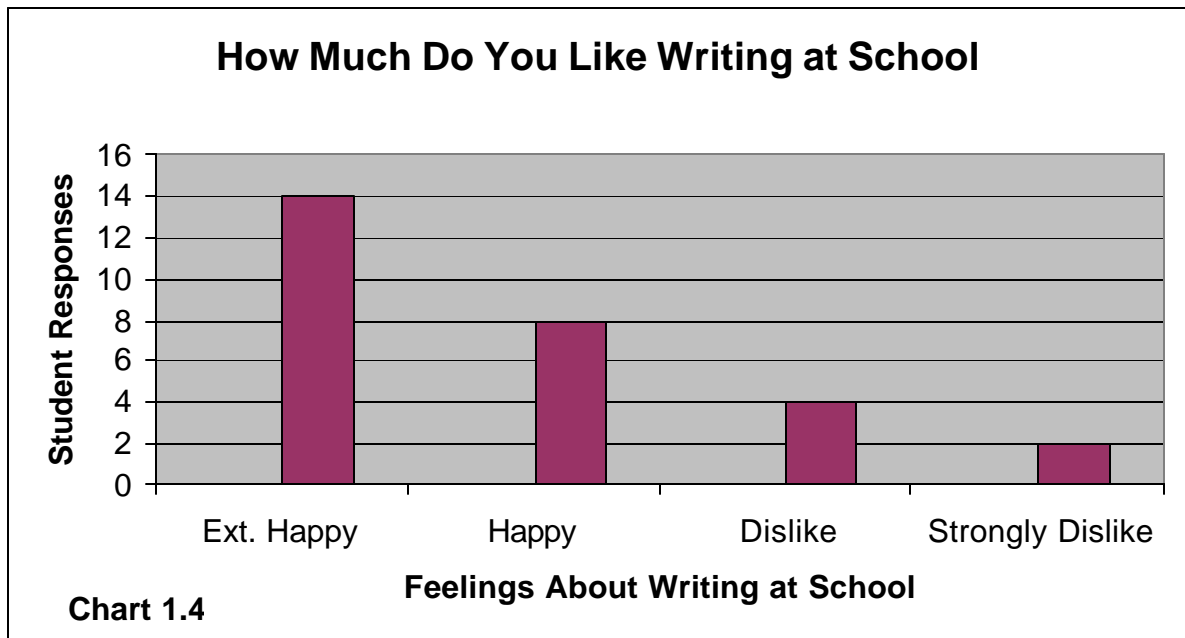
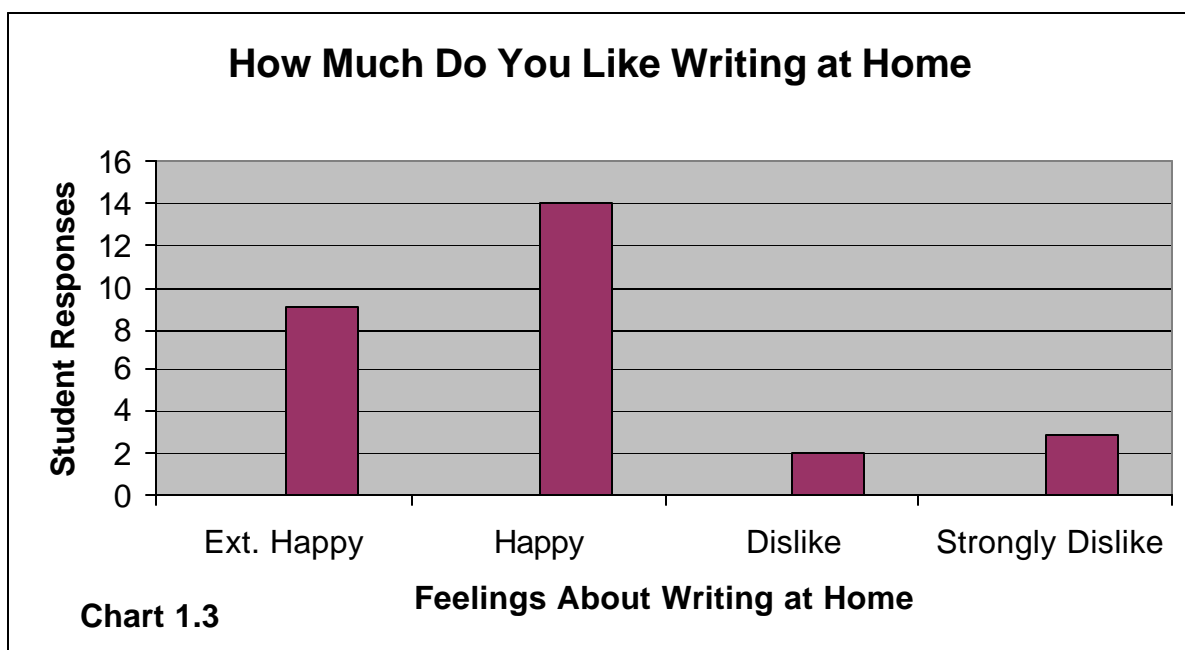
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Seldom(1-2)</b>			<b>Occas.(3-5)</b>			<b>Often (5+)</b>		
<b>Writing Mechanics</b>	<b>Progress</b>			<b>Progress</b>			<b>Progress</b>		
	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Apr</b>
Uses capital letters	7	0	0	9	7	3	11	21	25
Uses correct ending punctuation	5	1	0	10	8	5	12	19	23
Uses quotations appropriately	15	13	13	12	7	6	0	8	9
Uses commas appropriately	16	13	9	11	10	9	0	5	10
Writes complete sentences	5	2	1	18	11	8	4	15	19
Uses “and” to join ideas	16	9	5	9	9	11	2	10	12
Uses correct sentence structure	10	5	2	15	15	11	2	8	15
Knows and uses contractions	14	8	5	13	15	16	0	5	7
Knows root words-add prefixes, suffixes	16	8	8	11	18	17	0	2	3
Uses correct verb forms (present/past)	8	5	4	19	19	18	0	4	6
Knows subject/verb agreement	10	7	5	17	19	19	0	2	4
<b>Writing Task</b>									
Summarizes a story	7	5	3	10	12	7	10	11	18
Stories have a beginning, middle, end	7	5	3	12	10	8	8	13	17
Stories develop sequentially	10	7	4	15	13	10	2	8	14
Uses story elements (setting, characters, plot)	21	20	18	6	6	6	0	2	4
Uses a variety of vocabulary	16	10	5	11	10	13	0	8	10
Uses a variety of sentence structures	16	8	5	11	10	10	0	10	13
Uses appropriate paragraph structure	22	17	11	5	8	9	0	3	8
Uses topic sentence and supporting details	25	22	15	2	4	8	0	2	5
Uses dialogue	20	19	18	7	7	5	0	2	5
Focuses attention to writing task	8	5	3	14	13	7	5	10	18
Self-selects writing topics	23	13	8	2	10	10	2	5	10
Revises for clarity	21	9	5	4	13	8	2	6	15
Shares and discusses writing	16	7	4	6	13	8	5	8	16
Writes in several genres	27	12	7	0	6	8	0	10	13
Writes for a variety of purposes	17	8	5	8	15	11	2	5	12
Writes for a variety of audiences	17	8	5	8	15	11	2	5	12

**Table 1.4**

# Survey Results



# Survey Results



## Story Map

Title- Jessica

Author- Kevin Henkes

Genre- Fiction

### Setting

home, outside, school

### Characters

Ruthie

Problem- Ruthie had  
an imaginary friend.  
She is lonely.

Solution- She meets a  
real Jessica at school.  
They become friends.

I listened to a story  
called Jessica. The author  
is Kevin Henkes. The genre  
of this book is fiction.

introduction

This story takes place in  
Ruthie's home, outside and at  
school. The character is Ruthie.  
She is sad and lonely. She doesn't  
have a friend to play with.

Setting and characters

She makes up an imaginary  
friend. Her parents keep telling her  
there is no Jessica.

(make-believe)

problem

When Ruthie goes to school,  
she meets a real Jessica. They  
become best friends.

solution

This story reminds me  
of how I met my best  
friend. We lived in the same  
building. Our mothers were good  
friends. They helped each other.

text to self

Exhibit A



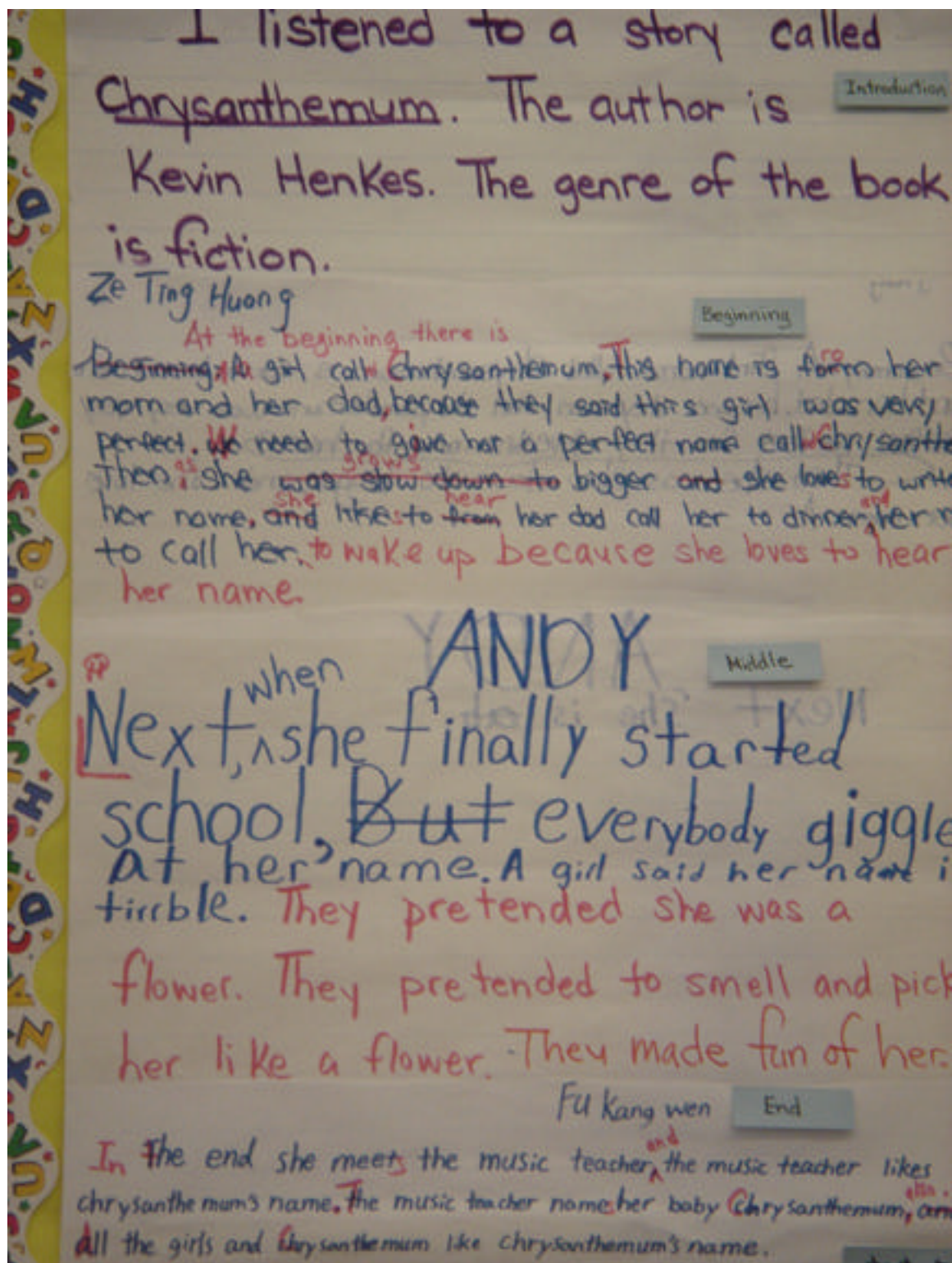


Exhibit B

## introduction

Yesterday we <sup>listened</sup> ~~heard~~ to a story called Angel Dragon Child, by Michele Maria Surat. It is a realistic fiction story. The story was very good, it was about a <sup>child</sup> ~~good~~ who came from Vietnam, and everybody was teasing her.

One of the story takes place in school, it's <sup>Setting and characters</sup> ~~it's~~ The <sup>the</sup> characters are Hoa who's shy, ~~to~~ poor, brave and nice. The <sup>other</sup> ~~second~~ character is Raman, he was naughty, mean, cruel and bully at the beginning, but because of Hoa he turned nice. The rest of the characters <sup>are</sup> ~~is~~ Hoa's family.

## Problem

It was Hoa's first day of school in New York. Everybody's teasing her, but everytime she looks at her mother's picture, she <sup>feels</sup> ~~will feel~~ <sup>better</sup> ~~more good~~. Hoa's mother <sup>is</sup> ~~are~~ not in New York with Hoa, <sup>her because</sup> she's still in China. Hoa's mother <sup>is</sup> ~~are~~ still in China because they don't have enough money for her mother to come. On Hoa's first winter in New York

Exhibit C

Non-fiction Reading Response

Name

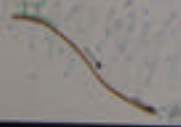
Title Erosion

Date

Author

Here's what I learned about erosion

- natural process
- occurs on hills, mountains, slopes
- soil travels down to the bottom
- could be caused by rain, snow, glaciers, wind, human or animal traffic
- harmful to the environment
- make streams muddy and block light from plants living in the water
- life cannot live
- plants cannot grow without good soil



erosion

Most erosion happens at the hills, mountains, and slopes.

When soil and whole particles travel down to the slope and they will gather at bottom of the hill or mountain. It can happen when the weather are bad and it was rain, snow, glaciers, and winds.

The effect of erosion is harmful to the environment and it is a problem wherever it destroys nature.

Ze Ting, Gen Hua, Fu Xing

Exhibit D

Family: mother, father, sister, Grand mother, Grand father.

Toy: Barbie.

Food: apple.

Pet: cat, dog.

Home: bed.

Figure 1.1

## Parent 家长会

昨天, my father and mother ~~也~~ 有来, 开 parent 会. I say is ~~NO~~ NO 开心..」 to  
My feel is <sup>NO</sup> GOD.」 My parent feel is NO GOD.」  
Teschchen feel is GOD and NO GOD the 中间.」 I ~~do~~  
do

Figure 1.2



## Story Map Outline

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title Bailey Goes camping

Author Kevin Henkes

Genre F

Setting (Where? When?)

Bailey home.

Characters (Who?)

Bailey and he sister  
brother and mother father.

Problem (What is the main problem?)

Why he mother fire and  
he brother sister do not  
give her get away home.

Solution (How is the problem solved?)

because the father  
mother and he sister brother  
say [He is small.]

Figure 1.3

I listened to a story called Bailey Goes camping by Kevin Henkes. It is a finction story.

Bailey the father mother and he sister borther do not give her get awag home.

Figure 1.3

## Erosion

In Mrs. Chin class  
208 , I learned about what  
is erosion mean. Erosion mean  
rains , snows , waters , ices ,  
winds make erosion. Erosion  
happend at hill and more  
places.

In Mrs. Chin class ,  
I learned about top of the  
soil have Snakes , Spiders , Red Fox ,  
Ants , Centipedes , Mushrooms , Millipedes ,  
Ladybugs . Deep of the soil have  
many animals too.

Figure 1.4



The Milk Makers  
By Gail Gibbons

This story is about cow have  
many kind: baby cow drinks  
they <sup>milk</sup> mom? In spring and summer, cow  
eats grass and drinks water from  
streams and ponds. In the cold months,  
cow eat grains, silage (pickled grass)  
and hay (dried grass). Cow has rumen,  
omasum and abomasum in they body.

I think this book is good  
because this book tell many people  
about cow. The authen want us  
know more about cows.

Figure 1.5

First Day  
of the ~~China~~ School.!!!  
China

At the first day : at  
school. I am very ~~happy~~  
~~happy~~ happy because I  
will have many friends on  
the school. At the first day  
of the school I ~~was~~ was  
first group in the  
classroom it have 45  
more that hear each class  
childrens; at the teacher ~~is~~  
table about 25 inches, in the  
classroom do you know how  
many ~~desk~~ desk? Is 47 desks,  
because 1 is teacher, 45 is the  
childrens, 1 more is pet papers  
on, so is 47 desks on  
the classroom!

Figure 1.6

First day at school ,  
 my teacher was a ~~Chinese~~ Chinese  
 people. ~~My~~ My English teacher  
 name is Mrs. Lee , my math teacher  
 name is Mrs. Lee too . My math  
 teacher and English teacher is very  
 nice , and my math teacher  
 first day she tell us how  
 to write one , two , three ..... ,  
 and my English teacher tell us  
 how to write A B C D ..... !

I feel first day at  
 school is some happy and ~~some~~ some  
 not happy ☹

Figure 1.6

### Why Cats Wash After Dinner

Write the story about the cat and mouse in a few sentences.  
Imagine that you are telling it to a friend.

The cat catch a mouse, she  
held the mouse between the mouse's  
strong front paws. The mouse  
said, "What kind of cat do you are".  
The cat started to wash herself.  
Finally the cat think she need  
to wash herself after dinner.



Figure 1.7

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title Bailey Goes Camping

Author Heaven Henken

Character's Name Bailey, Bailey's dad and his mom.

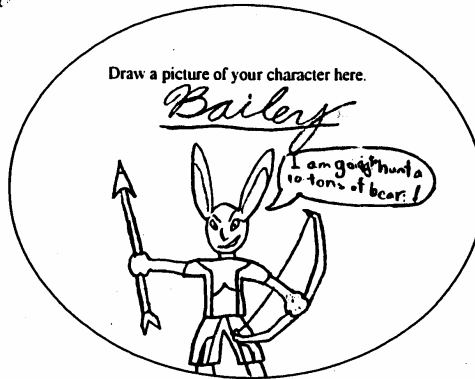
1. unhappy

Bailey's parent  
decide to go to  
camping, but Bailey  
can't go.

2. upset

Bailey's parent say,  
"You can go to camping  
next time". But  
he still upset.

Draw a picture of your character here.



3. Imaginative

Bailey pretend  
he was going  
to camping.

4. excited

Finally, Bailey  
was excited, because he  
can pretend he is  
going to camping.

Figure 1.8

I listen to a story called Bailey Goes Camping. The author of this <sup>Kevin Henkes</sup> book is. The genre of this story is fiction.

This story takes place in Bailey's house. Bailey, his dad and his mom is the characters of this story.

The problem of this story is Bailey's parents decides to go to camping and they don't let Bailey to go to camping. because they said his too young. Bailey was very unhappy and he feel that it is unfair.

Finally, Bailey pretend he went to camping, hunt the bear, sleeped in the tent, and do some good things on camp.

The story reminded me of when it was a weekend, my uncle and my aunt decides to go to Long Island, I want to go, too, but they said no. Finally my grandmother take my cousin and I go to the park to play.

Figure 1.8

## Erosion and Insects

I have finish learning about erosion and insects. Erosion means the water that carry soils away. If you plant some flowers near a place that erosion happens all the time, the flowers will not grow, it will die, because erosion can carry the soils away and plants need soils. That's why we should not plant flowers or any plants near a place that erosion happens all the time.

I also learn about insects. Insects are bad to human but it's also good to the trees, because they cause decay. Insects have six legs and three main body parts (head, thorax and abdomen). Different insects have different kinds of mouths, legs, antennae and wings. If there's an insect that has more than six legs, it is not an insect. This is what I know about erosion and insects.

Figure 1.11

I listen to a story called Bailey Goes Camping. The author of this <sup>Kevin Henkes</sup> book is <sup>Kevin Henkes</sup>. The genre of this story is fiction.

This story takes place in Bailey's house. Bailey, his dad and his mom is the characters of this story.

The problem of this story is Bailey's parents decides to go to camping and they don't let Bailey to go to camping because they said his too young. Bailey was very unhappy and he feel that it is unfair.

Finally, Bailey pretend he went to camping, hunt the bear, sleeped in the tent, and do some good things on camp.

The story reminded me of when it was a weekend, my uncle and my aunt decides to go to Long Island, I want to go, too, but they said no. Finally my grandmother take my cousin and I go to the park to play.

Figure 1.8



In the Chinese New Year, my family celebrate it with me. We eat chicken and other Chinese food. Then we give the red envelopes to someone we know if we meet them on the street, they will say "Gung Hay Fat Choy" to my family. I also get a lot of red envelopes. Then I go to watch the lion dance and dragon dance, it is fun to watch the lion jump up and down. Soon, my grandparents take my cousins and I go to the park to play, I play catch with my cousin. At night, I count my red envelopes, I get 13 envelopes and I get a lot of money.

Figure 1.9

## The First Day of Fourth Grade

When it was the first day of fourth grade, I felt very nervous when I ~~met~~<sup>met</sup> my teacher. On that day, I ~~eat~~<sup>ate</sup> my breakfast at home. Then I went to school.

When I went to school, I went to my new class, I saw my teacher, Mrs. Chow and I met my new friends. I felt very ~~nervous~~<sup>nervous</sup> when I talk to my teacher in the classroom.

Later, I went to ~~ate~~ lunch. Once I'm at the lunchroom, I talk to my new friends, then I played with them.

Finally, ~~it~~ it was almost time to go home, my teacher gave us ~~her~~ homework to do. At home, I told my parents about who's my teacher, and ~~what~~ what I had do in my school.

Figure 1.10

## Erosion and Insects

I have finish learning about erosion and insects. Erosion means the water that carry soils away. If you plant some flowers near a place that erosion happens all the time, the flowers will not grow, it will die, because erosion can carry the soils away and plants need soils. That's why we should not plant flowers or any plants near a place that erosion happens all the time.

I also learn about insects. Insects are bad to human but it's also good to the trees, because they cause decay. Insects have six legs and three main body parts (head, thorax and abdomen). Different insects have different kinds of mouths, legs, antennae and wings. If there's an insect that has more than six legs, it is not an insect. This is what I know about erosion and insects.

Figure 1.11