TEACHING SECOND GRADE ENGLISH LEARNERS TO WRITE USING THE INTERACTIVE WRITING APPROACH

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A Thesis

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Abstract

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Statement of the Problem

Scores on the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) reveal that English Learners are not making the adequate progress to become English proficient. Unfortunately, English Learners not making the adequate progress will have a higher possibility to drop-out of school and fail in life as a result of insufficient academic English. Teachers face the challenge to teach the language arts curriculum, guided by the English-Language Arts Content Standards, to the growing population of English Learners. One of the major challenges for teachers is to teach writing to second language writers. Teachers are trying to meet their needs by using instructional approaches that they consider appropriate. Unfortunately, many of the approaches being used in the classroom lack effectiveness, as they are not supported by research. This study was designed to address the limitations of earlier research on teaching English Learners to write. The purpose of this study was to identify the changes which
occurred in writing ability of second grade English Learners when they were taught to write using the interactive writing approach.

Sources of Data

Data was gathered from collected samples of the students’ independent writing throughout the six months of interactive writing instruction, which were analyzed to identify patterns of changes students made as a result of interactive writing instruction. CELDT scores from second and third grade were looked at to determine differences in the overall score and the writing section between the two tests.

Conclusions Reached

Although analysis of the data revealed that interactive writing instruction did not appear to have a positive effect in the area of grammar, and it appeared to have an unknown effect in helping students stay on topic, the data showed improvement in the areas of spelling and word choice. Additionally, the scores on the last writing samples improved as well as the pre and post writing CELDT scores, which revealed statistically significant differences.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my family and friends for their unconditional support and encouragement throughout the process of earning a Master of Arts degree, particularly my mother, my husband, and Michelle.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Merrill for her immense assistance in the completion of this thesis and the professors in the Language and Literacy Program at California State University, Sacramento for their magnificent job preparing teachers to expand literacy knowledge in all students.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The California State Board of Education seeks to reduce the school drop-out rate and urges California schools to make every effort to assure that English Learners become English proficient as soon as possible to discard the possibility that they fail in school and life as a result of insufficient academic English. In California schools, teachers face the challenge of teaching the language arts curriculum (which includes reading and writing) not only to native English speakers, but to the growing population of English Learners as well. According to the resource FAQs by the California Department of Education (2006), approximately 1.6 million students in California public schools in the kindergarten through grade 12, or one in four, are English Learners. This represents almost one-third of the English Learners in the nation.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 wants to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to a high-quality education and become proficient in the state academic standards and state academic assessments. Teachers face the challenge of teaching the language arts curriculum, guided by the English-Language Arts Content Standards, to all students; including students in bilingual programs.

One of the major challenges for teachers is to teach writing to English Learners. Teachers are trying to meet the needs of the growing population of second
language writers by using instructional approaches that they consider appropriate, unfortunately, many of the approaches being used in the classroom are not supported by research, thus are not as effective as those backed up by a series of research.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the changes that occurred in writing ability of second grade English Learners when they were taught to write using the interactive writing approach over the course of six months. While other methods might be used in second grade classrooms, interactive writing, with its strong student-centered approach, is one method which might be used to help the students write more and better, and ideal to examine the implications of its use.

Significance of the Study

There has been disagreement among researchers about when to begin writing instruction with English Learners, and how to organize that instruction. Some researchers, such as Ammon (1985) and Cummins (1979) have concluded that students need to master oral English before they start receiving instruction in English writing. Ammon contended that not being orally fluent in English results in pieces of writing lacking the elements of English and containing linguistic forms of their native language. In contrast, other studies (Au, 1993; Hudelson, 1989; Huss, 1995; Peyton, 1990; Seda & Abramson, 1989) have concluded that writing instruction in English does not have to wait until English Learners attained mastery of oral English, since they can make predictions about how written English works. Peyton concluded that English Learners learn to write and speak simultaneously as they observe and
participate in interactions and as they receive informal feedback based on their participation.

There are no published studies that provide qualitative, descriptive data on teaching writing to English Learners in the primary grades using the interactive writing approach. Most previous research looks at interactive writing in the kindergarten classrooms. Other research looks at interactive writing as the interaction between the student and the teacher through interactive journals. This study was designed to address the limitations of earlier research on teaching English Learners to write by identifying the changes, which occurred in writing ability of second grade English Learners as a result of interactive writing instruction.

Limitations

This study had several limitations. The length of the study was only six months. The sample size was small and included students from one classroom only and whose primary language was Spanish. This study did not compare English Learners learning to write in English using different approaches to those learning through the interactive writing approach. No consideration was given to other factors that may have influenced their ability in writing such as oral acquisition of English. In addition, the researcher was the teacher of the participants and may have had a bias toward using the interactive writing approach to teach students to write.

Definition of Terms

CELDT – California English Language Development Test. The CELDT is given to newly enrolled students whose primary language is not English and to
English Learners as an annual assessment. The CELDT has three purposes: (a) to identify students who are limited English proficient; (b) to determine the level of English language proficiency of students who are limited English proficient; and (c) to assess the progress of limited English proficient students in acquiring the skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing in English.

*English Learner* – a non-native English speaker who is learning English in school and usually speaks a primary language other than English at home.

*Mnemonics* – charts containing common and regular spellings for sounds, usually displayed in the front of a classroom above whiteboard (e.g.; one of the charts has a picture of a bowl filled with noodles and the *n, kn_, and gn* spellings).

*Phonemic Awareness* – the understanding that words are composed of a series of individual sounds that can be manipulated (segmented, blended, deleted, and inserted).

*Phonological Awareness* – the understanding that speech is composed of units of sound including sentences, words, parts of words, and individual sounds within words.

*Primary or Native Language* – the first language a child learns to speak.

*Stretching the Word* – to articulate or speak a word slowly so that the individual phonemes that make up the work can be heard.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 of this thesis is the introduction and includes the following: statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, limitations,
definition of the terms, and organization of the study. Chapter 2 is the review of relevant literature. It includes information on the California English Language Arts Content Standards, including the English Language Development Standards along with the writing component for grade two. It also includes information on bilingual education, teaching writing to English Learners and the different approaches used for this purpose, and interactive writing and its significance in developing writing skills. Chapter 3 focuses on methodology and includes the description of the study and explains about the participants, treatment, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter 4 describes the results from all the analyzed data. Chapter 5 contains the discussion and interpretation of the findings and includes recommendations for practice and future study. The interactive writing lesson, writing analysis form, and the 6 Trait Assessment for Beginning Writers (adapted from Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory by Area 3 Writing Project Teacher Consultants, 2001) are located in the Appendices.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

This review of literature provides context to the study’s focus on teaching writing to English Learners. It describes the California English Language Arts Content Standards, including the English Language Development Standards along with the writing component for grade two. It also contains information on relevant literature on how English Learners are supported through bilingual education programs. An overview of the different approaches and/or methods to teach writing to English Learners is also included. This chapter concludes by describing interactive writing and its significance in developing writing skills, including related research.

California English Language Arts Content Standards

The report *A Nation at Risk*, by the National Commission of Excellence in Education (1983 as cited in California State Board of Education, 1999b), brought to the attention of the California State Board of Education a “rising tide of mediocrity” in the California schools. This report was the motivator for the State Board to focus on designing the *English Language Arts Content Standards* to encourage the highest achievement for every student. In November of 1997, the State Board adopted the English Language Arts Content Standards to describe the content that students in kindergarten through grade twelve should master in the domains of Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking, and Oral and Written English Language Conventions by the end of each grade level (California State Board of Education, 1999b). The curriculum must include explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics,
decoding, word-attack skills, spelling, vocabulary, comprehension skills, writing skills and strategies and their application, and listening and speaking skills and strategies (California State Board, 1999b). Content standards, well designed materials, skilled teachers, and a comprehension program of assessment along with the 

*Reading/Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve* make up the system of support that the state of California has put in place to assure that all students who graduate from high school are proficient in the language arts. The standards are also based on the assumption that students will require higher level of literacy skills than ever before (California State Board, 1999b), as societies continue to be part of a fast evolving modern world.

*English Language Development Standards*

In July of 1999, the California State Board of Education (1999b) created and published the *English Language Development Content Standards*, which are aligned to the English Language Arts Content Standards, to encourage the highest achievement for every English Learner. These standards were created to assist teachers in teaching the English Language Arts Content Standards to English Learners and moving them along, regardless of their instructional program or English proficiency level, into the mainstream English language arts curriculum. The California English Language Development Standards address the skills that English Learners, in the different grades and at different English proficiency levels, must acquire to enable them to become fluent English proficient in the English language and in the concepts and skills
Writing Standards for Grade Two

This study focused on interactive writing in a second grade classroom. Writing Strategies, Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics), and Written and Oral English Language Conventions are the strands in the English-Language Arts Content Standards for this grade level. In the Writing Strategies strand students are expected to write grouping related ideas and keeping the focus, create legible written pieces, and revise to improve sequence and to add detail. In the Writing Applications strand students are expected to write brief narratives and friendly letters taking into consideration the Writing Strategies strand. In the Written and Oral English Language Conventions strand students are expected to write complete and syntactically correct sentences, correctly use various parts of speech including nouns and verbs, use quotation marks correctly and correct punctuation in a friendly letter, know when to use capital letters, spell high frequency and irregular words correctly, and spell basic short-vowel, long-vowel, r-controlled, and consonant-blend patterns correctly (California State Board, 1999b).

Writing Standards for English Learners in Grade Two

The English Language Development Writing Standards for grade two are similar to the English Language Arts Writing standards for the same grade, as the English Language Development Content Standards are aligned to the English Language Arts Content Standards (explained in the English Language Development
Standards section, California State Board, 1999a). The expectations for English Learners are very similar to the expectations for native English speakers. Depending on the student’s proficiency level of English language development, the students may write fewer and simpler sentences, write shorter narratives and friendly letters, and show inconsistency in the use of standard grammar.

Bilingual Education

Most students receiving support in their primary language are those receiving instruction in a bilingual classroom through a bilingual education program. A bilingual education program is one in which students learn the curriculum through their primary language and acquire English at the same time (Crawford, 1987). The purpose of bilingual education is to achieve one of two common goals: to transition students from their primary language to another language, or to teach students another language so that they become bilingual or multilingual. Bilingual education through a transitional program, to transition students from their primary language to English, is the most common approach. This approach allows students to temporarily use their home language while being taught through their home language, until they become proficient enough in English to manage in a mainstream classroom (Baker, 2001; Christian & Genesee, 2001).

Many bilingual educators are concerned about whether or not teaching literacy in the students’ primary language slows down English language literacy. They are afraid to waste time by allowing students to become literate in their primary language knowing that they need to acquire literacy in English. Studies have shown that
bilingual programs, which provide native language literacy, may make important contributions to second language development. Studies reveal that the use of a child’s native language in school or in the classroom does not impede the acquisition of English (August & Hakuta, 1997; Ramirez, 1992). After an eight year-longitudinal study of bilingual education, mandated by the U.S. congress, Ramirez et al. (1991 as cited in Baker, 2001; Christian & Genessee, 2001) concluded that Spanish speaking students in bilingual programs can be instructed significantly in Spanish without limiting their acquisition of English language and reading skills, while catching up to their English speaking peers in English language arts, English reading, and math. On the contrary, instruction exclusively in English to limited English proficient students did not accelerate their acquisition of English language arts, reading or math and did not appear to be catching up to their English speaking peers (Baker, 2001). The authors concluded that the bilingual programs were not superior to English-only programs, but rather that teachers lacked the knowledge and ability to design and deliver lessons that support academic instruction for both English speakers and English Learners in the English-only classrooms.

The fundamental belief about bilingual education which has also been supported by research is that skills taught in one language transfer to the second language (Edelsky, 1982, 1986; Genesee, 1987; Hakuta, 1986). The General Accounting Office (1987 as cited in Baker, 2001) conducted a survey on bilingual education, which was completed by ten experts, mostly professors of education, selected from prestigious institutions throughout the United States. Eight out of 10
favored the use of a native language in the classroom, as they believed that it strengthened literacy skills, which easily transferred to the second language (Baker, 2001).

English Learners in bilingual programs learn to write in their primary language as they continue developing oral English. These students learn to write for different purposes and in different genres. It is through letters, journals, narratives, stories, reports, etc. that they complain, ask, invite, reflect, narrate, summarize, and explain (Edelsky, 1986). Bilingual teachers have noted that children who can fluently write in their primary language decide for themselves when they want to start writing in English (Flores et al., 1985; Hudelson, 1984 as cited in Hudelson, 1989). Studies by Edelsky (1982, 1986) concluded that students who are confident in using what they know about writing in their primary language very willing apply it to English writing. She also found that students who were writing lengthy pieces in Spanish were also writing lengthy pieces in English. They also apply what they know about the English texts to which they had been exposed, even when they have not received instruction to write in English. Some students may feel insecure with oral English, and thus, uncomfortable writing in English; these students begin to write in English when they feel comfortable enough to begin using oral English (Hudelson, 1989).

English Learners Writing in English

Most public school teachers in California are responsible for teaching English Learners to write. It is a fact that these students are second language learners, and thus are, second language writers. They come to school with different prior knowledge,
language, cultural background, and life and schooling experiences. In addition, like all children do, they bring to school their very own personalities and social styles which influence the way they work in the classroom, including how they write (Hudelson, 1989).

*Developing Oral English First vs. Written and Oral English Simultaneously*

Some people in the education field support the idea of English Learners mastering oral English before learning to write in English. Ammon (1985) considered that English Learners simultaneously acquiring English as a second language and English literacy skills face difficulty when learning to write because of the differences between the demands of written communication and the oral communication skills that children have. He concluded that students need to master oral English before they start receiving instruction in English writing, adding that when students are not yet fluent in oral English they cannot apply the elements of English to their writing, and that linguistic forms of their native language would interfere with writing in English. According to Cummins, the problem could be addressed either by delaying English writing instruction until the learner acquires fluency in oral English, or by first teaching writing in the students’ primary language and then in English (Cummins, 1979).

In opposition to this, some researchers (Au, 1993; Hudelson, 1989; Huss, 1995; Peyton, 1990; Seda & Abramson, 1989) have concluded that writing instruction in English does not need to be delayed until English Learners attain mastery of oral English. They suggested that students would make predictions to apply what they
know about the systems of English, which include orthography (spelling),
segmentation (dividing words), capitalization and punctuation, phonology (sounds),
and syntax (relationship of words). Encouragement, support, and feedback can make
their written compositions approximate those of native speakers. Peyton stated that
English Learners learn to write early in the process of learning English, by copying
words or phrases from surrounding print, by producing invented spelling, and by
receiving informal feedback as they participate. Hudelson’s research (1989) concluded
that English Learners will work to create meaning from written form when they are
given the opportunity and encouragement by teachers who can significantly impact
students’ ideas of what writing is as well as the quality of their written creations. In
addition, not only can children write in English before becoming orally fluent, but
writing can enhance oral language development and reading comprehension. Not all
English Learners develop writing proficiency and knowledge of the English language
at the same rate, as every child brings her own strengths, preferences, prior
knowledge, and cultural background to the classroom (Au, 1993; Hudelson, 1989;
Huss, 1995; Peyton, 1990; Seda & Abramson, 1989).

Developmental Stages of Writing

Hudelson (1984, 1986) found that English language development of English
Learners parallels the writing development of students whose primary language is
English. Seda and Abramson (1989) found that young English Learners learning to
write for the first time moved through similar stages of writing development as native
English speakers. Ferreiro and Teberosky (1982) identified four stages of writing development in native English speakers and English Learners.

- **Stage 1** – Children create curved and/or straight lines to represent print.
- **Stage 2** – Children create graphic forms that resemble conventional letters. At this level children use a fixed number of characters to write words or sentences, usually using a repertoire of five or six characters.
- **Stage 3** – Children begin to assign sounds to characters. Each character represents a sound or normally a syllable.
- **Stage 4** – Children use more alphabetic writing with each letter sound represented by a character.

Seda and Abramson (1989) and Kamii, Long, Manning, and Manning (1986, as cited in Seda and Abramson) had very similar results with minimal differences in level 3. They found that at Level 3 children made letter-sound correspondences by individual consonants, each consonant represented one sound and not a syllable (Seda & Abramson).

Teachers see that young English Learners go through the same or very similar developmental stages as native speakers of English when they are learning to write; scribbling, making random marks, using one letter to stand for an entire word or thought, spelling phonetically, and traditional spelling (Young & Hadaway, 2006). Hudelson (1989) suggested that both English Learners and native English speakers are problem solvers who will hypothesize and test out what they know about how written English works. The written pieces of English Learners may include spellings that
originate from the child’s native language orthography, and reflect what the child
knows about syntax and semantics of the English language, but still written
productions of English Learners look very much like those of young native English
speakers learning to write. These include invented spellings and letter forms,
unconventional segmentation and punctuation, and drawings that express their ideas.

Approaches to Teach Writing to English Learners

The Constructivist Approach

Literacy instruction which helps students become interested and involved in a
meaningful activity and provides students with the support they need to complete the
activity successfully is known as the constructivist approach or constructivist model
and was based on literacy research and the ideas of Vygotsky (1978, 1981 as cited in
Au, 1993). According to Vygotsky, learning is a social process that takes place through
interactions between a child and others in their environment. Gradually, the child
internalizes the skills and knowledge acquired through these social interactions. He
suggested that a child learns through interactions that take place in the zone of
proximal development (ZPD), in other words, through interactions that provide
guidance and support in areas or parts that the child cannot manage independently, but
can do so with help. It is beyond the zone of proximal development when a child
cannot manage parts of a task at all, even with assistance. The zone of proximal
development is the area in which instruction can be of greatest benefit to the child
The concepts of constructivist approach and Vigotsky’s ZPD have been used in conjunction with the notion of scaffolding, as scaffolding refers to the supportive behaviors by experts to help learners achieve higher levels of control (De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000). It seems that English Learners acquire literacy skills when they are interested and involved in meaningful activities while being supported by teachers through interactions (between student and teacher) that take place when a student can not handle a matter independently than when this type of support is lacking. Among the most prominent characterizations of the constructivist approach in literacy instruction are the whole-language and the writing-process models to be discussed next.

The Whole Language Model

Advocates and teachers of the Whole Language Approach believe that literacy learning happens within the context of reading and writing natural and authentic whole text and that language is best learned when it is not broken down into distinct parts to be leaned by pieces. They think that children, including English Learners, can explore topics of interest to them which will engage them in reading and writing and through this engagement literacy is acquired (Hudelson, 1989; Strickland & Strickland, 1996).

The teaching of writing through the whole language model would reflect the following environment and practices:

- The classroom is designed by teacher and students to promote learning
- High frequency words and vocabulary words (including writing materials) are always ready and accessible for the students
• The teacher, and eventually the students, put emphasis on the meaning and importance in written communication

• Interactions between the teacher and student or group of students to discuss about what needs to be written, as they have the opportunity to choose what to write and to choose literature written by adult and children authors

• The teacher acts as the facilitator who demonstrates what it means to be a writer

• Students are risk takers who see learning to write as an exciting opportunity for unrestricted written responses with meaningful purposes

• Students work cooperatively to share, discuss, and revise their written products

• Students write on a daily basis

• Teachers are observers who evaluate and assess based on their observations on what students can and can’t do (Strickland & Strickland, 1996)

Peyton (1988 as cited in Hudelson, 1989) described one example of a whole-language classroom. He analyzed the classroom context that influenced a group of beginning-level English Learners to view themselves as writers and act as writers. He described the classroom as surrounded by meaningful print and children’s books. The teacher read stories and nursery rhymes to children, rather than isolated reading skill exercises. She also believed that students would learn to write by writing, so she modeled writing and her own thinking process that led her through her writing.

*The Writing-Process Model*
Emig (1971 as cited in Dahl & Farnan, 1998) was one of the first researchers of composing processes. Her investigations showed that students write either in the extensive writing or the reflexive writing mode. Extensive writing is school writing that addresses the teacher as the audience with minimal attention to prewriting, rethinking or contemplation of the written text. In contrast, reflexive writing has an audience other than the teacher (e.g.; a peer or even him or herself), attention is paid to revision, and it involves contemplation of the written text. Based on her research, Emig identified several categories of composing common in reflexive writing: planning, starting, composing aloud, reformulation (correcting, revising, and rewriting), stopping, and contemplation of the product. She also found that composing is not a strict left-to-right, linear process, but it is rather a recursive process (Dahl & Farnan, 1998).

Early research (by Britton et al., 1975; Perl, 1979; and Pianko, 1979 as cited in Dahl & Farnan, 1998) recognized the recursive nature of the writing process as Emig suggested. Unfortunately, the recursive characteristic of composing was not present in elementary and middle schools. A linear writing process was being used as a model for students, and students’ writing began to follow a predictable format. This model became institutionalized as the model of writing process (Dahl & Farnan, 1998).

The emphasis had been placed in a product-centered, traditional model (which stressed expository writing and a strict, linear writing process) until the writing-process model caused a major shift in composition theory (Hairston, 1982). The writing-process model (as found in early research) focuses on recursive writing
processes and teaches strategies for invention and discovery; considers audience, purpose, and context of writing; emphasizes recursiveness in the writing process; and distinguishes modes of written communication (e.g., expressive, expository, persuasive; and description, narration, evaluation, classification, etc.) as described by Silva & Matsuda (2001).

In the writing-process model steps are followed to produce a piece of writing. In other words, this process breaks writing into manageable pieces, allowing students to concentrate on one task at a time towards a final writing product (Peregoy & Boyle, 1997). Generally, the writing process is seen as consisting of five steps:

- Prewriting: planning, research, outlining, diagramming, and clustering
- Drafting: initial composition in prose form
- Revision: review, modification and organization (preferably with a peer)
- Editing: proofreading for clarity, conventions, style (preferably with a peer)
- Sharing the Writing/Submittal/Publishing: through performance, distribution of written material, or printing

Hairston (1982) emphasizes that the writing-process theory is diverse, flexible, and still emerging. Teacher-researchers who used think-aloud protocols discovered that there are different writing-processes and composing is not necessarily linear, but the steps follow a recursive pattern. Students frequently go back to the written text to previous words, sentences, or paragraphs to re-read, to remember, to add, to edit, or simply to catch the momentum of their writing (Emig, 1977; Sommers, 1980; Perl, 1980 as cited in Reid, 1993). Researchers have found that successful writers often use
a variety of composing processes and not a single strict process, depending on the
writing situation; as situations put social, psychological, and rhetorical constraints on
the writer (Flower, 1979; Flower & Hayes, 1980; Bizzell, 1982; Bruffee, 1986 as cited
in Reid, 1993).

A study done by De Guerrero and Villamil (2000) found that the scaffolding
provided by the reader during peer revision (a step in the writing-process), among
students learning to write in a second language, exhibited positive and supportive
behaviors that benefited the reader and the writer. These behaviors included intention
to keep the interaction going to accomplish goals, efforts at providing solutions to
textual problems, acquirement of clarification or correction, breaks to allow the writer
to express his views, effort to see the text through the writer’s eyes by asking his
opinion and searching for agreement, and effective involvement by showing humor,
sensitivity and desire to maintain cordial relations.

Quality research that supports teaching writing to English Learners through the
writing-process is limited. Researchers consider that the writing-process model is still
emerging, even though it is not as strict and linear as the product-centered model.
There are also indications that the field of inquiry is moving towards an integrated
theory of writing that includes both process and product models.

Additional Points to Consider when Teaching English Learners to Write

*Writing on a Regular Basis: Quantity vs. Quality*

Erazmus (1960) and Briere (1966) stress the need for English Learners to write
a lot and often considering that it is quantity and not quality that is crucial. They claim
that the greater the frequency, the greater the improvement because one learns to write by writing. Their studies indicate that when the emphasis is upon writing often rather than on error correction, students write more and with fewer errors. On the other hand, Braddock et al. (1963) and Hunting (1967) claim that writing with frequency and without supportive instruction and motivation may hurt writing more than improve it. Hudelson (1989) emphasized several points to help develop writing skills among English Learners. Giving English Learners the opportunity to write on a regular basis is essential for them to start developing as writers and to start expressing themselves exploring the written forms of the English language. She also stressed the importance of encouraging them to guess, to write, and to take risks and make mistakes as they learn from them. In other words, Hudelson suggests that English Learners write daily and be supported by teachers who value their efforts and motivate them to improve their writing ability.

Focus on the Message and not Conventions

Teachers need to respond to children’s writing by focusing on the message that the learner is trying to convey, rather than conventions (Hudelson, 1989). Primary attention should be given to the expressive and creating process of writing so that English Learners can communicate genuine thoughts and experiences. “English Learners could begin to appreciate English as another language to use, rather than just a second language to learn” (Silva & Matsuda, 2001, p.34). Teachers need to be aware of the importance of engaging English Learners in meaningful writing activities with purposes, and keeping them motivated and interested in expanding their writing skills.
Write for a Purpose

It is crucial that English Learners develop their writing skills through authentic writing. When there is a purpose for writing they become engaged because they have reasons to produce a piece of writing that is meaningful to them and allows them to communicate to others. This helps them discover what writing is, why people write, and for whom (Hudelson, 1989). According to Squire and Applebee (1969 as cited in Silva & Matsuda, 2001), those responsible for teaching writing should be more concerned with the students’ desire for writing rather than trying to find the right approach to teach writing. Loban et al. (1961 as cited in Silva & Matsuda, 2001) saw the need to establish that composing results from the need to express one’s personal feeling, experience, reaction, etc. and that support and encouragement are essential. Once this has been established, and the fear of writing has been removed, students will have greater success as writers and greater facility to deal with other type of writing assignments (Silva & Matsuda, 2001).

Five Major Findings in Relation to English Writing Development and English Learners

Hudelson (1984) revealed five major findings in relation to English writing development and English Learners. First, English Learners can begin writing in English before they fully understand the systems of English language, such as phonology (sounds), grammar, and spelling. Second, English Learners can write for different purposes, expressive writing to explore their feelings and personal identity; literary writing to create stories and poems; and transactional writing to convey a
message. Third, English Learners are able to revise their writing based on feedback given by their teachers and/or peers. Urzúa (1987) reached similar conclusions, adding that children are also able to react critically to other students’ writing. Fourth, the writing development of English Learners is greatly affected by the teachers’ beliefs about writing and its importance, and writing instruction. Fifth, writing development for English Learners will advance at different paces and will follow different paths, based on the students’ individual strengths, preferences, and cultural backgrounds.

Interactive Writing

*Interactive Writing Defined*

The term and approach of *interactive writing* was created and applied in 1991 by a research group of faculty members from The Ohio State University and teachers from Columbus, Ohio. These literacy teachers were interested in helping children understand written language, especially those with limited literacy experience (Button, Johnson, & Furgerson, 1996; McCarrier, Pinell, & Fountas, 2000). Based on the work of this research group, interactive writing appeared to be a strong instructional approach to help children understand the writing process. Teachers involved in the Literacy Collaborative, a university-school partnership for implementing classroom literacy programs, continue the work of the research team. Their research has found interactive writing to be a necessary element of a rich primary literacy program (McCarrier et al.).

Interactive Writing resulted from the combination of language experience developed by Ashton-Warner in 1963, shared writing based on Moira McKenzie’s
work in 1985, and a technique known as “sharing the pen”. In the language experience, the teacher writes for the children on chart paper as they express their ideas verbally. In shared writing, the teacher acts as the scribe for the children using chart paper too, but emphasizing the writing process and enabling children to develop and organize their ideas while creating meaningful text for them to read later (Button et al., 1996; McCarrier et al., 2000). Sharing the pen invites students to actually do the writing on the page that is being created by the group, based on the instructional needs of the children. The idea is for them to learn something about written language, practice it, and apply it later to their own writing (McCarrier et al., 2000).

The purpose of interactive writing is for teachers to help young writers move beyond what they already know about written language. This powerful demonstration of writing lets children participate as they learn how written language works; including the writing process, structures and patterns of written language, letter-sound relationships and other strategies, and conventions (McCarrier, 2000).

During interactive writing, both the teacher and the students interact and negotiate what is to be written and how, meaning that they compose the text together. On occasions where the children are involved in contributing letters and words to the group’s writing, this is what the research group called “sharing the pen”. Final written products are saved, and occasionally read by the group who helped with the composition. Within one lesson, the format of interactive writing exposes children to learn a variety of things about how written language works, as well as to review what they have already learned. The strategies and skills learned and reviewed during
interactive writing are later applied to their own independent writing. What the children and the teacher compose, write, and read as a group goes beyond what the writers and readers of the class could do alone. These powerful demonstrations and opportunities for writing explore topics of interest in the classroom and the teacher plays an important role in helping children find a reason or purpose for writing across the curriculum (McCarrier, 2000). The Interactive Writing Lesson Plan used for this study can be found in the Appendices.

*The Significance of Interactive Writing in Developing Writing Skills*

Currently there are very few studies analyzing the relationship between interactive writing and writing development but those available show promising results. Sipe (2001), for example, examined four research based writing models for invented spelling instruction, considering the interactive writing model an effective technique for teaching children to read and write. Invented spelling, which requires phonological awareness and alphabetic knowledge, plays an important role in developing reading and writing skills. Based on Sipe’s observations, children who had been doing interactive writing for a while anticipated some of the teacher’s questions during the interactive writing lesson, attained knowledge of initial and final letters in words (being able to hear and write these sounds), learned to spell high frequency words like *the*, modeled punctuation and writing from left to right and top to bottom with appropriate spacing. Interactive writing allowed everyone to participate and feel successful. The teacher scaffolded the lesson through direct, explicit instruction that supported children at their individual developmental levels, allowing active teaching
and active learning to go hand in hand. These observations by Sipe suggest that interactive writing may be a good method for teaching children to read and write, but still more evidence of its effectiveness is needed.

A study done by Mariage (2001) provided meaningful and clear explanations as to why interactive writing instruction may be effective. Mariage examined interactive writing instruction during the morning message in a third and fourth grade combination special education class. Mariage observed and analyzed the conversations held during the morning message and came across specific features of interactive writing instruction which may be fundamental when teaching children how to write. In this study, the teacher behaved as scribe and facilitator, but also as a more knowledgeable person to support students with writing conventions, processes, strategies, audience sensitivity, etc. One student gave the topic for the message and all class members (including the teacher) discussed and debated the writing, suggested for edits and revisions, and published the writing in a newsletter to go home.

Based on his observations, Mariage (2001) pointed out several characteristics of the morning message through interactive writing instruction, which may lead us to consider this approach an effective way to teach children how to write. Some of the characteristics included the teacher being able to control the direction of discussion and topics by carefully choosing what to highlight, allowing her to support and model dialogue while working with the entire class at each child’s zone of proximal development. Another characteristic was the inclusion of the writing process as part of interactive writing, but the writing process was not broken down into phases, editing
and revising were ongoing from the first to the last sentence. Other characteristics included the teacher as scribe, so students focus on meaning construction; oral language is seen as transferable to text; a sense of mutuality, trust, and reciprocity is acquired; and opportunities to engage in different ways of thinking, talking, behaving, and knowing writing are daily encountered. Mariage concluded that students who were more verbally active in constructing the written morning message appeared to be more knowledgeable in the area of editing than those who were less verbal. Mariage provided an explanation to why interactive writing instruction may be effective in teaching children to read and write, but did not provide enough evidence of its effect on student achievement.

A study done by Button et al. (1996) showed the effectiveness of interactive writing instruction in teaching children to read and write. Furgerson carried out an interactive writing lesson every day, including 20 to 30 minutes of independent writing to allow students to practice what they had learned during interactive writing instruction and to let them take other risks as writers. Her observations during independent writing helped her plan future interactive writing lessons. Later in the year, her students were completely familiar with the routine of interactive writing and had gained much more knowledge about conventions of print, phonological awareness (the ability to hear sounds in words), sequence of sounds heard, representation of sounds with letters, and identification of many different spelling patterns. Furgerson’s students were also aware that their purpose for writing determined the type of writing they would take on. A dictation task determined that her students had improved the
most in phonological awareness. The growth went from a mean score of 9.8 in the fall to 29 in the spring (maximum score = 37). The students also showed a big growth in the area of writing vocabulary when they were asked to write words for 10 minutes. Their mean score increased from 4.8 in the fall, with 0 to 20 words written correctly to 23.9 in the spring, with 1 to 56 words written correctly. The majority of her students were reading by spring of their kindergarten year and thought of themselves as readers and writers. This study did not have a control group and instruction was not limited only to interactive writing, therefore students’ growth could be accredited to other types of instruction. However, this study suggests that interactive writing instruction is a powerful tool for teaching students to read and write and encourages further research in this area.

A study by Craig (2003) explored the effect of interactive writing instruction on student phonological awareness and writing skills. The 16-week study examined interactive writing and phonological awareness and revealed that interactive writing instruction led to phonological awareness ability and increased word recognition and invented spelling skills. A group of 87 kindergarteners was pre-tested then the predominantly white, middle class students were randomly assigned to either a treatment or control group. The treatment group was divided into two groups. The “metalinguistic games plus” group received instruction using the Adams et al. (2000 as cited in Craig) text and worked only with sound activities, using no print. The “interactive writing plus” group received instruction beginning with the “sharing the pen” technique (McCarrier et al., 2000), adapted as children made progress in letter-
sound pattern knowledge. Students in the interactive writing plus group analyzed words they spelled during this explicit instruction which focused on patterns resulting from students invented spellings and word building activities demonstrating phonemic segmentation.

Post-tests at the end of the 16 weeks were given to identify their phonological awareness, developmental spelling level, word attach skills, comprehension, and word reading. While both treatment groups exceeded the control group in all areas, the interactive writing plus group matched the metalinguistic games plus group in phonological awareness and exceeded them in word recognition, comprehension, and word reading development. The students who received instruction that included print performed better on activities involving print (Craig, 2003). These findings may seem obvious, but reveal an important point. Students can learn to read and write when explicit instruction involving print takes place. Interactive writing does not only provide direct, explicit instruction, but supports all children at their own developmental level.

Children construct their own language and literacy and they become better at it as they learn more about constructing meaning from print. To gain knowledge in constructing meaning from print, they need environmental support (Clay, 1991). Teachers provide that environmental support by becoming active teachers more than close observers, since active teaching brings along active learning (Sipe, 2001). With active and supportive instruction, children develop in language and literacy competence (Vygotsky, 1962 as cited in Button et al., 1996). It is the quality of active
and supportive instruction through interaction what makes interactive writing powerful and efficient, not the length of the lesson (Button et al., 1996).

Conclusion

Although there are a wide variety of studies that provide useful information and support various methods to teach writing to English Learners, this evidence is still insufficient and it keeps shifting. The body of research found on writing instruction with English Language Learners, and particularly regarding interactive writing is still incomplete. The research regarding interactive writing instruction provides some support for its effectiveness as a way to teach young children how to write, but it does not specifically address English Learners. The purpose of this study was to contribute to the body of research out there by discussing how interactive writing instruction affected the writing ability of English Learners who were taught to write in English for the first time. The next section describes the methodology used in this study, based on the research that contributed to the design and need for the study.
Chapter 3
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Both qualitative and quantitative nonexperimental research methods were used to detect differences, over time, in writing ability of second grade English Learners who were taught to write using the interactive writing approach. These students received instruction in Spanish during the entire day while in kindergarten and first grade, with the exception of thirty to 45 minutes of daily English Language Development (ELD). They were taught to read and write only in Spanish until they came to second grade and began to learn to write in English for the first time through interactive writing lessons. No samples of their independent writing were collected prior to interactive writing instruction as students showed worry and anxiety when they were asked to write in English prior to this study. The students received interactive writing instruction two times per week for 45 minutes over a six month period of time, while samples of their independent writing were collected throughout.

Description of Study

This study investigated how interactive writing instruction affected the writing ability of English Learners who were taught to write in English for the first time. During interactive writing instruction, students had the opportunity to learn about conventions, sentence fluency, word choice, and organization and ideas; this instruction took place through dialogue between the teacher and students and the teacher probing of the students’ thoughts. The question that guided this study asked
how interactive writing instruction affected the writing ability of second grade English Learners who began to learn to write in English. There were three ways in which this question was examined. First, seven samples of independent writing were collected from each student over a six month period and analyzed to identify patterns of changes students made as a result of interactive writing instruction. Second, differences between the students’ first and last independent writing samples after receiving interactive writing instruction were examined using the 6 Trait Assessment for Beginning Writers (Adapted from Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory by Area 3 Writing Project Teacher Consultants, 2001). Third, the effects of interactive writing instruction were measured by comparing students’ overall and writing subtest scores on the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) between the tests administered prior to starting the study and those given following the study.

Participants

Participants in this study included 17 second grade students aged seven and eight attending a kindergarten through sixth grade elementary school in a small urban area in northern California. The school had a total enrollment of 422 students; 154 were English Learners and 309 were identified as low Socioeconomic Status (SES), meaning that they came from low income families with a low level of education. The parent education level report showed that 20% of the parent population graduated from high school and only 9% graduated from college (School Data Base, 2005; see Figure 1).
Parents of the 17 participants were notified of the study and all gave written permission for their child to participate. All participants made up the researcher’s second grade bilingual class composed of 11 girls and 6 boys. All were English Learners whose primary language was Spanish and all were from low Socioeconomic Status (SES) families. Most of the students, 88%, had been attending the school’s bilingual program since kindergarten (School Data Base, 2005; Student Cumulative Files, 2004-2005).

Although students were fairly balanced in academic skills and abilities, they were at different overall English proficiency levels ranging from Beginning to Advanced at the time they entered second grade. The chart below shows their overall CELDT scores from October of 2004, approximately six weeks after entering second grade (CELDT, October, 2004; see Figure 2).
Figure 2. Participants’ English Proficiency Levels

Treatment

All 17 students received instruction in the regular curriculum in Spanish on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays and in English on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and, in addition, ELD instruction was delivered for 45 minutes on a daily basis. Students received an approximately 45 minute interactive writing lesson every Tuesday and Thursday for six consecutive months, starting in the eighth week of school. The lessons were designed according to ideas and recommendations on the interactive writing approach described in McCarrier et al. (2000).
Interactive Writing Lessons

Students stayed at their desks during interactive writing lessons. On their desks they each had an individual dry-erase board, a dry-erase black marker, a small piece of cloth, a piece of lined paper, and a pencil with an eraser.

Interactive writing lessons included several steps, which were part of the normal routine of every lesson. The first step took approximately five minutes. The teacher wanted students to learn about the different purposes for writing. Students discussed with their partners ideas for writing based on daily literature, events, and interests, then shared them when called on (they were allowed to pass). The teacher created a list while she also provided feedback and explained to them the importance for writing about each of the topics. Once the topic list was finished, usually containing three to five topics, the students were asked to vote on one to be used for the lesson (e.g.; writing a summary, possible solution, or different ending for a particular story, telling the principal why it is important to continue having a particular school event, describing school activities they enjoy, summarizing a science experiment, inviting parents to a school event, giving thanks to community members who have visited our classroom, etc.).

The second step took about two to three minutes and involved coming up with a sentence to write. The teacher prompted students to think about the type of sentence they needed (e.g.; a main idea, a detail, a conclusion sentence, etc.) and then randomly selected a student to provide a sentence by pulling a popsicle stick with student’s name on it. Random selection provided equal opportunity for participation and created
a sense of responsibility among students. Students were allowed to pass if they did not feel ready to provide a sentence. Through dialogue and probing, the teacher encouraged students to alter the sentence that had been presented with the purpose of correcting it and/or adding more details to it, students raised their hands when they had a suggestion to improve it and occasionally the teacher made suggestions as well. Finally, the teacher made certain that the sentence made sense and paraphrased it if necessary to assure correct grammar and sentence structure (e.g.; “Me and my friends…” to “My friends and I…”, “We wanted everyone to see the project of our class.” to “We wanted everyone to see our class project.”, “They didn’t saw the little dogs.” to “They didn’t see the puppies.”).

The third step took about a minute and consisted of counting the words in the sentence, the purpose was for students to learn that sentences are composed of words and that there is space between them. The teacher said the sentence word by word as she counted the words on her fingers, then she repeated it one more time, this time the students followed along counting the words on their fingers as well. Immediately, the teacher drew an appropriately sized line on the whiteboard for each word in the sentence as she pronounced each word, then she pointed at the lines using a long pointer as both students and teacher repeated all the words in the sentence.

The fourth step took about five minutes and students were asked to write the words on the lines. The teacher pointed at the first line allowing students to recall the word to be written, the students were able to figure out what the first word was and the focus was now on the first word. The teacher stretched the word, meaning that she
articulated the word slowly so that students could hear the individual phonemes that made up the word, hoping to enhance their phonemic awareness to facilitate the process of encoding words using letters. The teacher asked students to write the word on their dry-erase boards as they sounded it out allowing full participation. She gave them as much guidance as necessary by pointing to the Houghton Mifflin mnemonics (charts containing common and regular spellings for sounds) and prompting so students were successful writing each particular word (e.g.; “You will need five letters to write this word.” “Remember that the letters th make the /th/ sound.” “Why do you need to add s at the end of run?” “The apostrophe will go after the third letter.” “You will find this word at the word wall.” “Why do you need to double the consonant?” “Is this word a proper noun? How do you know?” “This is the word fly, but to spell flies you get rid of the y and add ies because...”). Once the students had correctly written the word on their dry-erase boards, the popsicle sticks helped decide who would come up to the whiteboard to write down the word (students were allowed to pass), the chosen student decided whether or not to bring his/her dry-erase board along. As the student wrote the word, classmates provided support when necessary (by quietly raising their hand and waiting to be called on) using their own knowledge, word walls, alphabet charts, and Houghton Mifflin mnemonics. When additional support was needed, the teacher supported as she did when all students wrote on their dry-erase boards. During this step the teacher expected all students to be engaged while practicing spelling and letter formation. Before writing the next word, the teacher pointed at the words already written as students read them, right immediately she pointed at the next empty line
allowing students to recall the next word to be written, the students were able to figure out what the next word was and the focus was now on that particular word and so forth. The fourth step was to be repeated depending on the number of words in the sentence.

The fifth and last step took about three minutes. Students read the sentence just completed as the teacher pointed at each word. Finally the teacher allowed time for students to copy it onto their lined paper (she gave them the option to draw or not to draw the lines as their paper was already lined and students chose not to draw the lines). The steps were repeated from the second step on to continue with the next sentence. Once the whole writing was completed students read it a couple of times as the teacher pointed to the words.

Frequently (about every third lesson) the class ran out of time and had to finish their writing the next time interactive writing was scheduled which usually was in two days.

Data Collection

Both quantitative and qualitative information were gathered to examine differences in writing ability. The assessments used to determine students’ skills in relation to writing are described next. The 17 students were randomly given a number 1 through 17; this number replaced their name on every piece of collected data that included their name to protect their identity.
Samples of Independent Writing

The teacher collected samples of the students’ independent writing throughout the six months of interactive writing instruction. These were analyzed to identify patterns of changes students made as a result of interactive writing instruction (occasionally one to two students were absent and the teacher was unable to collect their sample). The table below shows when these samples were collected. No samples of students’ independent writing were collected prior to interactive writing lessons since students showed concern and nervousness when the teacher asked them to write in English on a topic of their choice, as they had only received writing instruction in Spanish in previous grades. During the six month period of interactive writing lessons students were given a total of seven writing prompts to write to independently.

Students were given the first writing prompt, to write to in English for the first time, after approximately 15 sessions of interactive writing (see Table 1).

Table 1

Writing Prompts and Interactive Writing Sessions Prior to Prompts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompt Number</th>
<th>Interactive Writing Sessions Prior to Prompt</th>
<th>Prompt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Write about something funny that happened to you or your family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Write about activities you like to do with your friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Write about what you do on the weekends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Write about your favorite toy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Write about what you do at parties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Write about what you see and what you do when it is spring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Write about what you like to do when you are on vacation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The teacher intentionally chose the writing prompts to be simple and familiar to all students to minimize confusion and tension among students and to try to assure that all students had the same access to ideas and the same access to opportunities to respond.

Students were given approximately 30 minutes to write to each prompt during regular interactive writing time and were encouraged to follow the steps of interactive writing instruction (think of an appropriate sentence and say it, count the words, draw the lines, write the words, and read it). They were not allowed to speak to anyone nor receive assistance from the teacher, but they were allowed to use writing tools posted in the room such as the word wall, alphabet chart, and Houghton Mifflin mnemonics. The teacher allowed the use of these tools for two reasons. The first reason was that students had been encouraged to use the tools available during interactive writing lessons. The second reason was to add continuity to the classroom environment the students were used to while providing a realistic setting of a primary grade classroom. The teacher collected all the writing samples once the students finished writing.

The collected samples of the students’ independent writing were dated, numbered (to replace students’ names), put in sheet protectors, and organized in a binder in chronological order for each individual student, starting with student one and ending with student seventeen. These writing samples were analyzed to identify patterns of changes students made as a result of interactive writing instruction.
California English Language Development Test

CELDT scores from second and third grade were used to determine differences in the overall and the writing section between the two tests. Students took the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) approximately six weeks after entering second grade which included a writing section for the first time, as writing was not part of the CELDT in kindergarten and first grade. When students took the CELDT they had not yet started participating in the interactive writing lessons. The CELDT was given to them again approximately four weeks after entering third grade and it included a writing section as well. By the time students took the CELDT in third grade they had completed about six writing assignments during regular class time, but had not participated in any type of writing lesson or writing instruction yet.

CELDT scores from both second and third grade were photocopied from original score reports in the student cumulative files. The copies were collected, numbered (to replace students’ name), organized in a binder starting with student one and ending with student seventeen (four numbers were skipped due to missing CELDT scores of four particular students), and arranged by placing second grade CELDT report at the top and third grade CELDT report at the bottom. These CELDT scores were examined to determine differences in the overall and the writing section of the test between scores from both grades. CELDT scores from four participants were not included as these students had moved to other school districts soon after completing second grade.
Data Analysis

This study involved quantitative and qualitative data collected to identify changes in writing during and after interactive writing instruction on students who were just learning to write in English for the first time.

A teacher with a Master of Arts in Education (Language and Literacy) who worked at the same school and the regular teacher created a writing analysis form (see Appendix B) used to analyze in detail conventions (grammar and spelling), sentence fluency, organization and ideas, and word choice in every writing sample. Copies of this form were made, color coded (to represent the date of the writing sample), numbered, and attached to every writing sample in the binder accordingly. To ensure reliability the same teacher who helped create the analysis form and who was not familiar with the students analyzed every writing sample using the form just mentioned.

The writing analysis form mentioned above (see Appendix B) was used with every writing sample to record findings related to five areas; conventions associated with grammar, conventions associated with spelling, sentence fluency, organization and ideas, and word choice. In the area of conventions/grammar a tally mark was recorded for every error related to one of the following: verb tense agreement, verb tense shifting, prepositions, articles, pronouns, compound words, adjectival and adverbial phrases, compound subjects, and capitalization. In the area of conventions/spelling a tally mark was recorded for every error related to one of the following: high frequency words, polysyllabic words, pluralization, contractions,
consonant doubling, y/i confusion, and words with consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC), consonant-vowel-consonant-final e (CVCe), vowel diagraphs (VD), other vowel diagraphs (OVD), diagraphs (th, wh, ch, and sh), and consonant blends.

In the area of sentence fluency a tally mark was recorded every time one of the following was found: incomplete simple sentence, incomplete complex sentence, complete simple-correct sentence, complete simple-incorrect sentence, complete complex-correct sentence, and complete complex-incorrect sentence. The sub-area of sentence flow and variation included pattern sentences, some sentence variation, and many different sentence starters; only one was marked. The area of organization and ideas included stays on topic, has a sequence (beginning, middle, and ending), and uses transitions; all that applied were marked. The area of word choice included uses only basic words, uses some advanced words, and uses many advanced words; only one was marked. There was an area for comments and it was used when necessary.

After the writing samples were analyzed, the results were organized in seven tables (one for each of the seven dates writing samples were collected) to see if there were differences over time.

Seven tables were created and color coded to represent each of the dates the writing samples were collected. The tables had 37 columns to represent all the descriptors under each of the four areas on the writing analysis form (Grammatical Errors, Spelling Errors, Sentence Fluency, and Organization, Ideas and Word Choice). They also had 17 rows to record whatever applied for each individual student; a number was written for the number of errors under the error descriptors and a number
one was written under the descriptors not related to errors but to the presence of absence of something.

An additional table was created to add up the numbers for the 17 students for each particular descriptor to determine how interactive writing instruction had affected writing ability of the whole group and not each individual student as they had been taught to write through this process as a whole class and not individually. This table had 37 columns to represent the same descriptors as in the seven tables previously mentioned and seven color coded rows to represent each date that writing samples were collected.

A third and last table was created to add up the numbers for the descriptors pertaining to the same area on the writing analysis form (Conventions: Grammatical Errors, Conventions: Spelling Errors, Sentence Fluency, and Organization, Ideas and Word Choice). It had four columns to represent each of the four areas on the writing analysis form and seven rows to represent each date that writing samples were collected.

The data from the last table was entered into the SPSS program to receive descriptive information about differences in students’ writing ability. The SPSS program was also used to evaluate differences in the overall and writing scores on the California English Language Development Tests (CELDT), using a correlation, a simple t-test, and a paired sample t-test.
**Using the 6 Trait Assessment for Beginning Writers to Score Writing Samples**

Students’ first and last writing samples were scored by a Reading Specialist and a second grade teacher, who worked at a different school, using the five point rubric 6 Trait Assessment for Beginning Writers (Adapted from Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory by Area 3 Writing Project Teacher Consultants, 2001). This rubric was divided into six areas; Ideas, Organization, Conventions, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Voice (see Appendix C). Each area includes the following levels; Experimenting (1), Emerging (2), Developing (3), Capable (4), and Experienced (5), based on where the highest number of descriptors checked fell under, as each area had descriptors for what the writing should look like at each level. The descriptors helped identify the ability level at each area, and the overall score was determined by the level with areas having the most descriptors checked. Each teacher was familiar with the rubric and used an individual blank rubric copy to independently score every sample, then compared scores for consistency. Writing samples with conflicting scores were given to a third teacher, also familiar with the rubric, who helped decide the final score. All scores were recorded on a table to look at differences between their first and last writing samples. The table had two columns to record scores from the first and last writing samples and 17 rows to record the scores for each individual student. One student missed the last writing prompt and his/her writing sample prior to the last one had to be used.
Conclusion

The chapter has described the methodology used to examine assessment results, on how interactive writing instruction affected the writing ability of second grade English Learners who began to learn to write in English. Data collection and analysis involved findings on three measures; full analysis of writing samples for each date samples were collected, scores from the first and last writing samples, and overall and writing scores on the California English Language Development Tests (CELDT) from early second and early third grade. The results of this qualitative and quantitative nonexperimental study will be shared in the next chapter and discussed in the last one.
Chapter 4

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter describes the results of the different analyses conducted to answer the question that guided this study, which was how interactive writing instruction affected the writing ability of second grade English Learners. The question was examined in the following three ways: analysis of writing samples to identify patterns; scores of participants’ first and last writing samples using the 6 Trait writing rubric; and changes in CELDT scores between the tests administered prior to starting the study and following the study.

Analysis of Writing Samples

Independent writing samples were collected at seven different times from the participating students throughout the six month period of the study. These samples were analyzed to identify areas where there were patterns of notable changes in students’ writing as a result of interactive writing instruction as noted below.

Grammar

The area of grammar comprised errors related to verb tense agreement, verb tense shifting, prepositions, articles, pronouns, compound words, adjectival or adverbial phrases, compound subjects, and capitalization.

Students’ errors in the area of grammar are summarized in Table 2. In the first three writing samples students averaged 1.9 complex sentences, and in the last three samples they averaged 2.9 complex sentences. On the first writing sample students
averaged 2.41 grammar errors, which was the lowest average out of seven writing sample sets. On the second writing sample students averaged 5.07 grammar errors, which was the highest average out of the seven sets. On the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth writing sample sets students’ grammar errors averaged similarly (3.01, 3.44, 3.56, and 3.38). On the last writing sample students averaged 4.56 grammar errors. Students’ grammar errors increased, corresponding with students trying to write more complex sentences as time progressed. Table 2 shows the number of students that provided a writing sample at each period, the total number of grammar and spelling errors students made in their samples from each period, and the average of grammar and spelling errors per student from each period.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Samples</th>
<th>Number of Participating Students out of 17</th>
<th>Number of Grammar Errors</th>
<th>Average of Grammar Errors per Student</th>
<th>Number of Spelling Errors</th>
<th>Average of Spelling Errors per Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>21.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>5.07</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>24.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>21.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>17.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>314</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sixth</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>3.38</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>17.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seventh</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>15.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Spelling

The area of spelling included errors related to CVC words, CVCe words, diagraphs, vowel diagraphs, other vowel diagraphs, consonant blends, high frequency
words, pluralization, contractions, consonant doubling, polysyllabic words, r-controlled, ing, wrong vowel, and other errors which included confusion or substitution of k/ck, ll/j, i/y, i/ee, j/h, and j/g. Students evidenced notable changes throughout the samples which are explained next.

In spelling students showed an obvious improvement as their errors declined as time progressed. Table 2 above indicates a rise in errors between the first and the second writing sample, averaging from 21.18 to 24.67, and also between the fourth and fifth, averaging from 17.88 to 19.63. This change corresponded with students moving from using only basic words to using some advanced words, which also increased their probability of error (the statistics are given below). The average of spelling errors from the fifth to the seventh writing sample dropped every time, from 19.63 to 17.25, to end at 15.94. The average of spelling errors varied as much as 8.73 and the average difference between the first and the last writing sample was 5.24.

When four specific spelling errors (CVC, high frequency words, vowel diagraphs, and errors that included confusion or substitution of k/ck, ll/j, i/y, i/ee, j/h, and j/g) were examined students averaged a total of 68.25 errors on the first writing sample. Students made fewer errors, by .25, on their second writing sample. Surprisingly on their third writing sample their errors increased reaching an average of 71.0. However, from the fourth writing sample on, their error average started to decline, going from 67.72 to 47.47, to 40.10, to end at 36.73. The average of these four specific spelling errors (CVC, high frequency words, vowel diagraphs, and other type of errors that included confusion or substitution of k/ck, ll/j, i/y, i/ee, j/h, and j/g)
varied as much as 33.25 and the average difference between the first and the last writing sample was 30.5 (an improvement of 45%). When looking at the standard deviation of these four specific spelling errors some noticeable differences were found. The first, second, fourth, and fifth writing samples showed a large disparity between the mean and the standard deviation, differing as much as 12 points. However, the third, sixth, and seventh writing samples had a mean in close proximity to standard deviation, differing only 1 to 2 points. The one-sample statistics in Table 3 below show the mean, standard deviation, and the standard error of measurement for spelling errors related to CVC words, high frequency words, vowel diagraphs, and other errors (which included confusion/substitution of k/ck, ll/j, i/y, i/ee, j/h, and j/g; r-controlled; ing; and wrong vowel) for each period that writing samples were collected.

Table 3

One –Sample Statistics on Spelling Errors Related to CVC Words, High Frequency Words, Vowel Diagraphs, and Other Errors (Confusion/Substitution of k/ck, ll/j, i/y, i/ee, j/h, and j/g; r-controlled; ing; and wrong vowel)
When the spelling errors were broken down and added together for each particular writing sample, it was noted that students had made the most progress in their spelling of high frequency words. The total number of errors related to the use of high frequency words decreased from 144 in the first writing sample to 89 in the last writing sample. The total number of errors related to the use of high frequency words decreased with every writing sample, with the exception of the second one, which showed an increase in errors from 144 to 181. In chronological order, the total number of spelling errors related to the use of high frequency words were 144, 181, 170, 153, 122, 97, and 89. Figure 3 below shows how the total number of errors related to the use of high frequency words declined overtime as explained above (again, with the exception of the second writing sample).

Interestingly, there was a decline in the total number of errors related to confusion or substitution of k/ck, ll/j, i/y, i/ee, j/h, and j/g, with the exception of the second writing sample which showed a decline from 73 to 52, and then an increase from 52 to 72. In chronological order, the total number of spelling errors related to confusion or substitution of k/ck, ll/j, i/y, i/ee, j/h, and j/g were 73, 52, 72, 51, 51, 49, and 39. The changes in the total number of spelling errors related to CVC words (in chronological order 15, 11, 12, 9, 14, 7, and 7), and vowel diagraphs (in chronological order 41, 28, 30, 10, 31, 19, and 16) were inconsistent. However, improvement was seen on the last two writing samples. Figure 3 summarizes this information.
Figure 3. Spelling Errors Over Time in Four Areas: Consonant Vowel Consonant Words, Vowel Diagraphs, High Frequency Words, and Confusion/Substitution of k/ck, ll/j, i/y, i/ee, j/h, and j/g; r-controlled; ing; and wrong vowel.

Writing samples were also analyzed for the areas of organization and ideas and word choice. From the first sample, students showed consistency in staying on topic in 96% of the writing samples collected throughout the study. Students also shifted from using only basic words to using some advanced words as time progressed; on the first three writing samples students used only basic words an average of 75% of the time, and used some advanced words an average of 25% of the time. On the fourth and fifth writing samples they used only basic words an average of 44% of the time, and used
some advanced words an average of 57% of the time. By the sixth and seventh writing samples the use of only basic words declined to an average of 25% of the time, and the use of some advanced words increased to an average of 72% of the time. As the use of some advanced words increased the use of basic words declined, however, none of the students used many advanced words with the exception of one student on the sixth writing sample. Figure 4 reports this information as explained above.

![Figure 4](Organization, Ideas and Word Choice Over Time)

Figure 4. Organization, Ideas and Word Choice Over Time.

Analysis of Scores from First and Last Writing Samples

Students’ first and last writing samples were analyzed and compared using the 6 Trait Assessment for Beginning Writers (adapted from Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory by Area 3 Writing Project Teacher Consultants, 2001). This phase of the analysis looked at differences reflected only in the students’ first and last
independent writing samples after receiving interactive writing instruction. In comparing students’ scores from first to last writing sample, there was a pattern of positive improvement. At the first writing sample, there was one student at Level 1; four students at Level 2; 12 students at Level 3; and no students at Level 4. By the final writing sample, there were no students at Levels 1 or 2; 11 students at Level 3; and six students at Level 4. Nine out of the 17 students (53%) improved their scores from the first to the last writing sample. Of these nine, six improved one level and the other three improved two levels. None of the students scored lower on the last writing sample than on the first one, and none of the students scored lower than Level 3 on the final sample. It must be noted however, that almost half of the students (8 = 47%) stayed the same, at Level 3. Additionally, since no statistical analyses were computed for these data, it is not clear whether the gains seen for half of the students indicate a statistically significant positive change overall. Figure 5 reports the results explained above.

![Figure 5. Comparison of First and Last Writing Samples.](image-url)
Changes in CELDT Scores

To further determine the effects of interactive writing instruction, the overall and writing subtest scores of students on the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) were evaluated to examine whether students’ scores had changed between the tests administered prior to starting the study and following the study. CELDT scores from four participants were not included as these students had moved to other school districts soon after completing second grade.

Table 4 reports the overall pre and post instruction CELDT scores for each student, using a 1 through 5 scale (1 for beginner, 2 for early intermediate, 3 for intermediate, 4 for early advanced, and 5 for advanced). The second part of the table reports each student’s pre and post numerical scores for the writing section of the CELDT.

Table 4

*Pre and Post CELDT Scores: Overall and Writing Section*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall CELDT Scores (1 through 5 designation)</th>
<th>CELDT Scores for Writing Section (numerical)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>Post</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
In order to identify any differences between the pre and post test CELDT scores, mean scores were computed and compared using t-tests. The mean overall CELDT score at the beginning of second grade was 2.38 (Early Intermediate ELD level). At the beginning of third grade the mean overall score was 2.92 (Early Intermediate ELD level). While there was a positive trend from the second to the third grade score for six students, for the remaining seven students there was no change. Not surprisingly, the results of the paired sample t-test did not reach statistical significance (t = .69).

The CELDT scores on the writing section at the beginning of second grade had a mean score of 448 (Early Intermediate ELD level). At the beginning of third grade the mean score was 504 (Intermediate ELD level). After a paired sample t-test was run, pre-writing to the post-writing scores showed a statistically significant difference at the .007 level with a t value of 3.21.

Discussion

The information presented in this chapter demonstrated differences and pattern changes found as a result of interactive writing instruction. Spelling was an area with noticeable patterns of positive progress. When spelling was broken down into specific types of spelling errors, the use of high frequency words appeared to be an area of improvement. All students moved from using only basic words to using some advanced words as time progressed. Their writing stayed on topic from the beginning of the treatment to the end, which could be accredited to knowledge previous to interactive writing. The students’ grammar appeared to worsen as they began to write
more complex sentences. When looking at the scores of the first and last writing samples, over half of the students improved their scores and the rest stayed the same. Finally, the students’ overall CELDT scores showed a trend of improvement but there was not enough of a change to reach significance. However, there was a significant positive difference for the writing subtest scores. Explanation of the data presented in this chapter will be discussed in Chapter 5.
Chapter 5
DISCUSSION, INTERPRETATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Data in this study were analyzed to detect differences, over time, in the writing ability of second grade English Learners who were taught to write through interactive writing lessons that took place during six consecutive months. The examination of the data revealed changes and differences which show some positive effect of interactive writing instruction on students’ writing ability. The following section will discuss the findings for the three assessments used in this study; analysis of writing samples, scores of first and last writing samples, and pre and post CELDT scores.

Discussion of Data Results

Analysis of Writing Samples

Students’ writing samples were analyzed for changes in usage of grammar, spelling, organization and ideas, and word choice. Grammar appears to be a complicated subject for English Learners. Analysis of the writing samples showed inconsistency in the average number of grammar errors across the seven sets of samples (going up and down throughout the study), with the lowest average on the first sample and the second highest on the last one, as evidenced in Table 2. However, this increase in grammar errors corresponded to an increase in sentence complexity. Nevertheless, it appears that learning grammar requires students to have a certain level of confidence in the use of English language. It is quite possible that participants in this study lacked that confidence, as they were all English Learners in a bilingual
program who had not received instruction in English with the exception of 30 to 45 minutes of ELD in the two previous grades. According to Ellis (2006), the learning of grammar is difficult when English Learners have not reached an adequate English proficiency level that would allow them to understand its complicated structures. Research suggests that teaching writing to English Learners should not be approached from the grammar side, focusing on the product and unintentionally adding fear to students and stifling their desire to write. On the contrary, it should be approached from the composition side, which results from the need to communicate one’s personal interests, seeking an audience and a purpose (Hudson, 1989; Silva & Matsuda, 2001). Results in this study seem to affirm the value of this approach to writing for English Learners.

Analysis of the writing samples showed a decline in spelling errors related to CVC Words, High Frequency Words, Vowel Diagraphs, and Other Errors (including Confusion/Substitution of k/ck, ll/j, i/y, i/ee, j/h, and j/g; r-controlled; ing; and wrong vowel), as evidenced in Table 3 and Figure 3. This decline in spelling errors could be credited to the fact that words in these groups were used frequently during interactive writing lessons. It is important to mention that one of the goals of interactive writing, besides involving children in purposeful writing, is to require students to make connections between how words look and how they sound, constructing words letter by letter and part by part (McCarrier et al., 2000). As evidenced by previous research, students who participated in interactive writing lessons have demonstrated improvement in the area of spelling, including learning to spell high frequency words;
becoming good at editing; gaining much more knowledge about identification of many different spelling patterns; and increasing invented spelling skills (Button et al., 1996; Craig, 2003; Mariage, 2001; Sipe, 2001).

It was interesting, but not surprising, to see how well students stayed on topic in the writing samples, as shown in Figure 4. Even though participants had not experienced writing in English prior to interactive writing lessons, they demonstrated a good ability in keeping their writing focused on the theme. However, since this was evident from the first sample, it is not clear what if any effect the intervention had on their ability to stay on topic. This finding aligns with the fundamental belief about bilingual education supported by research, which proposes that skills taught in one language transfer to other languages (Edelsky, 1982, 1986; Genesee, 1987; Hakuta, 1986). The Spanish writing samples that participants created in the first week of school in second grade demonstrated that they already had a good ability to stay on topic. The stability of their scores for staying on topic across the writing samples suggests that they applied this skill to the independent writing produced during this study. This finding is consistent with Edelsky’s (1982, 1986) conclusion that students who are confident in using what they know about writing in their primary language are very willing to apply it to English writing.

A pattern of some improvement in the area of word choice was also demonstrated by the analysis of writing samples. At the beginning of the treatment students used only basic words an average of 75% of the time, and used some advanced words an average of 25% of the time. By the end of the treatment students
had done almost the opposite; they used only basic words an average of 25% of the time, and used some advanced words an average of 72% of the time. According to Short and Echevarria (2004), vocabulary development for English Learners requires high quality instruction, which includes interactions with teacher and peers to discuss ideas; sheltered instruction techniques (e.g., slower speech, clear enunciation, and visuals and demonstrations); targeted vocabulary development; and connection to students’ experiences. All the techniques suggested by Short and Echevarria took place during the interactive writing lessons in this study.

Scores of First and Last Writing Samples

Comparisons of the scores from the first and last writing samples showed a pattern of progress in levels for the 6 Trait Writing Assessment. A little over half of the 17 students (53%) improved one level in their writing assessment scores from the first to the last writing sample, with a few of these students progressing two levels. At the time of the first sample, there were several students at Levels 1 and 2, with no students at Level 4. In contrast, there were no Level 1 or 2 students at the final sample, and 6 students had progressed to Level 4. This suggests some substantial progress. However, nearly half of the students (8 = 47%) stayed the same. These results suggest a mixed pattern of impact for the intervention. For some students, participation in the intervention may have helped them to progress one, or even two, levels on the assessment. For about half, however, the assessment did not have enough impact to change their writing assessment level. Changes for these students may have been too minimal to have been identified in this assessment. It should also be noted that these
results must be interpreted cautiously since this data was not analyzed to determine whether there was any statistically significant difference between the first and last writing samples. Nevertheless, the overall shift from no Level 4 scores at first sample to no Level 1 or 2 scores at the last sample suggests a pattern of positive growth.

Further studies are needed to examine what if any positive impacts can be identified for those students who began, and remained, at Level 3. The 6 Trait Assessment for Beginning Writers, which was used to score the first and last writing samples, describes level 3 as the developing stage. The descriptors of the developing stage reflect areas in which English Learners stay for a long time while learning to write. These include moving from basic and general ideas to more developed ones, writing more convincingly so that it adds to their purpose, writing with energy leaving aside simple-everyday sentences, using a wide variety of transitions to create a nice flow rather than a mechanic sequence, and minimizing convention errors to reduce distraction that impairs readability (these are also weaknesses in the developing stage).

It may be that the lack of movement among Level 3 students simply reflects the fact that English Learners need more time to negotiate their way through this level.

**CELDT Scores**

Results from the t-test analyses of the CELDT overall and writing scores were mixed. While the analysis for overall scores did not evidence a statistically significant positive difference, there was a positive change in scores from pre to post treatment for about half of the students; scores for the remaining half remained the same. Further
research may be needed to examine why the instruction seemed to improve overall scores for some students but not for others.

In contrast, scores on the writing section did show a statistically significant positive change from pre to post instruction. These mixed results may not be surprising, since the instructional intervention was aimed primarily at developing writing skills and did not focus on other English language development skills, which are assessed in the overall CELDT scores. The demonstrations along with the engaging student participation during interactive writing lessons make a huge contribution to the building of confidence at an early age (McCarrier et al., 2000). One could infer that the improvement shown on the CELDT writing scores could be attributed to the effectiveness of interactive writing lessons and to the confidence that these lessons accumulated in all students. At the same time, the lack of improvement in the overall scores may simply reflect the limited focus of the instruction to writing and its exclusion of other aspects of language development assessed in the overall score.

Recommendations for Practice and Future Study

This study has demonstrated an interesting pattern of possible impacts of interactive writing instruction on the writing ability of English Learners learning to write in English for the first time. Although the pattern of results is encouraging in some areas but mixed in others, these findings are constructive enough to sustain its use in classroom practice and in further research. Results in this study could have been affected by the limitations of the research. One factor limiting the outcomes of the
study could have been the small sample of participants, which could have not accurately reflected the population, as the participants were not randomly selected. Another limiting factor could have been the length of time for which this study occurred; the differences occurring from only a six-month period of treatment could have been larger if the treatment would have lasted the entire school year. Even though the findings are supportive for teacher practice, further and broader research on the impact of interactive writing instruction on writing ability of English Learners is necessary to contribute to the body of research that helps educators adopt better teaching practices to support the English Learner population.

Summary

More research in the field of teaching writing to English Learners is necessary, particularly related to the interactive writing approach as research in this field is very limited. This study determined that there were some positive differences in writing ability of English Learners who were taught to write in English for the first time through interactive writing lessons. However, in some areas of writing, and for some students, there was no clear evidence of positive impact. The differences which occurred might have been greater and perhaps even statistically significant had the study included a larger sample that would have allowed a better representation of the student population and had it extended for a longer duration. Interactive writing instruction did not appear to have a positive effect in the area of grammar, and it appeared to have an unknown effect in helping students stay on topic. On the other hand, it can be concluded that interactive writing instruction had a positive impact in
writing ability in the areas of spelling, including CVC words, high frequency words, vowel diagraphs, and confusion/substitution of k/ck, ll/j, i/y, i/ee, j/h, and j/g. In addition, the data showed improvement in the area of word choice as students used more advanced words as time progressed. It can also be concluded that interactive writing, as an encouraging and student-centered approach, helped students become confident when writing on their own. The scores on the last writing samples showed a pattern of improvement. Similarly, changes in the pre and post writing CELDT scores revealed statistically significant differences. This study suggests that interactive writing instruction is an effective approach to teach English Learners to write. I will continue with interactive writing instruction in the classroom as I believe that it is motivating, engaging, and supportive instruction that can help students become better writers.
APPENDIX A

Interactive Writing Lesson Plan
Interactive Writing Lesson Plan

Materials for each individual student:
*Dry-erase board* *Lined paper*
*Dry-erase marker* *A pencil with an eraser*
*Small piece of cloth*

A. Choosing a Topic for Writing

1. Students discuss with their partners possible topics for writing then are randomly selected to share ideas with the class.
2. Teacher provides feedback and students select one of the topics for the writing lesson.

B. Verbally Creating Sentences

1. Teacher prompts students to think of a sentence to be written (e.g.; main idea sentence, detail sentence, conclusion sentence, etc.) and providing the option to pass, randomly selects a student to provide a sentence.
2. Students and teacher verbally edit sentence for grammar and content.
3. Students repeat sentence with teacher, counting the words on their fingers.
4. The teacher draws an appropriately sized line on the whiteboard for each word in the sentence as he/she articulates the word.

C. Writing

1. Students identify words to be written on each line.
2. Students verbally segment each word then use their phonetic skills to write the word on their dry-erase boards. Teacher supports students by pointing to mnemonics charts and prompting as necessary.
3. Teacher randomly selects a student to come write the word on the teacher’s whiteboard while teacher provides any necessary support.
4. Students repeat steps 1-4 until the sentence is complete.

D. Reading Sentences

1. When the sentence is completed students read it as the teacher points to each word.
2. Students write the sentence on lined paper.
3. Students repeat as necessary for additional sentences.

E. Reading the Piece of Writing

1. Students read the entire piece of writing from the whiteboard as the teacher points to each word.
APPENDIX B

Writing Analysis Form
# Writing Analysis for EL Students

## Conventions: Grammatical Errors

**SCORE WITH TALLY MARKS**

- **Verb tense (agreement) error**
- **Verb tense shifting**
- **Incorrect Preposition**
- **Incorrect or missing article**
  - *A, an, the*
- **Incorrect pronoun**
- **Missed compound word** —
  - *Ex: some body vs. somebody*
- **Incorrect adjectival or adverbial phrase**
  - *Ex: the cake of chocolate vs. chocolate cake*
- **Compound subject**
  - *Ex: “Me and my friends” vs. “my friends and I”*
- **Incorrect or missing capitalization**

An absence of marks indicates that student did not make these errors.

## Sentence Fluency

**SCORE WITH TALLY MARKS**

- **Simple Sentence** = single clause, **Complex sentence** = 2 or more clauses

**Incomplete Sentences:**

- **Missing parts of speech**
  - **Simple**
    - *Ex: my mom likes cats because nice.*
  - **Complex**
    - *Ex: my mom likes cats because nice and they cuddly.*

**Complete Sentences:**

- **Simple correct**
  - *Ex: I like my mom.*
- **Simple incorrect**
  - *Ex: My mom I like*
- **Complex correct**
  - *Ex: My mom likes cats because they are nice and they are cuddly.*
- **Complex incorrect**
  - *Right parts of speech - wrong order. Ex: My mom likes cats because nice and cuddly they are.*

**Sentence Flow and Variation**

**MARK ONLY ONE:**

- **Pattern sentences**
- **Some sentence variation**
- **Many different sentence starters**

## Conventions: Spelling Errors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CVC-</th>
<th>CVCe-</th>
<th>VC-</th>
<th>VD-</th>
<th>OVD-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digraph-</td>
<td>th-</td>
<td>wh-</td>
<td>ch-</td>
<td>sh-</td>
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<td>High frequency word-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pluralization-</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Ex: partys vs. parties*

## Organization & Ideas

**MARK ALL THAT APPLY**

- **Stays on topic**
- **Has a sequence (beginning, middle, ending)**
- **Uses transitions**

## Word Choice

**MARK ONLY ONE:**

- **Uses only basic words**
  - *Ex: Cats are nice.*
- **Uses some advanced words**
  - *Ex: Cats are friendly.*
- **Uses many advanced words**
  - *Ex: Cats are wonderful companions.*

## Comments

*Created by Clara Soltero and Michelle Setzer March 2009*
APPENDIX C

6 Trait Assessment for Beginning Writers
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6 Trait Assessment for Beginning Writers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emerging</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Developing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Capable</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Experienced</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Word Choice**
- Some recognizable words
- Words or labels that go with the picture
- General or ordinary words
- Uses repetition
- Experiments with new and different words with some success
- Uses some descriptive words
- Precise, accurate, fresh, original words
- Creates vivid images in a natural way
- Attempts at figurative language
  (Her lips are as red as roses)

**Sentence Fluency**
- Strings words together
- Writes one sentence or an “almost” sentence
- Uses simple sentences
- Sentences tend to begin the same
- Reader may have to reread to follow meaning
- Some variety of sentence length
- Not all sentences begin the same
- Sections of writing have rhythm and flow
- Consistently uses variety in sentence length
- Sentence structure is correct and creative
- Variety of sentence beginnings
- Natural rhythm, cadence and flow

**Voice**
- Hints of voice present in words/phrases
- Looks different from most others
- Energy/mood is present
- Treatment of topic predictable
- Audience is fuzzy—could be anybody, anywhere
- Expresses some predictable feelings
- Moments of individual sparkle, then hides
- Repetition of familiar ideas reduces energy
- Awareness that the writing will be read by someone else
- Writing is individual and expressive
- Individual perspective becomes evident
- Personal treatment of a standard topic
- Attempts to convey a story or idea to the reader
- Uses text to elicit a variety of emotions
- Takes some risks to say more than what is expected
- Point of view is evident
- Writes with a clear sense of audience
- Cares deeply about the topic
# 6 Trait Assessment for Beginning Writers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 EXPERIMENTING</th>
<th>2 EMERGING</th>
<th>3 DEVELOPING</th>
<th>4 CAPABLE</th>
<th>5 EXPERIENCED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideas</td>
<td>Ideas</td>
<td>Ideas</td>
<td>Ideas</td>
<td>Ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses scribbles for writing</td>
<td>Some recognizable words</td>
<td>Sentences begin to tell a story or make a point</td>
<td>Sentences tell a story or make a point</td>
<td>Writing may present a fresh and original idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictates labels or story</td>
<td>Labels pictures</td>
<td>Ideas not fully developed</td>
<td>Ideas clear</td>
<td>Ideas are narrow and focused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shapes that look like letters</td>
<td>One sentence story</td>
<td>Idea may not stay on topic</td>
<td>Ideas stay on topic</td>
<td>Text enriched by details and description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line forms imitate text</td>
<td></td>
<td>Very few or no details</td>
<td>Includes details or descriptions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writes letters randomly</td>
<td></td>
<td>May use repetitive sentence patterns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No left/right progression</td>
<td>Consistently writes left to right</td>
<td>Simple beginning</td>
<td>Beginning works well</td>
<td>Definite beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No top/bottom progression</td>
<td>Consistently writes top to bottom</td>
<td>No sequencing</td>
<td>Basic sequencing</td>
<td>Creates interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiments with spacing</td>
<td></td>
<td>No transitions</td>
<td>Transitions few and simple</td>
<td>Sequencing is clear and logical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attempts ending</td>
<td>Transitions add interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(then, next, because, first)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventions</td>
<td>Conventions</td>
<td>Conventions</td>
<td>Conventions</td>
<td>Conventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write letter strings-phonetic (d/p/x, ect)</td>
<td>Semi phonetic spelling (MMR)</td>
<td>Phonetic spelling (MONSTUR)</td>
<td>Transitional spelling on less frequent words (MONSTUR)</td>
<td>Spellings of words are correct or very close to correct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempts to create standard letters</td>
<td>Mixed upper/lower case letters</td>
<td>Spelling of High Frequency words inconsistent</td>
<td>High Frequency words usually correct</td>
<td>High Frequency words are spelled correctly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempts spacing</td>
<td>No capitals at beginning of sentences</td>
<td>CAPS at beginning of sentences inconsistent</td>
<td>Most sentences start with capital</td>
<td>Capitalization correct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student interpretation</td>
<td>Uses spaces</td>
<td>End punctuation inconsistent</td>
<td>Uses CAPS on names and 1</td>
<td>Punctuation correct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needed to understand text/pictures</td>
<td>Sentences do not make sense</td>
<td>Simple sentences grammatically correct</td>
<td>End punctuation usually correct</td>
<td>May use creative punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No end punctuation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Indent to show paragraphs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


 Retrieved October 12, 2009, from California Department of Education website: http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/


Northwest Regional Education Laboratory/ Education Northwest (http://educationnorthwest.org/resource/464).


