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The Attitudes of Children with Specialized Language-Learning Needs toward Process Writing

Kara M. McAlister
Western Michigan University

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THE ATTITUDES OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIALIZED LANGUAGE-LEARNING NEEDS TOWARD PROCESS WRITING

by

Kara M. McAlister

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THE ATTITUDES OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIALIZED LANGUAGE-LEARNING NEEDS TOWARD PROCESS WRITING

Kara M. McAlister, M.A.

Western Michigan University, 1995

Students with specialized language-learning needs, who had participated in a computer-based writing lab at Western Michigan University, were interviewed regarding their knowledge about and attitudes toward a process approach to writing instruction. The students orally answered questions posed by the researcher in individual thirty-minute interviews. A Likert-type scale was used to measure the students' attitude toward process writing along with open-ended questions to investigate the students' knowledge about process writing. Qualitative techniques were used to analyze the data.

Responses to the knowledge questions indicated that the students have a better understanding of the meaning and purpose of author groups than of the other components of process writing. Planning and organizing was the component of process writing that the students had the most difficulty explaining. Their knowledge of revising and editing was limited to editing the form of their stories rather than content. The students' overall attitudes toward many of the aspects of process writing were positive, especially toward the aspects of ownership and publication of their writing.
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Kara M. McAlister
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, the focus of writing instruction has shifted from the finished product to the process of writing itself. According to Auten (1988), "Current research in composition reveals that teaching writing as a process rather than a product develops students' writing skills more effectively" (p. 35). Research on the writing process began with a benchmark study on the composing process of twelfth graders (Emig, 1971). Many studies since then have supported writing process instruction in the regular classroom with normally achieving students (Calkins, 1983; Graves, 1983; Harlin & Lipa, 1993; Hayes & Flower, 1986; Rasinski & DeFord, 1986). The effectiveness of process writing with exceptional students that represent the extremely low and high achievement levels, however, has not been thoroughly examined (Bos, 1988; Graham, Harris, MacArthur, & Schwartz, 1991; and Zaragoza & Vaughn, 1992). According to Zaragoza and Vaughn (1992), "of the available information on process writing, only a fraction of it has focused on exceptional children" (p. 185).

Teaching writing as a process provides students with a framework that is utilized by expert writers (Hayes & Flower, 1986). It is a student-centered instructional approach that involves an interactive model of composing. The process approach to writing instruction emphasizes planning and organizing, drafting, revising and editing, within the context of writing for a purpose, to share with peers and publish in a book. The components of process writing are recursive and overlapping in nature. According to Zaragoza and Vaughn (1992), process writing "requires empowering
students as authors to compose their own stories, share their stories with others, read their stories and the stories of classmates, work with classmates to revise and edit, invent spellings, and take control of their learning" (p. 185).

Process writing approaches assume conscious monitoring on the part of student authors. However, "research in the area of students' perceptions of their own writing is rather scarce" (DeFord & Rasinski, 1986, p. 294). According to Fear, Anderson, Englert, and Raphael (1987), "examining student beliefs provides an important source of information for documenting teacher effects" (p. 225). Other researchers have noted the importance of investigating students' knowledge about writing in order to identify areas of weaknesses. According to Graham, Schwartz and MacArthur (1993), "To better understand what and how students with learning disabilities write, it is important to consider what these students know about writing and the process underlying composing" (p. 237). The preceding researchers also state the importance of examining students' attitudes and beliefs about their writing as it may influence what and how they compose.

The current study addressed the dual issues of, first, what students with special needs know about the components involved in process writing, and second, how they feel about each component. The information regarding these issues was obtained through interviews of children with specialized language-learning needs using questions and a Likert-type scale instrument to probe their knowledge about, and attitudes toward, a process writing instructional approach. To investigate the children's knowledge about process writing, an ethnographic analysis was conducted to explore themes in the students' responses to open-ended questions. An ethnographic analysis, as stated by Spradley (1979) is "the search for the parts of a culture and their relationship as conceptualized by informants" (p. 93).
In this study, ethnographic interviewing techniques were used to search for students' definitions of the steps of the writing process and to probe their attitudes toward key aspects of an instructional approach aimed at developing the writing process. Although the researcher employed ethnographic interviewing techniques, it was not a fully ethnographic study (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). That is because it drew on one primary informational source (the views of the children who participated), and it was guided by two pre-established questions. They were:

1. What level of understanding do children with specialized language-learning needs have regarding the definitions and use of the steps involved in process writing after participating in such an approach twice weekly for at least 10 weeks?

2. What do children with specialized language-learning needs like and dislike about the various steps involved in the process approach to writing instruction?

The results of this study could provide information to educators from the students' perspectives about the potential strengths and weaknesses of using process writing with children who have language-related learning disabilities.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter presents a review of the rationale and organization for process writing approaches in both general and special education. Research is considered that focuses on: process writing as an instructional approach, the written expression of students with learning disabilities as compared to normally achieving students, efficacy of process writing with students with learning disabilities, and the perceptions and attitudes of such students toward this instructional approach to writing.

Process Writing

Development of the Process Writing Approach

Over the last two decades, research in the area of writing instruction has increased. Before 1970, writing instruction focused almost exclusively on teaching concrete skills such as grammar, spelling, and handwriting. The emphasis was on the finished product with little regard to the creative process and purpose of writing. Emig's (1971) investigation into the world of writing process shed new light that led researchers beyond this "finished product" approach.

Emig (1971) looked at the ways that students typically behave while they write. In her study, Emig asked eight twelfth graders of above-average and average ability to express out loud their thoughts and feelings while writing. She tape recorded their responses and found the results to be quite different from what the language textbooks supposed student writers to do during the composition process.
Emig found that students' self-initiated writing involved a longer process. The students completed more extensive prewriting activities, revised more while writing, started and stopped at more discernible moments, and reflected more on their work. In contrast, when involved in teacher-initiated writing, Emig found that the students did not have time for prewriting, they did not stop to contemplate what they were writing, and they did not voluntarily revise their writing.

According to Emig (1971), "Most of the criteria by which students' writing is evaluated concerns the accidents rather that the essences of discourse--that is, spelling, punctuation, penmanship, and length rather than thematic development, rhetorical and syntactic sophistication, and fulfillment of intent" (p. 93). Emig's study revealed that writers, when given ownership of their work, had a more involved process than just writing and fixing misspelled words.

Since Emig's study of the composing process of student writers, several other researchers have followed in her footsteps (Graves, 1983; Calkins, 1983; Hayes & Flower, 1986; Florio-Ruane & Dunn, 1987; Graham, Harris, MacArthur & Schwartz, 1991). They have studied the composing process of beginning and mature writers to develop more effective instructional writing approaches. Hayes and Flower (1986), for example, studied the composing process of adult (post secondary) writers to get a better understanding of the organization of cognitive processes underlying the act of writing. To record the cognitive processes of the writers, they collected "thinking aloud" protocols, similar to Emig's (1971) study, where the participants said "aloud" exactly what they were thinking while writing. Analysis of the protocols revealed that expert writers have goals for writing that are hierarchically organized. They employ three major processes to reach these goals- planning, drafting and revising. Hayes and Flower felt that by studying the cognitive processes of mature writers, instruction in writing would be better informed. The principles of process writing developed from the
translation of research on the composing process into an instructional approach to writing which focuses on the process of writing instead of just the finished product (Graves, 1983; Calkins, 1983; Florio-Ruane & Dunn, 1987; Graham, Harris, MacArthur, & Schwartz, 1991).

**Components of Process Writing**

The components of the process approach to writing instruction are recursive in nature and involve some amount and type of planning, writing, revising and editing, and sharing and publication. More broadly, the components have been labeled as prewriting, writing, and postwriting. Regardless of how they are divided, researchers agree on the important aspects of each component (Florio-Ruane & Dunn, 1987).

The planning part of process writing may be on paper or in the mind. It involves thinking of ideas or topics, imaging the audience and considering goals and purposes for writing. This is quite different from traditional classroom writing where the teacher decides the writing task, selects the topic, leaves the purpose unclear, and serves as the student's only audience (Florio-Ruane & Dunn, 1987). According to Stires (1983), "topics should be based on a student's experiences, knowledge, or interests. This self-selection of purposes, audiences, and topics gives the student a sense of ownership in their writing" (p. 562).

The writing or drafting component of process writing involves putting ideas into print. During first drafts, the focus is more on fluent generation of ideas than on monitoring for correct writing conventions. In traditional practice, the first draft was often given to the teacher to critique and edit and then returned to the student to correct as the final draft. In process writing approaches the first draft is often the first of many drafts. The teacher becomes a coach encouraging students to continually review their writing and revise as necessary, acting as their own editors. According to Florio-
Ruane & Dunn (1987), "research also suggests that students who write frequently with coaching and feedback tend to learn to write more effectively" (p. 60).

Revision is the third component of process writing. In a recursive model, revision can occur at any point during the process. It involves getting the text ready for an audience. The first emphasis is on making the ideas clear and coherent for the reader (Graves, 1983). During process writing instruction, grammar and spelling are also addressed in the context of the author's actual text and purposes for writing (Bos, 1988). This contrasts with traditional instruction in which "the acquisition of craft-oriented skills precluded the student from the concomitant development of those processes which underlie written expression as an essential form of communication" (Roit & McKenzie, 1985, p. 259). According to Graham and Harris (1988), "knowledge of grammatical concepts is not a necessary prerequisite for skillful writing, and instruction in traditional grammar exercises (e.g. diagramming sentences) does not improve students' writing performance. Skills in grammar and usage are best developed within the context of real writing tasks" (p. 511).

A process writing approach involves sharing work with peers and the teacher at multiple points in the process. This gives students an opportunity to give and receive feedback and perceive themselves as authors writing for a real audience. According to Graham and Harris (1988), whenever possible, writing should be aimed at an authentic audience and be designed to serve a real purpose" (p. 507). Publication of the author's work gives value and worth to the entire process. A teacher's account confirms this notion:

I discovered the importance of authentic, audience-directed writing and publication last year while I was daily logging observations of my students' writing behavior. Over and over again I found myself recording their enthusiasm about a publication or the response it generated. My students rarely chose to put a finished piece in their folders. Invariably they chose to publish, and often publication was the original objective when they began drafting. (Stires, 1983, p. 566)
In summary, a process approach to writing instruction involves "empowering students as authors to compose their own stories, share their stories with others, read their stories and the stories of classmates, work with classmates to revise and edit, invent spelling, and take control of their learning" (Zaragoza & Vaughn, 1992, p. 185). According to Roit and McKenzie (1985), teachers using this approach "communicate to the student that written language is a process which transcends the mere sum of its parts, and one which is only as good as the ideas behind it" (p. 258).

Written Expression of Students With Learning Disabilities

The participants in this study all have written language difficulties secondary to language impairments or learning disabilities. However, in reviewing the relevant literature, when addressing exceptional children, the main focus has been on the writing of students with learning disabilities, with less reference to children with specific language impairments. Therefore, the literature discussed below refers mostly to students with learning disabilities.

The written language problems of students with language and learning disabilities have been described by a number of authors (Bos, 1988; Graves & Hauge, 1993; Steve, 1994). Characteristics include "difficulty manipulating and perceiving the relationship among ideas, monitoring their texts, and using writing strategies to produce coherent texts" (Englert, 1992, p. 153). Other problems experienced by students with learning disabilities include "difficulty setting goals for communication, generating content, organizing material according to common text structures, and evaluating and revising their writing" and "difficulty with the physical demands and conventions of writing" (MacArthur, Schwartz, & Graham, 1991, p. 230).

When students with learning disabilities write stories, "they might forget to develop the story by including a problem and a plan, or the story might be finished
abruptly without an ending" (Graves & Montague, 1991, p. 247). Merritt and Liles (1987) also found oral stories generated by children with language impairments in the age range 9:0 to 11:4 to contain fewer complete story episodes, a lower mean number of main and subordinate clauses per complete episode, and a lower number of story components than stories of same-age peers without language impairments.

Barenbaum, Newcomer, and Nodine (1987) compared the written stories generated by students with learning disabilities with stories written by low achieving or normally achieving students at grades three, five and seven. The tasks they used to elicit the students' writing involved immediate writing after viewing a picture with a verbal prompt and writing after drawing a picture with a verbal prompt. The verbal prompt reminded the students to write a complete story with a beginning, middle and ending and to plan before they wrote. The compositions were scored independently by three authors and classified under one of the five categories in their scoring system, from most to least mature: **story** - consisting of a related beginning, middle and end with a conflict and a resolution; **primitive story** - consisting of related beginning, middle, and end without a conflict or problem, and less sophisticated; **action sequence** - series of events temporally arranged in order of occurrence, no clear directed goal connecting beginning and end; **description** - description of picture, no sequence of events, conflict, or resolution; **expressive** - inventories of thoughts or free associations, no narrative or story line. The results in regard to composition types written by the three groups indicated that students with learning disabilities wrote the fewest stories on both tasks, and they wrote a greater number of descriptive and expressive compositions. The students with learning disabilities produced fewer words in their stories, as well as many "non-story" compositions, and there was not significant improvement in either story production or fluency in the higher grade levels.
In a similar study, Houck & Billingsley (1989) compared the written expression of normally achieving students (NA) and students with learning disabilities at three grade levels in terms of productivity, syntactic maturity, vocabulary, and mechanics. Productivity was measured by the number of words and sentences produced. On average, the NA students produced more words and sentences in their compositions. The students with learning disabilities produced more words per sentence; however, this was due to their difficulty with punctuation and a tendency to create run-on sentences. Syntactic maturity was assessed by recording the number of T-units and mean morphemes per T-unit. Although no overall differences were found between the two groups on total number of T-units written, students with learning disabilities produced T-units that were less complex than those written by NA students. To index vocabulary, Houck and Billingsley counted the number of words containing seven letters or more. In every grade level, the mean number of words with seven letters or more was lower for students with learning disabilities. The assessment of mechanics pertained to spelling and capitalization only. Again, students with learning disabilities scored lower than their NA peers. For capitalization, 11th-grade students with learning disabilities had not achieved the accuracy level of the 4th-grade NA students. Spelling accuracies were also lower for students with learning disabilities versus NA students.

Overall, Houck and Billingsley reported:

the written products of students with learning disabilities in 4th, 8th, and 11th grade may be characterized as being shorter, containing fewer sentences with more words per sentence, including fewer long words, and having more spelling and capitalization errors compared to their NA peers. (p. 572)

The preceding characteristics of the written expression of students with learning disabilities and language impairments are based on students' written products. According to Graham, Harris, MacArthur, and Schwartz (1991), "researchers must first realize that continued study of the written products of students with learning
disabilities only yields modest gains in our understanding of the act of writing" (p. 109). However, they do not feel that this type of analysis should be abandoned, rather that researchers should expand beyond descriptive tabulations by using other methodologies to explore what and how students with learning disabilities write. Graham et al. stated that there is much to learn about the writing of students with learning disabilities and by utilizing other research tools such as stimulated recall or the think-aloud method we may gain "greater insight into the properties of the writer's knowledge and the psychological system that constrains how that knowledge is used" (p. 109).

Process Writing With Students With Learning Disabilities

Rationale and Recommendations for the Use of Process Writing With Students With Learning Disabilities

Many researchers have indicated the need for a change in the writing curriculum of students with learning disabilities from practicing grammar, spelling, and handwriting to one that focuses on the process of composing and the importance of sharing a message with an audience (Stires, 1983; Roit & McKenzie, 1985; Zaragoza, 1987; Graham & Harris, 1988; Bos, 1988; Zaragoza & Vaughn, 1992; Graham, Schwartz, & MacArthur, 1993). According to Roit and McKenzie (1985), "a remedial writing program characterized by an integrated, rather than hierarchical approach, would emphasize the importance of the clarity of thought and the meaning of the message across the curriculum" (p. 259). However, in order to instruct students on how to provide clear thoughts and meanings of messages when writing instead of focusing on the mechanics, educators must address the cognitive processes that underlie writing (Hayes & Flower, 1986).
According to Graham and Harris (1989b as cited in Graham, Schwartz, & MacArthur, 1993), "one explanation of why students with learning disabilities produce papers that are less polished, expansive, coherent, and so forth is that they are less adept than their normally achieving classmates in carrying out the higher level cognitive processes thought to underlie effective writing" (p. 237). Therefore, it would seem that exceptional students could greatly benefit from process writing because it teaches the students what to do when they write. By engaging in the components of process writing, students may be able to improve specific writing skills. For example, brainstorming with peers may help students generate ideas, and receiving peer responses to their work may help students develop a better sense of audience.

Graham and Harris (1988) provided specific recommendations for teaching writing to students with special needs using many of the aspects of process writing. Their recommendations were based on "recent conceptualizations of the process of writing, principles of effective writing instruction, and current knowledge of exceptional students' writing abilities" (p. 506). They suggested that teachers should allocate more time for writing instruction and more time for actual composing by the students. Not only do students with learning disabilities need more time for writing each day, they can also benefit from spending more time on each piece of writing (Bos, 1988). In a more traditional approach to writing instruction, students were expected to complete a writing assignment within the writing hour. An important part of process writing is allowing the students to work on one piece over several writing sessions.

Graham and Harris (1988) stated the importance of creating an environment that promotes writing development. By developing a writing community within the classroom where students share and collaborate, teachers provide a supportive, pleasant and nonthreatening environment. A component of process writing involves sharing stories with peers and the teacher. According to Zaragoza (1987), "when children are
given the opportunity to share their work with an audience, they learn that the essence of writing is communication; writing skills become meaningful and children feel in control" (p. 294).

Another recommendation that emphasizes teaching writing as a process with special education students involves addressing the cognitive nature of the composing process. According to Graham and Harris (1988), although more research needs to be done in order to give a complete picture of composing behavior by students with special needs, it appears that they have difficulty executing the cognitive processes critical to good writing. By teaching the components of process writing to students with learning disabilities, the students may increase their understanding of the thought process involved in effective writing.

Teachers' Accounts of the Process Writing Approach

The efficacy of process writing with students with learning disabilities has not yet been thoroughly examined (Bos, 1988; Graham, Harris, MacArthur & Schwartz, 1991). According to Zaragoza and Vaughn (1992), "of the available information on writing process, only a fraction of it has focused on exceptional children" (p. 185). This section reviews reports of two special educators who have used a process writing approach with their students.

Stires (1983) reported positive experiences with process writing in her role as a resource room teacher of students with learning disabilities. She found that writing is indeed a process in which students need to be actively engaged each time they write. By allowing students time to develop their piece of writing with teacher and peer facilitation, Stires noted that growth and learning did occur. Her experiences led her to reject conventional teaching methods of training writing skills in isolation and instead integrate those skills into the writing process. According to Stires, several aspects of
the process writing approach play a significant role in improving the writing of students with learning disabilities. These include "allowing students to choose their own topics (thereby letting them write about their own concerns and interests) and helping students discover real audiences and clear purposes (thereby developing understandings about communication)" (p.565).

Zaragoza (1987) reported similar positive influences of process writing on students with learning disabilities and inner-city high-risk students. She reiterated the fact that "the major shortcoming of writing instruction in the learning disabilities classroom is the glaring absence of practice in functional writing" (p. 290). In her article, Zaragoza described what she calls "an exciting alternative" to writing instruction. She states how process writing offers "special advantages" to students with learning disabilities as well as those at high risk of being labeled as learning disabled.

The important aspects of process writing Zaragoza (1987) describes include: giving the students time to write everyday; allowing them to have control of choosing their writing topic; providing opportunities for active student control over the writing process; integrating subskills into the process by focusing on one aspect of writing at a time; and sharing and publication of students' work. Zaragoza's qualitative results from utilizing this approach for four years with students with special needs displayed improvement in not only the students' written products but in the way they behaved within a writing community. According to Zargoza, "they saw themselves as writers and were realizing the importance of their thoughts and words" (p.299).

Research Studies of Process Writing With Students With Learning Disabilities

Bos (1988) reported two studies of process writing with students with learning disabilities. In order to complete these studies, she observed and collaborated with
three special education resource room teachers over a 2-year period as they implemented process writing in their classrooms with 14 fourth- through sixth-grade students with written expression difficulties. Her first study looked at the writing processes, products, and perceptions of mildly handicapped students when they were placed in an instructional setting that utilized a process-oriented approach to writing. She obtained her data through observation of the students and the classroom patterns. She also used a pretest-posttest format to assess students' written expression performance and perceptions and knowledge concerning the writing process and their competence as writers. Results revealed increases in the length and structural complexity of the written pieces, the amount and quality of planning, and students' perceptions of themselves as competent writers. Students also made gains in written expression performance, especially in the areas of thematic maturity, vocabulary, and overall coherence and organization of their written pieces. However, only minimal gains were made in spelling.

In the second study, Bos (1988) identified features of a process-oriented approach that seemed particularly salient to exceptional students in the context of their learning environment. The six features Bos deduced to be most beneficial were: providing opportunities for sustained writing, establishing a writing community, letting students choose their topics, modeling the writing process and strategic thinking, developing reflective thinking and a sense of audience, and sharing ownership and control. The salient features that Bos pointed out and her reasoning as to why they are beneficial concur with Zaragoza's (1987) results which were previously mentioned in this chapter.
Student Knowledge and Perceptions of Writing

Along with analyzing the final products of students with learning disabilities to assess their difficulties, it is important to consider breakdowns that may have occurred during the composing process. Therefore, it is helpful to examine students' knowledge and perceptions of writing (Graham, Schwartz, & MacArthur, 1993). The understanding of what a person knows aids in the determination of why he or she made a certain decision or used a certain strategy. For example, if students believe that good writers finish their piece in one draft, they may decide not to revise their initial drafts (Graham, Schwartz, & MacArthur, 1993).

Zaragoza & Vaughn (1992), studied the effectiveness of writing process instruction in the regular classroom with three second-grade students (a learning disabled, a low achieving, and a gifted student). The authors were interested in any changes that might occur in the students' writing attitudes and achievement in writing when using a process approach to writing over an extended period of time. All three of the students had participated in a process writing instructional program for a six-month period.

In order to assess change, Zaragoza & Vaughn (1992) used formal and informal evaluations of the students' writing and their attitudes toward writing. An attitudinal scale was administered at the end of the six-month period and consisted of fifteen true/false questions (e.g., "writing is one of my favorite subjects in school," p. 186). The scale consisted mainly of general questions about writing and did not include questions about planning to write or revising and editing. A formal written language test was administered before and after the six-month period and the students' completed compositions were evaluated every three weeks. The results indicated that all three students made gains in dictation, writing, language, proofreading, punctuation,
spelling, usage, and basic skills. In response to the attitudinal scale, the gifted student and the low achiever answered "true" to all the positive items and "false" to all the negative items (e.g., "I think writing is a waste of time," p.186). The same responses were recorded by the student with learning disabilities with the exception of one response in which he chose positively for, -- "It is hard for me to think of topics to write about" (p. 186). According to Zaragoza and Vaughn, all three students demonstrated positive attitudes about writing. When interviewed at the beginning of the next school year, the students had continued to write over the summer.

In another study, Graham, Schwartz, and MacArthur (1990) interviewed students with learning disabilities and students who were normally achieving (NA) about their knowledge of writing, attitudes toward writing, and their confidence in responding to common writing tasks and completing basic writing processes. The participants were in fourth, fifth, seventh, and eighth grade. In order to assess the participants' knowledge about writing, the researchers devised an interview protocol consisting of eight open-ended questions. The first three questions asked about the attributes of good writing and what good and poor writers do, the next three addressed students' knowledge about planning and writing, and the last two questions probed students' knowledge about revising and editing. The researchers also developed an attitudinal scale which consisted of six general items about writing (e.g., "I like to write," and "I would rather read than write," p. 240), and an assessment of self-efficacy which consisted of ten writing efficacy statements (e.g., "When writing a paper, it is easy for me to get ideas," p. 241).

The findings from the preceding study revealed that students with learning disabilities were: less knowledgeable than their normally achieving peers about writing and the writing process, more likely to suggest revising mechanical errors than substantive ones to improve their writing, and less likely to mention a substantive
solution for when they were having difficulty writing. In regard to the students' attitudes toward writing, the results showed that the normally achieving students responded more positively than the students with learning disabilities; however, both groups expressed some positive attitudes. The students also had positive opinions about their efficacy as writers despite evidence of their writing disabilities.

The preceding studies have begun to look at what students know about writing and their perceptions of writing, but do not specifically probe students' knowledge about and attitudes toward the specific aspects of the process writing approach. According to Graham, Harris, MacArthur, and Schwartz (1991) "inquiry must be directed at determining what students with learning disabilities know about the act of composing and what writing means to them" (p. 90). However, along with finding out what students know about the process of writing, it may also be helpful to inquire about their attitudes toward selected aspects of the process instructional approach.

What This Study Proposes to Achieve

According to Zaragoza and Vaughn (1992), "the writing difficulties of students with learning disabilities are so severe and extensive that it is surprising that writing has been a fairly low priority for these students" (p. 184). Research involving the efficacy of instructional practices for writing needs to also focus on children with special needs. However, most of the research describing the writing of students with learning disabilities has looked at their written products and according to Graham, MacArthur, and Schwartz (1991), "product data provides the researcher with very little insight into the processes students employ when developing their written products" (p. 90). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to interview students with learning disabilities about their knowledge of the components of a process approach to writing, as well as their attitudes toward the approach. This research will fill an important void. That is,
although process writing is used widely and considered effective, few research studies have been designed to investigate the technique. This study provides information to educators from the students' perspectives about the potential strengths and weaknesses of using process writing with children who have language-related learning disabilities. The results will have practical significance, in that they will assist educators to identify areas of process writing that might be unclear or unmotivating to the students. Educators might then adjust the components of process writing to better meet the needs of their students.
CHAPTER III

METHOD

This study was designed to provide information about how students in grades four through eight with specialized language-learning needs viewed the writing process approach to writing instruction. This chapter includes information about the investigative approach, the seven students who served as informants, the writing process approach as they experienced it, the interview instrument that was developed to probe their knowledge and attitudes, and the methods of analysis.

Investigative Approach and Techniques

The study was designed to gather information from student informants. Although an instrument was constructed in the format of a Likert-type scale to structure the interview process, the students' comments in their actual words were of primary interest. This type of research is more consistent with qualitative than quantitative techniques. Recommended procedures for qualitative analysis are that researchers analyze the data throughout the study. Qualitative researchers may also adapt the procedure as they go along instead of waiting to analyze the data once the procedure is complete. In qualitative designs, the data usually consist of words rather than numbers. According to LeCompte and Preissle (1993), the focus of qualitative analysis is on "substance, not arithmetic." They devote an entire chapter of their book to "analysis, not coding, and to eliciting meaning from data, not converting it to computable formulae" (p.235).
In this study, the researcher utilized the qualitative, ethnographic technique of key-informant interviewing to collect the data. Key-informant interviews involve interviewing persons who have participated in "key community institutions" and "have access-- in time, space, or perspective--to observations denied the ethnographer (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 166). Ethnography involves the analysis and description of a cultural group (Spradley, 1972). Although, an ethnographic technique was used, this study was not a true ethnography because it did not employ the full range of tools used in traditional ethnography and involved only limited corroboration from multiple data sources (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). It does, however, represent qualities of "educational ethnography," as described by LeCompte and Preissle.

The role of the researcher is an important consideration in qualitative, ethnographic designs. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the idea of the "researcher as instrument" recognizes that researchers can never be value free, but suggests that they need to be open to participants' points of view, not imposing their own" (p.138). In this study, the researcher had also been an instructor who worked directly with five of the informants within two Writing Lab semesters. Two of the students were participants in the Writing Lab during semesters that the researcher was not present, and therefore, should not have recognized the researcher as an instructor. These differences are considered in the interpretation of the results.

Participants

The informants in this study were seven students in grades four through eight. The group included 5 boys and 2 girls. One of the boys was African-American. The rest of the informants were Caucasian. All of the students had been participating in a computer-based writing lab as part of a three-year research project supported by the U.S. Department of Education (Bahr & Nelson, 1993) called "Linking Text-
"Processing Tools to Student Needs" (Project LTPT) in which a process writing approach was used as the instructional method.

The subject-selection criteria for participation in the larger research project (LTPT) were intentionally fairly broad. The researchers were interested in how a heterogeneous group of students with language disorders and learning disabilities would respond to selected text-processing features in computer software programs aimed at supporting students' writing. The criteria for participation in Project LTPT were:

1. Referral by speech-language pathologists and learning disability specialists as having learning disabilities and/or language impairments involving written language processing.

2. Written language as a goal area in the student's individualized education plan.

3. Intelligence scores within normal limits (severe discrepancy between an IQ score and language test or achievement test score was not required).

4. Ability to complete a formal test battery that was administered over two sessions and required 3 to 4 hours to administer. Formal tests in the battery included (a) the Bader Test of Reading-Spelling Patterns (abbreviated as Bader; Bader & Jarrico, 1982); (b) the Test of Written Language-2 (TOWL-2); and (c) the Writing Process Test (WPT). In order to meet this requirement, students had to have sufficient written language ability to write compositions for the TOWL-2 and WPT that included at least two sentence-like units (they did not have to be complete sentences, or use correct adult syntax). Prospective participants also completed an informal phonological deletion task designed to assess phonological awareness and an informal articulation task involving repetition of complex multisyllabic words after the examiner.
5. Parents or guardians who granted permission for their children to participate in the study and who could work out transportation for the after-school writing laboratory. Parents signed a separate permission form for the current study and students also signed formal assent forms for both the original research and for the current study.

**Brief Profiles of Participants**

Table 1 presents the results of formal testing for the seven students who participated in the current study. These results show a variety of abilities in the areas addressed by writing instruction. Other qualities of the individual students help to interpret the meaning of their responses to the interview questions. Therefore, a brief description follows of each participant, with pseudonyms used in place of the students' real names and omission of other details to maintain anonymity, but with otherwise accurate descriptions.

**Sarah**

Sarah was a 12-year-old sixth grader with Down's Syndrome. She was in a regular education classroom at her elementary school and received resource room special education services. Sarah had participated in the Western Michigan University (WMU) Writing Lab for two semesters (Fall, 1993 and Winter, 1994). Sarah's goals at the writing lab focused on planning and generating ideas for stories, relating story details to the main idea, increasing the use of complex sentences, using correct punctuation and capitalization, and using a consistent verb tense throughout her stories. Sarah's stories were generally action sequences dealing with someone getting in trouble for aggressive behavior and the consequences they faced. During the first semester, Sarah rarely worked on one story for longer than one session. Spelling was a strong
point for Sarah and she was willing to provide spelling assistance to her peers. With prompting, Sarah was able to actively participate in the Writing Lab; sharing and receiving ideas.

Table 1
Scores on Written Language Assessment Tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>CA</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>WPT a</th>
<th>TOWL-2 b</th>
<th>Boder c</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Devel. Fluency Overall</td>
<td>Quotients</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>11;6</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>3 1st</td>
<td>5 13th</td>
<td>6 1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>10;6</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>6 9th</td>
<td>4 3rd</td>
<td>4 3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>9;5</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>7 22nd</td>
<td>8 20th</td>
<td>7 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthony</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>9;5</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>8 22nd</td>
<td>3 1st</td>
<td>5 6th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeremy</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>12;0</td>
<td>8th</td>
<td>4 3rd</td>
<td>9 35th</td>
<td>6 9th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alison</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>10;1</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>6 9th</td>
<td>7 13th</td>
<td>6 7th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>9;8</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>10 51st</td>
<td>14 90th</td>
<td>13 81st</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a The values represent standard scores with a M of 10 and a SD of 3 with percentile rankings shown underneath.
b The values represent quotients with a M of 100 and a SD of 15 based on overall written language standard scores.
c The values represent grade level equivalencies.
Anthony

Anthony was a 10-year-old fourth grader, who was in a regular education classroom and received speech services for a phonological processing disorder affecting the sounds /l/, /r/, and /w/. It was recommended that Anthony attend the WMU Writing Lab to focus on his story telling and sequencing skills. At the time of the interview, Anthony was participating in his third semester of the writing program. Anthony's written expression at the story level was characterized mainly by action sequences, therefore, a goal for him was to develop a causally related narrative. Anthony was enthusiastic about sharing his story ideas with his peers at the Writing Lab and providing others with suggestions for story improvement. He was receptive to peer feedback as well and would immediately edit errors that were pointed out to him during group conferencing.

Bob

Bob was a 10-year-old fourth grader who attended a regular education classroom and received speech-language services at his school. Bob was participating in his second semester of the WMU Writing Lab. His written discourse was expository in nature and lacked supportive detail. A goal for Bob was to write a simple narrative, including a character, setting, and action. Bob was a focused author and insisted on writing one story each day and would refuse to revise or add more to any of his previous stories during his first semester of the Writing Lab. However, by the end of the second semester Bob's stories contained a problem and solution and he even worked on one story over five sessions. Bob was willing to interact with peers and share ideas within a small group (one peer and instructor) but became less vocal in a larger group.
Alison

Alison was a 10-year-old fifth grader who attended a regular education classroom. She was enrolled in her third semester at the WMU Writing Lab. Alison was able to write simple narratives with few descriptors and complex sentences. According to her graduate instructor, Alison was protective of her work until it was in final form. She even changed her text to code to keep others from reading it. However, within an author group, Alison was eager to read her story and summarize peer's stories. She also provided positive feedback to her peers and asked them relevant questions about their work.

David

David was a 10-year-old fourth grader who was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder which influenced his ability to concentrate and focus on tasks. At the time of the interview, David was participating in his third semester at the WMU Writing Lab. David's written expression was characterized as simple narratives. Generation of novel ideas through story webbing and brainstorming was a main goal for David, along with using conjunctions to form compound or complex sentences. David resisted using any type of planning strategies, however, stating that he would rather think of ideas as he typed. According to his graduate instructor, David had difficulty providing feedback due to his decreased attention when peers were reading their stories. When reminded to listen to others' stories, David would attend, although still required prompting to provide feedback.
Jeremy

Jeremy was a 14-year-old eighth grader who attended regular education classes at a middle school. At the time of the interview, Jeremy was participating in his fourth semester at the WMU Writing Lab. His written expression was characterized by lists of video game characters and NBA players and statistics. He had difficulty composing a simple narrative, although, with scaffolding, he wrote stories consisting of causally related events. According to his graduate instructor's report, Jeremy did exhibit metacognitive awareness of discourse as evidenced by the types of questions he asked in author groups and his ability to brainstorm for settings, characters, and conflicts that could be used to create his own story.

Procedure

Participants' Experience of Process Writing

The participants attended a computer writing lab at WMU for at least two semesters, twice weekly for an hour and fifteen minutes each session. A typical session for the students consisted of: learning to type with special software for the first fifteen minutes, sharing and listening to stories in author groups of 2-3 students and a graduate student clinician for the second fifteen minutes, writing on the computer for the next 30-35 minutes, and then printing and conferencing individually with the clinician for the last 10-15 minutes. More specifically, the learning-to-type portion of the Writing Lab involved increasing their knowledge and accuracy of keyboarding by completing a series of lessons and graphing their progress. The author groups involved reading their stories and then receiving peer feedback in the form of positive comments and questions. The students then spent time writing at their individual computers, sitting adjacent to the other students in their author groups. They were
encouraged to talk with peers and/or instructors while writing when they needed help or wanted to discuss their stories. At the end of the Writing Lab, the students met with the clinicians to discuss any questions or concerns they were having along with what components of the process writing approach they had utilized that day. Each session, the students recorded on a chart what they had done that day in regard to the use of one or all of the components of process writing.

At the WMU Writing Lab, the students were instructed to use a three-component process when writing. The components were typical of the process writing approach discussed in the review of the literature involving planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. However, the components were combined to three instead of five for self-mediation strategy learning. The components in this study were labeled planning and organizing, writing the story, and revising and editing.

**Interview Protocol**

To address students' knowledge of and attitudes toward process writing, an interview protocol was devised containing both open-ended and Likert-type scale questions (see Appendix A). The protocol was divided into the four sections of the process writing approach to focus on each component. Similar open-ended questions relating to the definition and purpose of the component were placed at the beginning of each section. More specific questions involving the students' attitudes toward the procedures of each component followed and were answered using a Likert-type scale.

The questions were derived from Zaragoza & Baldwin's (1988) informal writing attitude scale (as cited in Zaragoza and Vaughn, 1992) and the Harlin-Lipa Writing Interview (as cited in Harlin and Lipa, 1993). However, Zaragoza and Vaughn's writing scale assesses students' perceptions and interests in writing and not specifically the instructional approach. The same is true for the Harlin-Lipa Writing
Interview (1993), although, the content of their questions are more closely related to the questions used in this study. According to Harlin and Lipa, their protocol contained questions that "tapped the children's attitudes toward writing, identified writing activities children engaged in at home and at school and outlined their understanding and viewpoints of the composing process" (p. 289). Harlin and Lipa's questionnaire did ask for the definition of writing but did not address definitions or purposes of the other individual components of process writing or the students' attitudes or interests toward these components. Therefore, novel questions were created by the researcher, concentrating on the specific procedures of the process approach to writing instruction.

Interviews

The participants were individually interviewed by the researcher for approximately 30 minutes in a quiet environment of their choice. The participants were familiar with the interview process due to the brief interviews about specific software features that were conducted at the end of each Writing Lab semester by Bahr and Nelson (1993) for their research project. The participants' Likert-type scale responses were recorded on the interview form either by the subject or the researcher. After the students responded to the Likert-type scale questions, they were asked why they chose their answers. Audio tape recordings of the interviews, which were transcribed by the researcher, provided the opportunity to record the participants' responses to both the Likert-type scale and open-ended questions.

When interviewing the students, the researcher restated questions and asked additional questions to clarify the students' answers and to check their understanding of the questions being asked. The entire interviews were transcribed including the various clarification questions that were asked of each student (See Appendix B). This may
have influenced the students' responses; however, the researcher felt this was necessary when students' responses were not appropriate for the questions.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the results of the interviews are presented in the same format as the interview protocol used to conduct them. Because of the qualitative nature of the investigation, results are discussed as they are presented. The results of probing knowledge and attitudes about author groups are presented and discussed first, followed by results and discussion regarding student responses about each of the three components of process writing as used in the experiences of these students: planning and organizing, writing your story, and revising and editing. The information within each section first addresses the students' knowledge expressed in response to the open-ended questions followed by attitude-ratings on the Likert-type scale questions. Finally, the students' responses to additional open-ended opinion questions are discussed within each of the four sections.

Author Groups

Knowledge About Author Groups

The students' responses to knowledge questions about author groups revealed their understanding of the meaning and purpose of this component of process writing. For example, one student reported that author groups are "people who work with you to do stories." Another student stated that author groups are "where you can discuss your stories with other people in your group." In response to why we have author groups, Alison stated, "so we can try to help other people out." Sarah reported that the
reason we have author groups is "because people might have ideas for the other peoples' stories." Steve provided a similar response to Sarah's but added another important point, "to make sure your story makes sense and it makes the other kids have an idea for another story." These comments support the conclusion that students have a good understanding of the role author groups play in a process approach to writing.

**Attitudes Toward Author Groups**

The students' attitudes toward the different aspects of author groups were, for the most part, positive. Table 2 summarizes their ratings.

**Table 2**

Frequency of Responses to Questions About Author Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questiona</th>
<th>Really Don't Like</th>
<th>Sort of Don't Like</th>
<th>Sort of Like</th>
<th>Really Like</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do you feel about:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. sharing stories with others?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. other kids talking about your story?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. listening to other kids' stories in author groups?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. talking about other kids' stories?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. only the teacher reading your story instead of other kids?</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. the teacher picking the author groups?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aQuestions 1 and 2 were the open-ended questions about what an author group is and why we have them.
When asked about sharing stories, all of the students but one liked sharing their stories with others. Sarah, who chose "really don't like," had stated at the beginning of the interview that she really liked sharing her stories with peers so she may have been confused about the meaning of the question. However, when Sarah was asked if she liked the teacher reading her story only and not the kids, she decided that she really liked the teacher reading her story and no longer liked sharing her story with others. When asked why she did not like sharing her stories with others, Sarah could not give a reason. She responded to the question about having the teacher read her story only with "Yeah, because I like you."

In response to the other kids talking about their stories, only Jeremy "sort of didn't like it," although, he could not explain why. On the opposite end of the scale, Alison really liked when the other kids talked about her story, commenting "it makes me feel good that people like it."

When asked about listening to other kids stories, Bob was the only one who selected "sort of don't like." He reported that this was because, "It takes really long for their long stories, like if they're four pages, it gets like boring. It's like new to me the first day, then after the next day it's boring, and boring and boring." This same student stated later that he really didn't like having only the teacher read his story because he could not "understand the words because they go so fast." Two positive responses to listening to other students' stories included Sarah's, who really liked listening to peers' stories because she wanted to "get more ideas from other people to make it more powerful... some more characters" and Anthony's, who when asked about listening to other students' stories said, "I really like it [listening to peers' stories] because it's fun and gives me ideas for my story."

In response to how they felt about talking about other kids' stories, all of the participants except Jeremy liked it. Jeremy said he did not like talking about other kids'
stories because he's "not interested in everybody's stories." Alison also indicated that she sometimes "doesn't like" talking about other students' stories because she stated, "sometimes I don't really want to hurt their feelings, telling them what they need and stuff, so it sort of makes me feel bad when I tell them sometimes." Steve, however, gave a more descriptive positive response for why he really liked talking about other kids stories, "because that just cheers them on and gives them more clues to go on."

The participants had more disperse responses to the questions about having only the teacher read their stories and pick the author groups. Jeremy indicated that he does not like having only the teacher read his story because he has to change it and "write the whole thing over again, revise and edit." David had a different point of view. He stated that he really does not like having only the teacher read his story because "other kids can read it and like it too."

In response to the teacher picking the author groups, Anthony stated that "he really likes it because you mostly get people you like at the end of the semester." Sarah agreed with having the teacher pick the author groups because she stated, "I like the other kids." David, on the other hand, wanted to pick the kids in his author group so he could have his friend, Anthony. Jeremy agreed, saying, "I want to pick my own author groups."

The next question, an opinion one, was a continuation of the preceding Likert-type scale question about picking the kids in their author groups. The question asked what kind of kids they would pick to be in their author groups. The students' responses were similar in that they all mentioned something about nice, good people who were their friends. Same gender was also a requirement for most of the students; however, nothing was mentioned about wishing for any other common feature.

Another opinion question asked the students if they thought author groups helped them. Five out of the seven students stated that author groups helped them get
ideas. Sarah reported that author groups help her get "more ideas, interesting ones." Another student, Alison, stated, "They [author groups] help me plan my story more and help me write it." The students who disagreed about author groups helping them were more frequently negative in their other responses as well. David, who did not think author groups helped him, stated that "yeah, they [author groups] do [give you ideas] but not very good ones." When asked what he would change about author groups, David replied "not have them."

Other comments on what to change about author groups consisted of time and size adjustments. For example, a few students mentioned making the time spent in author groups shorter so they could have more time writing. Jeremy indicated that he would like fewer people in the author groups. When probed about the ideal number, he said, "one person," so that fewer people would be sharing their stories, allowing more time for writing. Steve had another recommendation for saving time when asked what he would change about author groups. His suggestion was that "you don't have to read the whole story; you only have to read the new part."

Even though most of the students felt positively about author groups, many of them indicated that they would rather spend the time writing their stories. Not only did the students want to spend less time in author groups, they also wanted to decrease the time spent planning and organizing and revising and editing as well. The students request for shortening the time allotment for all the components except writing may be an indication that they do not have a clear understanding of the other components and why they are necessary in the writing process.
Planning and Organizing

**Knowledge About Planning and Organizing**

The results of the students' knowledge of planning and organizing revealed a limited understanding of this component. They were unable to explain what planning and organizing means and why we do it. Many of their responses were restatements of the actual question words. For example, two students replied that planning and organizing meant "planning your story and organizing your story." Three other students responded to the question about explaining the planning and organizing component with, "I forgot," and "I don't remember." When asked reasons as to why they plan and organize their stories, two students said, "to get ideas." Perhaps because they know getting ideas is a part of process writing, and they thought it would be an appropriate answer to this question as well as the prior set. Other answers that were off-target included, "Well, to help you spell words or something."

**Attitudes Toward Planning and Organizing**

Although responses to the knowledge questions showed limitations, the students' comments about the attitudinal scale questions showed a more complete understanding of planning and organizing when asked more specific, in-context questions. The students' rankings for this set of questions are shown in Table 3.

The first attitudinal question asked the students how they felt about planning and organizing. The results were split, with interesting explanations of why they liked or did not like planning and organizing. Two students reported not liking to plan and organize because it, "takes up too much time," and, "it wastes my time of writing." Another reason for not wanting to plan and organize before writing came from Jeremy who stated, "I already know what I'm going to write in my story, and I know what I'm
going to put in my story." Jeremy's rationale about planning and organizing was reiterated by other students during the course of the interviews regarding this step of process writing. For example, Bob responded to this question with a rationale similar to Jeremy's, "I think about things in my head; I don't have to write them on a piece of paper; I'll remember it." Sarah, on the other hand, stated that she really likes planning and organizing because, "I like to write out what I'm thinking of."

Table 3
Frequency of Responses to Questions About Planning and Organizing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questiona</th>
<th>Really Don't Like</th>
<th>Sort of Don't Like</th>
<th>Sort of Like</th>
<th>Really Like</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. planning and organizing before you write?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. thinking up your own ideas?</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. getting ideas from other kids?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. the teacher thinking up ideas for you?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. making notes or webs on paper before you write your story?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. the computer giving you pictures to write about?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. the computer giving you questions to answer about your story?</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aQuestions 1 and 2 were the open-ended questions about what planning and organizing is and why we do it.

All of the students felt positively about thinking up their own ideas. Alison, for example stated, "I just don't like other people telling me what I have to write and stuff
because I like putting my own ideas into my story." Steve reinforced the fact that students really like "thinking up" their own ideas, "because then it makes your story a lot better because then nobody knows what you're going to do next. It makes it mystery like." The concept of ownership is an integral part of process writing and from the previous results appears to be well liked by the students learning with the approach.

The next two attitudinal questions inquired about the students' feelings on having the teacher and other students give them ideas. The results were mixed. Steve, in response to how he felt about the teacher giving him ideas, stated, "[I] sort of like it because sometimes it could be something you don't want to put, but sometimes she does give me some hints of what... for example, I had 'lcp' and she wanted me to put what 'lcp' was." Another positive response to the receiving ideas from the teacher came from Sarah who reported, "I like teachers to give me lots of details and punctuation." The last part of Sarah's comment mentions punctuation. This is one of many remarks that the students made about punctuation and spelling when referring to the teacher. More examples are provided later in this chapter. Some reasons for not liking ideas from the teacher and students included: "[I] really don't like [getting ideas from students] because it doesn't sound right," and "I really don't like it, because I really don't like teachers trying to think up ideas for me. I like to think [of] them on my own."

In response to taking notes or making webs on paper before they write, all but one of the students chose the negative side of the Likert-type scale. Five out of the seven students chose "really don't like." Their comments on why they felt negatively about this type of planning were consistent with their overall feeling of not liking to plan before they write. For example, Alison stated, "I really don't like it, because I know what I'm going to write about, so I don't need a web to help me work on it."
Steve's response is similar in the beginning but then he gives a different rationale: "[I] really don't like it [making webs], because I already have a web up here [points to head]; then it's lost in your head when you write it on paper." Steve's final comment is contradictory to the strategy that most people use of writing information on paper as another way of processing and remembering. His answer could possibly be related to the increased time it takes him to write it down, causing him to lose track of what he is thinking.

The last two Likert-type scale questions asked the students how they felt about the computer helping them plan by giving them a picture to write about or questions to answer regarding their story. Two out of the 7 students had used the software that provided a series of story grammar question-prompts to outline their story elements before they started writing. Two of the five remaining students were given an explanation of how the software worked, once the interviewer became aware of the difference in experience levels. Therefore, there were fewer responses to this question and two of the responses were from students who had not actually used the software that included this feature. All of the students had used the software that gave them access to a picture bank before writing, but only two had used the software that has students construct their own pictures as a pre-writing activity. From the four responses that were given, three of the students indicated that they "really don't like" having the computer give them questions about their story. The other student, Jeremy, chose "really like" in regard to the computer asking questions, although he was not probed at the time of his interview as to why he chose that answer. Regarding their experience with software that allowed them to create a picture and then write, four of the seven students who responded felt positively about designing a picture to help them write. Bob's response was "really like it, so it can give me an idea of what the picture is and I can write words down that can mean something."
At the end of this section, two opinion questions were asked: "Do you think planning and organizing help you?" and "What would you change about planning and organizing?" The results seem to indicate that the students do not want to plan and organize because they feel it does not help them and only takes away from the time that could be spent writing. Their comments reflect a lack of understanding of what this component means, and why it may be necessary and helpful. For example, Bob's response when asked about what he would change was, "planning when getting ready to go home and stuff because I didn't really like to stay there planning and organizing to get home." This displays Bob's confused meaning for the word, "planning." His comment apparently refers to the individual conferences that were held at the end of each writing session, during which the students marked off on a chart what step or steps they had worked on that day. In a way, Bob was correct in that he was organizing his work; however, the students did not make plans relative to their stories in the end-of-the-session conferences. Therefore, Bob showed limited understanding of this component.

Jeremy also gave a response showing lack of understanding. In response to being asked about whether or not planning and organizing helps him, he stated, "the more you think [spend time thinking] about having ideas for your story and all that and you can put them in there." This response came from a student who does not show any signs of planning and could benefit from planning in that his stories are usually just lists of characters from movies and comic books, which do not contain any story grammar elements. Anthony did feel that planning and organizing helped him, and he explained his reason logically, saying, "You can think of characters in your story and what the title can be." Sarah indicated that planning and organizing "kind of" helps her too; however, her reasoning, even after another explanation of the component, was vague and still seemed to indicate a lack of understanding. She stated, "Because I want
it [my story] longer." She did not explain how planning and organizing helped her write a longer story.

Writing

Knowledge About Writing

The students were asked general questions about what it means to write a story and why we write stories. The students' responses reflected their thinking about what they learned at the Writing Lab and/or viewpoints of other instructors from previous writing experiences. The students' responses did show some deeper thinking along with more surface level thinking. Steve, for example said that writing a story means "you take and you write what you think, so we can learn, so we can have something to do and stuff." When asked what you learn, Steve's response was "you learn how to read better." Alison also had rationale for her response, saying, "it means to write what you like about what goes on during the day, and sometimes it helps you tell your friends about how much you like them." Her response to the specific question about why we write stories was, "I write a story because I like to write stories." Sarah also gave the same reason for writing stories. She had more difficulty telling what it means to write a story and gave the surface meaning, "first, you write out a story and you, like, type it on the computer, and you like, put some... that's all I know." Other responses to why we write stories included, "get better spelling," and "so we can like make a good story for your mom and dad to read over and over again." It does appear that some of the students have the sense of writing for an audience, even if their broader sense of purpose is rather fuzzy. Further evidence of audience awareness is described in the revising and editing section of this chapter.
Attitudes Toward Writing

The majority of the attitudinal Likert-type scale questions about writing addressed ownership issues. The results indicate that most of the students liked working over several sessions, deciding how long their stories should be, and picking their own words for their stories with minimal assistance from other students. In regard to having their teacher help them write their stories, most students reported needing a teacher's help for punctuation and spelling, but did not mention needing assistance with content.

Table 4
Frequency of Responses to Questions About Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questiona</th>
<th>Really Don't Like</th>
<th>Sort of Don't Like</th>
<th>Sort of Like</th>
<th>Really Like</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. working on the same story over several sessions?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. picking the words for your story?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. deciding how long your story should be?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. figuring out spelling on your own?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. using a computer to help you write?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. other kids helping you write your stories?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. the teacher helping you write your stories?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aQuestions 1 and 2 were the open-ended questions about what writing is and why we do it.
Most students felt positively about writing over several sessions, except for Sarah and Jeremy. They reported that they would rather write different stories each session. Their responses seemed consistent with the way they worked at the Writing Lab. Both students would frequently say they were done with a story halfway through one session of the writing lab and they generally required maximum scaffolding to expand on what they had written. A positive response for writing one story over several sessions was, "It lets me add more detail to my story. It helps me come up with more ideas."

All of the students, except Jeremy, liked picking the words for their stories. Jeremy, who chose "really don't like" and Bob, who chose "sort of like," indicated that they would like the teacher to help them. Bob's response to why he sometimes doesn't like picking the words for his story was, "I don't like picking the words for my story a lot, I try to think of them but I forget to remember them." Bob's explanation may reflect difficulties in auditory comprehension and/or oral expression. These other factors play a role in the interviewing process of students with language-learning disabilities.

All of the students liked choosing the length of their story. Comments from three different students were, "I like it long," and "if I couldn't decide how long it could be, I wouldn't really like writing stories, because if it was really short, I wouldn't like my story at all," and "I think it should be really long, probably about really long." Sarah was the only one who liked her stories short, one page, because, as she explained, she liked to write a new story each session.

Although the student emphasis on length was not probed further, it seemed to be a major criterion among students for judging quality: the longer the better. Another example was David's comment in response to why he liked long stories, "I like the way it looks." This remark came from a student who does not express much spontaneously
about many things either orally or in writing. The remark may also be an indication of his sense of purpose. He knew his story would be published in a book at the end of the semester and he wanted it to "look good." Jeremy's response as to why he liked long stories also showed a sense of purpose, "So everybody can read it and all that; take a long time to read."

The next question addressed invented spelling. As one of the instructors during two terms of Writing Lab, the investigator saw how important correct spelling was to many of the students. They did not want to spell words on their own. This reluctance appeared to reflect a lack of confidence, as indicated by comments in their interviews and in the lab. It appeared that they did not see themselves as good spellers and wanted the teacher to spell words for them rather than making an attempt to spell words on their own. For example, Alison stated that she wanted this help "because sometimes I need help spelling words that I don't really know; like if it's, like I'm in fifth grade, and if I wanted to use an eighth grade word, I wouldn't know how to spell it." Bob's comment is an example of not seeing himself as a good speller, "I know a lot of words that I don't know how to spell them correctly." Anthony's response is another example of acknowledging the authentic purpose of writing that is an important part of process writing. He stated in response to figuring out his own spelling, "sort of don't like it because you might spell the words wrong and it might go in the book wrong, spelled wrong."

Six out of the seven participants responded positively to using the computer to help them write. Their reasons for positive responses included that their hands did not get as tired as they do when they handwrite stories and also that they liked to use the computer. Bob gave an interesting reply in regard to the question about writing on the computer, saying, "It helps me out a lot. I get to write a lot and figure out things on the computer and figure out in my brain too kind of."
In response to other kids helping them write their stories, Sarah and Anthony were the only students who liked it. Sarah chose really like "because I like doing detail." The other students did not want suggestions from peers while writing. Alison stated,

I sort of don't like it because sometimes kids don't know what I'm writing about so they don't know what kinds of words that I should put in. So I sort of don't like it because they think that they should tell me what to put in and what to write. It feels like they're pushing me around.

Steve does not like help from other students either. He stated, "I don't like it because sometimes they can give you something you don't want."

When asked about how they felt about help from the teacher, the students expressed positive and negative feelings. Bob reported that he didn't want the teacher's help because "sometimes the teacher doesn't know what you're writing about and she doesn't know what to put in your story and where you're going and stuff like that." Another reason for not wanting help from the teacher was, "I'd rather just write my stories on my own." Sarah, however, felt positively about the teacher helping her write because, "I like the teachers." When probed as to how the teacher helped her, Sarah indicated that spelling was the only way in which the teacher helped her.

The last questions of this section asked the students if writing stories helps them, and what would they change about writing stories. Most of the students agreed that writing stories helped them; however, spelling and punctuation were the areas commonly mentioned when probed to say how. Four out of the seven students commented on how writing helps them with the spelling and punctuation. For example, Bob commented, "It helps me learn how to put like quotation marks and other stuff," and Anthony said, "it helps me with my spelling words". The students did address a few other ways that writing helps them. David stated that writing helps you become "better at stories." Steve also thought that writing helps him, he stated, "It
[writing] helps you take in and learn how to get more information from it." Steve's answers was not probed further as to what exactly he meant. Alison's comment was more clear, "[writing] helps me like if I wanted to become an author when I was older, I would remember writing stories here."

Two students did state that writing did not help them. Jeremy was one of the students. His response was, "nope, because they don't help you make a better story because you can't make your stories that good when you can't think of nothing." As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Jeremy had more difficulty than the other students generating ideas. His stories in the beginning of the semester were lists of characters from movies and comic books and he was resistant to scaffolding about other approaches. Jeremy's negative response to whether or not writing helps him reflects his difficulties, and in that respect, is a positive sign of accurate self-reflection. Sarah was the other student who responded "no" to the question about whether or not writing helped her. When probed to explain further, Sarah did not expand on her negative response. She did provide feedback on what she would change about writing, "I would type it."

Revising and Editing

Knowledge About Revising and Editing

In response to the questions regarding their knowledge about revising and editing the majority of students knew that it means "fixing" their stories. An example was David's suggestion that revising and editing mean, "fixing your story so it's right." A few other students mentioned the words "right" and "wrong" in their responses as well. Other definitions of revising and editing included "making the right punctuation and capitals" and "[that revising means] revise your story and see if there is
anything wrong with the spelling and editing means you can get it done to put in a book." Although the students did not seem to grasp the broader meaning of revising, their responses indicated an understanding of the editing function regarding spelling and punctuation. None of the students mentioned revising the content of their stories. When asked why we revise and edit, a few students displayed a sense of audience awareness; "so people can read your story better," and "we do it because, if we didn't revise and edit, the people that were reading it wouldn't know what we were talking about." Other students appeared to see the surface level meaning only, suggesting the reason as, "so that when the stories come out, (they won't be wrong) won't on the printer be wrong."

**Attitudes Toward Revising and Editing**

The first Likert-type scale question about revising and editing asked students how they felt about changing things in their stories. The results were divided across the range of possible responses, and all of the students gave reasons for why they chose their answer.

Bob reported that he really liked changing things in his story because he could "get help figuring out spelling," and Anthony "really like[d]" changing things "to make it [my story] better." Steve "sort of liked" to change things when his story did not sound right. Alison, however, stated that she "sort of" did not like to change things "because sometimes I like what I write in my stories and sometimes other people don't like what I write so sometimes I have to change it to make them happy." Her response indicates the importance of having control or ownership of her writing. She continued to emphasize her desire to make her own decisions about her writing in the remaining part of her response, where she reported changing things "especially at school for my teacher. He wants us to write about one certain thing that went on and sometimes he
tells me to change stuff in my story." A final comment about making changes in their stories appears to reflect an emerging idea of revising for content. David stated, "I sort of don't like [changing things in my story] unless it's really bad or something." When probed, his criterion for what makes a story "really bad" was "something that's not interesting."

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questiona</th>
<th>Really Don't Like</th>
<th>Sort of Don't Like</th>
<th>Sort of Like</th>
<th>Really Like</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do you feel about:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. changing things in your stories?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. having correct punctuation and spelling?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. helping other students revise and edit?</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. help from the teacher when revising and editing?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. revising and editing your stories to get them ready for publishing in a book?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions 1 and 2 were the open-ended questions about what revising and editing is and why we do it.

All of the students responded positively when asked how they felt about correct punctuation and spelling. A few of the students indicated that they welcomed help from the teacher because they were not able to spell words correctly, or add the correct punctuation on their own. For example, one student stated, "Sometimes I need help
with what I should put at the end of my sentences." Another student remarked, "I like punctuation, but I don't really like going back and trying to figure out where to put the punctuation and stuff." This same student reported that he liked spelling but that "I always gets messed up on words I don't know." Two students gave similar reasons for why they liked having correct punctuation and spelling, saying, "because then it makes your story sound a lot better" and "because it might sound right."

In response to being asked about helping other students revise and edit, four out of the seven participants expressed positive feelings. Alison really liked helping other students because "sometime they don't know that they forgot to put capitals, so sometimes I can help them do that, and sometimes I can tell them to put periods where they need it and stuff like that." Her comment again reflects the participants' ideas that revising and editing a story involves changing mechanical errors and not the content. David, however, "sort of" did not like helping other students revise and edit. He stated, "I don't want to revise and edit other people's story; I'd rather revise my own story I guess."

The majority of the students responded positively to the question about having the teacher help them revise and edit. Anthony liked having a teacher's help because "they could help you with your spelling and on your story." Bob, on the other hand, stated that he did not like the teacher helping him because "she has to show me where to put periods and stuff, and I don't like to put them where she has to tell me, because I know where to put them."

The last Likert-type scale question in this section addressed students' awareness of audience. The students were asked how they felt about revising and editing their stories to get them ready for publication. Five of the seven participants felt positively about revising and editing for publication. Most of the students reported that they liked having their stories in a book and that they needed to revise and edit so people could
read their stories. For example, Steve stated, "[I] really like it [revising and editing for publication] because then you know that your story's right; then it sounds right." However, Bob was more negative about revising and editing, "I sort of don't like it [revising and editing for publication]; well, I hate revising and editing, my like head sort of hurts, and I can't really think of anything."

The final two opinion questions asked whether or not the students believed that revising and editing helped them and what would they change about this component of process writing. Most of the students felt that either revising and editing did not help them, or only mentioned that it helped them with their spelling. Anthony's response about how revising and editing helped him was more insightful and revealed some awareness of the need to revise content. He stated "you can see if you need more words and stuff, or you have to change the word or put more periods." When asked about what they would change about revising and editing, most students said they did not know. Steve, however, offered a suggestion about what he would change about revising and editing, "that you wouldn't have to do it that often, that the computer would spell it [the words] right [for you]."

In summary, the results of this study showed that the participants have a better understanding of the meaning and purpose of author groups than the other components of process writing. The planning and organizing component was most difficult for the participants to explain. The students also did not seem to have a full understanding of revising and editing as evidenced by the finding that the majority of their responses focused on editing the form of their stories rather than the content. The students' overall attitudes toward many of the aspects of process writing were positive. The attitudinal items that received the most positive responses related to ownership and publication of their writing.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

In this final chapter, the main findings of this study are summarized, and their clinical implications are considered. Limitations of the research design and implementation are also discussed. Future research questions are suggested.

Clinical Implications of Findings

This study has provided support for the importance of probing students' knowledge and attitudes in order to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of an instructional approach. For instance, negative attitudes toward certain aspects may reflect students' difficulties in that area and the need for either more instruction, or the use of an alternative method to teach that skill. The same is true of asking students what they know about the instructional approach. If the students' responses are inappropriate, clinicians or teachers may have a better idea of the areas that need to be addressed.

In regard to author groups, the students in this study displayed a clear understanding of this component of process writing. The students were able to provide a general explanation of author groups as a context for sharing stories and giving and receiving feedback. Their responses, when asked the purpose of author groups, were also insightful and appropriate. This finding is consistent with prior reports. For example, according to Zaragoza (1987), when students are given an opportunity to share their work, they begin to understand that writing is communication. One of the
comments in this study revealed the student's understanding of how writing conveys a message when she said, "sometimes it [writing] helps you tell your friends about how much you like them."

The students indicated that by sharing their stories with others, they were able to see if their story made sense or not. These responses revealed the students' awareness of an authentic audience and a purpose for writing. They responded positively to many of the attitudinal questions regarding the aspects of author groups that relate to peer interactions. For example, when students share their stories in author groups, they must present their work in front of the group and then receive comments and criticisms about their work. This requires a certain amount of self-confidence and motivation that is not always characteristic of students with learning disabilities. However, the findings in the current study indicate that students with learning disabilities are motivated to share their stories and receive feedback from peers. This is consistent with Zaragoza's (1987) suggestion that sharing stories in a group helps students feel in control and enhances their self-esteem.

The type of students the participants would choose to be in their author group were all fairly consistent. The student's writing ability was not mentioned. One reason that the participants may not have mentioned "good writers" as ideal author group partners might be due to limited self-awareness of their problems. According to Graham, Harris, MacArthur, and Schwartz (1991), compared with normally achieving students, "students with learning disabilities were equally confident in their capabilities to respond to common writing assignments and to execute important composing processes while writing" (p. 94).

Planning was an area that Graham, Harris, MacArthur and Schwartz (1991) also found difficult for students with learning disabilities to explain. Those researchers found that students with learning disabilities, when asked to write an essay, would
change the assignment into a question-answer task involving no advanced planning.
The students wrote whatever they could think of quickly. The students' responses to
the researchers' questions provided in the current study displayed evidence of limited
advanced planning as well, "I just do it [planning] in my head, and sometimes I just
type words out, and it becomes a story," and "[I] really don't like [planning] because I
don't like to write down things and waste time and stuff. It wastes my time of
writing." Graham and his colleagues concluded that, "clearly, using a planning
strategy of this nature, students will not generate much content nor be responsive to
such important concerns as whole-text organization, the needs of the reader, or the
constraints imposed by the topic" (p. 94).

One reason inferred from the current study as to why students with learning
disabilities may not plan before they write is that they do not know how to plan. This
was evidenced by the participants' definitions for planning and organizing, which were
simply restatements of the actual words used by the interviewer. An example was, "it
means planning your story and organizing your story." Other responses to questions
about the meaning of planning and organizing a story included, "I forgot," and "I don't
remember." These results seem indicative of the need for a greater amount of
instruction on how to plan and organize a story.

The students in this study, however, had received specific instruction about
planning and organizing, including models and prompts of ways in which they could
plan and organize their story. During the first semester of the Writing Lab, two of the
participants used planning and organizing software that prompted pre-writing steps
before they wrote. One of the software programs was text-based, presenting a series
of questions that prompted students to outline their stories using story grammar
elements (e.g., "Who are the characters in your story?", "Where does your story take
place?", and "What will happen to your characters?"). The students who used this
software did not appear to internalize these questions, as evidenced by their limited responses to the knowledge questions in this study and their persistent difficulties including story grammar elements in their stories. The other software used in the first semester of research involved computer-generated picture-construction, followed by writing a story. After the first semester, all of the students had access to other software that made pictures available as a pre-writing idea source. All of the students also were given opportunities at the Writing Lab to write notes on paper or on their computer prior to writing their stories. In many cases the graduate-instructors modeled how to make semantic webs, but the students did not appear to do any independent planning either on paper or on the computer. If more emphasis had been placed on the students' planning and organizing by making a specific protocol for them to follow, it might have changed a fundamental part of process writing involving integrating, not separating, specific writing skills. This is consistent with recommendations by Graham and Harris (1994) about the need for explicit instruction in the context of process writing instruction. The students would have been filling out a worksheet on basic story grammar elements instead of incorporating the elements into their narrative writing.

Revising and editing was another component of process writing that the students did not seem to understand completely. The results of queries about the students' knowledge about, and attitudes toward, revising and editing again concur with those found by Graham, Harris, MacArthur and Schwartz (1991). In particular, the prior authors also reported that students with learning disabilities made more comments about mechanical aspects of writing than substantive ones, commenting that, "for these students, mechanics (not substantives) drove the revising process" (p.94). In the current study, at least one of the students related punctuation and spelling to the purpose of each component of process writing. Regarding why we plan, one student said, "Well, to help you spell words or something." Regarding why we write, another
student commented, "[to] get better [at] spelling." In response to questions about what they do when revising and editing, the majority of comments related to editing mechanical features, not content. This finding is similar to those by Graham et al. that, for students with learning disabilities, the "basic outlook and method [for revising and editing] was to clean house -- tidy up a few words and errors and make everything look neater" (p.94). Given these findings, it appears that more instruction regarding content revisions is necessary.

A final clinical implication from the findings of the current study involves the students' positive attitudes toward having control or ownership of their writing. All of the students reported that they liked "thinking up" their own ideas. In other words, the students enjoyed making their own decisions about their writing. For example, the students all had their own views on whether or not to work on a story over several sessions. Their responses implied that they should be the ones to decide when their stories were finished. The students also felt positively about choosing the length of their stories. It was concluded from the students' responses, that increasing the quantity of words instead of the quality of words was an important goal for their writing. The students reported that the reason for wanting to write longer stories was so they "looked" good when published. Even though they may have placed more importance on the form of their stories than of the content, these students did express positive feelings about writing, especially when given ownership of their writing. It is important to note also, that, although the participants in the current study liked having control over decisions about their writing in terms of length, topic, and time spent writing, they did not like "figuring out spelling on their own," and felt they needed help from the teacher. Given the fact that the students recognize spelling as a major weakness in their writing, teachers need to devise strategies for providing sufficient scaffolding for students' difficulties with spelling and punctuation while maintaining an
appropriate focus on content. Instruction involving the mechanics of writing might be best addressed within a context such as process writing, where the students are motivated to improve, but it may need to be more explicit than incidental, as Graham and Harris (1994) suggest.

Limitations and Future Research

In addition to the positive findings of this research, a few limitations emerged from the analysis process. The ethnographic interview technique, which was defined earlier in Chapter IV, was used to probe what children thought process writing was about, and also their attitudes toward it. Unfortunately, the researcher did not realize the length of time that this technique would require and scheduled only thirty-minute interviews with the students. The time limitations made it impossible to probe fully many of the students' answers. Also, the students' decreased attention toward the end of the thirty-minute interview may have limited their responses to the final questions (about revising and editing) more than to the earlier questions (about author groups). In retrospect, it might have been better to interview the participants over two sessions. The students were eager to participate at the beginning of the interview and spent time thinking about their answers, but toward the end of the interview, they tended to lose focus and wanted to know when they would be finished.

Another factor which may have affected the responses for one of the students was the time between her participation in the Writing Lab and her interview about process writing. There was an eight month time span between Sarah's participation in the process approach and her interview about this approach. However, when reviewing Sarah's responses, many of her answers were appropriate for the questions, and she was able to recall other details from the Writing Lab, including the teachers' and students' names.
After reviewing the students' knowledge about and attitudes toward process writing, several ideas for future consideration are evident:

1. Students' negative attitudes toward and decreased awareness of planning and organizing indicates the need for more specific and effective instruction related to this component of process writing.

2. Students' responses about wanting words spelled correctly in their stories and wanting teachers to help them spell raise questions about when and how to use invented spelling with students in this age group.

3. Students' difficulties discerning revising and editing indicates a need to teach these components separately to increase students' awareness of the difference between revising the content and editing the form.

Future studies would do well to continue to probe students' knowledge about, and attitudes toward, instructional approaches, especially for students with special needs. In fact, the interview process itself may have instructional value. It conveys to students that their opinions are important. It may also build their awareness of the key aspects of writing as a process. This could be a focus of future research. In the current study, it was not always clear what the students' actual level of understanding was. Further, it was difficult to tell whether unclear answers reflected limited understanding of the component of process writing in question, or limited ability of the students to express what they knew. Therefore, future studies should be designed to permit more extensive probing as to the meaning of students' responses, especially for students with oral language impairments.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the current study looked at one approach, process writing, within one setting, the WMU Writing Lab. The students who participated in the Writing Lab used computers for writing and had several instructors available for extra individual attention. The preceding two factors may have played a
role in the students' attitudes toward the instructional approach. Therefore, a need exists to consider students' responses to process writing approaches in other settings, as well as students' responses to other instructional approaches to writing. Finding better ways for students to meet the writing demands, not only of the educational system, but of the working world as well, is a significant national concern. Students with special needs, particularly, may continue to fall increasingly behind their peers in functional writing skills unless they receive effective instruction. Perhaps the most significant conclusion of this study is that by providing students with special needs a framework for the process of writing and opportunity to see that writing is communication, they are more motivated to improve their writing skills. Motivation is the first step in openness to instruction.
Appendix A

Interview Protocol
INTERVIEW FORMAT

"Hi __________. Thanks for agreeing to help me with this research project. As you know, I'm interested in your opinion of The Writing Process. I want you to think about what happens at school too, not just the WMU Writing Lab. I'm going to ask you a few questions and ask you to decide how much you like or don't like some things. There are no right or wrong answers. You can say anything you want, good or bad. You don't have to worry about hurting my feelings. I care about what you think.

What are the three steps of the writing process?

AUTHOR GROUPS

1. What are author groups?
2. Why do we have author groups?
3. How do you feel about sharing your stories with others?

REALLY DON'T LIKE SORT OF DON'T LIKE SORT OF LIKE REALLY LIKE
4. How do you feel when the other kids talk about your story?

REALLY DON'T LIKE SORT OF DON'T LIKE SORT OF LIKE REALLY LIKE
5. How do you feel about listening to other kids' stories in author groups?

REALLY DON'T LIKE SORT OF DON'T LIKE SORT OF LIKE REALLY LIKE
6. How do you feel about talking about other kids' stories?

REALLY DON'T LIKE SORT OF DON'T LIKE SORT OF LIKE REALLY LIKE
7. How do you feel about having only the teacher read your story instead of the other kids?

REALLY DON'T LIKE SORT OF DON'T LIKE SORT OF LIKE REALLY LIKE
8. How do you feel about the teacher picking the author groups?

REALLY DON'T LIKE SORT OF DON'T LIKE SORT OF LIKE REALLY LIKE
9. If you could pick, what kinds of kids would be in your author group?
10. Do you think author groups help you?
11. What would you change about author groups?

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1This interview protocol will be used to guide the interviewer. Kids will read along with the interviewer and circle their own answers.
PLANNING AND ORGANIZING

1. What does planning and organizing mean?
2. Why do we plan and organize?
3. How do you feel about planning and organizing your story before you write it?
   REALLY DON'T LIKE    SORT OF DON'T LIKE    SORT OF LIKE    REALLY LIKE
4. How do you feel about thinking up your own ideas?
   REALLY DON'T LIKE    SORT OF DON'T LIKE    SORT OF LIKE    REALLY LIKE
5. How do you feel about getting ideas from other kids?
   REALLY DON'T LIKE    SORT OF DON'T LIKE    SORT OF LIKE    REALLY LIKE
6. How do you feel about the teacher thinking up ideas for you?
   REALLY DON'T LIKE    SORT OF DON'T LIKE    SORT OF LIKE    REALLY LIKE
7. How do you feel about making notes or webs on paper before you write your story?
   REALLY DON'T LIKE    SORT OF DON'T LIKE    SORT OF LIKE    REALLY LIKE
8. How do you feel about the computer giving you pictures to write about?
   REALLY DON'T LIKE    SORT OF DON'T LIKE    SORT OF LIKE    REALLY LIKE
9. How do you feel about the computer giving you questions to answer about your story?
   REALLY DON'T LIKE    SORT OF DON'T LIKE    SORT OF LIKE    REALLY LIKE
10. Do you think planning and organizing helps you?
11. What would you change about planning and organizing?

WRITING

1. What does it mean to write a story?
2. Why do we write stories?
3. How do you feel about working on the same story over several sessions?
   REALLY DON'T LIKE    SORT OF DON'T LIKE    SORT OF LIKE    REALLY LIKE
4. How do you feel about picking the words for your story?
REALLY DON'T LIKE  SORT OF DON'T LIKE  SORT OF LIKE  REALLY LIKE

5. How do you feel about deciding how long your story should be?
REALLY DON'T LIKE  SORT OF DON'T LIKE  SORT OF LIKE  REALLY LIKE

6. How do you feel about figuring out spelling on your own?
REALLY DON'T LIKE  SORT OF DON'T LIKE  SORT OF LIKE  REALLY LIKE

7. How do you feel about using a computer to help you write?
REALLY DON'T LIKE  SORT OF DON'T LIKE  SORT OF LIKE  REALLY LIKE

8. How do you feel about other kids helping you write your stories?
REALLY DON'T LIKE  SORT OF DON'T LIKE  SORT OF LIKE  REALLY LIKE

9. How do you feel about the teacher helping you write your stories?
REALLY DON'T LIKE  SORT OF DON'T LIKE  SORT OF LIKE  REALLY LIKE

10. Do you think writing stories helps you?

11. What would you change about writing stories?

REVISING AND EDITING

1. What does revising and editing mean?
2. Why do we revise and edit?

3. How do you feel about changing things in your stories?
REALLY DON'T LIKE  SORT OF DON'T LIKE  SORT OF LIKE  REALLY LIKE

4. How do you feel about having correct punctuation and spelling?
REALLY DON'T LIKE  SORT OF DON'T LIKE  SORT OF LIKE  REALLY LIKE

5. How do you feel about helping other students revise and edit?
REALLY DON'T LIKE  SORT OF DON'T LIKE  SORT OF LIKE  REALLY LIKE

6. How do you feel about help from the teacher when revising and editing?
REALLY DON'T LIKE  SORT OF DON'T LIKE  SORT OF LIKE  REALLY LIKE
7. How do you feel about revising and editing your stories to get them ready for publishing in a book?

REALY DON'T LIKE  SORT OF DON'T LIKE  SORT OF LIKE  REALLY LIKE

8. Do you think revising and editing helps you?

9. What would you change about revising and editing?
Appendix B

Interview Transcripts
Student - Anthony

K What are the three steps of writing?
A Author groups, writing, and editing.

AUTHOR GROUPS
K Why do we have author groups?
A To help each other think of stories

LYKERT SCALE
K How do you feel about sharing your stories with others?
A Really like it
K How do you feel when the other kids talk about your stories?
A Sort of like it, sometimes happy and sometimes not.
K How do you feel about listening to other kids stories in author groups?
A Really like it because it's fun and gives my ideas for my story.
K How do you feel about talking about other kids stories?
A Really like it.
K What would you tell them.
**A If you like their stories and if they should add something.
K How do you feel about having only the teacher read your story instead of the other kids?
A Sort of like.
K How do you feel about the teacher picking the author groups?
**A Really like it because you mostly get people you like at the end of the semester.
K If you could pick, what kinds of kids would be in your author group?
A Friends.
K Do you think that author groups help you?
A yeah gives you ideas.
K What would you change about author groups?
A The time, I hate sitting.

PLANNING AND ORGANIZING
K What does planning and organizing mean?
**A No, I don't remember.
K Do you remember what we would do to plan a story?
K Why do we do that?
A To get knew ideas.
K When do we do that?
A When your writing your story, before.

LYKERT SCALE
K How do you feel about planning and organizing before you write?
A Sort of like it
K How do you like thinking up your own ideas?
A Sort of like it
K How do you feel about getting ideas from other kids?
A Really like it because it gives you ideas that you can put down about your story and you can find out about next weeks story, the next day.
K How do you feel about the teacher giving you ideas?
A Sort of like, it helps you get ideas.

K How do you feel about making webs or writing on paper before your story?
A Sort of don't like because I don't like doing it.
K Do you think planning stories helps you?
A Yes, it's easier to find your mistakes.
K How does it help you find your mistakes?
A You can read it and you can check through it.
K Is that what you do when you plan though?
K So you read it and find mistakes when you plan?
A No.
K Does writing down on paper first or planning help you?
A Yes
K How does it help you?
A You can think of characters in your story and what the title can be.

WRITING

K What does it mean to write a story?
A I don't know.
K Why do write stories?
A Get better, spelling.

LYKERT SCALE

K How do feel about working on the same story over several times?
A Like it.
K How do you feel about picking your own words for the story?
K How do you feel about deciding how long your stories should be?
A Really like it
K (explanation of question)
K How many pages would you like it to be?
A Half
K Do you like long or short stories?
A Long and short depends what day it is.
K How do you feel about figuring out spelling on your own?
A Sort of don't like it because you might spell the words wrong and it might go in the book wrong, spelled wrong.
K How do you feel about using a computer to help you write?
A Really like cause your hands don't get tired that easy, how easy writing with pencil.
K How do you feel about the other kids helping you write your stories?
K How do you feel about the teacher helping you write your story?
K Do you think that writing stories helps you?
A Spelling and I don't know.
K What would you change about writing stories?
A Nothing

REVISIGNG AND EDITING

K What does revising and editing mean?
A To find mistakes.
K Why did we do that?
A To find your mistakes so you don't spell anything wrong.
LYKERT SCALE
K How do you feel about changing things in your story?
A Really like to make it better.
K How do you feel about having the correct punctuation and spelling?
A Really like it.
K How do you feel about helping other students revise and edit?
A Yeah.
K How do you feel about help from the teacher when fixing your story?
***A They could help you with your spelling and on your story.
K How do you feel about revising and editing your stories to get them ready for publishing in a book?
A Really like it so other people can read it.
K Do you think that fixing your stories or revising and editing helps you?
A Yes, you can see if you need more words and stuff or you have to change the word or put more periods.
K What would you change about revising and editing?
A Nothing.
K Do you think you should spend a lot of time doing it?
A A little less.
K What would you like to do the most, plan it, write it or revise it?
A Write it.

Student - Bob
December 11, 1994

AUTHOR GROUPS
K What are author groups?
B They are a group talking about and interviewing your story and telling what to add to your story.
K Why do we have author groups?
B So we can first interview our stories and see how good they are and then see if the story is alright and then we go back to the computer and print.

LYKERT SCALE
K How do you feel about sharing your stories with others?
B Really like because I think that they are sort of neat to me.
K How do you feel when the other kids talk about your stories?
B Sort of like, I like it when kids talk about my stories but when they tell about names and stuff, I don't really want them to use those names.
K Names? You mean like use your names from your story?
B yeah.
K How do you feel about listening to other kids stories in author groups?
***B Sort of don't like it, because it takes really long for their long stories, like if they're four pages, it gets like boring. It's like new to me the first day, then after the next day it's boring and boring and boring.
K How do you feel about talking about other kids stories?
B Sort of like it because I kind of like because I don't like talking a lot and I don't like to talk.
K Do you ever tell the kids if something is good or bad?
B No
K How do you feel about having only the teacher read your story instead of the other kids?
**B I don't really like it, because it's kind of boring, I can't understand the words because they go so fast, and um I don't like teachers reading my story to me because I hate it.

K How do you feel about the teacher picking the author groups?
B Really like, I like picking author groups because like in when you're the only ones in your group and you have no one to author group with, we move to another group to author group.

K If you could pick, what kinds of kids would be in your author group?
**B Good kinds of kids that don't say swear words and stuff.
K Would they be boys or girls or both?
**B Boys.
K Just boys, how come?
**B Because really good boys don't say bad words and stuff.
K What about girls?
B Girls don't say stuff, but I don't like girls in author groups.
K Do you think that author groups help you?
B Sort of, they kind of help me a little, but anyways I can't understand anybodies reading when they read small, it's like I can't really hear.
K How do they help you.
B Kind of.
K What about with your story?
**B Yeah they help you add new things to your story and stuff like that.
K What would you change about author groups?
**B A like no interviewing stories or so just party rock until it's time to write a story.
B Rocking parties and then when it's time go back and write out stories.
K So you would just like not have the author groups?
B Yeah
K What about would you change how many people are in your author group?
B Yeah, just one.
B Just me.
K I thought you said they helped you?
B They do but I don't like to hear them say words or stuff.

PLANNING AND ORGANIZING
K What does planning and organizing mean?
**B Get ready, planning come right in and start on type to learn and organizing stuff for writing.
K How do you do that? Do you do any kind of planning or organizing before you start writing?
B Yeah, I checked to see if my words are the same style, the same color, and the same size
K But before you even start a story do you ever take any notes or think about it in your head?
B No
K Why do we plan and organize?
**B So we can get started on the computer and not waste time.
K How do you feel about planning and organizing before you write?
**B Really don't like because I don't like to write down things and waste time and stuff.
It wastes my time of writing.
K How do you like thinking up your own ideas?
B I think of it a lot. I think about things in my head. I don't have to write them on a piece of paper. I'll remember it.
B It's better for me to think up my own ideas then the teacher because then she doesn't have to bother me.
K How do you feel about getting ideas from other kids?
**B Sort of don't like it. I don't like kids talking a lot, talking to me about what kind of good ideas there are because I like to get them on my own. I try to figure out some ideas on my own and they just bother me and stuff.
K Have you ever used any of their ideas?
B No
K How do you feel about the teacher giving you ideas?
B I really don't like it because I really don't like teachers trying to think of ideas for me.
K How do you feel about making webs or writing on paper before your story?
B I don't know what they are. Oh yeah, no I don't really do that because it takes longer to write it down.
K How do you feel about the computer giving you pictures to write about?
**B Really like it, so it can give me an idea of what the picture is and I can write words down that can mean something.
K How do you feel about the computer giving you questions to answer first?
K Do you think planning stories helps you?
B No, I don't really think that. It doesn't really help me.
K What would you change?
***B Planning when getting ready to go home and stuff because I didn't really like to stay there planning and organizing to get home.
K Well planning and organizing you do more at the beginning of writing lab.
B Oh planning and organizing, yeah.
K So if you could change something?
B I'd rather not do it at all.

**WRITING**
K What does it mean to write a story?
B It means typing all your story out and trying to figure out words and stuff and trying to them out, have new words in your story kind of like.
K Why do write stories?
***B So we can like make a good story for your mom and dad to read over and over again.
K Is that why you write stories?
B Yes.
K Do you write them for yourself?
B No I don't write them for myself a lot.
LYKERT SCALE
K How do you feel about working on the same story over several times?
**B I really like it, I have extra time on my stories like five days or ten.
K How do you feel about picking your own words for the story?
B Sort of like, I don't like picking words for my story a lot, I try to think of them but I forget to remember them.
K So would there be someone else that you'd like to pick the words for your story?
B Yeah, my teacher.
K How do you feel about deciding how long your stories should be?
K (explanation of question)
B Yeah, I don't really like it.
B I do like it.
K How do you feel about figuring out spelling on your own?
B Really don't like, I know a lot of words that I don't know how to spell them correctly.
B Yeah, I get help from the teacher.
K How do you feel about using a computer to help you write?
B It helps me out a lot. I get to write a lot and figure out things on the computer and figure out in my brain too kind of.
K How do you feel about the other kids helping you write your stories?
B I don't really like it, I don't really like the other kids helping me out on the stories because I like to work it out myself and I don't like other people help me a lot.
K How do you feel about the teacher helping you write your story?
B I don't like it because it's kind of boring. I have to tell her how to write and she has to type it on.

K Do you think that writing stories helps you?
**B Yeah I think so to me.
K How does it help you?
**B It helps me learn how to put like quotation marks and other stuff.
K Does it help you any other way besides quotation marks?
**B Yeah, it helps me out with a lot of things like reading your story and then when it stops right there and you can put a period right there and stuff like that.
K What would you change about writing stories?
B No

REVISING AND EDITING
K What does revising and editing mean?
B It means checking on your story to see if it's all right and then you can print it out.
K Why did we do that?
B So we can make our story better and not make it like crummy or something.
K How do you make it better when you revise and edit?
B You go back in your story and change some words, the words you don't know.
K Don't know how to spell you mean?
B Yeah.
K Why do you think we do that? Is there any reason why we do that?
B No
K What about for the book that you do?
B What book?
K Didn't you get a book at the end? at the party?
B For that, kind of.
LYKERT SCALE

K How do you feel about changing things in your story?
***B Really like because I get help a lot and I try to figure out what I can spell and stuff
like that. To figure out spelling.

K How do you feel about having the correct punctuation and spelling?
**B Sort of like it, I like punctuation but I don't really like going back and trying to figure out where to put the punctuation and stuff.

K What about spelling?
B I like spelling but I always get messed up on words I don't know.

K Do you like having correct spelling?
B Yeah.

K How do you feel about helping other students revise and edit?
**B I don't like to help them, like my head hurts a lot and I don't like to say words to them to help them revise and edit.

K How do you feel about help from the teacher when fixing your story?
B I don't sort of like it because she has to show me where to put periods and stuff and I don't like to put them where she has to tell my because I know where to put them.

K How do you feel about revising and editing you stories to get them ready for publishing in a book?
**B Yeah but I sort of don't like it well I hate revising and editing my like head sort of hurts and I can't really think of anything.

K Do you think that fixing your stories or revising and editing helps you?
B No it really doesn't help me.

K What would you change about revising and editing?
B I don't know.

Student - David

K What are the three steps for writing a story?
D Write your story, well actually you print your story and you correct your story, write your story.

AUTHOR GROUPS

K What are author groups?
**D They are people who work with you to do stories.

K Why do we have author groups?
**D So you have ideas.

LYKERT SCALE

K How do you feel about sharing your stories with others?
D Sort of like, I don't know.

K How do you feel when the other kids talk about your stories?
D Sort of like, I don't care if they talk about my stories.

K Are there ever times you don't like it?
D Not really.

K Any time you really like it?
D No

K How do you feel about listening to other kids stories in author groups?
D Sort of like it
K How do you feel about talking about other kids stories?
D I don't care. Sort of like.
K How do you feel about having only the teacher read your story instead of the other kids?
D Really don't like, I don't know because other kids can read it and like it too, I don't know.
**D I like having the other kids and the teachers.
K How do you feel about the teacher picking the author groups?
D What does that mean?
K (explained)
K Would you rather pick your own group.
D Yeah.
K So about the teacher picking the group?
**D I don't like that because I'd rather have Aaron cause he's my friend.
K If you could pick, what kinds of kids would be in your author group?
D I don't know.
K What about boys or girls.
D Boys.
K How come?
D I don't know, I don't like girls.
K Do you think that author groups help you?
D no.
K What did we say author groups do again?
D Give you ideas.
K Does that help you?
D No.
K Do they give you idea?
**D Yeah they do but not very good ones.
K What would you change about author groups?
D Not have them.

PLANNING AND ORGANIZING
K What does planning and organizing mean?
***D Planning your story and organizing your story.
K What exactly do you do for that?
D I'm not sure.
K Why do we do that?
***D Well to help you spell words of something.
K Can you think of any other reasons?
D To give you ideas

LYKERT SCALE
K How do you feel about planning and organizing before you write?
**D I don't know, sort of like, sort of don't like, it takes up too much time.
K How do you like thinking up your own ideas?
**D Really like because I don't like people giving me ideas.
K Does it make it harder or easier to write?
D It make it easier because people don't tell you what to write in your story.
K How do you feel about getting ideas from other kids?
D Sort of don't like
K How do you feel about the teacher giving you ideas?
D Sort of don't like, I don't care.
K If I gave you an idea, would you like it?
D No not really. If it was a good idea, I don't know, if I'd like it or not.
K How do you feel about making webs or writing on paper before your story?
D Really don't like.
K How do you feel about the computer giving you pictures to write about?
D Sort of don't like
K How do you feel about the computer giving you questions to answer first?
D Really don't like, I don't care.
K Do you think planning stories helps you?
D Yeah, I guess, well no.
K What would you change?
D I don't know, not having to do it.

WRITING
K What does it mean to write a story?
D It means just to write a story
K Why do write stories?
***D Sometimes you feel like it.

LYKERT SCALE
K How do feel about working on the same story over several times?
D Sort of like
K How do you feel about picking your own words for the story?
K How do you feel about deciding how long your stories should be?
**D I like it long, so really like.
K Why do you like it long?
D I don't know, I like writing long stories, I like the way it looks.
K How do you feel about figuring out spelling on your own?
D Sort of don't like
K How do you feel about using a computer to help you write?
D I like that a lot better than writing with your hand.
K HOW come?
D It's quicker.
K How do you feel about the other kids helping you write your stories?
D Sort of don't like, I rather just work on my own story.
K How do you feel about the teacher helping you write your story?
D Sort of don't like, I'd rather just write my stories on my own.

K Do you think that writing stories helps you?
D I don't know, I have no idea, I'm not sure.
K What would it help you do?
**D Be better at spelling, better at stories.
K What would you change about writing stories?
D Nothing.

REVISING AND EDITING
K What does revising and editing mean?
D Fixing your story so it's right
K Why did we do that?
***D I don't know so people can read your story better.

LYKERT SCALE
K How do you feel about changing things in your story?
D I don't change anything in my story.
D Sort of don't like unless it's really bad or something.
K What makes it really bad?
***D Writing a bad story, something that's not interesting.
K How do you feel about having the correct punctuation and spelling?
D I don't care. Sort of like.
K So you don't care if it's not spelled right?
K How do you feel about helping other students revise and edit?
D Sort of don't like because I don't want to revise and edit other people's story, I'd rather revise my own story I guess.
K How do you feel about help from the teacher when fixing your story?
D Sort of like so they can fix your story.
K How do you feel about revising and editing you stories to get them ready for publishing in a book?
***D Sort of like, I like having it in the book.
K Do you think that fixing your stories or revising and editing helps you?
***D I guess because it would help you spell.
K What would you change about revising and editing?
D I don't know.
K Would you like to do it for a longer amount of time?
D No not at all, shorter time.

Student - Jeremy

K What are the three steps in the writing process?
J Planning and organizing, writing your story and revising and editing.

AUTHOR GROUPS
K Why do we have author groups?
J So we can tell about the authors name and tell ideas about their story and tell each other about their story.

LYKERT SCALE
K How do you feel about sharing your stories with others?
J Really like it, it's more fun because XXX share ideas.
K How do you feel when the other kids talk about your stories?
J I don't like doing that. I don't know, I can't remember
K How do you feel about listening to other kids stories in author groups?
J Sort of like it.
K How do you feel about talking about other kids stories?
J Really don't like I'm not interested in everybody's stories.

K How do you feel about having only the teacher read your story instead of the other kids?
**J Really don't like, you got to change it, you got to go up there and write the whole thing over again, revise and edit.

K How do you feel about sharing your stories with others?

K How do you feel about the teacher picking the author groups?
**J Really don't like because I want to pick my own author groups.
K If you could pick, what kinds of kids would be in your author group?
**J I'd pick kids that are my age, under thirteen, 12, 13, or 14 years old.
K Would you pick boys or girls?
**J Boys.
K How come just boys?
**J I just like doing that.
K Do you think that author groups help you?
**J No,
K What would you change about author groups?
**J No, six kids maybe.
K How come more kids?
**J Because you got to write more stories, no just one.
K I just want one person in my author group because it'll take a long time and you never have to read stories and all that, you have one person, two person, three person, it's easier and quicker.

PLANNING AND ORGANIZING

K What does planning and organizing mean?
**J I don't know.
K Do you remember when we talked about planning or writing notes before you start?
**J Yeah
K Why do we do that?
**J So you know the story your writing and know the ideas you want to put in your story.

LYKERT SCALE

K How do you feel about planning and organizing before you write?
**J Really don't like it because I already know what I'm going to write in my story and I know what I'm going to put in my story.
K How do you like thinking up your own ideas?
**J I don't know, I watch movies sometime and I can think about the ideas I'm going to put in there.
K How do you feel about getting ideas from other kids?
**J Sort of like well they'll say like remind me an idea to put in my story.
K How do you feel about the teacher giving you ideas?
**J Really don't like I can't remember.
K How do you feel about making webs or writing on paper before your story?
**J Yes I don't like it.
K Do you think planning and organizing helps you?
**J No
K What would you change?
***J Something different you know, like what are going to do with this? because the more you think about having ideas for your story and all that and you can put them in there.

**WRITING**
K What does it mean to write a story?
K Why do write stories?

**LYKERT SCALE**
K How do feel about working on the same story over several times?
K You said you really don't like working on the same story over time. You'd rather do what?
J Write different stories.

K How do you feel about picking your own words for the story?
J Really don't like.

K How do you feel about deciding how long your stories should be?
***J I think it should be really long, probably about really long.
K Why do you like it really long?
J So everybody can read it and all that, take a long time to read.

K How come you don't like to do your own spelling?
***J IXX I correct after I'm done with my story, I revise and edit.

K Do you think that writing stories helps you?
J Nope because they don't help you make a better story because you can't make your stories that good when you can't think of nothing.

**REVISE AND EDIT**
K Do you think revising and editing helps you?
J No because you got to correct everything.
K So what would you change about it?
?***J They shouldn't put revising, you should correct it before you write your story.
K Correct it before you write it?
K You mean while you write it, correct it?
J Yeah
K What if you couldn't?
?***J Ah just forget about it at home and go back there and get it.
K Why do we revise and edit?
J So, I can't remember.
Student - Steve  
December 11, 1994  
3rd grader

K Can you tell me what the three steps are that we use at the writing lab?  
S I forgot what that are but I think one of them was revise and edit and one of them was stop and listen to your story and see if it makes sense.

AUTHOR GROUPS
K What are author groups?  
S They like if there is two people they read each others stories and they ask if XX people some more ideas.  
K Why do we have author groups?  
**S To make sure your story makes sense and it makes the other kids have an idea for another story.

LYKERT SCALE
K How do you feel about sharing your stories with others?  
**S I sort of like it because some of them will make fun of them.  
K How about when they don't, Why do you like it?  
S Because sometimes they don't make fun of me because I know that they weren't listening.  
K But do you like to share your stories sometimes.  
S Because it gives them more ideas to do more on it.  
K How do you feel when the other kids talk about your stories?  
S Sort of like it because sometimes you don't know if they are talking about it, if they think it's bad or they think they're just talking about it if it's good.  
K So sometimes you don't know if they think it's bad?  
**S Yeah, they might make fun of it behind your back.  
K How do you feel about listening to other kids stories in author groups?  
S Yeah, really like it because sometimes it sounds better and sometimes it sounds good and I give them some more ideas.  
K How do you feel about talking about other kids stories?  
S Really like it because that just cheers them on and gives them more clues to go on.  
K How do you feel about having only the teacher read your story instead of the other kids?  
**S Really don't like it because they didn't even do it.  
K Because the teacher didn't do one.  
K Would you like just the teacher reading it instead of the other kids?  
S Maybe, sort of like it probably because there was this one kid in our group who when he telled his story he would talk soft and when he talked to me he would talk hard or loud. I think it's because he doesn't want everyone else hearing his stories.  
K How do you feel about the teacher picking the author groups?  
S Really like it because sometimes the teacher can be really nice or really mean. Last year I had this one teacher and I was in the front row and then in the middle of all our stories, I had to change and go to Bill's group. So last year I was with Bill.  
K So would you like to choose who's in your group?  
S Yeah.  
K This question says that the teacher gets to pick it only? Do you like the teacher picking?  
S No
S Sort of don't like
K If you could pick, what kinds of kids would be in your author group?
S Nice ones.
K Would their be boys or girls or both?
S Sometimes girls or boys.
K Do you think that author groups help you?
**S Yeah because it gives you more ideas.
K What would you change about author groups?
**S You don't have to read the whole story you only have to read the new part.

**PLANNING AND ORGANIZING**
K What does planning and organizing mean?
S It means plan ahead like I told my teacher I'd do revise and edit on the fourth day instead of the fifth day cause then I don't have to do so much work and then I can keep on writing.
K Do you plan your ideas?
**S In my head.
K Why do we do that?
S So you would get more ideas for your story and get a longer story.

K How do you feel about planning and organizing before you write?
S Sort of like because I used to do it with some words because then if I wanted to do it, then if I wanted to take and find it again, then I could do that.
K So you would do it and then you could look back at it.
K How do you like thinking up your own ideas?
S Really like it because then it makes your story a lot better because then nobody knows what you're going to do next. It makes it mystery like.
K How do you feel about getting ideas from other kids?
S Sort of like it because then it gives me alot more but I don't take and put what they say I put sort of what they say.
K How do you feel about the teacher giving you ideas?
S Sort of like it because sometimes it could be something you don't want to put, but sometimes she does give me some hints of what e.g. I had lcp and she wanted me to put what lcp was.
K How do you feel about making webs or writing on paper before your story?
S Really don't like it because I already have a web up here (points to head). Then it's lost in your head when you write it on paper.
K When you write it on paper?
S Yeah because sometimes I have drawings in my head.
K And it gets lost when you put it on paper?
**S No I've got to put them in the computer
K How do you feel about the computer giving you pictures to write about?
S Really like, it took and showed the robots and made it a lot better because it showed them.
K Did it help you with your story at all?
S It took and gave you a view of what people did like I had this mad dog and I put that that he likes spicy food because he had a pop and a taco.
K So did that picture give you an idea?
S Yeah, it gave the people of my story an idea.
AUTHOR GROUPS

K - Can you tell me what author groups are?
A - It's where you can discuss your stories with other people in your group.
K - Why do we have author groups?
A - So we can try to help other people out.
K - How would you help them?
A - By telling them if they need any capitals or periods.
K - Okay is that what you do in the author group at the writing lab?
A - yeah
K - Can you think of anything else you do at the writing lab in your author groups?
Anything else you talk about?
A We talk about what our story's going to be like

LYKERT SCALE

K How do you feel about sharing your stories with others?
A Sort of like it.
A Because I like seeing what other people are reading, writing about and I like people
    to know what I'm writing about.
K How do you feel when the other kids talk about your story?
A Really like it
A It makes me feel good that people like it.
K How do you feel about listening to other kids stories in the author group?
A Sort of like it.
A Because we could use that time to write out stories and sometimes we don't really
    want to hear them because we already know what it's going to be about.
K How do you feel about talking about other kids' stories?
A Sort of like it.
A Because sometimes I don't really want to hurt their feelings telling them what they
    need and stuff so it sort of makes me feel bad when I tell them sometimes.
K How do you feel about the teacher reading your story instead of the other kids?
A Really like it.
A I don't know why.
K Would you rather just have the teacher only read it and not the kids?
A No, I like reading it but sometimes I want her to read it.
K How do you feel about the teacher picking the author groups?
A Sort of like it
A I don't know why.
K If you could pick, what kinds of kids would be in your author groups?
A Nice kids.
K Anything else about the kids?
A Kind.
K Would they be boys or girls.
A They'd be girls or boys.
K Are there certain kids at school you would pick to be in your author group?
A No
K Do you like the author groups you have right now?
A Yes
K Do you think that author groups help you?
A Yes
K How do they help you?
A They help me plan my story more and help me write it.
K What would you change about author groups?
A Nothing.
K What about the size, like how many kids? Would you want more or less?
A Maybe more.
K What about how long your in the author groups?
A Maybe a little bit shorter.
K How come?
A I like writing my story.

PLANNING AND ORGANIZING
K Can you tell me what planning and organizing mean?
A It's where you plan your story and then you organize it.
K Why do we do that?
A So we know what is going on in our story.
K How do we do it?
A We read our story and then we tell ourselves what we are going to write next in it and then we say, and then we organize it by helping us, ourselvs, work on it a little bit more.

LYKERT SCALE
K How do you feel about planning and organizing your story before you write it?
A Sort of like it.
K How come?
A I don't know.
K How do you feel about thinking up your own ideas?
A Really like it.
A I just don't like other people telling me what I have to write and stuff.
K How come.
A Because I like putting my own ideas into my story.
K How do you feel about getting ideas from other kids?
A Sort of like it.
A I don't know.
K So when other kids give you ideas, do you use their ideas?
A Sometimes.
K How do you feel about the teacher thinking up ideas for you?
A Sort of like it because sometimes I don't know what I'm going to write about so sometimes she helps me.
K Is there ever a time you don't like it?
A No
K How do you feel about taking notes or making notes on paper or making webs?
A I really don't like it because I know what I'm going to write about so I don't need a web to help me work on it.
K How did you feel about making a picture on the computer and then writing?
A I really liked it because it told a little bit about your story.
K When the picture was done first, did it give you ideas?
A It was easier to write.
K Would you like the computer to give you questions about your story first?
A No
A I really don't like it.
K Do you think that planning and organizing helps you?
A yeah, it helps me organize my story like where certain words are going to go and stuff and planning helps me plan my story out so I know what it's going to be about.
K So if you don't like to use the paper or the webs, how do you usually plan? Do you just do it in your head?
A I just do it in my head and sometimes I just type words out and it becomes a story.
K Is there anything you'd change about planning and organizing?
A no

**WRITING THE STORY**
K What does it mean to write a story?
A It means to write what you like about what goes on during the day and sometimes it helps you tell your friends about how much you like them.
K Why do we write stories?
A I write a story because I like to write stories.

**LYKERT SCALE**
K How do you feel about working on the same story everytime?
A Really like it because it lets me add more detail to my story. It helps me come up with more ideas.
K How do you feel about picking the words for your story?
A Sort of like it, no I really like it because of someone else picked my words, I wouldn't know how to put them in the story.
K How do you feel about deciding how long your stories should be?
A I really like it.
K How come?
*A Because if I couldn't decide how long it could be I wouldn't really like writing stories.
Because if it was really short, I wouldn't like my story at all.
K How long do you like your stories to be?
A Maybe three pages or four or five.
K The longer the better?
A Yes
K How do you feel about figuring out your own spelling?
A I sort of like it.
A Because sometimes I need help spelling words that I don't really know, like if it's, like I'm in fifth grade and if I wanted to use an eighth grade word, I wouldn't know how to spell it.
K How do you feel about using a computer to help you write?
A I feel really good about that. I really like it.
A Because my hands don't get as tired as writing on just plain paper. So like if I wanted to write a three page story, my hands would get pretty tired.
K Do you think that you write longer stories on the computer?
A Yeah, I feel that I write longer stories.
K How do you feel about the other kids helping you write your story?
A I sort of don't like it because sometimes kids don't know what I'm writing about so they don't know what kinds of words that I should put in. So I sort of don't like it because they *think that they should tell me what to put in and what to write. It feels like they're pushing me around.
K How do you feel about the teacher helping you write your stories?
A I sort of like it because sometimes the teacher doesn't know what you're writing about and she doesn't know what to put in your story and where you're going and stuff like that.

K Do you think that writing stories helps you?
**A Yeah, it helps me with my spelling words and helps me like if I wanted to become an author when I was older, I would remember writing stories here.

REVISING AND EDITING
K Can you tell me what revising and editing mean?
A They mean that you can revise your story and see if there is anything wrong with the spelling and editing means you can get it done to put in a book.
K Why do we do that?
A We do it because, if we didn't revise and edit, the people that were reading it wouldn't know what we were talking about.

LYKERT SCALE
K How do you feel about changing things in your story?
A Not really.
**A Sort of don't like because sometimes I like what I write in my stories and sometimes other people don't like what I write so sometime I have to change it to make them happy.
A Especially at school for my teacher. He wants us to write about one certain thing that went on and sometimes he tells me to change stuff in my story. And when I do my handwriting sheets he tells me to write bigger and my mom always tell me to write smaller so I don't know which one to go with.
K How do you feel about having correct punctuation and spelling?
A I really like it. Because sometimes people tell me, Andrea, why did you put a period here? You could've put an exclamation mark or question mark. So, I just like doing that.
K When you do it yourself, do you do it correctly?
A Um, no. Sometimes I need help with what I should put at the end of my sentences.
K Why do you like to have it the correct way?
**A Because sometimes when I'm writing a story and I put a period instead of an exclamation mark, I really don't feel good about it. Because sometimes I know that I could have put a question mark or an exclamation mark and I put a period instead.
K So you'd rather have it the right way?
A Yes.
K How do you feel about helping other students revise and edit?
A I really like it.
A Because sometimes they don't know that they forgot to put capitals, so sometimes I can help them do that and sometimes I can tell them to put periods where they need it and stuff like that.
K How do you feel about help from the teacher? Do you like the teacher to help revise and edit?
A I really like it, because sometimes she can tell me what I missed in my story and stuff, so if I put it in the book and it's like I left it and she didn't help me, the people wouldn't understand if it's the beginning of the next sentence or the end of a sentence or something like that.
K How do you feel about revising and editing your stories to get them ready for a book?
A Sort of like
K How come?
A I don't know.

K Do you think that revising and editing helps you?
A Yeah
A It helps me know what I missed and what should be capital and what shouldn't
K What would you change about revising and editing?
K Is there anything you'd change?
A No
K Do you think you should spend more time or less time doing it?
A Less time
K How come?
A I don't really know, I just think it should be less because sometimes I find it out
really fast and I get done before times over with.

Student - Sarah
10-23-94

AUTHOR GROUPS
K What are author groups?
**S You gather around to help people with their stories.
K Why do we have author groups?
S Because people might have ideas for the other peoples' stories.

LYKERT SCALE
K How do you feel about sharing your stories with others?
S Really like it because I want to get more ideas.
K How do you feel when the other kids talk about your stories?
S Really like
K How do you feel about listening to other kids stories in author groups?
**S Really like because I want to get more ideas from other people to make it more
powerful in it, some more characters.
K How do you feel about talking about other kids stories?
S Really like, I like to give them ideas.
K How do you feel about having only the teacher read your story instead of the other
kids?
S Really like.
K You'd rather have the teacher read it and not the kids?
S Because I like the teachers.
K Okay, but this question is asking you, would you just like the teacher to read it and
not the kids?
S Yeah
K So you don't like sharing your story with the kids?
S No
K I think up here though didn't you say you really like sharing your story with the
other kids?
S I change it, I really don't like.
**K You'd rather just the teacher?
**S Yeah, because I like you.
K Okay, you could do both. Do you like doing it with the teacher and the kids?
K Just the teacher?
S Yeah just the teacher.
K How do you feel about sharing your stories with others?
S Really don't like.
K And why don't you like to share your stories with the other kids?
S Because, I forgot.
K You know when you have to read your story out loud to the other kids, do you like doing that?
S No
K How come?
S Because I just don't like it.
K How do you feel about the teacher picking the author groups?
S Really like because I like the other kids, for instance, Aaron, Dan, I like those to kids to be in my author group, and wait, there is one more, Andrea.
K If you could pick, what kinds of kids would be in your author group?
S Aaron, Dan, and Andrea and David Keller.
K Why would you pick them?
**S Because they are really nice to me and they are really nice to the teachers.
K What about in your classroom, what kinds of kids would you pick?
S Jenny, Rebecca.
K Are these your friends? Would you pick kids that are your friends?
S yeah, friends
K Would you pick just boys or just girls?
S Just girls.
K Do you think that author groups help you?
S Yes to make other kids stories know ... I forgot. Because I want to get more ideas, interesting things.
K What would you change about author groups?
**S I like the names of the groups, Jurassic Parks.
K What about how long they are? Do you think they should be longer or shorter?
S Shorter, because I don't like longer names.
K Okay, but what about how long we would talk in the author groups?
Do you think that was long enough or should it be longer or shorter for talking?
S yeah longer, because I like Mr. Bursian, he's funny.

K What does planning and organizing mean?
S I forgot
K Do you remember what we would do to plan a story?
**S Write it out.
K Why do we do that?
S I forgot.
K Why do you think we plan it before we write?
S Because I want more ideas so I can write it longer.

K How do you feel about planning and organizing before you write?
**S Really like because I like to write out what I'm thinking of.
K How do you like thinking up your own ideas?
S Really like because I want more detail to my story.
S I like writing on a piece of paper.
K How do you feel about getting ideas from other kids?
**S Really don't like because it doesn't sound right.
K How do you feel about the teacher giving you ideas?
**S Really like because I like teachers to give me lots of details and punctuation.
K How do you feel about making webs or writing on paper before your story?
S Sort of like
K How do you feel about the computer giving you pictures to write about?
**S Really like, I want a boarder around it so it's dark time so you'll lay in bed and I really like the pictures and I like the colors.
K What about for writing? Did that help you?
S Yeah it did because I like the colors and I like the font.
K Did it give you ideas for your story at all?
S yeah it did
K How do you feel about the computer giving you questions to answer first?
S I really didn't like it because it's kind of...
K Some questions were...
K Did it help you with your story?
S No
K How come?
S Because everytime I write it, everyone get hurt.
K Do you think planning stories helps you?
S No
K What would you change.
S Because I want more description.
K (explanation of planning) e.g. writing notes on paper
K Does that help you?
S Kind of
K How does it help you?
**S Because I want it to be longer.

**WRITING**
K What does it mean to write a story?
S First you write out a story and you like type it on the computer and you like put some... that's all I know.
K Why do write stories?
**S Because I like it.

**LYKERT SCALE**
K How do feel about working on the same story over several times?
S Really don't like because it doesn't make any...
K Would you rather do one story one day and another story another day?
K Why would you rather do that?
S Because I like doing it like that.
K How do you feel about picking your own words for the story?
S Really like because I like the word bank, I like that a lot.
K How do you feel about deciding how long your stories should be?
S I really don't like that.
K (explanation of question)
K How come you don't like to choose how long your stories will be?
S Because I like doing one page after another page.
K You like doing a lot of pages.
S No, like one page at a time like everyday.
K So, you like doing a new story everyday or one page of the same story.
S I want to do a different story.
K And then how long would you make your stories?
S About five sentences long.
K How many pages?
S One page.
K What if I said your story had to be five pages? Would you like that?
S No
K So you kind of like to decide how long your stories should be, right?
S Yeah
K So would you want sort of like or really like?
S Sort of like.
K How do you feel about figuring out spelling on your own?
S Sort of don't like because it may not make sense.
K How do you feel about using a computer to help you write?
**S I really like because I like to type.
K Any other reason you like to use a computer?
**S I like the pictures.
K How do you feel about the other kids helping you write your stories?
S Really like because I like doing detail.
K How do you feel about the teacher helping you write your story?
S I really like that one.
S Because I like the teachers, Mr. Bursian, Ms. Van Meter, you, Ms. Hoffman.
K Why do you like the teacher helping you with your story? How does the teacher help you?
S I like the teachers doing it because I really don't want the kids doing it because I like the teachers.
K How do the teachers help you? What do they do for you?
**S If I spell a word wrong and I don't get this and then someone will XX thank you and then I spell the word right.
K So the teacher would help you spell the word right? Is that all the teachers help you with?
S Yeah.

K Do you think that writing stories helps you?
S No
K Doesn't help you? Doesn't make you better at anything?
S No
K What would you change about writing stories?
**S I would type it.
K At school do you type it or do you write it on paper?
S I write it on paper.
K So you'd rather type it?
S Yeah

**REVISING AND EDITING**
K What does revising and editing mean?
S Fix things.
K Why did we do that.
S Because it won't make any sense.
K To who?
S To the people.
K What people.
S Like the kids.

**LYKERT SCALE**
K How do you feel about changing things in your story?
S I really don't like because I really don't like it.
K How do you feel about having the correct punctuation and spelling?
S I really like it because if you spell a word wrong and go back and erase it and do the correct spelling to it, I really like that.
K Why do you like having correct spelling?
S Because it might sound right.
K How do you feel about helping other students revise and edit?
S Really like.
K Why do you like to help other kids?
S Because I like to read it and if you spell a word wrong, pretend you're the student and I'm the teacher say something to me.
K Okay know let's say I'm another kid, would you like to help me fix my story?
S Yes.
K How do you feel about help from the teacher when fixing your story?
S Really like it because I like the teachers.
K Why do you like them to help you correct things?
S Because I like the teachers and I like teachers helping me.
K How do you feel about revising and editing your stories to get them ready for publishing in a book?
S I really do, because I like the teachers to give books to the kids in their author groups and I really like that.
K Do you like to have your story in the book? Why do you like having it in a book?
**S Because I like people to read it.**
K Do you like to fix it before you put it in a book?
**S Yeah because you read it to the other groups. What is she talking about?**

K Do you think that fixing your stories or revising and editing helps you?
S Yeah to get more ideas.
K What else does it help you do? What did we fix?
S The words.
K Okay and does that help you with the words do you think?
S Yeah.
K What would you change about revising and editing?
S This is a really hard question. I don't know that one.
K Well let's think about it (explanation ..)
S I don't like the kids helping.
K Why don't you like the kids helping you?
S I like the kids better.
K Do you like the teacher helping you too?
S I like both.
K So you wouldn't change that?
S No.
K Do you think it's important to revise and edit?
S Yeah.
Appendix C

Research Protocol Clearance
Date: Sept 14, 1994

To: Kara M. McAlister

From: Christine Bahr, Acting Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number 94-08-03

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled "The attitudes of children with specialized language-learning needs toward process writing" has been approved under the full category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you must seek specific approval for any changes in this design. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: Sept 14, 1995

xc: Nelson, SPAA
BIBLIOGRAPHY


