THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

The Writing Process of
Two Kindergarten Children
Margaret D. Mulvenna

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Education.

(C) Margaret D. Mulvenna, December, 1988
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Permission has been granted to the National Library of Canada to microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film.

The author (copyright owner) has reserved other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her written permission.

L'autorisation a été accordée à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de microfilmor cette thèse et de prêter ou de vendre des exemplaires du film.

L'auteur (titulaire du droit d'auteur) se réserve les autres droits de publication; ni la thèse ni de longs extraits de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation écrite.

THE WRITING PROCESS OF TWO KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN

BY

MARGARET D. MULVENNA

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

© 1989

Permission has been granted to the LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA to lend or sell copies of this thesis, to the NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CANADA to microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film, and UNIVERSITY MICROFILMS to publish an abstract of this thesis.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.
ABSTRACT

Participant observation was used to examine the writing processes of two girls (ages 5 years, 11 months and 5 years, 7 months). The children's perceptions of writing, how they reasoned about writing, how their writing changed over time, and the evolution of the subjects' writing in terms of spelling, topic choice, story concept, and editing strategies were examined.

Data collection took place daily (averaging 15 to 30 minutes per day, per subject) over a six-month period in a public elementary kindergarten classroom. The children either initiated the writing activity themselves or were invited to write according to their own definition of writing. Data collected included the children's drawings and written products and the researcher's observational notes and interviews with the children.

The results indicated that: (a) the girls' abilities to initiate writing activities increased over time, (b) drawing and oral language helped the children gain control over the messages they wished to express, and (c) peers had a significant influence on topic selection. It was recommended that teachers of writing for preschool to grade one children: (a) create informal learning environments that encouraged verbal interactions and drawing, (b) allow children to be responsible for their own learning, and (c) informally assess the writing process over extended periods of time through careful observation when children are actually writing.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer wishes to acknowledge with thanks the many people who were a support in this study.

Kelvin Siefert, advisor and committee chairperson, for his contribution during this endeavour and for his ongoing support.

Rick Freeze, committee member, for his willingness to step in during the later stages and helpful writing suggestions.

Cathy Dearden, committee member, for her interest and readiness to provide help.

Seven Oaks School Board, for granting me an eight week educational leave which provided me with the necessary time required to write this thesis.

Pat Hauser, friend and typist, for her willingness to constantly make revisions.

Finally, a special thanks to Al, Carla, and Charles for their understanding, patience, and support.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PURPOSE OF THE STUDY</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study Approach</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Development</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental Stages of Spelling</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LITERACY RESEARCH</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Language and The Writing Process</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading-Writing Relationship</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Before Reading</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences Between the Reading and Writing Processes</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FACTORS INFLUENCING CHILDREN'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROCESS</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Language and Drawing</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play and Independent Exploration</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences in the Ways Children and Adults Learn</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications for Writing Instruction</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE WRITING PROCESS: A PROBLEM SOLVING ACTIVITY</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic Choice</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story Concept</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editing Strategies</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Writing Process iv

III. METHOD ................................................................. 39

QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH... 39
Objective Measurement Versus
Understanding Behavior From Subject’s
View ................................................................. 40
Testing Preconceived Hypotheses Versus
Developing a Research Problem Through
Observation .................................................... 41
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN EDUCATION ........ 42
Nature of Classrooms and Learner’s
Perceptions ....................................................... 42
Ability to Put Behavior in Context ......... 43
Process Orientated ......................................... 43
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ON THE PROCESS OF
WRITING .......................................................... 44
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN PRESENT STUDY... 45
SUBJECT SELECTION ........................................ 47
THE SETTING ..................................................... 48
GENERAL PROCEDURES .................................. 50
Observations ...................................................... 50
Field Notes and Writing Samples .......... 51
Time Periods ..................................................... 51

IV. RESULTS ................................................................. 60

DATA ANALYSIS ...................................................... 60
Organizing Descriptive Data .................... 60
Finding Trends in the Data ....................... 62
WRITING BEHAVIOR ........................................... 63
Individual Behaviors ............................... 63
Changes in Behavior ................................. 63
Learning Strategies .................................... 66
Purposes of Writing .................................... 69
Literacy Concepts ......................................... 69
Spelling Development ............................... 74
Story Concept ................................................. 77
Editing Strategies ......................................... 77

V. DISCUSSION ............................................................... 83

HOW CHILDREN’S PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE
NATURE OF WRITING CHANGED OVER SIX MONTHS. 84
The Writing Process

Erica's Perceptions of the Nature of Writing ................................................. 84
How These Perceptions Support Theoretical Knowledge.......................... 85
Jackie's Perceptions of the Nature of Writing .................. .......................... 87
The Role of Drawing in the Writing Process ................................................. 89

HOW THE CHILDREN'S WRITING CHANGED OVER TIME .............................. 92
Changes in Erica's Writing ................................................................. 92
Changes in Jackie's Writing ............................................................... 98
Theoretical Support ................................................................................. 108

SPELLING STAGES ..................................................................................... 112
Erica's Spelling Development .............................................................. 113
Jackie's Spelling Development ............................................................. 114

PATTERNS OBSERVED IN THE SPELLING DEVELOPMENT OF TWO KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN. 115
Short "A" Vowel Representation .............................................................. 115
Use of Short Vowel Sounds ................................................................. 115
Long Vowel Sounds ................................................................................. 116

SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION OF WRITING FOR PRESCHOOL TO GRADE ONE CHILDREN ................................................................. 117
Creating Print Rich Environments .......................................................... 117
Providing Writing Materials ................................................................. 117
Acting as Their Writing Model .............................................................. 118
Inviting Children to Write ................................................................. 118
Learning How to Write Through Play ..................................................... 119
Exploring Writing ................................................................................... 120
Learning Environments Suited to Individual Learning Styles ................ 121
Creating Interactive Classrooms .......................................................... 123
Allowing Children to Write in Developmentally Appropriate Ways .... 124
Spelling ................................................................................................. 125
Assessing Writing Development .......................................................... 126

CONCLUSION ............................................................................................... 128

REFERENCES .............................................................................................. 128

APPENDIX ................................................................................................. 134
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to gain information about how two kindergarten children:
1. perceive the nature of writing
2. reason about writing
3. change their writing behavior over time
4. develop their spelling patterns

Significance of the Study

The practical need for researchers and teachers to observe children's writing development as it occurs under naturalistic conditions in the classroom is addressed in this study. Smith (1984) and Sulzby and Teale (1985) have provided evidence that children in a literate society start learning about written language long before they enter school. They learn from print in their environment (Goodman, 1984) and from adults they see using print (Bissex, 1985; Schickedanz and Sullivan, 1984). Two researchers, Bissex (1980a) and Baghdan (1984), have provided longitudinal studies of children demonstrating that children in a literate
society may learn to read and write by age three or four. Their studies occurred in home settings.

This thesis is relevant to early childhood educators as it extends the case study approach to the kindergarten classroom. By doing so, it attempts to build an understanding of how two children's writing development grows and changes in their first formal school experience.

Statement of Problem

Changes in the writing process which are analyzed include:

1. story concept
2. editing strategies
3. topic selection
4. spelling

The problems that children encounter in the writing process and the problem solving strategies they use to make discoveries about how written language works are explored.

Theoretical Foundations

Three theoretical bases formed the basis upon which the present study was constructed. They are the case study approach, the factors influencing writing
The Writing Process

development, and the developmental stages of spelling.

Case Study Approach

A primary basis of this study was the case study approach used by Bissex (1980a) and Baghdan (1984) to describe young children using writing in highly familiar situations. Information regarding the learning strategies that children used when writing (such as self directed learning, experimentation, hypotheses testing, practice, and risk taking) were provided by the above authors.

Writing Development

There are five factors which may influence writing development.

First, oral language and drawing are viewed as being necessary for children to gain control over the message they wish to express (Graves, 1982).

Second, independent explorations of written language are crucial if children are to be free to write in a way that is developmentally appropriate (Graves, 1982; Martinez & Teale, 1987).

Third, in an attempt to make sense of the writing process it is only natural that children make errors. These errors provide us with insight into their
The Writing Process

understanding of writing. Changes that occur in writing problems experienced by children indicate growth (Bissex, 1980b).

Fourth, writing is viewed as an individual and ongoing process which requires constant practice (Graves, 1982; McDonell & Osburn, 1980). It therefore logically follows that children must communicate in writing daily if growth is to be observed.

Fifth, learning in such a process is believed to proceed from general to specific, from highly contextualized to abstract (Graves, 1983), and from the whole to its parts.

Developmental Stages of Spelling

Early spelling behaviour may proceed in stages. The following stages of spelling development have been identified by Graves (1983).

Stage 1 - Use of initial consonants eg. B - brass
Stage 2 - Initial and final consonants eg.
       BS - brass
Stage 3 - Initial, final, and interior consonants
       eg. BRS - brass
Stage 4 - Initial, final, and interior consonants
       and a vowel place holder. Vowel is
The Writing Process

incorrect but in correct position eg.

BRES - brass

Stage 5 - Child correctly spells the word with aid
of visual memory system and better vowel
discrimination.

These theoretical perspectives help us to view
young writers as being creative and experimental. As
writers self-direct their learning, they test
hypotheses and become risk takers. Thus, the writing
process may be viewed as an individual and ongoing
process that requires constant practice and which
results in constant change.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review is divided into three sections. The relationship between oral language and writing, as well as the reading-writing relationship are explored in the first section. Information on how writing, reading, and oral language support each other in young children’s development is also included.

Writing, as one important element of literacy, is dealt with in the second part of the literature review. Three current theories dealing with factors influencing children's understanding of the writing process are presented. First, children need to use oral language and drawing to help express their ideas when writing. Second, children must play with and independently explore written language, in order to learn about it. Third, children learn differently than adults. The implications of these factors for appropriate program planning is also discussed.

The third section of the literature review, deals with the writing process as a problem solving activity. Children involved in the writing process are faced with problems in story concept, editing strategies, topic
The Writing Process

selection, and spelling. Research conducted in these four areas of the writing process are presented. This information provided a framework for analyzing children's writing in the present study.

Literacy Research

Introduction

Several authors (Atkins, 1984; Buckley, 1987; Dyson, 1983b; Kane, 1982; McKenzie, 1985; Milz, 1985; Read, 1975; Teale, 1986) have pointed out the relationship between oral language, reading, and writing, and the ways in which these processes support each other in the young child's literacy development. The important role that oral language plays in the writing process and the need to create informal learning environments that encourage verbal interaction has been discussed by Dyson, 1981; Smith, 1981 and Sowers, 1982.

In addition, three important aspects of the reading-writing relationship have been explored. First, the notion that reading and writing as mutually supportive (yet different) processes has been discussed by Bissex (1980a), Goodman (1985a), and Martinez and Teale (1987). These writers see children as being
capable of switching between the writing and reading modes in order to test out and modify hypotheses about the rules of writing. Second, there is a belief that young children are developmentally ready to write before they are ready to read. The implications that this knowledge has on program planning has been presented by Baghdan, 1984; Bissex, 1980a; Chomsky, 1979 and Giacobbe, 1982. Third, the differences between the reading and writing processes has been discussed by Chomsky, 1979; Clay, 1983; and Read, 1981.

**Oral Language and the Writing Process**

It has been consistently reported that oral language is an integral part of the writing process (Dyson, 1981; Graves, 1975, 1979; Read, 1975; Smith, 1981; Sowers, 1982). The role of oral language in early writing was studied by Dyson (1983b). Five children of varying developmental levels were selected as case studies from a heterogeneous class of 22 kindergarten children (mean age was 5 years, 7 months) in a south western city of the United States. The curriculum did not include any formal instruction in reading or writing. A writing center was established with paper, pencils and markers, and the children were
asked to write according to their own definition of writing. Data collection took place over a 3 month period and consisted of audiotape recordings of the children's talk at the center, observational notes, interviews with the children and their parents, and written products. The talking and writing strategies used in the children's writing activities were observed. Observations indicated that oral language was an integral part of learning to write. Initially children focused on the most concrete aspect of writing, its graphic form and might for example write names (SONYA) or labels which were made by memorizing letters and their spatial arrangements. The children used oral language to give more explicit meaning to their text (writing) and might for example explain, "That's my Mama's name." Eventually they used language to analyze their writing. Here's an example cited of a child trying to write "peepo" (people).

"Put a P............P" (writes P)
"Peeee...." (changes P to R and adds POP). 
"Pee po, pееee po....peeеe po" (adds o). 
"Peep o....peepo...." (adds PH) (Dyson, 1983b, p.14)
The Writing Process

The text was written as RPOP OPOH and read as peep o.

The children's attempts to write down their talk using encoding strategies (letter name based and syllable based) to devise a system for expressing their ideas were demonstrated in this study. The strategies used were closely connected to spoken language.

Further evidence of the relationship between the self directing oral language of young children and their learning to write was provided by Ginishi and Dyson (1982). Two brief case studies of first graders (one male and one female) were conducted. The children's writing behaviour was observed at the beginning of the school year, over a 6 week period, when each child was alone, in a group and by interviewing them. Both children used oral language to encode words into print and frequently sounded words out. These findings suggested that the oral language of two 6-year-old children served as a bridge from oral to written language.

The dynamic relationship between oral language and written language was also shown by Graves (1982). Sixteen children, (8 first graders and 8 third graders)
at different levels of development, were observed for a 2 year period in order to learn how they changed in their writing process. This study was conducted at Atkinson Academy in New Hampshire, a small New England town. Data collection included observations and interviews. Sensitive microphones were used to record the mumble (the re-reading and sounding out) that children did when writing. Two observations were noted. First, that the oral language that surrounded composing could be 30 to 40 times greater than the actual writing created. Second, that this self directing oral language seemed to gradually disappear by mid-grade three. Graves proposed that this oral language most likely became internalized as inner speech. The above research findings provided evidence that suggests that most young writers who make the transition from oral to written discourse must produce language and sound when they write. Based on these findings, an informal learning environment that encouraged verbal interaction was provided within the study by:

1. encouraging children to discuss the topic they had chosen
The Writing Process

2. encouraging children to talk about the pictures they were drawing
3. stressing that children should write words the way they sounded
4. allowing children to exchange ideas with their peers during the writing process
5. asking children to check over what they had written (re-read) in case they wanted to add or change anything.

Reading-Writing Relationship

Reading and writing are viewed as mutually supportive processes which are closely related to oral language (Goodman, 1985a) and are believed to develop concurrently (Martinez & Teale, 1987). Producing a written message brings together the listening, speaking, reading, and writing processes. Many researchers have observed children reading their own writing. In order to determine the children's awareness of a connection between the spoken and the written word, the children in this study were encouraged to read to me what they had written.

Bissex documented her son's growth as a writer and reader (from age 5), in a 5 year case study (Bissex,
1980a). She discussed how Paul was able to supply the knowledge he had gained through reading to his own spelling; because he noted inconsistencies between the two systems (Bissex, 1984). For example, while writing a friend's last name "Potter" which Paul had written "PATR", he realized that p-a-t spelled pat, and so he questioned what he had written. Paul seemed to be switching between the writing and reading modes, checking one source of information against the other. As Paul was able to keep on taking in information about writing from the world around him (through reading), he was able to modify his own writing accordingly. Paul viewed reading and writing as mutually supportive processes.

Writing Before Reading

There are accounts of children who began to write before they knew how to read (Baghdan, 1984; Bissex, 1980a; Giacobbe, 1982; Read, 1975). Using their knowledge of letter names and sounds these children were able to write words by creating their own spellings.

The belief that children are developmentally ready to write before they are ready to read was presented by
Chomsky (1978). Three reasons were cited as to why writing appeared to precede reading. First, writing was a creative endeavour which allowed inventive spellers to compose words according to the way they sounded. Children, therefore developed a confidence that they could write anything they could say, because they had discovered the principle of writing. Second, the writing task consisted of translating from pronunciation to print. Reading on the other hand was not simply the inverse of spelling (writing). When reading words, children were faced with spelling that corresponded to a linguistic level that was considerably more abstract than pronunciation. Therefore, learning to read meant learning to relate spelling to this more abstract linguistic level. Third, when writing words the message was known to the child. When reading, the child's task was more difficult because he or she had to infer a message from print - a message chosen by someone else.

Chomsky's theory was supported by research conducted by Giacobbe (1982). Giacobbe wanted to find out what her 22 first graders attending the public school in Atkinson, New Hampshire could do as writers.
Observations were made during the first 2 weeks of school. On the first 3 days of school, small groups of four or five children were given a journal and asked to write in it, according to their own definition of writing. The other 17 children were assigned to other areas in the classroom. The researcher circulated around the classroom observing and talking to the children about what they were doing. The children continued to write in their journals daily. During the second week of school a self-made writing test was administered by the teacher. The children in this study demonstrated that they could write even though they could not read. However, they were usually able to read what they wrote.

In the present study the children are not involved in a formal reading program. However, they are exposed to written language, for example, songs and poems that are learned are written out on chart paper, books are read to them, and they are allowed to explore how writing works.

**Differences Between the Reading and Writing Processes**

Read (1981) used samples of writing from four and five-year-old children, which were collected in
studying young children's spelling (for more information refer to Read, 1975). He found that the processes of reading and writing differed significantly. Read maintained that at one stage children have two distinct systems, one for reading standard spelling and another for writing in their invented orthography. "Both systems can be effective, and the nonstandard spelling system does not necessarily affect the reading system adversely."
(Read, 1981, p. 107). Children did not seem confused by the differences between what they wrote and what they read. A child could spell the word turn as TRN, but read TURN correctly. Read's findings supported the theory presented by Chomsky (1979) - that inventive spellers may view reading and writing as two separate activities. She suggested that this distinction persisted until they adopted standard spelling into their own writing.

In this theory, early writing activities played an important part in learning to read because they allowed children to practice the more concrete aspects of word composition before they undertook the more abstract task of reading. When such children moved on to
reading, they were prepared to take an active role in teaching themselves.

In summary, during early childhood any experiences that develop the listening, speaking, writing, or reading processes will promote learning in the whole literacy development of the child. Growth in one area of literacy development, including print, affects growth in other areas, such as reading. This makes intervening in any one area both possible and educationally helpful.

Factors Influencing Children's Understanding of the Writing Process

Introduction

Several current theoretical perspectives on how young children come to gain an understanding of the writing process are presented in this section.

Several authors (Graves, 1982; McDonell & Osburn, 1980; Temple, Nathan & Burris, 1982) have pointed out that oral language and drawing serve several functions in the writing process and are viewed as an integral part of composition.

The importance of providing a play environment that encourages independent exploration of written
language has been discussed by Baghdan, 1984; Buckley, 1987; Goodman, 1984; Graves, 1982; and Teale, 1987).

The assumption that, because children learn in different ways than adults, they view writing differently, has been presented by Doake, 1979; Goodman, 1984; Graves, 1983; and Smith, 1983.

The implications that this knowledge has on planning an appropriate learning environment that encourages writing is discussed.

Oral Language and Drawing

Several researchers have focused on the relationship between oral language, drawing, and writing (Calkins, 1982; Dyson, 1983; Graves, 1982). Graves (1982) observed how children seek to control writing when they go about composing. Sixteen children (8 from grades 1 and 2; 8 from grades 3 and 4) in a small rural school in New Hampshire with varying ability were observed in the classroom over a 2 year period. Information was gathered by hand recording or videotaping child behaviours during the writing process. Interviews, structured interventions, and analysis of the children's writings were also used. A number of principles emerged about how children gained
control of making the transition from speaking to writing. First, children needed to hear and see what they meant. They controlled their writing through drawing and speaking as they wrote; and by discussing their writing with friends and the teacher. Beginning writing was more speech than writing. Second, during the beginning stages of writing, drawing was important to nearly all children. It was their means of finding out what they knew and what they wanted to write. Drawing served a rehearsal function. This means that as children drew they organized their thoughts and planned what they were going to say. Thus, the drawing served as a type of memory bank that children could refer to as they wrote. Third, young children showed a greater interest in drawing than writing. When children drew and then wrote, it was the drawing that generally received the greatest attention. Fourth, children gradually moved their focus from drawing to writing. Children may eventually eliminate drawing from the writing process or perhaps use it after they have written as a way of illustrating the text.

Temple, Nathan, and Burris (1981) stated that one method of developing a more fluent story would be to
encourage children to draw a picture, have them discuss how it related to the story they were about to write, and then have them write the story. Additional evidence that oral language and drawing served a rehearsal function for 6-year-olds was provided by Calkins (1982).

Based on the results obtained in the above studies, the researcher in the present study chose to ask the children to elaborate on their topic choice and encouraged them to verbalize their thoughts about what they wished to write. The children were allowed to write using whatever methods they chose. Drawing pictures, talking about what they represented before, during, and after completion, and then requesting the children to write about their picture was a standardized procedure in this study.

Play and Independent Exploration

Researchers (Baghdan, 1984; Buckley, 1987; Goodman, 1984) have emphasized the importance of play and written language as basic requirements for understanding literacy. Baghdan (1984), in describing her daughter, stated that "reading and writing began as play activities. She never separated function from her
fun in her learning” (Baghdan, 1984, p. 100).

Current researchers (Bissex, 1980a, 1980b; Calkins, 1983; Graves, 1982; Teale, 1987) have viewed writing largely as an act of discovery. Children learn to write by writing. They learn to write by applying their own learning strategies. Bissex (1980a, 1980b), in a longitudinal study of her son Paul, described several learning strategies that Paul discovered when writing. Paul started writing using letter-like forms to convey a general message. Next, he constructed sound-letter relationships on the basis of letter names, for example, "RUDF" meant, Are you deaf? Later, he made finer separations between consonant and vowel sounds. In spelling "telephone", for example, he put a vowel before the L rather than just using the letter L to stand for its name. These examples demonstrate how a child learning to write actively constructs and revises rules; thereby gaining an understanding of how the writing system works.

Doake’s theory (1979) of the way children learn to read and write, supports current research which views writing largely as an act of discovery. He described children as controlling and directing their own
learning motivated by some inner drive to master the task. When children regulated their own learning, experimentation and approximation became their main emphasis - rather than an accurate reproduction based on an adult standard. Error free performance was not expected and the development of the process of self correction was encouraged. In this thesis errors are viewed as important clues to the child's thoughts and are representative of the existence of rules in the child's mind.

The present study supports the belief that children are capable of directing their own learning and encouraged self discovery of the writing process by:

1. allowing children to independently explore written language and write in ways that were developmentally appropriate. Emphasis for learning was therefore not based on direct teaching, but rather, focused on encouraging the children to play and experiment with the writing materials in their environment, in order to make their own discoveries.

2. acknowledging the fact that learning language
The Writing Process

whether oral or written is a developmental task which children accomplish in their own way and in their own time. Decision making was valued and errors were viewed as a necessary part of the learning process.

3. encouraging developmentally appropriate ways of fostering literacy growth by allowing children to learn by constructing their knowledge, and not by merely imitating adults in rote-ways. Children were encouraged to take risks and their early attempts at writing were accepted and praised.

In this context writing is seen as an individual and ongoing process that requires practice and takes time. Practice for the purpose of this study can be defined as repeated trials that result in increasing mastery. In conclusion, writing can be viewed as a complex and dynamic process. Children's acquisition of an understanding of the writing system and how it works happens gradually, over a period of time, as is evident in the longitudinal data collected. It is for this reason that the children in this study were encouraged to write each day over an extended period of time.
Differences in the Ways Children and Adults Learn

Theory and research consistently agree that young children learn to write differently from older children and adults (Doake, 1979; Goodman, 1984; Graves, 1983; Smith, 1983). As adults we might assume that writing is nothing more than learning to make letters and combining them into words. Case studies of children's writing development (Baghdan, 1984; Bissex, 1980a; Graves, 1982; Giacobbe, 1982) have suggested that young children learned to write through a process that was quite the opposite of that proposed by adults. Rather than learning to write by mastering first the parts (letters) and then building up to the whole (writing sentences) it appeared that the children attended first to the whole and much later to the parts.

Implications For Writing Instruction

Research (Buckley, 1987; Sulzby & Teale, 1985) has shown that writing develops differently from the way literacy is conventionally presented in the first year curriculum. Doake (1979) warned that teachers trying to break the reading/writing process into minute steps and abstract bits of information fragmented language and in so doing took all the meaning and relevance out
of learning the task. By asking young children to concentrate their attention on the finer elements of language, teachers may be placing demands on them that they are unable to cope with cognitively.

Doake (1979) suggested that information be taught in context - which means giving specific help at the time of need. In formal instruction the focus on a specific learning task, such as letter-sound correspondence, can be very stressful for the young child because it is in conflict with his/her natural way of learning. At this age most children cannot yet read or write and should not be expected to do so in conventional ways. Instead, literacy education should help children to discover writing in a way that makes sense to them. This means that young children must be encouraged to write and read in their own way.

When children write, they learn the skills and information which they need to write well, as is evident in the research conducted by Baghdian (1984), Bissex (1980a), Calkins (1982), Giacobbe (1982), Smith (1983). Lucy Calkins (1982) observed and compared 2 third grade classrooms at Atkinson Academy, a public school in rural New Hampshire, over the course of one
year. One classroom allowed children lots of time to write on topics of their choice (1 hour a day, 3 times a week). The children in this classroom were observed by the researcher each day as they wrote. In the other classroom the children were taught language mechanics through daily drills and workbook exercises. All the children in both classrooms were interviewed and asked to identify certain types of punctuation and explain their use. Children who had no formal instruction in punctuation, but who wrote daily could define or explain an average of twice as many kinds of punctuation as could children who wrote rarely, but were taught punctuation through daily language lessons, drills and worksheets. These findings support the theory that young children learn to write more effectively when skills can be learned in context and in response to their questions and individual needs.

Milz (1985) in her study of first graders found that children learned to write before they were formally taught about handwriting, spelling, or story formation. She also found that children move toward conventional forms even though they are not corrected or instructed to use them.
The Writing Process: A Problem Solving Activity

Introduction

The writing process presents children with many problem solving situations. The areas of spelling, topic choice, story concept, and editing strategies will be examined. The idea that children resist learning how to spell (write) through direct teaching has been presented by Chomsky (1979) and Temple, Nathan, and Burris (1982). Duckworth (1979), Goodman (1985b), and Sowers (1982) have described how children learned to write without instruction by inventing their own theories. Graves (1983) has described the stages of spelling that children go through. These stages serve as a reference used to analyze children's writing in this present study.

Calkins (1982) and Graves (1982) have studied the effect that topic choice has on children's attitudes toward writing. The importance of allowing children to draw on personal experiences, has been discussed by Calkins (1982) and Martinez and Teale (1987).

Children's concept of story also has been examined, through their writing, by Golden (1984).

Information regarding how children change as
The writing process has been provided by Calkins (1982) and Graves (1982).

**Spelling**

Temple, Nathan, and Burris (1982), have argued that conceptual learning, including learning how to spell (write), resists direct teaching. Chomsky (1979), in her investigation of the relationship between young children's spelling and writing, supported the belief that children can, and do, make tremendous gains without instruction. Chomsky suggested that the spelling task consisted of translating from pronunciation to print and that young children used their knowledge and perceptions of oral language (how they hear things) to determine how to represent words. She maintained that the print-sound relationship was something children had to invent for themselves and that writing activities provided valuable experience and practice in phonetic word analysis and letter-sound correspondence helping children gain a sense of control over the printed word.

Sowers (1982) investigated the writing process of a class of grade 1 students in Atkinson Academy, a public school in New Hampshire. For 2 years, she
observed the children writing topics of their own choice (according to their own definition of writing) and analyzed their writing samples. The children's invented spelling provided insight into how they figured out the rules of written English. For example, when Joshua wanted to write "radio" he pronounced the word several times and wrote "rdo". He indicated that there was another sound, between the r and d, but said he was not sure what it was. He said radio again and filled in the letter a. Joshua described the sequence that most beginning writers follow when he explained, "first you hear beginning and end sounds. Then you hear the sounds in the middle" (Sowers, 1982, p. 39).

Chomsky wrote that, "self-made hypothesis about spellings are an active process taking the child far beyond the rules that can be offered him by the best patterned, programmed, or linguistic approaches. The more the child is prepared to do for himself the better off he is" (Chomsky, 1979, p. 49).

Duckworth (1979) and Goodman (1985) maintained that children have to have a theory in order to write. Once children have a theory, no matter how correct or incorrect, they can decide whether results confirm or
The Writing Process 30

contradict this theory. A contradiction might lead the
cchild to formulate a new theory that would take these
new features into account. This raises the children's
understanding to a new level. Bissex's 5 year case
study of her son's growth as a writer and reader
illustrated how Paul was beginning to question his
letter name strategy for spelling the long e sound
(Bissex, 1980a). He started using Y rather than E for
the long e sound after his friend Toby had corrected
Paul's spelling of her name TOBE two weeks earlier.
Since then, Paul had written TOBY and KANDYS, but also
TADE. He questioned the spelling of his father's name
Henry, asking whether there was an E at the end. Paul
continued to use both Y and E spellings for the final
long e sound for months. This example, illustrates how
children constantly construct new theories about print
from diverse sources and experiences (books, signs,
other people). Children shift to new hypotheses when
their current ones conflict with new written structures
they encounter and as they go through the process of
inventing and comparing their representations with
print around them.

While writing, children work with spelling in the
midst of many other processes. Graves (1983) emphasized the following characteristics about spelling and listed the stages that children go through. Graves maintained that:

1. each letter that a child puts into a word represents some sound
2. letters run together as they do in speaking
3. consonants are more easily heard when sounding out words than vowels and become foundations upon which words are made
4. children go through the following stages:
   Stage 1 - Use of initial consonants eg. B for brass
   Stage 2 - Initial and final consonants eg. BS for brass
   Stage 3 - Initial, final, and interior consonants eg. BRS for brass
   Stage 4 - Initial, final, and interior consonants and a vowel place holder. Vowel is incorrect but in the correct position eg. BRES for brass.
   Stage 5 - Child correctly spells the word with aid of visual memory systems and better
vowel discrimination.

Read (1981) also stressed the systematic nature of invented spelling. He stated that children's representations of sounds were consistent and rule governed and amazingly similar across the different groups of children studied.

Several researchers (Bissex 1980a; Graves, 1983; Gundlach, 1982; Sowers, 1982) agree that for most beginning writers problem solving was at the spelling level. When the mechanics of spelling dominated, words did not flow. Writing was viewed as a slow and difficult task for many children as it was dependent on the speed with which children recognized sound-symbol relationships from their own speech and the speed with which letters were written.

The following authors (Bissex, 1984; Graves, 1983; Sowers, 1982) agree that spelling is a matter of habit for adults but not for children. Invented spelling was really invented and new every time. Bissex (1980a) who conducted a 5 year case study of her son's growth as a writer and reader agreed that when Paul wrote directions, as DRAKHENS he did not regard that spelling as permanent. One month later he wrote DRAKSHINS, and
two years after that DIRECKSHONS, and in another year spelled the word conventionally. Problem solving for most beginning writers is at the spelling level. It therefore seems likely that spelling development will be an important part of data analysis.

**Topic choice**

Graves (1982) in a 2 year study of 8 first and second graders, and 8 third and fourth graders of varying abilities at Atkinson Academy in New Hampshire studied the effect that topic choice had on children's attitude to writing. Data collection included hand recorded observations and written samples. Four significant findings were observed. First, that regular writing helped children put the spelling and mechanical aspects of writing behind them, allowing them to give greater attention to information and topic focus. Second, that choice of topics was viewed as the single most important influence on children's attitudes to writing. Third, young children if given the opportunity could learn to choose topics well. Fourth, children were greatly influenced by their peers and often became aware of topic ideas from each other.

The importance of leaving children in control of
their own writing, by allowing them to choose their own topics has been addressed by Calkins (1982), Martinez and Teale (1987), and Milz (1985). Grave's finding that choice of topics was viewed as the single most important influence on children's attitudes to writing was supported by Martinez and Teale. Topics that allowed the children to draw on personal experiences resulted in longer and better formed stories (Martinez & Teale, 1987). Calkin's statement "When children have ownership of their pieces they want to do the best they can do - because it is theirs" (Calkins, 1982, p. 47) emphasizes the importance that choice of topics has on children's writing abilities.

In conclusion, writing is often facilitated when the writer cares about what he or she is writing. The present study supports this finding and observed the effect that regular writing had on the children's spelling development and topic selection.

**Story concept**

Children's concept of story was examined through their writing by Golden (1984). First, second, and third graders written samples were collected in the classroom by inviting groups of six to eight students
to write about a topic of their choice (Golden & Vukelic, 1981; Vukelic & Golden, 1982). Golden defined stories as having a beginning, middle and ending. Writing samples demonstrated that first graders used settings which were not elaborated, plots that were not fully developed, and stories that were basically beginnings without middles or endings. Second graders demonstrated a story structure with a beginning, middle, and ending; and showed increased plot development. Third graders showed greater character and plot development which advanced the story. Stories turn out to be complicated things when we break them into the parts that make them up. It is therefore not surprising that they should be difficult to write.

**Editing strategies**

Revision defined as "the act of changing something already composed" (Graves, 1983, p. 56) was studied by Graves (1983). Three children (two girls; one 6-year-old and one 8-year-old, and one 8-year-old boy) were observed while writing on topics of their choice, for a 2 year period in an elementary school in New Hampshire. Results indicated that:

1. Children revised in other media forms such as
2. Revision began when children chose their own topics. Children who have a number of topics to write on learn to exclude some and write on others. During this selection process they are learning to revise.

3. Beginning writers do not revise. Getting the message down required all their attention.

4. In the first grade revision usually meant adding on.

5. Most revision is at the word unit level and involved adjustments of spellings. Words that are more stable for example, sight words, are more likely to be revised than first inventions.

Similar results were obtained by Calkins (1982). Both studies provided evidence that suggested that children have to be familiar enough with the process to change it. These findings also suggest that one of the best ways of observing how children change as writers is to look at their revisions.

In conclusion, "children grow as writers because
they wrestle with imbalances between their intentions and the problems at hand," (Graves, 1982C, p. 178).

The writing process can therefore be viewed as a "problem finding, problem solving activity" (Calkins, 1980, p. 331). Therefore, the thinking process is vital to writing. Each child may be viewed as progressing through various stages in the writing process, as they learn new concepts and develop new theories about writing. Some children remain at one stage for a long time, others quickly internalize many new concepts. Allowing children to self direct their own learning at their own pace and in their own way encourages individual growth.

The literature review has served to establish a conceptual framework for understanding beginning writing and has provided a theoretical and developmental basis for analyzing the children's writing in this study. The 3 basic research questions asked in this study were:

1. Over a 6 month period, what are the changes in two girls' perceptions about the nature of writing and the way they reason about writing?

2. Over a 6 month period, what are the changes in
two girls' writing development?

3. Over a 6 month period, what is the evolution of two girls' writing in terms of spelling, topic choice, story concept, and editing strategies?
CHAPTER III

METHOD

The first part of this review compares the use of qualitative and quantitative methods of research in education, explains the merits of qualitative research when studying the learning process, and shows how information gained from such an approach compliments research literature that already exists on the process of writing. The second part of this review provides the rationale for using the case study approach which is commonly used in qualitative research, as the method of collecting data in the present study.

Qualitative and Quantitative Research

Educational research studies often use qualitative and quantitative methods to address the same issues. Qualitative and quantitative research methods do not compete; they just tell different stories. Each method concentrates on different aspects of the nature of human behaviour and the best ways of coming to understand it. According to Firestone (1987) qualitative and quantitative methods of research have
distinct characteristics that provide us with different kinds of information.

Objective Measurement Versus Understanding Behavior

From Subject's View

Quantitative studies seek to explain changes in social facts primarily through objective measurement, such as inventories and questionnaires that produce data that can be statistically analyzed. Variables are considered interconnected and mutually influential. Thus attention focuses on a set of variables rather than on the total situation, such as a classroom or school.

Qualitative research presents a more dynamic, changing view of the world. Central to this approach is understanding behaviour from the subject's own frame of reference. Qualitative studies view human behaviour as significantly influenced by the setting in which it occurs. The qualitative researcher therefore focuses observations on the particular setting under study because the approach is more cautious about generalizing to other, related settings.

One of the most frequently used methods of qualitative research is participant observation. In
observational case studies, the major data gathering technique is participant observation; the researcher enters the particular setting over a period of time, gets to know the subjects and systematically collects descriptive information. Usually the information consists of the individual’s words, pictures or observable behaviour.

Testing Preconceived Hypotheses Versus Developing a Research Problem Through Observation

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1982), data analysis is an ongoing part of participant observation and requires speculating about themes or patterns that emerge. At each step, what researchers observe and ask about in the research problem depends on what they have learned. Connections between pieces of data and understanding the subject’s world provide insight into why he or she acts in the manner observed. In contrast, quantitative research questions are formed by operationalizing variables within a pre-existing conceptual framework or theory. This method also stresses the use of established procedures, such as experimental or correlational designs, to reduce error and bias. Quantitative research arrives at
The Writing Process

understandings through experimentation and induction; through what is commonly called scientific generalization.

In conclusion, each approach provides different ways of acquiring an understanding of behaviour. Specific situations require the use of the method best suited to the purposes of that particular study.

Qualitative Research in Education

Nature of Classrooms and Learner's Perceptions

Wilson (1977) stated that qualitative techniques allowed the researcher to gather information about human behaviour that is impossible to obtain by quantitative methods. In quantitative research, behaviour is explained in terms of formal statements of relationships which are verified through statistical testing of the null hypothesis. This results in generalizations that can be applied beyond particular instances. Erickson (1986) contended that the main problem with the quantitative approach is that it provided a one-dimensional view of the classroom process, products such as achievement test scores, and classroom interactions. Such research has provided some insights about educational issues but leaves many
major questions unanswered.

The great variations across classrooms has led to the increased use of qualitative research methods. According to Erickson (1988), participant observation has played a significant role in educational research because classrooms are socially and culturally organized environments, and because the ways in which teachers and learners perceive the learning situation are intrinsic to education. Both of these features lend themselves better to qualitative than to quantitative research methods.

Ability to Put Behaviour in Context

Qualitative research is characterized by certain specific strengths. One strength, for example, is the ability to put behaviour in context and to attend to the processes, as well as outcomes (Erickson, 1988). Understanding the human aspects of change is what qualitative research strategies do best. In this view, teachers and their students define the real world together, as they interact in the classrooms; the researcher is concerned with understanding their feelings and reactions.

Process Orientated
Bogdan and Biklen (1982) supported the qualitative emphasis on process, as benefitting educational research. According to these authors, the qualitative view of situations as complex makes qualitative research useful by allowing the researcher to look at many dimensions of educational issues, rather than by narrowing the field, a practice common in quantitative methods of research.

Qualitative Research on the Process of Writing

Prior to the last decade, few studies have involved participant observations of children during writing activities. Most studies have been correlational, focused on single interventions on writing performance. Data from such studies makes it difficult to understand what is involved in the writing process. Some cross-sectional studies (Clay, 1975; Temple, Nathan, & Burris, 1982) have analyzed writing samples of children of various ages and have defined stages in the development of writers, but have not examined the processes used to obtain these final products.

In order to understand how young children learn to write we must observe them when they are engaged in
The Writing Process

writing. In the last decade there has been an increasing amount of research directed at actually studying children while writing. Longitudinal studies based on daily observations over an extended period of time, allow us to discover the learning strategies used by children. Two researchers (Baghdan, 1984; Bissex, 1980a) used longitudinal studies of their own children in the home situation to provide a better understanding of young children's initial attempts at writing. Bissex (1980b) explained the rationale for observing the writings of specific children, as providing leads regarding questions to ask and patterns to look for in studying other children. Graves (1975) stated that research devoted to the full study of single individuals in the school setting is required. An increasing number of studies (Dyson, 1983b, 1986; Calkins, 1983; Graves, 1979; Gundloch, 1981) have focused on the process of writing in the classroom setting.

Qualitative Research in Present Study

Because of the lack of studies of the writing process and of children while actually writing, the present study used these methods to explore the writing
processes of two kindergarten age children in the classroom setting over a six month period. The present study specifically deals with analyzing changes in the writing process observed over an extended time. The use of detailed observations, the concern with process and the emphasis on perspectives that these subjects have, regarding the writing process, all made qualitative methods most appropriate for this specific study.

In addition to the above reasons, there are two others for using qualitative methods in this study. First, it focuses on one specific setting, and second it focuses on children's perceptions of how the writing system works over time.

Stake (1988) presented support for the use of the case study approach in achieving a better understanding of the complexity and dynamics of the writing process, by stating that it is appropriate to focus on children because in this learning situation, it is the child and how he or she perceives learning to write that we are concerned with. He pointed out the relevance of using such an approach, stating that the strength of the case study approach is that by being aware of another's
personal experience we can better come to understand an educational system. This increased realization of how teachers learn about their students, can be extended to how teachers learn from each other and researchers. This results in a sharing of knowledge that is more easily understood and more readily applied to one's own personal situation.

Subject Selection

In this study, two caucasian girls from middle income families, aged 5 years 11 months and 5 years 7 months, who attended a kindergarten with other 4 and 5-year-olds in an urban elementary school in a mid-western city of Canada were observed as they explored writing in the second half of their kindergarten year (beginning of January until June, 1988). Based on information provided by the classroom teacher and found in cumulative record files, two children of average developmental abilities were chosen for this study. Language samples and writing samples were gathered during a preliminary observation period (September to January). Both girls appeared to have the following characteristics: they used age appropriate language when expressing themselves orally, they possessed
average fine motor skills, and they showed a willingness to write according to their own definition of writing. Both girls, by the beginning of January, were using invented spelling which included most vowels; however, the vowels used were often incorrect.

The children's parents were contacted and the research procedure was explained. Parental permission was received. In order to conceal the identify of the two children participating in this study, two alternative names were chosen. (See Appendix.)

The Setting

The classroom in which the study occurred emphasized pre-literacy and literacy skills in the following ways:

1. The children were provided with experiences that stimulated speaking and expanded their vocabulary.

2. The children were read to daily so that they became familiar with stories, language patterns and structures.

3. Many opportunities were provided for the children to see the written word - songs and chants were written out on chart paper and
things were labelled in the classroom.

4. To help the children connect the printed word with spoken language the teacher wrote down what the children said about their pictures.

5. The teacher encouraged the children to write by acting as their writing model. This involved:
   a. developing experience charts with the children based on significant activities in the children's lives
   b. recording observations of the children during their play
   c. writing notes to the children, to their parents, and other people in the school
   d. responding in writing to stories the children have written in their journals

6. The children were encouraged to imitate adult writing.

   The children were encouraged to explore early writing. This was accomplished by adding drawing and play writing to the things the children naturally explored during the day. The children were provided with writing materials - various types, colors and sizes of paper, and chalk boards, as well as things to
write with; colored markers, colored pencils, crayons, pencils, and chalk. Scissors, glue, masking tape and a stapler were also available within the classroom. Pencils and paper were located within the housekeeping and block building areas to encourage sign making, lists, exchange of a friend's number - all in an attempt to extend dramatic play by adding print to it and making it more meaningful.

These goals are consistent with research that expresses the importance of play and the use of written language as basic requirements of understanding literacy (Baghdan, 1984; Goodman, 1984). The children in this study are exposed to meaningful print and are allowed to experiment with it through play activities. Several researchers (Bissex, 1980; Clay, 1975; King, 1985) have indicated that children who are encouraged to take risks and experiment with print learn to write independently at an early age.

General Procedures

Observations

As part of the study, children wrote for 10 to 30 minutes per day, either on their own initiative or at my request. Observations were made daily, from January
4th through June 24th, 1988, sometime between 9:20 and 11:00 a.m. This timing coincided with the free choice period of the class day. Observations were recorded from 10 to 30 minutes a day on each subject and they averaged 10 minutes everyday per subject during Phase I, and 30 minutes every day per subject during Phase II.

The children were observed in three kinds of situations:
1. working alone as they self initiated the writing project
2. Jackie and Erica writing side-by-side
3. during interactions with myself

Field Notes and Writing Samples
Observations all consisted of some combination of field notes and actual writing samples of the children. Two examples, of the type of field notes collected are found in Table I.

Figures 1, 2, and 3 are examples of writing samples collected from one of the subjects during different phases of the study.

Time Periods
Generally the observations fell into the following
Table I

Two Examples of Field Notes

Example 1

Date:  January 21, 1988

Context: I have invited Jackie to write.

J  "I know what I’m going to write about -
   birthdays no cakes, birthdays?
   How do you spell happy birthday?"

M  "Try to sound it out. Do the best you can."

(She writes: HAPPY
   BRHDAY
   TO
   JACKIE!

on the birthday cake in her picture.)

M  "What can you tell me about birthdays?"

J  "I'm not finished the picture yet."

(At top of paper using a brown colored
   pencil she writes:
   BRHDAY R FUN AND WAN YOU
birthdays are fun and when you
   GO HOMYOU GAT AHRETBAY
go home you get a treat bag

O.C. Jackie seems to have an idea in mind about what she wants to write about when I invite her to the table. This was not evident at the beginning of January.

Example II

Date: June 6, 1988
Context: I am observing Jackie writing.

J "Look at all the writing I’ve done. My story is exciting."

M "Is it an adventure?"

J "You might say in some ways. It’s not a very long story – but it’s exciting."

She has written:

RABATRDEP Rabbit Redeep
ALATALL FRAG a little frog
WAS DANSAING was dancing
ON A LALEPAD on a lily pad.
HE LIKtFANE He looked funny.
THEAN HE WAS Then he was
Table 1 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAD SO HE JAPT</th>
<th>mad so he jumped</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IN TO THEWA TR</td>
<td>into the water.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

J (to Erica) "Do you like that story?"
E (laughs) "It's funny."
E (to Margaret) "Do you like that story?"
M "Yes."
E "Maybe Mr. Selchen (our principal) will like it."

J "Do you mean you give them to Mr. Selchen?"
M "No, but you could show it to him."

O.C. Both Erica and Jackie seem more aware of an audience.

Note. Other field notes are available upon request from the researcher. J = Jackie; M = Margaret; E = Erica; O.C. = observer comment.
Figure Caption

Figure 1. Erica's writing sample; Phase I, January 4, 1988.

Note: Other writing samples are available upon request from the researcher.
Figure Caption

Figure 2. Erica's writing sample; Phase II, March 14, 1988.

I LOVED DADDY WAD

ATTIC FAN
Figure Caption

Figure 3. Erica's writing sample; Phase III, May 17, 1988.

I PLAD A GAM AT MY GRAM

IS LAP

DIRE "AND" SAR

GRAMS

WE ETAP AND GRAMS.
time periods.

**Preliminary observations.** September to January 4 - I observed and interacted with the children as they worked in their centers. During this time the children's writing behaviour was assessed, in order to identify possible case study children.

**Phase I.** January 4 to March 14 - Major emphasis was on gathering data. During interactions with children I encouraged them to talk about the topic they had chosen before attempting to write about it.

**Phase II.** March 14 to April 14 - Data collection continued. The children were focusing their attention on how words were spelt. As a result, my interactions with them during this phase focused on the spelling of words. I assisted them by slowly sounding out misspelled words.

**Phase III.** April 18 to June 24 - Data collection continued. During this phase two changes in the children's writing were observed. First, the children became more aware of the necessity of leaving spaces between words. For example, Jackie was having difficulty re-reading what she had written. Also, the
children were becoming more competent as spellers, and as a result were producing an increased amount of writing, which demonstrated a growing sense of story development.

Based on these observations, my interactions with the children focused on story content and stressed the importance of having a beginning, middle, and ending in a story. Spacing between words was emphasized during this period.
The Writing Process

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Data Analysis

Analysis of the data provided information about how children perceived the nature of writing, how they reasoned about writing, how they solved problems about written expression, and what changes occurred in story concept, editing strategies, topic selection and spelling.

Organizing Descriptive Data

Data analysis was an ongoing part of the research. Therefore data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously. To make sense out of the descriptive data gathered the following approach recommended by Bogdan and Biklen (1982) and Bogdan and Taylor (1984) was used.

1. The study had a broad exploratory beginning.
   Its purpose was to gain an understanding of the writing process as perceived by two kindergarten children.

2. The initial data collections were reviewed and examined, and decisions were made about where to go in the study. As more was learned about
The topic of writing, a research focus was developed based on what was feasible to do and what was of interest to me. This resulted in narrowing the scope of data collection.

3. Insights into understanding incidents that occurred in data were recorded in the form of observer comments and served as a summary of what was thought to be emerging. As data was read certain patterns of behaviour or reoccurring events emerged.

4. A preliminary list of coding categories was devised by searching through the data for regularities and patterns, as well as for topics covered by data. Words and phrases were written down to represent these topics and patterns. These words and phrases became coding categories which served as a means of sorting descriptive data.

5. All data was coded and organized into major coding categories.

6. As the study progressed, the coding system was refined according to what was considered relevant to the data collected. Based on this
information the research questions became more focused and further decisions were made about what to observe and what questions to ask.

7. By simultaneously coding and analyzing the data, several theories or concepts that seemed to explain the writing process began to develop.

8. By comparing specific incidents in the data these concepts became modified and their relationship to one another examined until they became integrated into a new theory.

Finding Trends in the Data

Trends in the data were obtained by comparing differences between the three phases of coding categories. Behaviour that showed changes either positive or negative (change means 100% increase or a 50% decrease between time periods after taking the difference in length of periods into account) were used as a source of ideas for discussing the results.

The field notes were read several times. Examples were sought that provided explanations or answers to the above two questions. Descriptions of these examples in the discussion section were cited from the field
notes which were given page numbers. Each line of each page of field notes was numbered from 1 - 25. The line numbers aided in describing the results and in referring the reader to appropriate places within the notes.

Writing Behavior

Individual behaviors

The following tables are made up of descriptive data which has been organized and coded into major categories. These tables illustrate behaviors that showed significant changes between time periods.

Table 2 shows the frequency with which specific types of Margaret's behavior occurred when she interacted with Jackie and Erica during phase I, II, and III of the study. Row 1 shows that Margaret asked Jackie to write 30 times during phase I, 24 times during phase II, and 7 times during phase III. She invited Erica to write 47 times during phase I, 8 times during phase II and 9 times during phase III.

Changes in behavior

Table 3 shows the percent change in Margaret's behavior from phrase I to II, from phase II to III and
The Writing Process

Table 2

Margaret’s Behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Margaret's Behaviour</th>
<th>Phase Frequencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Invites child to write</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Orientates child’s thinking to topic</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Asks for further explanation of topic</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Seeks clarification</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Keeps child on task</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Assists child with task:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a) offers a suggestion</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6b) sounds out a word</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6c) provides information</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: J = Jackie; E = Erica.
## Margaret's Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Margaret's Behavior</th>
<th>I-IIJ</th>
<th>II-IIIJ</th>
<th>I-III</th>
<th>I-IIE</th>
<th>II-IIIIE</th>
<th>I-IIIIE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Invites child to write</td>
<td>20%↓</td>
<td>71%↓</td>
<td>77%↓</td>
<td>83%↓</td>
<td>12%↑</td>
<td>81%↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Orientates child's thinking to topic</td>
<td>33%↓</td>
<td>100%↓</td>
<td>100%↓</td>
<td>87%↓</td>
<td>50%↓</td>
<td>93%↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Asks for further explanation of topic</td>
<td>82%↓</td>
<td>350%↑</td>
<td>18%↓</td>
<td>100%↓</td>
<td>4600%↑</td>
<td>84%↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Seeks clarification</td>
<td>1900%↑</td>
<td>88%↓</td>
<td>533%↑</td>
<td>74%↓</td>
<td>29%↑</td>
<td>88%↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Keeps child on task</td>
<td>82%↑</td>
<td>55%↓</td>
<td>18%↓</td>
<td>91%↓</td>
<td>600%↑</td>
<td>38%↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Assists child with task:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a) offers a suggestion</td>
<td>100%↑</td>
<td>233%↑</td>
<td>586%↑</td>
<td>100%↓</td>
<td>1700%↑</td>
<td>8%↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6b) sounds out a word</td>
<td>8400%↑</td>
<td>97%↓</td>
<td>200%↑</td>
<td>18%↓</td>
<td>89%↓</td>
<td>75%↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6c) provides information</td>
<td>788%↑</td>
<td>71%↓</td>
<td>150%↑</td>
<td>38%↑</td>
<td>23%↓</td>
<td>8%↑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** J = Jackie; E = Erica.
from phase I to III for both Jackie and Erica. Table 3 can be read as: Row 1 indicates that there was a 20% decrease in the number of times that Margaret asked Jackie to write from phase I to II, a 71% decrease from phase II to III, and an over all 77% decrease from phase I to III. Row 1 also shows that there was a 83% decrease in the number of times that Margaret asked Erica to write from phase I to II, a 12% increase from phase II to III and an over all 81% decrease from phase I to III.

As can be seen in Tables 2 and 3, during the later phases of the study (phases II and III) two significant changes occurred in Margaret’s behaviour. Margaret spent less time inviting Jackie and Erica to write and less time orientating their thinking to a particular topic.

**Learning Strategies**

Tables 4 to 15 can be read in the same manner as Tables 2 and 3. Tables 4 and 5 indicate that Jackie and Erica self initiated writing activities less at the beginning of the study, and more often at the end of the study. Changes in Jackie’s and Erica’s learning strategies were noted when comparing percent changes
Table 4

Learning Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Strategies</th>
<th>IJ</th>
<th>IIJ</th>
<th>IIIJ</th>
<th>IE</th>
<th>IIE</th>
<th>IIIE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Self initiates writing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a. Thinks aloud</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b. Responds to question about topic</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2c. Verbalizes ideas while drawing pictures</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Planning</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a. Asks Marg. question</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4b. Asks peer question</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4c. Seeks adult help</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a. Makes off task comment</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5b. Peer offers support</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5c. Models writing of peer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5d. Peer comments on her drawing or writing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: J = Jackie; E = Erica
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Strategies</th>
<th>I-IIIE</th>
<th>II-IIIIE</th>
<th>I-IIE</th>
<th>II-IIE</th>
<th>I-IIE</th>
<th>II-IIE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Self initiates writing</td>
<td>400%↑</td>
<td>27%↑</td>
<td>267%↑</td>
<td>167%↑</td>
<td>56%↑</td>
<td>317%↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a. Thinks aloud</td>
<td>115%↓</td>
<td>82%↓</td>
<td>62%↓</td>
<td>79%↓</td>
<td>0%↓</td>
<td>79%↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b. Responds to question about topic</td>
<td>19%↑</td>
<td>66%↓</td>
<td>59%↓</td>
<td>96%↓</td>
<td>1050%↑</td>
<td>80%↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2c. Verbalizes ideas while drawing pictures</td>
<td>53%↑</td>
<td>77%↓</td>
<td>65%↓</td>
<td>92%↓</td>
<td>150%↑</td>
<td>81%↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Planning</td>
<td>73%↑</td>
<td>23%↓</td>
<td>33%↑</td>
<td>87%↓</td>
<td>350%↑</td>
<td>40%↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a. Asks Marg. question</td>
<td>83%↓</td>
<td>300%↑</td>
<td>50%↓</td>
<td>100%↓</td>
<td>700%↑</td>
<td>75%↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4b. Asks peer question</td>
<td>300%↑</td>
<td>50%↓</td>
<td>100%↑</td>
<td>100%↓</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4c. Seeks adult help</td>
<td>33%↑</td>
<td>100%↓</td>
<td>100%↓</td>
<td>700%↑</td>
<td>100%↓</td>
<td>100%↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a. Makes off task comment</td>
<td>300%↑</td>
<td>79%↓</td>
<td>17%↓</td>
<td>70%↓</td>
<td>60%↓</td>
<td>88%↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5b. Peer offers support</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>93%↓</td>
<td>93%↓</td>
<td>38%↓</td>
<td>100%↑</td>
<td>23%↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5c. Models writing of peer</td>
<td>700%↑</td>
<td>63%↓</td>
<td>200%↑</td>
<td>100%↑</td>
<td>200%↑</td>
<td>80%↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5d. Peer comments on her drawing or writing</td>
<td>20%↓</td>
<td>50%↑</td>
<td>20%↑</td>
<td>100%↓</td>
<td>1000%↑</td>
<td>233%↑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: J = Jackie; E = Erica
from phase I to phase III. There was a decrease in (a) the number of times the girls thought out loud, (b) the number of times they verbalized ideas while drawing, (c) and the number of off task comments made, (d) but there was an increase in the number of questions that they asked Margaret.

Purpose of Writing

As can be seen in Tables 6 and 7, phase I was characterized by the girls labelling objects, creating lists, signs, and writing letters. However, these behaviours generally decreased or completely disappeared during phases II and III. During phases I and II, Jackie’s and Erica’s main purpose for writing was to make statements. The number of statements written, decreased during phase III. Phase III is characterized by an increase in story writing.

Literacy Concepts

As reported in Tables 8 and 9, Jackie’s concept of literacy increased steadily from phases I to III. Erica’s concept of literacy showed a significant increase from phase II to III. Both girls showed a decrease in verbally expressing confidence in their literacy skills from phase I to phase III.
Table 6
General Purposes of Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purposes of Writing</th>
<th>IJ</th>
<th>IIJ</th>
<th>IIIJ</th>
<th>IE</th>
<th>IIE</th>
<th>IIIE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Label objects</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Create lists</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Make signs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Write a letter</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Make a statement</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Create a story</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Copying</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Make a book</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* J = Jackie; E = Erica.
### Table 7

**General Purposes of Writing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of Writing</th>
<th>I-IIJ</th>
<th>II-III</th>
<th>I-IIIJ</th>
<th>I-IIE</th>
<th>II-IIIIE</th>
<th>I-IIIIE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Label objects</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%↓</td>
<td>100%↓</td>
<td>260%↑</td>
<td>100%↓</td>
<td>100%↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Create lists</td>
<td>100%↓</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%↓</td>
<td>40%↓</td>
<td>100%↓</td>
<td>100%↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Make signs</td>
<td>100%↓</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%↓</td>
<td>100%↓</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Write a letter</td>
<td>100%↓</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%↓</td>
<td>80%↓</td>
<td>100%↓</td>
<td>100%↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Make a statement</td>
<td>12%↓</td>
<td>50%↓</td>
<td>56%↓</td>
<td>66%↑</td>
<td>80%↓</td>
<td>34%↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Create a story</td>
<td>800%↑</td>
<td>175%↑</td>
<td>2400%↑</td>
<td>100%↑</td>
<td>300%↑</td>
<td>3100%↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Copying</td>
<td>400%↓</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>400%↓</td>
<td>200%↓</td>
<td>200%↑</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Make a book</td>
<td>100%↑</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%↑</td>
<td>300%↑</td>
<td>33%↑</td>
<td>400%↑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** J = Jackie; E = Erica.
### Table 8

**Concept of Literacy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase frequencies</th>
<th>IJ</th>
<th>IIJ</th>
<th>IIIJ</th>
<th>IE</th>
<th>IIE</th>
<th>IIIIE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concept of Literacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Displays confidence in literacy skills</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Child's concept of literacy</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Aware of oral-written relationship</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Aware of drawing-writing differences</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** J = Jackie; E = Erica
### The Writing Process

#### Table 9

**Concept of Literacy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept of Literacy</th>
<th>I-IIJ</th>
<th>II-IIIJ</th>
<th>I-IIIJ</th>
<th>I-IIIE</th>
<th>II-IIIIE</th>
<th>I-IIIIE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Displays confidence in literacy skills</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>400%↓</td>
<td>400%↓</td>
<td>71%↓</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>71%↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Child’s concept of literacy</td>
<td>243%↑</td>
<td>142%↑</td>
<td>728%↑</td>
<td>60%↓</td>
<td>108%↑</td>
<td>17%↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Aware of oral-written relationship</td>
<td>67%↑</td>
<td>90%↓</td>
<td>83%↓</td>
<td>300%↓</td>
<td>200%↑</td>
<td>33%↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Aware of drawing-writing differences</td>
<td>67%↓</td>
<td>50%↑</td>
<td>50%↓</td>
<td>100%↓</td>
<td>400%↑</td>
<td>300%↑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** J = Jackie, E = Erica
Spelling Development

By looking at Tables 10 and 11 it is evident that significant changes in spelling development were noted in nearly all categories. When comparing the percent change from phase I to phase III the following results were obtained:

1. Throughout the study, Jackie and Erica increasingly used the short "a" vowel to represent a variety of vowel sounds. However, during phase III they began to differentiate more between vowels and started to use short "o" for the short "u" sound.

2. Silent letters were omitted in steadily increasing percentages from phase I to phase III. Other types of long vowel representation were used during this period.

3. Jackie demonstrated a variety of spelling of words over time when comparing phase I to phase III. Erica in phase III had 10% fewer spelling variations than in phase I, but this was not a significant difference.

4. The girls were using dots to separate words, as well as correct spacing in their writing a
The Writing Process 75

Table 10

Spelling Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spelling Development</th>
<th>Phase frequencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1a. &quot;a vowel&quot; represents variety of vowel sounds</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b. &quot;o&quot; for short &quot;u&quot; sound</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1c. &quot;i&quot; for short &quot;o&quot; sound</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Silent letters omitted</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Long vowel representation</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Variety of spelling of words over time</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Represents same sound in different ways</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a. &quot;ing&quot; representation</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6b. &quot;er&quot; representation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6c. &quot;ed&quot; representation</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6d. &quot;y&quot; ending</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7a. &quot;sh&quot; representation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7b. &quot;ch&quot; representation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. &quot;th&quot; representation</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9a. Uses correct spacing</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9b. Uses dots to separate words</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Use of punctuation marks</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Learned sight words</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: J - Jackie, E - Erica
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spelling Development</th>
<th>I-IIJ</th>
<th>II-IIIJ</th>
<th>I-IIII</th>
<th>I-IIIE</th>
<th>II-IIIIE</th>
<th>I-IIIIE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a. &quot;a vowel&quot; represents variety of vowel sounds</td>
<td>167↑</td>
<td>75↑</td>
<td>367↑</td>
<td>75↓</td>
<td>440↑</td>
<td>83↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b. &quot;e&quot; for short &quot;u&quot; sound</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>500↑</td>
<td>500↑</td>
<td>100↑</td>
<td>2100↑</td>
<td>2200↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1c. &quot;i&quot; for short &quot;e&quot; sound</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>200↑</td>
<td>200↑</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Silent letters omitted</td>
<td>33↑</td>
<td>41↑</td>
<td>88↑</td>
<td>40↑</td>
<td>107↑</td>
<td>190↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Long vowel representation</td>
<td>11↑</td>
<td>460↑</td>
<td>522↑</td>
<td>50↑</td>
<td>2166↑</td>
<td>3300↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Variety of spelling of words over time</td>
<td>77↑</td>
<td>13↑</td>
<td>100↑</td>
<td>81↓</td>
<td>375↑</td>
<td>10↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Represents same sound in different ways</td>
<td>100↑</td>
<td>70↑</td>
<td>240↑</td>
<td>33↓</td>
<td>150↑</td>
<td>67↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a. &quot;ing&quot; representation</td>
<td>128↑</td>
<td>81↑</td>
<td>314↑</td>
<td>25↓</td>
<td>108↑</td>
<td>56↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6b. &quot;er&quot; representation</td>
<td>1100↑</td>
<td>21↑</td>
<td>1350↑</td>
<td>180↑</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>180↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6c. &quot;ed&quot; representation</td>
<td>800↑</td>
<td>250↑</td>
<td>2100↑</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1400↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6d. &quot;y&quot; ending</td>
<td>600↑</td>
<td>117↑</td>
<td>1300↑</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>800↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7a. &quot;sh&quot; representation</td>
<td>400↑</td>
<td>30↑</td>
<td>550↑</td>
<td>100↑</td>
<td>650↑</td>
<td>1500↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7b. &quot;ch&quot; representation</td>
<td>100↓</td>
<td>700↑</td>
<td>800↑</td>
<td>50↓</td>
<td>350↑</td>
<td>125↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. &quot;th&quot; representation</td>
<td>45↑</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>45↑</td>
<td>33↓</td>
<td>800↑</td>
<td>500↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9a. Uses correct spacing</td>
<td>71↓</td>
<td>394↑</td>
<td>44↑</td>
<td>100↑</td>
<td>1150↑</td>
<td>2400↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9b. Uses dots to separate words</td>
<td>100↓</td>
<td>1300↑</td>
<td>1200↑</td>
<td>367↑</td>
<td>200↑</td>
<td>1300↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Use of punctuation marks</td>
<td>80↓</td>
<td>25↑</td>
<td>50↓</td>
<td>33↓</td>
<td>286↑</td>
<td>144↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Learned sight words</td>
<td>44↓</td>
<td>129↑</td>
<td>28↑</td>
<td>4↑</td>
<td>142↑</td>
<td>152↑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
significantly higher percentage of the time during phase III, as compared to phases I and II.

5. The girls wrote more learned sight words at the end of the study, as compared to the beginning.

**Story Concept**

As can be seen in Tables 12 and 13, story concept began to develop during phase II. Both girls were starting to create stories with a beginning. During phase III both girls had shown a significant increase in writing stories with beginnings, and were also writing stories with a beginning and middle, and a beginning and ending. During phase III Jackie and Erica were creating complete stories (beginning, middle, ending) with help from myself, as well as creating some independently.

**Editing Strategies**

As reported in Tables 14 and 15, there was a steady increase from phase I to III in Jackie's ability to read her own writing and make revisions. Although Erica's editing strategies showed a 83% decrease between phases I and II, there was a 100% increase from
### Table 12

**Story Concept**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story Concept</th>
<th>Phase Frequencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Beginning</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Middle</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ending</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Beginning &amp; middle</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Beginning &amp; ending</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Middle &amp; ending</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Creates beginning, middle &amp; ending with help</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Creates beginning, middle &amp; ending independently</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** J = Jackie; E = Erica.
The Writing Process

Table 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story Concept</th>
<th>I-IIJ</th>
<th>II-III</th>
<th>I-IIIJ</th>
<th>I-IIIE</th>
<th>II-IIIE</th>
<th>I-IIIIE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Beginning</td>
<td>200%↑</td>
<td>300%↑</td>
<td>600%↑</td>
<td>100%↑</td>
<td>1300%↑</td>
<td>1400%↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Middle</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ending</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%↑</td>
<td>100%↑</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Beginning &amp; middle</td>
<td>500%↑</td>
<td>60%↑</td>
<td>600%↑</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1000%↑</td>
<td>1100%↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Beginning &amp; ending</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>700%↑</td>
<td>700%↑</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>500%↑</td>
<td>500%↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Middle &amp; ending</td>
<td>100%↑</td>
<td>100%↓</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>200%↑</td>
<td>200%↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Creates beginning, middle &amp; ending with help</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>200%↑</td>
<td>200%↑</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1000%↑</td>
<td>1000%↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Creates beginning, middle &amp; ending independently</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>700%↑</td>
<td>700%↑</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%↑</td>
<td>100%↑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: J = Jackie; E = Erica.
The Writing Process 80

Table 14

**Editing Strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Editing Strategies</th>
<th>IJ</th>
<th>IIJ</th>
<th>IIIJ</th>
<th>IE</th>
<th>IIE</th>
<th>IIIE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Reads own writing and makes revisions</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. With adult assistance makes revisions</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Reads - adds information</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. With adult assistance adds information</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** J - Jackie, E - Erica.
Table 15

**Editing Strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Editing Strategies</th>
<th>I-IIJ</th>
<th>II-IIIJ</th>
<th>I-IIIJ</th>
<th>I-IIE</th>
<th>II-IIIIE</th>
<th>I-IIIIE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Reads own writing and makes revisions</td>
<td>500%↑</td>
<td>13%↑</td>
<td>575%↑</td>
<td>83%↓</td>
<td>100%↑</td>
<td>67%↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. With adult assistance makes revisions</td>
<td>7000%↑</td>
<td>96%↓</td>
<td>300%↑</td>
<td>24%↑</td>
<td>86%↓</td>
<td>62%↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Reads - adds information</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>700%↑</td>
<td>700%↑</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1400%↑</td>
<td>1400%↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. With adult assistance adds information</td>
<td>100%↓</td>
<td>300%↑</td>
<td>200%↑</td>
<td>83%↓</td>
<td>3600%↑</td>
<td>550%↑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** J - Jackie, E = Erica.
phase II to phase III. When comparing the percent change from phase II to III we see that both girls during this period required less adult assistance when making revisions but more adult assistance when adding on information. It was not until phase III that both girls were able to read what they had written and independently add on more information.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the results of the study in four sections. The first section describes how two kindergarten children perceived and reasoned about the nature of writing and the changes that occurred in both these areas over a six month period. It also discusses common trends or similarities in how they perceived and reasoned about the nature of writing. Section two describes how two kindergarten children's writing changed over time. Changes in the children's writing is also compared. Section three describes how the theories presented in the literature review support patterns observed in the spelling development of two kindergarten children. It also discusses the stages of spelling development (according to Graves, 1983) that Jackie and Erica went through during a 6 month period. It presents similar patterns observed in the spelling development of both children. The implications that these findings have for writing instruction in preschool to grade one settings are summarized in the final section.
The Writing Process

How the Children's Perceptions About the Nature of Writing Changed Over Six Months

Erica's Perception of the Nature of Writing

Writing - a natural learning process.

Experimenting with writing on a daily basis proved to be a positive learning experience for Erica.

Erica's comment, "I don't believe it. I didn't know how to write. I didn't practice a single bit and I'm getting it right." E. p. 5 (20-22) demonstrates how natural a process writing can be for young children when done in a meaningful context.

Reading, writing, spelling relationship. Even at the beginning of the observations, in early January, Erica herself seemed to express an understanding of the relationship between writing, spelling and reading when she says,

"I'll see if I know how to write. Let's see if I know how to spell it even. I can't write what I can't spell. If you expect me to spell I can't read." J. p. 6 (15-19)

What you have to do to write well. By the end of May Erica had developed an even better understanding about the nature of writing.
When I asked her, "What do you have to do to write well?" Erica's statements, "You have to know how to spell words. You have to draw good and not scribble. You have to work a lot of time. You have to spend your time on writing usually." J. p. 97 (19-25) and J. p. 98 (1 and 2) provided valuable insights into what she felt was involved in the actual process of writing.

When asked, "How do you become a better writer?" Erica responded with, "I guess you just really have to sound out words, so you can write them down and you have to be sure - so you need to use a pencil and eraser."

How These Perceptions Support Theoretical Knowledge

Erica's perceptions about the nature of writing support the following theoretical knowledge about factors which influence writing development.

Importance of oral language and drawing. She discussed the importance of drawing and sounding out words in the writing process thus supporting Grave's findings (1982) that oral language and drawing are necessary for the child to gain control over the message he wishes to express.
The need for constant practise. She supported the need to practise - therefore the idea that one learns to write by writing was expressed by Erica, thus supporting McDonell and Osburn's findings (1980) that mastery of this process requires constant practise and therefore children must communicate in writing daily if growth is to be observed.

Errors - a necessary part of the learning process. Erica seemed to be aware of the possibility of revising what she had written, thus supporting the research of Bissex (1980a), who viewed errors as a necessary part of the learning process which facilitated growth. These observations suggest that Erica had developed a strong sense of what was involved in the actual process of writing.

Implications. The results provided some insight into the nature of literacy and ways to help develop it. Based on this information teachers of preschool to Grade 1 should be able to structure appropriate learning environments that (a) encourage children to experiment with writing on a daily basis, (b) allow children to write in developmentally appropriate ways - therefore, in their own ways, (c) trust in children's
learning thus enabling them to be responsible for their own learning. When children learn to write under these conditions they develop an understanding of what is involved in the actual process of writing.

**Jackie’s Perceptions of the Nature of Writing**

*Good writing is long.* Jackie tended to view the writing process in more analytic terms than did Erica. In late March, Jackie’s perception of what characterized good writing was based on length. The longer it was, the better it was. *J. 29 (5-10).* By mid-June there appeared to be less of an emphasis on length and Jackie was using other criteria to judge her writing as was evident in the statement.

"It’s not a very long story – but it’s exciting."

*J.98 (15).*

*Awareness of audience.* Jackie’s perception of audience also changed over time. From January to May she read to me all that she had written and occasionally shared her writing with the entire class during a group time.

In early May when I reminded her, "Are you leaving spaces between the words? How will we know where one word ends and the next begins if you don’t?"
Jackie responded, "I'll tell you."

Because where the words began and ended was clear to her, she saw no need to leave spaces. She did not seem aware of an audience or realize that others might have difficulty reading what she had written.

Jackie's view and awareness of audience changed significantly over the next two months. Erica's questioning her about her stories and showing an interest in what she had written eg) "Did you really have an adventure?" J. 79 (16-25) may have contributed to Jackie's growing awareness of audience.

By June Jackie was asking others what they thought about what she had written for example,

Jackie asked Erica, "Do you like that story?" J. 100 (7 and 8). Jackie was also beginning to read what she had written to her classmates. She was overheard saying to Annette, "Listen, I'll read this to you."

Jackie demonstrated that she was now more aware that other people could actually read what she had written, when she covered her writing with her hand and asked Erica,

"Would you know what it says if I just take my
hand off?" she removes her hand and Erica reads "the".

Trends or Similarities on How Erica and Jackie Perceived the Nature of Writing

The Role of Drawing in the Writing Process

Several researchers (McDonell, Osburn, 1980; Temple, Nathan, Burris, 1982; Graves, 1980) have found that drawing serves several functions in the writing process and is viewed as an integral part of composition. Data analysis of the present study supports the above findings and provides evidence about how Erica and Jackie perceived the role of drawing in the writing process. In this study drawing served two purposes.

Drawing— a means of topic selection. Drawing seemed to provide a means of topic selection. Usually Erica and Jackie did not know what they would write about until they drew.

When asked, "tell me what you’re going to write about today" typical responses were: "I think first I’d better make my picture, then I’ll think what I’m going to write about." E. 28 (3-5) or "I’m just writing something." (as she draws)
"When it comes to writing it down I’ll think about it" E. 105 (2-4) and "I’m going to write about two things today, but not on the same paper." When asked what the second thing was she responded, "I don’t know. I mean I know but I want to do the first one first." J. 34 (20-24)

Based on these observations, drawing and verbalizing their thoughts and ideas about what was happening in the picture seemed to serve as means of rehearsing what Jackie and Erica knew and wanted to write about. These findings support those of Graves (1982) who also found that oral language and drawing were necessary for the child to gain control over the message he wished to express.

Drawing — a type of memory bank. Drawing also served as a type of memory bank that the children could refer to as they wrote. It helped them remember what they had written.

For example, when Erica was reading me what she had written "One day we went shopping, we saw" Erica paused "I forgot what this one was" (referring to a word she had written). When I suggested that she look at her picture and asked
her what it was about, she was able to figure out
the rest of the sentence that she had written. E. 109 (13-18)

Drawing and writing - Two different activities.

Drawing and writing were viewed as two different
activities. Field notes J. 2 (18-22) and J. 5 (8)
provide incidents of Jackie using felt markers for her
drawings and a pencil for her writing. This
characterized the writing samples collected throughout
the observation periods.

When asked, "Why do you use markers to make your
picture and use a pencil to do your writing?"
Jackie responded, "Because that's the way I like
it. The pictures look pretty with colour. The
words don't need colour." (J. 5 (11-14)

Implications. Results showed that drawing and
oral language helped two young children learn about
writing. These two children needed to rehearse before
they wrote - they needed to draw, play or talk before
they wrote. Knowing how children learn best, allows us
as teachers to set up appropriate learning
environments. Teachers need to (a) encourage children
to draw before they write, (b) allow children to think
aloud while writing and verbalize their ideas while drawing pictures, and (c) realize that children use different approaches to gain control over the written message. In summary, teachers must ensure that children learning to write have informal learning environments where drawing is viewed as being as equally important as writing and where verbal interaction with adults and peers is encouraged.

How The Children's Writing Changed Over Time

Changes in Erica's Writing

Phase I. During Phase I, I invited Erica to write 88% of the time. She began her writing with the basic sentence frame - I like to... 65% of the time. Like the children observed in Grave's (1982b) study, Erica too focused on the self and seemed to need to express her own experiences. Erica displayed an interest in labelling things in her picture, creating lists, copying poems from chart paper in the room, and writing letters. Sixty-four percent of the time she wrote statements that were based on informational things.

Phase II. Nearing the end of phase II (around April 11) the amount that Erica wrote began to increase. She often drew three or four pictures and
The Writing Process

wrote separate statements about each. Seventy-four percent of her writing consisted of statements.

**Phase III.** There was an 83% decrease in my inviting Erica to write between phases I and II and this was followed by Erica's obsession with writing during phase III between April 18 - June 24 which was characterized by Erica spending 44% of the sessions writing during the whole play time. During this period of time Erica seemed to control and direct her own learning and appeared to be motivated by some inner drive to master her writing, a behaviour which was also observed in the children which Doake (1979) observed.

**Purpose for Writing.** Thirty-three percent of these stories had only beginnings, 25% had a beginning and middle. With adult assistance, therefore by my asking Erica questions such as, "What comes next in your story?" or "Now you need an ending" she was able to create a story with a beginning, middle, and ending - in 25% of the cases. She was able to create only one complete story on her own.

Erica tended to write more as a result of my questioning her about her topic. She would verbalize a response to my question and add this to her writing.
During phase III Erica also was beginning to read over what she had written and was revising her writing by adding on more information. Erica became more interested in creating books during the last month of observations.

Peer influence on topic choice. Erica's topic selection during phases I - III centred around birthdays, butterflies, and balloons. During phase III Erica's topic selection seemed to be significantly influenced by Jackie's presence when writing. Graves (1982) found that children are greatly influenced by their peers and often become aware of topic ideas from each other. There are several examples which demonstrate how Erica and Jackie influenced each other in topic selection.

When Erica was writing about colours she commented, "Jackie did this before, but not the same. She did how different pink is from red." E. 110 (11-15). Erica wrote about how different blue is from purple. When Jackie and Erica were both drawing their picture Erica said, "We're both drawing the same picture - raindrops and we're both doing the same writing." E. 112 (5-9)
When Jackie observed Erica writing about her swimming lessons Jackie commented, "I'm going to write about my swimming pool in the summer." J. 37 (6-7) When Jackie sees Erica making a book she says, "I don't want to make a book like that," but reconsiders and says, "maybe I will" and proceeds to do so. J. 80 (1-10)

By writing beside each other Erica and Jackie were exposed to a variety of topics that could be:

1. incorporated into their writing that day
   eg) Jackie said, "I wonder what I should write about" pauses and looks at what Erica is drawing and decides, "I'll write the same as you," and proceeds to copy Erica's drawing of a hot air balloon

2. referred to and used at a later date

Jackie and Erica were influenced by one another's topic selection during 24% of the writing sessions in phase I, during 56% of the writing sessions in phase II, and during 33% of the writing sessions in phase III. This meant that they either both wrote on the same topic that day or that one of them chose to write about a topic that the other had previously
The amount of time that the girls spent writing seemed to be dependent on the presence of each other while writing. When Erica wrote for over an hour, Jackie was always beside her writing for the same length of time. In fact, Jackie often started off the day by entering the room and asking whether Erica and herself could write all day.

One example of the influence that they had over each other, was the day Jackie had completed her story and left to play. Erica asked, "Can I finish this later?" I asked her to finish it now and Erica responded, "I think I'm finished" and went to join Jackie on the climber.

**Implications.** The findings demonstrated that peers significantly influenced each other's writing. Just the presence of a peer while writing encouraged one child to write for a longer period of time than she would normally do on her own. The children discussed their topic selections with each other, this resulted in a sharing of ideas. This study seemed to suggest that children may store information about topic choice that others have written about in the past and use this
information at a later date in their own writing.

A major conclusion of this study is that children's interactions had positive affects on their ability to write.

Some children seem to need to write beside their peers and interact with them during the writing process. Teachers need to create interactive classrooms, with quiet areas (for children who work best by themselves) if optimal learning is to occur.

**Self initiated writing.** Comparing writing behaviour in the different phases showed a continued increase in the amount of writing that Erica self initiated over the observation periods. There was a 167% increase in self initiated writing between phases I and II, and 58% increase in self initiated writing between phases II and III.

**Spacing.** Throughout the three observation phases Erica displayed a growing awareness of spacing between words. On January 19th, Erica seemed to be developing some rationale for the need for spacing.

When she wrote ILC.CAT and was asked what the dot meant she responded, "So the C won't watch up with the other C - like just so there's a separate
During phase II Erica continued to experiment with the use of spacing. In early March, Erica continued to use dots after words (eg) in her letter writing she wrote FROM. E. 24 (18-11) 

On March 23 she expressed her ideas about what words are and the need for spacing when she said, "That's the end of a word and on the other side that's a new word. That's what that means." E. 36 (17-19) 

During phase III Erica used a combination of dots and spaces. If she didn't leave enough room between words she would separate them with a dot E. 56 (10 and 11), E. 63 (6-9), E. 65 (12-16). By the end of April she made closer approximations to correct spacing (eg) E. 69 (3-5), E. 70 (6 and 7). Erica wrote an average of one to three words per line throughout the three observation phases. This seemed to be her way of best dealing with the issue of spacing. 

Changes in Jackie's Writing

Phase I. During phase I Jackie was invited to write 90% of the time. Jackie used the standardized
writing form - "I like farms..." or "Farms are fun..." 40% of the time. During this observation period Jackie seemed occupied with facts which were expressed as statements 80% of the time. She repeated themes as well as familiar words. Between January 4 and February 2, during a total of 14 writing sessions, Jackie wrote "I like to go on a boat" 2/14 times. She repeated the same information about birds 4/14 times. Between January 4 and February 2 during a total of 14 writing sessions Jackie repeated her topic selection 71% of the time.

Phase II. During phase II Jackie self initiated the writing sessions 52% of the time and was invited to write 48% of the time. Phase II was characterized by Jackie writing more, but using less spacing. She had just returned from a two week trip to Disney World and 40% of her topics focused around this theme. Forty percent of her writing consisted of statements and 35% stories.

Phase III. Phase III was characterized by Jackie self initiating writing 66 2/3% of the time and being invited to write 33 1/3% of the time. She spent 44% of the writing sessions engaged in writing during the
Implications. The data collected showed that during the later stages of the writing process children tended to become more involved and began to choose to write for long periods of time— even in preference to other types of free play activities (blocks, sand, water play). Teachers of young children need to set up large blocks of uninterrupted free choice time daily, so that children are given enough time to work through the problem solving strategies required to gain a better understanding of the writing process.

Purposes for writing. She was now writing stories 70% of the time and statements 30% of the time. Twenty-four percent of her stories had only beginnings, 24% had beginning and middles and 24% had beginning and endings. Jackie was able to create a complete story on her own in 20% of the cases.

Story concept. Phase III was characterized by Jackie developing more of a sense of story. On April 21, when I first explained that stories have a beginning, middle, and ending Jackie created a story with a beginning and ending using one sentence to represent each part of the story. J. 55 (18-23)
The Writing Process

By May 11 her story concept was better developed. She had characters who were involved in more of a plot which required more planning when sequencing events.

J. 75 About this time Jackie began to write more imaginary stories and started to differentiate between stories that were real and those that were not. J. 90 (16)

Jackie's exposure to books had begun to influence her writing style as was evident in her attempts at starting her story with "A long time ago" J. 84 (8) and ending it with "we lived happily ever after". J. 94 (19) Jackie was also beginning to evaluate Erica's writing based on her perception of what constituted a story.

When Erica said, "I think I already wrote a story, see 1, 2, 3, 4" and points to the lines she has written Jackie comments, "no its 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. It's just a beginning. In my bible book (a book her Mom is reading her at home) I'm on page 52 and you only have 6 lines."

Spacing. During phase I from January 4 - 25 Jackie wrote using two to three word groupings and used correct spacing. From January 25 and during phase II
she wrote longer sentences but more consistently did not use correct spacing.

Jackie first seemed to verbalize that there was a problem when she didn't leave spaces on April 11 when she had difficulty reading what she had written.

She commented, "everything so crumbled up here. I can't see here so good. There's too many things."

On April 21 because she was experiencing more difficulty reading what she had written I explained why people leave spaces between words when they write. J. 53 (9-13) The following example suggests that Jackie seemed to know what words are:

"I know there's two words - on and my", she sees no real purpose for using spacing. Her rationale is that "I know where it is. I just sound it out first and I know where the end of it is." When I point out "that no one else will know where the end of it is" Jackie responds "then I'll show you where it is." J. 74 (1-8)

However, she shows no concern for audience.

Although Jackie knows why spacing is needed, J. 107 (7), "so the words don't get bunched up", she does not use it consistently. During phase III Erica
experiments using a combination of correct spacing and no spacing. J. 62(7-11), J. 63 (8-18).

Changes In The Children’s Writing Over Time

When comparing the three observation phases the following similarities were noted in the changes that occurred in the writing process of both Erica and Jackie.

**Being invited to write.** During phase I much of my behaviour was directed at initiating the writing task. This occurred 85% of the time for Erica and 90% of the time for Jackie. The number of times I invited the children to write decreased over time. There was a 77% decrease in my inviting Jackie to write and a 81% decrease in my inviting Erica to write between phases I and III.

**Self initiating the writing activity.** The data collected suggests a trend towards self initiating the writing task. The following significant increases in self initiating writing were noted:

- A 400% increase between phase I and II for Jackie
- A 267% increase between phase I and III for Jackie
- A 187% increase between phase I and II for Erica
- A 317% increase between phase II and III for Erica
Implications. The results indicated that when children first begin to write, we as teachers should expect that they will need to be invited to write. As they become more familiar with what is involved in the writing process and more confident in their spelling, they will become more motivated to write and will self initiate this activity more often.

Beginning writing is more speech than writing. According to Graves (1982), beginning writing is more speech than writing. However, if the child writes daily he becomes more and more familiar with the process and there is less need for spoken language.

The following data supports these findings:

1. Thinking aloud showed:
   - 82% decrease between phase II and III for Jackie
   - 82% decrease between phase I and III for Jackie
   - 79% decrease between phase I and III for Erica

2. Verbalizing ideas while drawing pictures showed:
   - 77% decrease between phase II and III for
The Writing Process 105

Jackie
- 65% decrease between phase I and III for Jackie
- 81% decrease between phase I and III for Erica

**Purposes of writing.** The type of writing that Erica and Jackie engaged in changed over the three observation periods. Erica and Jackie used writing for a variety of purposes during phase I, but focused on making statements, which showed a decrease once they began writing stories. Data indicates that:

1. Labelling objects, creating lists, signs and letters showed a 100% decrease between phases I and III for both Erica and Jackie.
2. Making statements showed a 50% decrease between phases II and III for Jackie and a 60% decrease between phases II and III for Erica.
3. Creating a story showed a 2500% increase between phases II and III for Jackie and a 3300% increase between phases II and III for Erica.

**Variety in spelling of words over time.** This longitudinal study provided data that was consistent
and in agreement with research conducted by Doake (1979) and Sowers (1982). Doake found that when error free performance is not expected, the development of the process of self correction is encouraged. Sowers (1982) maintained that invented spelling was really invented and new every time and that when the child tries to spell the word again it is invented again. The variety in spelling words over time that was observed provides evidence for the above statements. There was a 77% increase in the variety in spelling of words between phases I and II for Jackie, a 100% increase between phases I and III for Jackie, and a 375% increase between phases II and III for Erica.

Editing strategies. As the year progressed there was an increase in the children’s reading what they had written and in their making revisions, in the form of changing letters. The following increases occurred:

- 500% increase between phases I and II for Jackie
- 575% increase between phases I and III for Jackie
- 100% increase between phases II and III for Erica

These findings support Clay’s observations (1975).
that children engage in overt self correcting which involves a type of searching, checking, and self correcting which requires the child to switch between the writing and reading modes.

Graves (1979) found that beginning writers do not revise and that in the first grade revision usually means adding on. The present study supports Gay's findings. Jackie and Erica did not add on information until phase III at which time this behaviour showed an increase of:

- 700% between phases II and III for Jackie
- 600% between phases I and III for Jackie
- 1400% between phases II and III for Erica
- 1400% between phases I and III for Erica

Implications. The results show that writing takes time - it is a learning process and cannot be rushed. The teacher's role in this process must be closely examined. As children experiment with writing they need a supportive adult who (a) provides a print rich environment, (b) provides the materials that encourage writing, (c) gives children the time and opportunity to write daily, (d) accepts and shows an interest in children's creations, and (e) helps children develop
learning strategies that help solve the problems they encounter in the writing process.

Patterns in the Spelling Development of the Children

Several researchers (Chromsky, 1978; Duckworth, 1979; Temple, Nathan, and Burris, 1982) have argued that spelling ability grows from actively building a theory and from understanding about how spelling works. Learning to spell therefore involves constructing and revising rules. This section will describe some patterns observed in the spelling development of two kindergarten children over a six month period.

Theoretical Support

When mechanics of spelling dominate, words do not flow. Data obtained by Graves (1983) indicates that when the mechanics of spelling dominate, words do not flow. This is evident in the phase II writing of both Jackie and Erica, which was characterized by factual statements. Graves (1962) maintained that regular writing helped children put the spelling and mechanical aspects of writing behind them allowing them to give greater attention to information and topic focus. As the year progressed there was a trend away from writing factual statements towards writing stories especially
The Writing Process 109

during phase III of the observations, which supports
Grave’s claim that once children become more confident
with spelling, they can devote their attention to other
aspects of their writing.

Writing - attending first to the whole and later
to it’s parts. Results of this study support the
findings of Doake (1979) and Graves (1983) who
suggested that rather than learning to write by
mastering first the parts (letters) and then building
up to the whole (writing sentences) it appears that the
child attends first to the whole and much later to the
parts.

In Erica’s changing spelling of the word like -
Lic, L, LLK, LK, LAK, LIK, LI, Liik, LIK, LIKE and
the word because - BKAS, BCS, BCAS, BKAS, BE SASE
and Jackie’s changing spelling of the word
birthday BARQDAY, BRTDAY, and BARTDAY we can see
the children’s ability to make finer and more
complex distinctions.

Steadily increasing approximation to standardized
spelling. Erica and Jackie’s constant revision of
their spelling illustrates a continuing process of
differentiation. It is likely that their steadily
increasing approximation to standardized spelling is influenced by information obtained from:

1. their practice in phonetic word analysis and letter-sound correspondence
2. significant others, for e.g. when I asked Jackie how she knew how to spell the word mouse she responded, "cause my Mom told me one day."

Jackie's comment suggests that an adult's assistance in spelling words that are difficult for children to sound out, upon their request may help them learn sight words which can be used in the writing at a later date.

3. exposure to books and environmental print e.g. signs, television. Certain words, which cannot be easily sounded out changed in their spelling over time.

For example, Jackie wrote there - THERE J. 61 (16), THERE J. 62 (16), and finally THERE J. 63 (12) without any assistance from myself.

These observations support Sower's findings (1982) that invented spelling is really invented and new every time. This data suggests that when children regulate their own learning, experimentation and self-correction are encouraged.
Implications. Results indicated that there was a great variation in the spelling of words over time. Teachers should therefore encourage children (preschool to Grade 1) to write without concern about the proper formation of letters or standard spelling - knowing that - through a process of testing out hypotheses and being influenced by print around them children will gradually make closer and closer approximations to conventional spelling.

Learning how to spell resists direct teaching. Research suggests that conceptual learning and this includes learning how to spell (write), resisted direct teaching for preschool to grade 2 children (Duckworth, 1979; Temple, Nathan, Burris, 1982). One example that supports these findings was Jackie's use of the short "a" vowel for the short "i" sound.

For example, she wrote TRIP as HRAP. I asked Jackie to "Look at the word trip." I sounded it out for her t-r-i-p and Jackie changed H to T making it TRAP. I then commented, "You wrote trap. For trip you need an i." Jackie changed the T to an i. I explained that, "I meant the A was supposed to be an I" Jackie made the i in
The Writing Process

front of the A. I responded "You don't need the A" and Jackie crossed it out.

It seems clear from this episode that in trying to explain to Jackie what the short "i" sound was, I was doing exactly what Doake (1979) warned teachers against. By asking that Jackie concentrate her attention on minute steps and abstract bits of information I was placing demands on her that she was unable to cope with cognitively. Jackie did not grasp the concept of the short "i" sound as was demonstrated later in her representation of trip as TRAP. J. 43 (10) and J. 45 (13)

In contrast, by allowing Jackie to figure out for herself for example, how to spell birthday - although the process was much longer and resulted in more errors being made, it allowed Jackie to discover writing in a way that made sense to her.

Implications. The results obtained suggest that teachers must refrain from being too quick to explain things to children and instead, allow children to discover how the writing process works for themselves.

Spelling Stages

According to Graves (1963) children go through
certain stages in spelling. Erica and Jackie's writing samples illustrate that children are capable of operating in various spelling stages simultaneously. 

Erica's Spelling Development

During phase I of her writing Erica was using all five stages of spelling for example:

Stage I - Use of initial consonant - W for with - page 13 (1)

Stage II - Use of initial and final consonant - WL for will, GT for get - page 10 (13)

Stage III - Initial, final and interior consonant - BCS for because - page 14 (8)

Stage IV - Initial, final and interior consonants and a vowel place holder. Vowel is incorrect. SATG for skating - page 17 (1)

Stage V - Child correctly spells the word eg) LOVE

During phase II of the study Erica focused on stages 2 - 4 in her spelling, with an increase in the number of sight words she was capable of producing and during phase III focused on stages 3 - 5. By the end of the study Erica was spelling more words correctly. There was a 142% increase in the number of sight words that Erica knew between phases II and III.
Jackie’s Spelling Development

Jackie began her writing at a more advanced level of spelling. During phase I she focused on stages 3 - 5 and during phase III emphasis was on stages 4 and 5. By the end of the study, Jackie too was spelling more words correctly. There was a 129% increase in the number of sight words that Jackie knew between phases II and III.

Implications. Writing and reading, as presented in this study are viewed as developmental learning processes. The results showed that children are complex and that they do not learn to write (spell) by moving through a series of stages one at a time, instead they seem to be capable of operating at various spelling stages simultaneously.

These results have implications for teachers when evaluating their students’ writing progress:

1. Because writing is a process informal assessment over extended periods of time is necessary.

2. In order to notice the gradual growth that occurs during the writing process it is necessary to carefully observe and talk to the
children while they are engaged in writing.

3. Evaluating end products (without first observing the process) and expecting children to perform according to set standards at specific times in their development is not appropriate.

4. Teachers must strive to give their uncritical support to children, rather than focusing on errors, if learning is to occur.

Patterns Observed in the Spelling Development of Two Kindergarten Children

Erica and Jackie's spelling had the following similar characteristics:

Short "a" Vowel Representation

The short "a" vowel was used to represent a variety of short vowel sounds throughout the study.

For example, bast - best j. 57 (23), fan - fun E. 22 (5), PAPLS - popples E. 66 (3), WATR - winter J. 50 (17), Jast - just J. 82 (10)

Use of Short Vowel Sounds

During phase III of the study there was a trend to distinguish between the different short vowel sounds.

Short "u" sound. The short "u" sound was
represented by the short "o" vowel

eg) JOSD = JUST E. 70 (13); POT = PUT e. 83 (9);
    BOYH = BUSH J. 66 (20); PORT = PUSHED E. 90 (15)

Short "e" sound. Erica represented the short "e" sound with the short "i" vowel

eg) OPIN = OPEN E. 108 (2); popi = puppet E. 111 (5)

Long Vowel Sounds

During phase III Jackie and Erica experimented with long vowel sounds.

Double vowels. They used double vowels

eg) AWAE = away J. 66 (2); Tiim = Time E. 55(3);
    Tiem - Time E. 63 (14); LiEK = LIKE J. 84 (8); HIE
    = HIGH J. 101 (19); ROOD = ROAD E. 97 (2)

"A" vowel at the end of the word. The use of the "A" vowel at the end of the word.

eg) NICE = NISA E. 48 (5); TiMA - TIME J. 90 (10);
    SAFA = SAFE J. 102 (6); NITA - NIGHT J. 103 (9)

Correct representation of long vowel sounds. The correct representation of long vowel sounds

eg) TIME J. 104 (1); MOVE J. 104 (11); HOME E. 91 (3); CAME E. 99 (14)
Summary of Implications for Instruction of Writing for Preschool to Grade One Children

The results from this study imply several ideas about teaching writing to young children. Teachers can be supportive of children's writing in a number of ways.

Creating Print Rich Environments

Teachers can encourage young children to become aware of "print" and it's importance in their daily lives by providing them with many different opportunities to see the printed word. This can be accomplished by reading to children daily, so that they become familiar with stories, language patterns, and structures. As children tell stories about their pictures teachers can write down what they say, thus helping them connect the printed word with what they already know - spoken language. Songs and poems can be written out on chart paper. Labels can be used to help organize materials in the classroom.

Providing Writing Materials

One of the most important things teachers can do to support children's beginning efforts at writing is to provide materials which encourage writing. A
The Writing Process

writing center well supplied with various colors and sizes of paper and chalkboards, as well as things to write with — colored markers and pencils, crayons, pencils and chalk belong in every early childhood classroom. Scissors, glue, masking tape, and stapler should also be available. This is a place where children can experiment with and explore writing.

Acting as Their Writing Model

Teachers can encourage children to write by acting as their writing models. This involves (a) developing experience charts with the children based on significant activities in the children's lives, (b) recording observations of the children at play, (c) writing notes to the children, to their parents, and to people in the school, and (d) responding in writing to the stories that children have written in their journals. Children who observe their teachers writing develop the idea that writing is an important activity and a worthwhile use of time.

Inviting Children to Write

Children learn to write by writing. Teachers need to invite children to write during the early stages of writing. If the children are setting up a store, the
teacher might say to a child, "let's make a sign that says store, or let's make a sign that says IN or OUT, so that people know which door is the entrance and which door is the exit." Small groups of children can also be invited to write (according to their own definition of writing) in their journals (books stapled together with 8 1/2" x 10" sheets of white paper) about the topic of their own choice. As they become more familiar with what is involved in the writing process and more confident in their spelling, they will become more motivated to write and will self initiate this activity more often.

Learning How to Write Through Play

Young children learn best through play. In their play children experiment, plan, use language, practise, imitate, think, and solve problems.

Establishing learning centers. One way of allowing children to direct their own learning is to divide the classroom into a variety of learning centers, such as a block area, a science table, library, a climber, computer, art area, painting area, sand and water play manipulative materials (puzzles, pegs), a writing center, and activities that stimulate
math and language development.

Encouraging writing in various centers. The writing center need not be the only place where children can write. Pencils and paper can be located within the housekeeping and block building areas to encourage sign making (CLOSED or DO NOT BREAK), lists or exchanges of friends’ telephone numbers - all in an attempt to extend dramatic play by adding print to it and making it more meaningful.

Exploring Writing

The teacher ensures that the materials that encourage children to play with writing are available at the various centers.

Allowing children to self-direct their own learning. Teachers must be cautioned to allow children to direct their own learning. This means that play must fulfil the children’s purposes and must not be interfered with in order to teach specific skills. However, if a teacher was invited into the restaurant he or she might ask to see the menu before ordering, offer the waiter a pad of paper and pencil to write down the order, and pay for the meal by cheque.
Allowing for large blocks of uninterrupted play time. Young children require large blocks of uninterrupted play time (at least 2 to 2 1/2 hours per day) to choose activities that interest them and meet their developmental needs. Through play (this includes playing with writing) children find problems to be solved, test out hypotheses, and find appropriate solutions.

Writing on a daily basis. Teachers can encourage children to explore writing by integrating oral language, listening, writing, and reading in the things the children naturally explore during the day. Mastery of the writing process requires constant practise. Centers encourage children to communicate in writing daily.

Learning Environments Suited to Individual Learning Styles

Since children’s initial attempts at writing are varied it is important that teachers provide learning environments that take these individual learning styles into account. Researchers and teachers must look beyond the print (text) and be aware of the important role oral language and drawing play in helping children
The Writing Process

learn about writing.

Oral language. Children need to rehearse before they write - they need to draw, play, or talk about their topic selection before they write. If a child has chosen to write about a farm that he or she has visited, the teacher might encourage the child to verbally express his or her ideas by asking, "Tell me what you know about farms," or "what did you do at the farm?"

Drawing. Drawing is an important part of the writing process. It serves as a means of rehearsing what children know and want to write about. Drawing serves as a memory bank - something that children can refer to as they write. Teachers need to encourage children to draw before they write. This can be accomplished by inviting the child to draw a picture about how the farm looked and what happened when he or she visited the farm. The teacher would then encourage the child to verbalize his or her thoughts and ideas while drawing the picture by showing an interest in what the child is doing and perhaps suggesting, "Tell me about what's happening in your picture."
Creating Interactive Classrooms

A major conclusion of this study is that children's interactions had positive affects on their ability to write. Such information has relevance for us, as teachers. We must provide a wide range of alternatives in the classroom, which allow children to progress in their writing development using a variety of methods. Some children seem to need to write beside their peers and interact with them during the writing process. Teachers therefore need to create interactive classrooms with quiet areas (for children who work best by themselves) if optimal learning is to occur.

A group of children could work at a large table and be encouraged to discuss their topic selection with each other. This would result in a sharing of ideas. Just the presence of their peers while writing may encourage some children to write for a longer period of time than they might normally do on their own. The interest that peers show in each others writing and the questions that they ask each other might result in children developing a greater awareness of a sense of audience.
Allowing Children to Write in Developmentally Appropriate Ways

What a child already knows should form the base for his or her writing activities. Teachers must encourage children to write in developmentally appropriate ways, therefore according to their own definition of writing. Teachers need to encourage children to take risks and accept and praise their early attempts. These attempts could include scribbling, drawing, using a random assortment of letters to represent words, or sounding out words and writing down the letters they hear. Errors would be viewed as a natural means of growing and developing.

All children seem to follow the same sequence in their writing development but learn at different rates and in different ways. Teachers should therefore encourage children to write without concern about the proper formation of letters or standard spelling - knowing that - through a process of testing out hypotheses and being influenced by print around them children will gradually make closer and closer approximations to conventional spelling.
Spelling

Teaching children isolated skills (e.g. letter-sound correspondence) which require them to concentrate their attention on minute steps and abstract bits of information may place demands on children that they are unable to cope with cognitively. Children may begin to feel that they have little control over the writing process. Lack of understanding about how written language works limits children's ability and desire to learn.

Teacher's role. Teachers must examine their role in the writing process. They must refrain from being too quick to explain things to children and instead allow children to discover how the writing process works for themselves. For example, teachers should allow children the opportunity to figure out the correct spelling of words over time, instead of trying to correct their spelling. Children who are allowed to take risks and make errors, soon learn how to write (spell) in a way that makes sense to them.

Adult assistance in spelling words that are too difficult for children to sound out, upon their request and at the time of need - may help them learn sight
words which can be used in their writing at a later date.

Assessing Writing Development

Reading and writing as presented in this study are viewed as developmental learning processes. Therefore, evaluating written end products without first observing the process and expecting children to perform according to set standards at specific times in their development are not appropriate. Informal assessment of children's writing development over extended periods of time is necessary. Teachers must carefully observe and talk to the children while they are engaged in writing. Written anecdotal records of the children's behaviour during the writing process and daily writing samples provide important sources of information about children's writing development.

Conclusion

Schools must create learning environments that allow young children to view reading and writing as exciting play. When children are allowed to learn to write through meaningful experiences which are often self initiated they become independent writers who are capable of directing their own learning. Children who
are given opportunities to experiment with writing internalize concepts about how writing works and begin to understand the writing process.
The Writing Process

References


The Writing Process


Duckworth, E. (1979). Either we’re too early and they can’t learn it or we’re too late and they know it already: The dilemma of applying Piaget. Harvard Educational Review, 49 (3), 297-312.

Erickson, F. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching. In M.K. Wittrock (Ed.), Handbook of research on teaching (3rd ed.) (pp. 119-180). NY: Macmillan.


The Writing Process


Appendix

In order to assist my child's teacher, Margaret Mulvenna, with her study of young children's writing development I am willing to have my child be part of the research project conducted in Mrs. Mulvenna's classroom.

I am aware that observations of my child will be recorded regularly (10 min. per day) from mid-January 1988 until the end of June 1988. My child will be observed in a variety of situations: a) working alone as he/she initiates writing projects; b) in a group situation interacting with peers during the writing process; c) during interactions with her teacher and other adults (teacher aide, parent volunteer) in the classroom.

I am aware that writing samples will be collected throughout this observation period. I have been informed that my child's writing progress, comments, and identity will remain confidential throughout the study. The information obtained will be shared with during the course of the year. I understand that I can obtain information about the overall results of the completed study, upon request from the researcher, Margaret Mulvenna.

I may withdraw my child at any time with no prejudice to her ongoing school education. If I withdraw my child from the study I will allow the information, obtained to this point, to be utilized in the research data collection. I am looking forward to having a better understanding of my child's growth and development in the writing process.

Further information may be obtained about the proposed research by contacting Margaret Mulvenna at O.V. Jewitt School, 66 Neville Street or phoning 633-1714.

I am willing to have my child ______________________ participate in this writing development research in the kindergarten at O.V. Jewitt School.

Signature of Consent ________________________________
Relation to child ___________________ Date _______________