The impact of the feedback from participants in the writing center and its implication for the administrator in a large suburban district in Georgia

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THE IMPACT OF THE FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS IN THE
WRITING CENTER AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR THE ADMINISTRATOR
IN A LARGE SUBURBAN DISTRICT IN GEORGIA

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THE IMPACT OF THE FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS IN
THE WRITING CENTER AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR
THE ADMINISTRATOR IN A LARGE SUBURBAN
DISTRICT IN GEORGIA

Advisor: Trevor A. Turner
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The purpose of this study was to examine the level of
agreement or disagreement of students regarding the
usefulness of the computer in the writing process. An
examination of the level of agreement or disagreement from
students and teachers with regards to the usefulness of the
computer in the writing process was implemented. The
teachers further determined the effectiveness of the
computer improving students' writing.

A quasi-experimental design was used to determine how
students felt about the use of computers in expressing their
feelings within regard to stimuli. There was an
experimental group in which a treatment was conducted, but there was no control group.

The findings revealed that when students are exposed to "stimuli" at a Writing Center and then use a computer to write their feelings regarding the "stimuli", the students and the teachers are likely to express more agreement than disagreement that the computers are helpful in written expression.

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, recommendations were made. The implementation of these recommendations was that students who use the computers in the writing process tend to feel better about their writing and about themselves.
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CHAPTER I
THE GENERAL AND SPECIFIC PROBLEM

THE GENERAL PROBLEM:
Students were exposed to "stimuli" at a writing center. After their experience with the stimuli, they were allowed to use computers to express their feelings regarding the stimuli. The research problem was whether the students would see the computer as helpful in expressing their feelings concerning the stimuli.

Research Questions:
1. What would be the level of agreement or disagreement of students regarding the usefulness of a computer in improving their writing at a writing center?
2. What would be the level of agreement or disagreement of teachers regarding the usefulness of the computer by students to improve writing after students were exposed to stimuli at a writing center?

BACKGROUND:
The Writing Center is located in Georgia's largest school system which serves more than 87,600 students living in a 258 square-mile area near Atlanta. It provides diverse educational programs and services to students of all ages through post-secondary level. The system includes 74 elementary schools; 21 high schools;
three junior highs; special centers for reading, writing, foreign language, science, vocational-technical, educational computing, special education, early childhood, learning resources and performing arts; as well as a technical institute, the second largest such facility in Georgia. Approximately 7,900 full-time employees staff these schools in which the overall pupil-professional staff ratio is 21:1.

After noticing the reoccurrence of the poor performance of freshmen on the college level nationally in the area of written composition, the superintendent established a task force to study writing programs that would address the needs of the students. The task force consisted of language arts coordinators. The results of the task force indicated that there were several programs in place; however, the one in the California Bay Area was the one selected as the most effective.

The California Writing Project (CWP) is a teacher-teaching-teacher program to improve student writing in California by improving the teaching of writing in California classrooms. Each year nearly 15,000 teachers—from all levels of instruction and all regions of the state participate in a variety of summer and school-year programs sponsored by the 19 local writing projects in the statewide CWP network.

Teachers teaching teachers is their formula for
success. The California Writing Project has worked because it puts a premium on what is working in the teaching and learning of writing. Its staff development model is not the familiar deficit model that treats teachers as if they were diseased, damaged, and in need of repair. It is a model that celebrates good teaching and enhances the professional status of teachers. Teachers come to these university-based programs not as students but as colleagues, recognized as authorities in classroom practice, who bring with them a source of knowledge about the teaching of writing that is uniquely their own. Their commitment, enthusiasm, and desire to share are the heart of the California Writing Project.

A committee was sent to California to observe and evaluate the program with regards to implementation in the School System. These findings were reported to the superintendent, and a committee was appointed to adapt the Bay area concept.

It was decided that the target population would be the seventh grade, the last grade before exiting elementary and entering high school in the system at that time.

The Writing Center offers students a variety of motivational pre-writing programs in a large auditorium. The stage presentations range from multi-media to live performances: drama, music, dance, mime, caricature, readings, and storytelling. Each program is designed
specifically for the writing purpose: descriptive, expository, narrative, or persuasive.

The mission of the Writing Centers is to develop and improve students' critical and creative writing skills while fostering positive interaction among students coming from different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds. This mission is achieved by enhancing self-confidence in the expression of ideas in all subject areas through experience, success, and precision to reach each child's highest capabilities.

The goals are to provide an integrated experience for our students in a social environment and to enhance sensitivity, fluency, clarity, and effective written communication that will help the student in all subject areas. Greater awareness of system goals for the total community evolves through the supportive involvement of principals, instructional lead teachers, and administrative/supervisory personnel.

The Writing Centers are targeted for all 5th and 7th graders. Both Writing Centers work closely with the principals, lead teachers, and classroom teachers from the seventy-four participating schools to assure a positive experience for the students and to accomplish the goals of improving, enriching, and encouraging more positive writing skills.

The seventh year center has three computer writing
laboratories. Each student has an opportunity during one of the scheduled visits to complete the writing process through using the computer.

Over ten thousand fifth and seventh graders attend the centers each year (1987-88 - 10,549 students participated). The students, accompanied by their classroom teachers, spend approximately six hours daily for four or five visits at the Writing Centers.

Several current comments from students and teachers are as follows:

"Attending the Writing Center is always a highlight written into my plan book. Not only do I learn new and varied writing techniques, but the students recall some of the Writing Center lessons in the home school follow-up lessons. Thanks for creating such a positive atmosphere!"

"I wish I could repeat the seventh grade so that I could come back to the Writing Center."

"Thank you very much for taking your time to teach us the different kinds of writing."

Staffing, budgeting, and facility location assume a large portion of the planning pre-implementation stage. In addition to existing language arts materials, additional current instructional materials are required. Each seventh grader attends the center nine times, or once a month, scheduled so that the schools are racially mixed with emphasis being placed on students being divided
in the classrooms by male/female, white/black, and honors/remedial. Each classroom is composed of students in all categories, and all the students begin the day with a stimulus program in the auditorium geared to their age level.

At the conclusion of the above, the first Writing Center was opened to seventh graders in 1981 in an existing elementary school which had additional space because of a drop in enrollment for that year. The staff consisted of one coordinator, one secretary, one custodian, eighteen classroom teachers, one paraprofessional, and one physical education teacher.

After its second year, the Writing Center had outgrown that facility and the center was moved to another site in 1983. In late November of that same year, the center moved to its current location, previously an elementary school that had been closed because of decreased enrollment.

At the conclusion of the 1983-84 school year, the Writing Center was reviewed, and current trends proved that instruction in writing should begin at an earlier age. Therefore, the decision was made to open a second writing center geared specifically toward the fifth grade students.

In 1985, the staff was divided in half, with seniority having first choice of locations. The Fifth Year Writing
Center was opened at an elementary school, located in the southern part of the county. At this time, because of fewer staff members at each center, each elementary school would be allowed quarterly visits of at least four visits per school to the Writing Centers.

The Writing Centers are currently structured with four or five visits per elementary school; both the fifth and seventh year grade levels have the opportunity to attend the Writing Center; and the combined centers have twenty-five employees on staff.

**SPECIFIC RESEARCH PROBLEM:**

When students are exposed to "stimuli" at a writing center and then use a computer to write their feelings regarding the stimuli, the students and teachers are likely to express more agreement than disagreement that the computers are helpful in their expressions.

The main research propositions are:

1. That students will tend to agree more than disagree on a number of items that computers aid their writing.

2. That teachers will tend to agree more than disagree that students tend to write more and have more positive attitudes when using a computer if being provided stimuli.

The program stimulus is a live, multi-media visual and performing arts presentation which is correlated with one
of the four modes of writing (narrative, descriptive, expository, or persuasive) at the beginning of the sessions at the center. The program stimulus is given in a large auditorium.

Following the program stimulus the students report to their pre-assigned classes for pre-writing program tie-in. The teacher leads the students in a discussion of the program stimulus and the various components of the mode of writing for the day. This procedure is done through the use of a jotlist, brainstorming, and other related prewriting activities.

The next phase of the process is orientation and review of the keyboarding skills required for the use of the Bank Street Writer, a word processing computer program that makes typing and revision of the printed text easier. Once the word processing program is loaded into the computer, the text appears on the computer screen. At the same time, the writing is also stored in an area of the computer's memory.

Both students and teachers state that the use of computer aided instruction expedite the writing process and also stimulate students to expand their topics; thus adding to their fluency.
According to the participants, it is much easier to make corrections using the computer than to make corrections using pencil and paper (See items 1-9, Seventh Grade Composition Students' Survey; APPENDIX A).

Definitions of Terms:

Stimulus: In this paper the term stimulus is defined as a vehicle which causes the students to want to write. The stimulus is a multimedia visual and/or performing arts form which presents one of the four modes of writing (descriptive, narrative, expository, and persuasive).

Bank Street Writer: Bank Street Writer is a word processor computer program that makes it easier to type, revise, store, retrieve, and print text. Once the word-processing program is loaded into the computer, the text that is typed appears on the computer screen. At the same time, the writing has
been stored in an area of the computer's memory which allows the use of the features of the word processor to make additions or corrections by moving forward or backward through the text.

Students' feelings of helpfulness of computer is defined as the extent of agreement or disagreement the students felt that the use of the computer made them:
1. comfortable
2. easier to correct their writings

(See Items 1-9 Students' Survey; APPENDIX A)

Teachers' feeling of helpfulness of computer is defined as the extent of agreement or disagreement the teachers felt the use of the computer:
1. increased positive attitudes toward writing
2. increased interest in expressing ideas through Bank Street Writer

(See Items 1-5 Teachers' Survey; APPENDIX B)
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In recent years, although writing has received increased emphasis, Huey (1921) mentioned the relationship that writing plays in the role of language. In his discussion of the evolution of writing, Huey states that mankind made an easy transition from drawing in the air to drawing in sand, or on bard, stone, or wood—indicating that writing is a natural way to communicate. Betts (1957), when making curriculum recommendations, suggested that "writing" be taught in the primary grades. Betts portrays writing as a part of language, thus revealing his awareness of the importance writing plays in communication.

Donald Graves (1978) comments that, "Writing also contributes to reading because writing is the making of reading...Auditory, visual, and kinesthetic systems are all at work when the child writes, and all contribute to greater skill in reading." Graves further notes, "most writing instruction really isn't instruction at all." Rather, the teacher provides the appointment for writing through assignments and then responds to the mechanical errors contained in the child's writing after it is completed. The entire process area is left untouched in
Many researchers employed different writing treatments and techniques to improve reading comprehension (Smith, 1981). A need for improved comprehension and writing was recognized. When miscellaneous activities were used, students experienced significant gains in comprehension, but the research involving sentence-combining produced mixed results (Fisher, 1974; Combs, 1975/1979).

Stotsky, (1983) synthesizing the research on reading and writing relationships, concluded that correlational investigations show that better readers produce more syntactically mature writing; that the better writers are the better readers; and that the better writers read more than do poor writers. It was recommended by Stotsky that further research studies are needed in the area of reading and writing relationships.

Hall (1972), states that writing stems naturally from reading; learning the written code involves both reading and writing. Furthermore, Platt (1977) states that if children are critical readers, then they will understand others' ideas more easily.

This view that writing enhances critical comprehension is similar to Smith's (1983) view of writing development. he states that to learn to write, one must read in a special way—like a writer. Smith states that
writing skills are learned by reading. To learn to write for newspapers, one must read newspapers; textbooks about them will not suffice. For magazines, one must browse through magazines rather than through correspondence courses on magazine writing. To write poetry, one must read it. For the conventional style of memoranda in your school, one must consult the local school file.

Ribovich (1979) contends that writing is a powerful way for children to understand the functions of written language; and with this broader perspective, they understand the reasons for reading. When students realize that writing is useful, then reading is useful; therefore, reading their authored compositions is more meaningful.

Emphasis on writing has increased significantly in the last fifteen years, and researchers have investigated the nature of the relationships in hopes of discovering ways to improve proficiency.

Recent revelations of students' lack of writing skill have influenced legislators in the state of Georgia to list the teaching of writing as a priority for education and to incorporate writing in the statewide curriculum.

Walmsley (1980) states that an important component of teachers' perceptions relates to their knowledge of writing instruction. Graves (1978) and Walmsley (1980) report that teachers do not feel well prepared to teach writing. In order for teachers to teach writing more
efficiently, it is essential for them to be informed of the writing process so that this procedure might be implemented adequately in the classroom. By becoming comfortable with the process, they will be able to teach successfully.

Teachers need to be knowledgeable about the writing process; they need to write. Graves (1978) states that people do not teach well what they do not practice themselves. Maya (1979) echoes this notion by saying, "Not only are many teachers ignorant of how to teach writing, they then do not write themselves." Maya stresses that until teachers discover what writing means, they will fail to help their students become efficient, productive writers. Students need to have positive models who participate in writing and display pleasure in the activity.

Teachers, in addition to having students write, also need to take time for writing instruction in the content areas within the instructional schedule. Shanahan (1980) found that a minimum amount of time was spent on writing development in the elementary classroom, as little as 30 to 60 minutes per week. Graves (1978) also found teachers devoted only a small percentage of time to writing, because most of the teachers' efforts were spent with reading and mathematics instruction.

Unfortunately, the lack of student writing, until
recently, has rarely been the subject of the media. Writing instruction, unlike foreign languages, reading, physical education, the arts, and science, has not been scrutinized by study committees and critics.

Today, however, writing and its importance as an essential lifetime skill are being looked at very closely by both the public and the professional education. Questions about how writing is taught and what practices are most successful are being posed as the quest for competencies in basic skills continues.

For principals, especially those whose backgrounds are not in English or language arts teaching, providing answers to these kinds of questions is not easy. Yet, as principals they are expected to have answers. They are the instructional leaders in their schools; and students, parents, citizens, and teachers look to them for direction and guidance.

Research in the area of writing indicates the following:

The teaching of grammar, mechanics, and spelling is an ineffective way to promote fluency in writing and takes time away from practical writing application.
Writing frequently, without proper preparation and instruction, will not necessarily insure improvement.
Increased reading experience warrants a positive correlation with good writing.
Advantageous outcome accumulates by using such prewriting procedures as thinking, discussing, sharing, peer role playing, interviewing, debating, and problem solving.
Emphasis on content and organizational
development through careful instructional guidance is essential in solving the communication problem throughout the writing process. Attention on quality, not quantity, is the issue of concern rather than hastily produced pages. Teachers' awareness will promote desirable results.

There is some evidence that sentence-combining practice, without instruction in formal grammar, is an aid to syntactic fluency (Combs, 1979). Evidence substantiates that the revision process itself is critical in improving writing; however, there does not seem to be any evidence to support one revision process over another. Written communication is closely related to speech; therefore, teachers should accentuate and maximize the close association between written and oral language. Affirmative feedback is more productive than disapproving response in promoting positive attitudes toward writing; however, the caliber of students' writing may not be affected by positive or negative criticism. Editing and evaluation by peers are effective techniques used to improve writing skills. In recent years researchers in composition have urged a shift in the teaching of writing.

Rather than analyzing written products as a means of teaching and improving writing, these researchers (Emig (1971), Murray (1968), Britton (1978), and Myers (1983)) have urged teachers to approach writing in a more fluid way. They further recognize and stress that discovery,
exploration, and settling are all involved in the process of writing.

Britton (1978), Murray (1968), and others show that students have already acquired the competence to produce all the sentence types by about grade four, but that their writing performance does not fully reflect their natural competence. A program of sentence combining that causes students to practice - to produce - a variety of sentence structures capitalizes upon that natural competence and "frees" students from their inability to express themselves fluently.

As we use the term "fluency," we refer to the ability to combine "prepositions" or "minimal sentences." By combining minimal sentences through transformations, such as predicate complement embedding or relative clause formation, writers discover the ability to "say more" with every statement. It is this ability to "say more" - and the ability to write a variety of sentence types - that mark the successful writer.

Because writers cannot be expected to do these steps in sequence with each writing task, it is important to emphasize to students that although each step is involved in all writing, the steps rarely happen in sequential order from one to ten. Miles Myers (1983) of the Bay Area Writing Project speaks clearly about the Steps Method.

In the classroom, the Steps Method means that writing
is used as an instrument for self-discovery, not just as a means of communicating something for someone else. Therefore, students are given extensive practice in prewriting, simply filling a page in order to lean how writing helps them discover what they know, what they do not know, and, in fact, what they want to write about. They are not expected to write a thesis and an outline before they have written something; writing is considered a means of discovering one's thesis and organization.

Writing as an instrument for self-discovery does not mean that correctness of form is neglected. It does mean that teachers are not forced to begin with the notion of correctness or incorrectness. They know that writing doesn't appear as a finished product, that writers must draft and revise and revise again. Precision in form and idea are demanded, but teachers now recognize that correctness and structure must come out of the developing meaning and purpose of the work. They teach both process and product.

Researchers Graves (1978, 1983), Walmsey (1980), and others generally agree that writing frequently is helpful to the developing skills of writers. Students will write for many audiences, from a variety of points of view. They will explore many types of writing and will try out their own creative ideas. They will strive always to find an appropriate form and to communicate logically and
clearly. This is achieved through revising, a key step of
the writing process.

Thus, the writing process stresses prewriting, writing, and revising as its key elements. It acknowledges that writers work in a variety of ways in their attempts to communicate effectively.

It is further agreed by researchers that a writing class is different from most other classes; there is no information to memorize, no formula to master. In a writing class, much of the subject matter comes from the writer. The writer's interests, experiences, thoughts, feelings, and knowledge of facts and opinions are the resources that shape the content of writing. Moreover, details about people and events are not quite expressed the same way by different writers. A writer's view of the world is unique, and it changes continually as does the writer.

A writer has the major responsibility for expressing ideas. Because of the individualism communicated, a writing class is really a workshop. In any workshop, the object is to build, create, perform; the product or result is what counts. In working with paints or wood or words, the basic skills and techniques are taught to allow the raw material to be taken and shaped into a finished product.

Becoming a good writer does not require any
extraordinary talent-any special "gift." Some people, of course, have more natural ability than others, but virtually everyone has the ability to write competent English. Writing well is a skill like any other-driving a car, dancing, or playing basketball. The writing skills may be acquired similarly to those other skills, first by learning the rules and then by applying those rules in practice.

Many teachers of composition have found that imitation exercises enhance a course by adding to student confidence as well as competence. Imitation allows students to see that the distance between them and professional writers, while considerable, is not an unbridgeable chasm. It can also be, particularly when it involves attempts at parody, simply fun. One thing students of the 1980s know is that learning to write is a serious business: what they now need to learn is that it also can be fun.
CHAPTER III
RESEARCH METHODS

THE DESIGN:

A quasi-experimental design was used to determine how students felt about the use of computers in expressing their feelings in regard to stimuli. There was an experimental group in which a treatment was conducted, but there was no control group. There was also no pre-post data analysis. The design consisted of a post-test only after a treatment was conducted.

POPULATION:

The population consisted of five thousand seventh grade students and 296 seventh grade teachers from forty elementary schools located throughout the school district.

SAMPLE:

The sample consisted of 962 seventh grade students and eighty-one teachers.

TREATMENT:

All seventh grade students throughout the school district come to the Writing Center for four visits. On each visit a different mode of writing (narrative, descriptive, expository, and persuasive) is introduced. Upon arrival, the students assemble in the auditorium and are given a brief description of the day's mode of writing. The students are then presented with a multimedia stimulus consisting of visual and performing arts
designed for the particular mode of writing. At the conclusion of the stimulus, the students are dismissed to pre-assigned classes. In the classroom the students are guided through the prewriting program tie-in as they discuss the stimulus and other related topics of interest.

The brainstorming technique is used to encourage and generate ideas for possible individual topics. Jotlists (a listing of words, phrases, or ideas related to a given topic) are developed by each student with an overhead model used as a guide. Upon completion of the selected jotlists, the students begin a first draft. Students are directed by the teachers to write continuously throughout this time period without specific regard to mechanics. Fluency is the objective at this stage of the writing process.

After a specified time limit, the students are instructed to exchange papers for peer response (positive simple and concise feedback through constructive observation of another student’s paper). Papers are returned to original authors for consideration based on peer response.

Teachers then respond to the students’ papers stressing fluency and content by encouraging expansion of thoughts and ideas on the topic. Comments regarding mechanics and organization are noted when applicable.
Revisions are made by the students, and the final drafts are completed. Closure for the day's mode of writing is presented by the teachers, and introductory statements are directed toward the mode of writing for the next visit. Time is allowed before departure for students to volunteer to read papers in front of the class. (TABLE 1)

QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT:

The survey instruments were adapted to assess the effectiveness of the use of the Bank Street Writer in the writing process.

Several groups of educators were requested to design an instrument to assess the effectiveness of the Bank Street Writer in the writing process, and the instrument was explained by the different groups as follows:

GROUP A - consisting of central office staff and teachers responsible for designing the survey and formulating plans for implementation.

GROUP B - consisting of students and teachers responsible for conducting and participating in the field testing.

GROUP C - consisting of teachers responsible for administering, tallying, and evaluating the results of the instrument that was given to the students.
The results of the survey were made possible through the work of these three groups. The survey instruments were adaptations to evaluate the effectiveness of the use of the Bank Street Writer in the writing process. (See APPENDIX A - Students' Seventh Grade Composition Survey; APPENDIX B - Teachers' Seventh Grade Composition Survey)
TABLE 1
WRITING CENTER MODEL

PROGRAM STIMULUS

PRE-WRITING PROGRAM TIE-IN

SUMMARY

BRAINSTORMING
(Topic To Be Explored)

MODELS OF WRITING

*Narrative

*Descriptive

*Expository

*Persuasive

SHARING

CLUSTERING

FIRST DRAFT
(Free Writing)

FINAL DRAFT
(Going Public)

REVISION
(Restructing)

TEACHER RESPONSE
(Feedback)

PRE-REVISION

PEER RESPONSE
After the instrument was designed, it was examined by a group of teachers to determine the validity of the instrument. The instrument was then distributed to one school where it was field tested on a group of twenty-four elementary students and two teachers. The students did not encounter any difficulty in responding to the survey items. The result of the field test showed the instrument to be valid in addressing students' and teachers' reaction to use of computers in the writing process. (See APPENDIX A - Students' Seventh Grade Composition Survey; APPENDIX B - Teachers' Seventh Grade Composition Survey)
CHAPTER IV

DATA PRESENTATION AND DATA ANALYSIS

The data will be reported in order of propositions.

**Proposition 1:** That students will tend to agree more than disagree on a number of items that computers aid their writing.

**Proposition 2:** That teachers will tend to agree more than disagree that students tend to write more and have more positive attitudes when using a computer if being provided stimuli.

The data with respect to Proposition 1 are stated in Table 2.

**Rating Scale Key:**

- **HA** - Highest Agreement
- **SA** - Strongly Agree
- **A** - Agree
- **DA** - Disagree
- **SD** - Strongly Agree
- **OTHER**

If the categories HA, SA, and A are put together, then the conclusion can be seen from Table 4 that the majority agreed on every item that the computers aided them in expressing their feelings effectively. This means that Proposition 1 can be accepted. Students do agree rather than disagree that the computers aided them in expressing their
feelings. (See Table 2)

The data to be tested for Proposition 2 are found in Table 3. If categories HA, SA, and A are put together, teachers overwhelmingly agree that students tend to write more and have more positive attitudes about writing when they are using the computers. (See TABLE 3 and TABLE 4)

On the items specifically related to students' positive attitudes, 100% of the teachers in the sample agreed that the students did display more positive attitudes when using the computers. Proposition 2 can also therefore be accepted.

The study revealed that when students are exposed to "stimuli" at a writing center and then use a computer to write their feelings regarding the stimuli, the students and teachers are likely to express more agreement than disagreement that the computers are helpful in their expressions.

Students agreed that the computers aided their writing because they felt more comfortable using the computers with the writing process and because the computers allowed them to make changes more accurately and efficiently. Students wrote longer papers. Students wrote better papers using the computers. Students preferred using the computers to using pen and paper.

Students also found the computers more helpful because of the novelty of the new technology which they
found attractive. Students appeared more motivated and more confident about their compositions while using the computers.

Teachers found that the students had a more positive attitude. This attitude could also be attributed to the novelty of the computer technique. The students were more comfortable because it is a self-correcting technique allowing them to develop greater control over their own learning rather than being so dependent on the teachers.
TABLE 2
STUDENTS' FEELINGS ABOUT THE COMPUTERS IN EXPRESSING THEIR FEELINGS OF STIMULI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>HA</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>DA</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>OTHER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I felt comfortable using the computer to do my writing.</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. It was easier to make changes in my paper using the computer.</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I wrote a longer paper when I was writing at the computer.</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I made more changes in my paper using the computer.</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I feel that I wrote a better paper using the computer.</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I would rather use a computer than pencil and paper to do my writing.</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. My paper had few mistakes when I was using a computer.</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. When I was using the computer to write, it was more important to me to do good writing than to learn how to use the computer.</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I would like to use a computer to do my writing more often.</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HA</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>DA</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
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<td>----</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The students had adequate prior use of the Bank Street Writer program before going to the Writing Center.</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. In general, students displayed positive attitudes about using the computers for writing.</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The students were anxious to use the computer to do more writing when they returned to their home school.</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The students appeared more motivated and more confident about their composition work.</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. My students need more opportunities to use the Bank Street Writer.</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RATING SCALE**

- HA - Highest Agreement
- SA - Strongly Agree
- A - Agree
- DA - Disagree
- SD - Strongly Disagree
# Table 4

**Writing Center Composition Survey**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>% Agree</th>
<th>% Disagree</th>
<th>% Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>94.39%</td>
<td>5.09%</td>
<td>0.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>81.50%</td>
<td>17.78%</td>
<td>0.73%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>58.11%</td>
<td>40.02%</td>
<td>1.87%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>63.51%</td>
<td>34.30%</td>
<td>2.18%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>78.09%</td>
<td>21.41%</td>
<td>2.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>597</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>85.45%</td>
<td>13.20%</td>
<td>1.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>77.55%</td>
<td>20.89%</td>
<td>1.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>66.74%</td>
<td>31.60%</td>
<td>1.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>87.84%</td>
<td>8.42%</td>
<td>3.74%</td>
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**Teachers Results**

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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>% Agree</th>
<th>% Disagree</th>
<th>% Other</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>79.01%</td>
<td>20.99%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>90.12%</td>
<td>9.88%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>93.83%</td>
<td>4.94%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>97.53%</td>
<td>2.47%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

32
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The body of research in the area of writing is growing; however, there is still limited research on the use of the computer in the writing process.

This quasi-experimental design study was used to determine how students and teachers felt about the use of computers in expressing their feelings in regard to stimuli. There was an experimental group in which a treatment was administered, but no pre-post data analysis was available.

The following propositions were tested, and the findings are indicated.

1. That students will tend to agree more than disagree on a number of items that computers aid their writing.

2. That teachers will tend to agree more than disagree that students tend to write more and have more positive attitudes when using a computer if being provided a stimulus.

CONCLUSIONS:

It can be concluded that Proposition 1 was accepted because the students did tend to agree more than disagree on a number of items that the computers aid their writing.
Proposition 2 was accepted because the teachers did tend to agree more than disagree that students tend to write more and have more positive attitudes when using a computer if being provided stimuli.

It is further concluded that in this study that the use of computer aided instruction had a positive impact on learning when used as a tool in the writing process.

**IMPLICATIONS:**

1. Students who use the computers in the writing process tend to feel better about their writings and themselves.

2. The attitudes of the visiting classroom teachers have a direct impact on the students' attitudes toward the instructional program at the Writing Center.

3. The use of the computer as a tool for writing has a positive impact on students' achievement in other courses.

4. Students tend to make more corrections of mistakes in their writing when using the computers.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is recommended that the school district:

1. Develop and implement a similar writing program for fourth and sixth grade students.

2. Develop and implement additional computer labs so
that all students may use the computers on a continuous basis at the Writing Center.

3. Develop and implement a schedule that will allow additional hours and visits to the Writing Center.

4. Develop and implement an on-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Writing Center administration and instructional program.

5. Develop and implement a system to involve additional central office (instructional) personnel in the Writing Center program.

Further research should be done in the areas of involving the community in the writing program.
# APPENDIX A

## SEVENTH GRADE COMPOSITION SURVEY

### STUDENTS

Please answer the following questions concerning computer use at the Writing Center using the scale below. Please answer each question by darkening the letter on the answer sheet that best answers the question for you.

*Thank you.*

<p>| | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Highest Agreement</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I felt comfortable using the computer to do my writing.

2. It was easier to make changes in my paper using the computer.

3. I wrote a longer paper when I was writing at the computer.

4. I made more changes in my paper using the computer.

5. I feel that I wrote a better paper using the computer.

6. I would rather use a computer than pencil and paper to do my writing.

7. My paper had fewer mistakes when I was using a computer.

8. When I was using the computer to write, it was more important to me to do good writing than to learn how to use the computer.

9. I would like to use a computer to do my writing more often.
APPENDIX A - Continued

RESULTS OF THE
SEVENTH GRADE COMPOSITION SURVEY

STUDENTS

These are the results of a survey of 962 students from 40 schools. The scale of responses listed below was used in the survey.

a Highest Agreement
b Strongly Agree
c Agree
d Disagree
e Strongly Disagree

The "Other" category represents unreadable student responses.

1. I felt comfortable using the computer to do my writing.
   a - 484  b - 201  c - 223  d - 42  e - 7  Other - 5
   94.39% Agree  5.09% Disagree

2. It was easier to make changes in my paper using the computer.
   a - 358  b - 211  c - 215  d - 133  e - 38  Other - 7
   81.50% Agree  17.78% Disagree

3. I wrote a longer paper when I was writing at the computer.
   a - 171  b - 131  c - 257  d - 293  e - 92  Other - 18
   58.11% Agree  40.02% Disagree

4. I made more changes in my paper using the computer.
   a - 197  b - 151  c - 263  d - 241  e - 89  Other - 21
   63.51% Agree  34.30% Disagree

5. I feel that I wrote a better paper using the computer.
   a - 312  b - 200  c - 220  d - 146  e - 60  Other - 24
   76.09% Agree  21.41% Disagree
APPENDIX A - Continued

6. I would rather use a computer than pencil and paper to do my writing.
   a - 597  b - 115  c - 110  d - 63  e - 64  Other - 13
   85.45% Agree  13.20% Disagree

7. My paper had fewer mistakes when I was using a computer.
   a - 304  b - 203  c - 239  d - 147  e - 54  Other - 15
   77.55% Agree  20.89% Disagree

8. When I was using the computer to write, it was more important to me to do good
   writing than to learn how to use the computer.
   a - 181  b - 162  c - 299  d - 212  e - 92  Other - 16
   66.74% Agree  31.60% Disagree

9. I would like to use a computer to do my writing more often.
   a - 607  b - 120  c - 118  d - 53  e - 28  Other - 36
   87.84% Agree  8.42% Disagree
**APPENDIX B**

**SEVENTH GRADE COMPOSITION SURVEY**

**TEACHERS**

Please answer the following questions concerning computer use at the Writing Center using the scale below. Please answer every question. Thank you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating Scale</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>c</th>
<th>d</th>
<th>e</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Highest Agreement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1. The students had adequate prior use of the Bank Street Writer program before going to the Writing Center.</td>
<td>a b c d e</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. In general, students displayed positive attitudes about using the computer for writing.</td>
<td>a b c d e</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The students were anxious to use the computer to do more writing when they returned to their home school.</td>
<td>a b c d e</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The students appeared more motivated and more confident about their composition work.</td>
<td>a b c d e</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. My students need more opportunities to use the Bank Street Writer Program.</td>
<td>a b c d e</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

40
APPENDIX B - Continued

RESULTS OF THE SEVENTH GRADE COMPOSITION SURVEY TEACHERS

These are the results of a survey of 81 teachers from 40 schools. The scale of responses listed below was used in the survey.

a Highest Agreement
b Strongly Agree
c Agree
d Disagree
e Strongly Disagree

1. The students had adequate prior use of the Bank Street Writer program before going to the Writing Center.

   a - 30   b - 12   c - 22   d - 13   e - 4
   79.01% Agree  20.99% Disagree

2. In general, students displayed positive attitudes about using the computer for writing.

   a - 47   b - 28   c - 6   d - 0   e - 0
   100% Agree  0% Disagree

3. The students were anxious to use the computer to do more writing when they returned to their home school.

   a - 34   b - 16   c - 23   d - 8   e - 0
   90.12% Agree  9.88% Disagree

4. The students appeared more motivated and more confident about their composition work.

   a - 29   b - 25   c - 23   d - 4   e - 0
   95.06% Agree  4.94% Disagree

5. My students need more opportunities to use the Bank Street Writer.

   a - 60   b - 10   c - 9   d - 2   e - 0
   97.53% Agree  2.47% Disagree
APPENDIX E

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REFERENCES
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Smith, F. Reading like a writer, Language Arts, 60, 558-567, 1983.

Smith, Frank "Myths of Writing," Language Arts, 58, October, 1981.
