

EVALUATION OF WRITING SKILLS OF LOW ACHIEVING
FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADE CHILDREN IN THE
BRYAN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

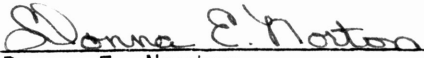
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ABSTRACT

Evaluation of Writing Skills of Low Achieving
Fifth and Sixth Grade Children in the
Bryan Independent School District

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The purpose of this study was to determine whether the reading and writing skills of low achieving students might be improved by enhancing the students' self-images. Many of the low achieving students in the fifth and sixth grades investigated in this study were minority students. Among the reasons which could account for their low achievement are language difficulties--some students use ethnic or regional dialects of English and for others English is their second language--and low self-images. In research currently being conducted by Norton (1984), it was hypothesized that improving the self-image of culturally different children brought about improvements in their reading and writing skills.

The subjects for the study were 13 students in a fifth grade class, 11 students in a sixth grade class, and 11 students in an English as a Second Language (ESL) sixth grade class. The subjects were all low achieving students, having scored in the lowest 5% of their grade level on basic skills tests. The treatment was administered to the experimental classes between November and March and consisted of incorporating a large selection of multiethnic literature into the reading and writing program of each class. Books were made available for all the students which contained stories about Blacks, Hispanics, and Native

Americans. These stories were intended to build pride in the students' cultural heritage and to have a positive effect on their self-images.

To test the hypothesis that better writing skills are found in children with a positive self-image, it was decided to get a direct sample of the spontaneous writing of the students before the use of the ethnic reading materials and again several months after the intervention treatment. The students were asked to write an autobiography and were given 20 minutes to write. The same procedure was followed in both the fall semester and the spring semester to gather these writing samples.

The earlier samples were compared with the later samples in terms of total words and total sentences, which were subdivided into simple, compound, and complex sentences. All three classes showed improvements in some areas of their writing in the spring semester.

It was concluded that there are many variables that must be considered in assessing the gains made in the writing skills. Student maturation and teacher skill are possible reasons for improved writing skills. However, it appears that the research hypothesis was borne out: that is, improving the self-image of the student and providing reading/language arts instruction based on positive multiethnic literature will in turn improve the reading and writing skills.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Competency in reading and writing is a prime objective for all students. Without these skills the students are at a disadvantage in all their subjects of study. Consequently, for years and years researchers have sought to improve the learning of reading and writing skills by all students. They have examined different teaching methods, the use of different materials, the characteristics of different readers, and different strategies to remediate poor performance where it occurred.

A particular concern is for that subgroup of students who are low achievers. But low achieving students are not all alike. Further subgroups can place these students into categories of being low ability; of having difficulty with language, either because the students speak an ethnic or regional dialect of English or because English is not the students' first language; or of being unmotivated for one reason or another. Investigations for ways to improve reading and writing abilities of these children continues to be a major focus in contemporary research.

Several ways of helping Black children with reading difficulties are reported by Rupley and Blair (1983). Among the suggestions are 1) emphasizing standard English prior to or during reading instruction, 2) using dialect readers, 3) using the language experience approach, and 4) allowing a dialect reading of traditional English texts.

This thesis follows the style of the Review of Educational Research.

Also Rupley and Blair suggest that bilingual children who develop oral competency in the second language have fewer reading problems. Nutter and Safran (1984) reported that much more emphasis is placed on teaching reading than on teaching writing, probably because much more is known about teaching reading than teaching writing. They recommend a technique called "sentence combining exercises." Using this technique, several simple sentences are combined into a single, more complex sentence.

Norton (1984) approaches the problem of reading and writing difficulties from a different angle. Many of the low achieving children are minorities; therefore, the focus of Norton's research is on whether a heightened cultural awareness and improved self-image produces more motivation and more success in reading and writing skills. This hypothesis is being tested in a three-year study being conducted by Norton, with fifth, sixth, and seventh grade students in the Bryan Independent School District as the subjects.

The present research was related to Norton's work and specifically investigated the impact of placing ethnic materials in fifth and sixth grade classrooms so as to improve the self-image and the cultural image of the children and to provide reading/language arts instruction based on positive multiethnic literature so as to motivate students to become better readers and writers. In doing so it looks at the potential effects of this intervention approach to the remedial approach to learning reading and writing skills.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As any study on teaching children to read and write will indicate, all children do not learn at the same rate or equally well. Efforts to find the causes of poor writing skills have so far identified learner deficiencies in other language skills, certain personal and social characteristics of the learners, differences between learners' first language or dialect and standard English, and insufficient instruction in writing as possible causes. The common supposition that insufficient study of grammar could cause poor writing and that poor writing could be improved by supplying the missing instruction in grammar has not been supported by the research. In fact, results obtained by Schuster (1961) showed that there was little use in teaching grammar in an attempt to improve writing, and according to Elley (1975) student attitude toward the study of grammar may negate any positive effect it may have.

Evanechko, Ollila, and Armstrong (1974) found that there is a strong relationship among the language skills; especially there is a high degree of correlation between reading and writing. Thus, it can be speculated that a deficiency in reading skills might produce a consequent deficiency in writing skills. Norton (1980) stated that a child's ability to use a varied vocabulary effectively is a major factor in clear written communication. She found that vocabulary deficiencies in students interfered with oral language, reading, and writing ability. When a child enjoys reading, his vocabulary and, consequently, his writing skills improve.

Research done by Tonjes (1977) revealed some personal and social characteristics of poor writers. Typically they are financially poor with a bad self-concept, are less intelligent than their fellow students, and are apprehensive about writing. Also they are poor readers, use non-standard language, and know little about grammar. Their writing has significantly fewer subordinate clauses than that of good writers.

Language differences also account for many problems in writing ability. Black students, for instance, whose oral language is a Black dialect, must first learn the rules of standard English before they can be expected to write standard English. Rupley and Blair (1983) noted there is a mismatch between the language structure of Black English and standard English. The language differences are semantic, syntactic, and phonological. Students who speak Black English, therefore, are involved in learning a new form of their language. The writing problems of students who speak non-standard English have commonly been attributed to their having "no grammar" or syntax and to their suffering from a limited lexicon (Ascher, 1983). In fact, Labov (1972) has shown that Black English vernacular is grounded in its own grammatical rules and logic. Black students are highly fluent in speech.

Nutter and Safran (1984) found that children with learning disabilities who can't read very well usually can't write very well either. However, language arts instruction for children with learning disabilities often focuses much more on helping them learn to read than on helping them learn to write, even though reading and writing (as well as listening and speaking) can reinforce each other as the child develops his total linguistic competence.

Overall, then, the poor reader and writer tends to have a low self-concept, is financially poorer and less intelligent than his fellow students, is apprehensive about reading and writing skills, and uses non-standard English.

Current research being done by Norton (1984) further investigates many of these variables. Norton hypothesizes that improving the self-image of students who are low achievers and providing reading/language arts instruction based on positive multiethnic literature will cause their reading and writing skills to improve. Because many of the students who fit the profile are minorities, specially chosen reading/language arts materials containing positive ethnic stories and folktales have been developed and provided in selected classrooms. Many of these selections have been rewritten to control the vocabularies for the particular grade levels. One of the objectives of Norton's research is to determine whether interest in the reading materials causes increased reading activity and whether that in turn causes writing skills to improve.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

This chapter first describes the sample, the treatment, the data gathering technique, and the design of the study. Then it presents the findings for each class and interprets them.

Methodology

Sample

Three low achievement classes in the Bryan Independent School District were used in this study. There were one fifth grade class and two sixth grade classes, one of which was an English as a Second Language class. The students in all three of these classes were termed low ability because they had scored in the lowest 5% of their grade level on the basic skills tests administered the previous spring. The tests used were the California Test of Basic Skills (CTBS), and, in the case of the fifth graders, the Texas Assessment of Basic Skills Test (TABS). The fifth grade class contained 13 students, 4 girls and 9 boys. The sixth grade class contained 11 students, 4 girls and 7 boys. The English as a Second Language sixth grade class contained 11 students, 7 girls and 4 boys. The minority distribution in these classes was fifth grade-- 10 Blacks; sixth grade--8 Blacks, 2 Hispanics; and, the ESL sixth grade-- 10 Hispanics and one Indian. It was obvious that, despite their similar achievement test scores, the ESL class was more able than the other two classes.

Treatment

The treatment was administered to the experimental classes between November and March and consisted of incorporating a large selection of multiethnic literature into the reading and writing program of each class (see Appendix A). Books were made available for all the students which contained stories, both fiction and non-fiction, about Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans. Inservice sessions were held with the teachers of these classes to provide them with ideas for relating the ethnic stories to their art projects and games. The teachers then used these materials for reading practice, to teach reading and writing skill lessons, and as the subject for a follow-up writing activity. The materials were also used to stimulate discussions of ethnic culture that built pride in the students' cultural heritage. Because many of the students in the low ability classes are minorities--77% in the fifth grade class, 91% in one sixth grade class, and all of the ESL sixth grade class--the placement of these materials in the classrooms was intended to have a positive effect on their self-image. It should be noted, however, that the experimenter had no real control over how much use each teacher made of the multiethnic materials.

Data Gathering Techniques

Rather than administering a standardized test of grammar and writing to explore any changes in writing skill that might be prompted by the treatment, it was decided to get a direct sample of the spontaneous writing of the students before the treatment and again several months later. A writing assignment that students would feel comfortable with and one in which they had ample knowledge was considered to be best

suiting for a study of this kind. Therefore, the students were asked to write an autobiography. The word "autobiography" was defined for the students prior to writing, and they were advised to write about their past, present, and future. To assist them with this suggestion, the terms past, present, and future tense were discussed. The students were then given 20 minutes to write. (The guideline for the research to use when obtaining this writing sample is shown in Appendix B.) The same procedure was followed in both November and March to gather these writing samples.

To determine change in writing ability, the fall samples were compared to the spring samples on several grounds. First, simple fluency was compared by counting total words. Second, the total number of sentences written on each occasion was compared, but it immediately became obvious that more sentences did not necessarily mean more sophistication or skill in writing. Therefore, it became necessary to look at the relative frequency of simple, compound, and complex sentences to get some estimate of increasing complexity of writing style. Even that leaves some questions unanswered, however, because more extended and more carefully modified simple sentences can also reveal growth in writing skill. Error analysis was limited to counting sentence fragments, because many errors committed by these students were dialectical rather than grammatical. Examples of types of dialectical errors are the omission of inflectional endings on nouns to indicate plurality or possession and lack of inflectional endings on verbs to indicate tense.

When words were being counted, so many questions arose regarding abbreviations, numerals, etc. that it was necessary to define a word

for the purpose of this study. The definition follows.

- 1) A numeral is counted as a word; e.g., I have 3 nieces.
- 2) A date, either Feb. 15 or Sep. 18, 1984, for example, is counted as one word.
- 3) Contractions are counted as one word.
- 4) Addresses, such as 324A Carson, are counted as one word.
- 5) Abbreviations, such as St., ok, and TV are counted as one word, but S.S. (social studies) and P.E. (physical education) are counted as two words.
- 6) Titles such as Mrs., Miss, and Mr. are counted as one word.
- 7) Symbols such as & are counted as one word.
- 8) Expressions of time such as 6:00 are counted as one word.

For determining the number of sentences, the definition of a T-unit (Hunt, 1965) was used with some modifications. A T-unit is one main clause (a "minimal terminable unit") plus all the subordinate clauses attached to or embedded within it. Because many of the students did not use either punctuation or a conjunction between simple sentences and also did not always use capital letters, determining where one sentence ended and the next began became a problem. Therefore the following ground rules were adopted.

- 1) When two or more simple sentences are joined by the coordinating conjunction "and," each pair of sentences is counted as one compound sentence. If there are an odd number of sentences, the one left over is counted as a simple sentence.
- 2) Strings of simple sentences having neither a conjunction nor any form of terminal punctuation are counted as simple sentences.

Design

The design for this study was quasi-experimental with only experimental groups used. All classes received the treatment and all classes wrote pre- and post-treatment writing samples. The investigation reported here is, however, part of a three-year longitudinal study being conducted under the direction of Dr. Donna E. Norton.

Findings

Fifth Grade

Table 1 shows total words, total sentences, and fragments for the fifth grade for the fall and spring writing samples. Nine out of 13 students wrote more words in the spring than in the fall. The four who wrote fewer words also had fewer sentences. However, two students had fewer sentences but a greater number of words. This is explained by the fact that both students had fewer simple sentences but more complex sentences. Also, one of the students reduced his fragments from 3 to 0. Both the more complicated sentences and the relative lack of fragments reveal more maturity in writing styles. This syntactic maturity reflects an ability to organize and communicate information more efficiently.

Table 2 shows total sentences as either simple, compound, or complex sentences. While no student in this fifth grade class increased his number of compound sentences, seven students wrote more complex sentences in the spring than in the fall. Because compound sentences can be formed by joining two simple sentences with a coordinating conjunction, the complex sentence with the subordinate clause is considered

Table 1
 Comparison of Total Words, Sentences, and Fragments
 for Fall and Spring Semesters--Fifth Grade Class

Student	Total Words		Total Sentences		Fragments	
	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring
5- 1	77	78	5	6	0	0
5- 2	90	145	12	17	0	2
5- 3	57	79	6	6	1	0
5- 4	4	49	0	5	1	1
5- 5	26	19	3	2	0	1
5- 6	51	29	7	5	0	0
5- 7	66	71	10	8	0	0
5- 8	52	111	3	5	0	0
5- 9	24	31	3	5	0	0
5-10	33	23	4	1	0	1
5-11	40	64	4	9	1	0
5-12	97	94	12	10	1	1
5-13	51	56	4	2	2	0

Table 2
 Comparison of Simple, Compound, and Complex Sentences
 for Fall and Spring Semesters--Fifth Grade Class

Student	Total Sentences		Simple Sentences		Compound Sentences		Complex Sentences	
	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring
5- 1	5	6	1	2	2	1	2	3
5- 2	12	17	9	14	2	2	1	1
5- 3	6	6	4	1	2	0	0	5
5- 4	0	5	0	5	0	0	0	0
5- 5	3	2	2	1	1	0	0	1
5- 6	7	5	6	4	0	0	1	1
5- 7	10	8	9	6	0	0	1	2
5- 8	3	11	1	7	2	0	0	4
5- 9	3	5	3	5	0	0	0	0
5-10	4	1	2	0	2	1	0	0
5-11	4	9	3	8	1	1	0	0
5-12	12	10	11	7	1	1	0	2
5-13	4	2	3	0	1	1	0	1

the more difficult sentence structure to learn to write. Students who include complex sentences, then, are displaying greater maturity in their writing styles.

Sixth Grade Regular Class

The sixth grade students wrote far more total words and total sentences than the fifth grade students. This is shown in Table 3 and Table 4. The increase in number of words is consistent with findings by Hunt (1965) and O'Donnell et al. (1967) who determined that the average length of T-units and number of clauses per T-unit increase at each grade level. Four of the eleven students increased total words in the spring over the fall semester and three students wrote more sentences, while one wrote the same number. However, six students wrote more complex sentences in the spring than in the fall, one student writing 10 as compared to 1.

Sixth Grade ESL Class

The students in the sixth grade English as a Second Language class had the best record of improvement of the three classes. Although their test scores labeled them as low ability, at least 75% of the students in this class were of average or above intelligence. Their scores reflect difficulty with language. Many of these students will be placed in average ability classes once they are adept enough at standard English to make higher scores on the basic skills tests.

Table 5 reveals that all the students except one in this class increased both number of words and number of sentences from fall semester to spring semester. The one student who did not, wrote her fall

Table 3
 Comparison of Total Words, Sentences, and Fragments
 for Fall and Spring Semesters--Sixth Grade Class

Student	Total Words		Total Sentences		Fragments	
	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring
6- 1	256	297	24	37	0	2
6- 2	263	271	22	19	0	1
6- 3	69	191	8	21	1	0
6- 4	145	137	21	21	0	0
6- 5	163	111	16	14	1	0
6- 6	39	141	2	7	1	0
6- 7	166	104	13	12	0	0
6- 8	436	296	47	26	0	1
6- 9	83	75	10	5	0	0
6-10	146	73	12	8	0	0
6-11	148	91	10	7	0	1

Table 4
 Comparison of Simple, Compound, and Complex Sentences
 for Fall and Spring Semesters--Sixth Grade Class

Student	Total Sentences		Simple Sentences		Compound Sentences		Complex Sentences	
	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring
6- 1	24	37	18	26	5	1	1	10
6- 2	22	19	13	6	9	9	0	4
6- 3	8	21	7	13	1	6	0	2
6- 4	21	21	19	18	0	0	2	3
6- 5	16	14	13	12	2	2	1	0
6- 6	2	7	2	4	0	0	0	3
6- 7	13	12	6	9	6	2	1	1
6- 8	47	26	28	19	8	4	11	3
6- 9	10	5	8	3	2	0	0	2
6-10	12	8	4	3	3	3	5	2
6-11	10	7	3	3	4	3	3	1

Table 5
 Comparison of Total Words, Sentences, and Fragments
 for Fall and Spring Semesters--ESL Sixth Grade Class

Student	Total Words		Total Sentences		Fragments	
	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring
ESL- 1	71	133	5	10	0	0
ESL- 2	311	471	25	43	1	3
ESL- 3	58	160	6	16	0	0
ESL- 4	212	331	18	32	2	0
ESL- 5	81	406	10	59	0	4
ESL- 6	67	196	5	20	0	0
ESL- 7	60	95	6	8	0	1
ESL- 8	131	220	14	17	0	1
ESL- 9	65	149	6	14	0	0
ESL-10	40	123	4	13	0	0
ESL-11	188	106	27	14	0	0

Table 6
 Comparison of Simple, Compound, and Complex Sentences
 for Fall and Spring Semesters--ESL Sixth Grade Class

Student	Total Sentences		Simple Sentences		Compound Sentences		Complex Sentences	
	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring
ESL- 1	5	10	2	6	1	2	2	2
ESL- 2	25	43	14	32	4	6	7	5
ESL- 3	6	16	4	15	2	1	0	0
ESL- 4	18	32	13	22	3	7	2	3
ESL- 5	10	59	7	47	1	5	2	7
ESL- 6	5	20	3	10	2	8	0	2
ESL- 7	6	8	3	5	2	2	4	5
ESL- 8	14	17	8	10	2	2	4	5
ESL- 9	6	14	2	4	3	8	1	2
ESL-10	4	13	2	8	1	3	1	2
ESL-11	27	14	24	11	3	2	0	1

semester paper in Spanish and her spring semester paper in English. Because she was more comfortable with Spanish, she wrote more in that language.

Table 6 shows that for both compound and complex sentences seven students increased the number written. Most of the students in this class seem very much at ease with a writing assignment. In fact, the general climate of the classroom was relaxed and happy. This, combined with the natural ability of the students and their greater command of the English language in the spring, probably helps to account for their tremendous progress.

It was reported that many of the ethnic stories placed in the classrooms were used, not only to read but also as the basis for other class projects. Also it was reported that many students enjoyed borrowing the books for recreational reading. The impact these stories may have had on the self-image and subsequently the writing skills of the students cannot be ignored.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Having gathered samples of writing skills before and after a 3-5 month experimental treatment of exposing the children to ethnic literature and providing reading/language arts instruction based on positive multiethnic literature, it is interesting to consider the summary findings and their meanings. Each class--the fifth grade, the sixth grade, and the ESL sixth grade--had some children who showed remarkable improvement in the spring semester writing sample. Student 5-8, for instance, more than doubled his total words written, and students 5-3 and 5-8 wrote 5 and 4 complex sentences in the spring semester while both had written no complex sentences in the fall semester (Tables 1 and 2).

Similar examples can be shown in the sixth grade class with student 6-3 nearly tripling his total words written and students 6-1 and 6-2 showing marked improvement in number of complex sentences written (Tables 3 and 4).

Every student in the ESL sixth grade class showed improvement in some area including the one student (ESL-11) who wrote fewer words in the second writing sample than the first. This student increased complex sentences from none to one. The outstanding increase in achievement for this class was shown in the writing sample of student ESL-5. This student increased total words from 81 to 406 and had more compound and complex sentences as well (Tables 5 and 6).

When means were figured for total words, total sentences, compound

sentences, and complex sentences for each class, some areas in each class did not show improvement in the spring semester sample over the fall semester sample. The fifth grade class, for example, showed improvement in total words, total sentences, and complex sentences. Total compound sentences decreased.

The sixth grade class showed improvement only in complex sentences; total words, total sentences, and compound sentences decreased.

The means for the ESL sixth grade class increased in all four of the categories. It can be seen in Table 7 that although the ESL class made greater leaps in total number, the sixth grade class was much farther ahead of the ESL sixth grade class when the first writing sample was obtained.

Conclusions

Although this study was limited both by the size of the student population and the duration, we can state that on the average the children's writing skills did appear to improve. We observed that

- 1) low ability students can write,
- 2) to some degree teacher variables determine the outcome of the experiment, and
- 3) students with more ability as well as students with less ability seemed to benefit from the use of positive ethnic literature.

It appears also that the research hypothesis was borne out: that is, improving the self-image of the student and providing reading/language arts instruction based on positive multiethnic literature in turn improves the reading and writing skills. However, a number of factors could not be controlled. For instance, precisely how much time

Table 7
 Mean Total Words, Total Sentences, Compound Sentences,
 and Complex Sentences for Fifth Grade, Sixth Grade,
 and ESL Sixth Grade Classes

Class	Mean Total Words*		Mean Total Sentences*		Mean Compound Sentences		Mean Complex Sentences	
	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring
5th Grade	51	65	6	6	1.08	.54	.38	1.54
6th Grade	174	163	17	16	3.63	2.72	2.18	2.81
ESL 6th Grade	117	217	12	22	2.18	4.18	1.81	2.72

*Rounded to the nearest whole number.

a teacher spent in implementing the treatment using the ethnic reading materials could not be known nor dictated by the researchers.

We are left with the question of how much of the improvement in writing skills is simple maturation of the students or is teacher generated and how much was brought about by the intervention of the treatment.

Recommendations

The short duration of this project placed limitations on the ways the data collected could be analyzed. In the long-range study, of which this project is a part, further analysis of the data should be undertaken.

It would be helpful to know how many describing words (adjectives and adverbs) each student wrote and whether the describing words were used in several simple sentences or used in one more complex simple sentence using the process of embedding. More sophisticated communication requires greater precision in description and one way to measure precision is to look at the words the students chose to use. More precise choices of nouns and verbs is also an indicator of maturity in writing skills.

It was noted that most of the students used very little internal punctuation and often terminal punctuation was missing as well. Revealing the areas of difficulty with punctuation could prove beneficial to teachers in helping students overcome the errors made.

Of interest to teachers of minority students would be the identification of the most common dialect errors made. Teachers could work with students, not to eliminate their dialects, but to increase their

knowledge of standard English so that they might make better scores on basic skills tests.

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APPENDIX A

Multiethnic Reading/Language Arts Literature

Fifth Grade

Title of Book	Author
<u>Native American</u>	
<u>And It Is Still That Way</u>	Baylor, Byrd
<u>They Put On Masks</u>	Baylor, Byrd
<u>Running Owl the Hunter</u>	Benchley, Nathaniel
<u>Small Wolf</u>	Benchley, Nathaniel
<u>Indian Hill</u>	Bulla, Clyde Robert
<u>The Loon's Necklace</u>	Faye, William*
<u>Arrow to the Sun: A Pueblo Indian Tale</u>	McDermott, Gerald
<u>Hispanic American</u>	
<u>A Boy Named Manuel</u>	Curriculum Adaptation Network for Bilingual Education*
<u>...And Now Miguel</u>	Krumgold, Joseph
<u>Pedro, the Angel of Olvera Street</u>	Politi, Leo
<u>Old Ramon</u>	Schaefer, Jack
<u>Cesar Chavez: Man of Courage</u>	White, Florence
<u>Black American</u>	
<u>Who's in Rabbit's House?</u>	Aardema, Verna
<u>Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears</u>	Aardema, Verna
<u>Meet Martin Luther King, Jr.</u>	DeKay, James T.
<u>A Story, A Story</u>	Haley, Gail E.
<u>New Life: New Room</u>	Jordan, June*
<u>John Henry: An American Legend</u>	Keats, Ezra Jack

The author verified the titles and authors supplied by the project staff with the exception of those marked with an asterisk.

Multiethnic Reading/Language Arts Literature

Sixth Grade

Title of Book	Author
<u>Native American</u>	
<u>Corn is Maize: The Gift of the Indians</u>	Aliko
<u>Trickster Tales from Prairies and Lodgefires</u>	Anderson, Bernice*
<u>Hawk, I'm Your Brother</u>	Baylor, Byrd
<u>The Desert Is Their's</u>	Baylor, Byrd
<u>When Clay Sings</u>	Baylor, Byrd
<u>The Ring in the Prairie</u>	Bierhorst, John
<u>The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses</u>	Goble, Paul
<u>The Fire Bringer: A Paiute Indian Legend</u>	Hodges, Margaret
<u>Groundhog's Horse</u>	Rockwood, Joyce
<u>The Legend of Scarface</u>	San Souci, Robert
<u>When Thunders Spoke</u>	Sneve, Virginia Driving Hawk
<u>How Corla Saw the Shalako God</u>	Young, Biloine W. and Wilson, Mary*
<u>Hispanic American</u>	
<u>Fiesta! Cinco de Mayo</u>	Behrens, June
<u>The Lady of Guadalupe</u>	De Paola, Tomie
<u>...And Now Miguel</u>	Krumgold, Joseph
<u>Famous Mexican-Americans</u>	Newlon, Clarke
<u>Old Ramon</u>	Schaefer, Jack
<u>Black American</u>	
<u>Tales from the Story Hat</u>	Aardema, Verna
<u>The Adventures of Spider</u>	Arkhurst, Joyce Cooper
<u>Martin Luther King, Jr.</u>	Boone-Jones, Margaret

Sixth Grade Multiethnic Reading/Language Arts Literature (continued)

<u>Jambo Means Hello: Swahili</u>	Feelings, Muriel
<u>Alphabet Book</u>	
<u>The Time Ago Tales of Jahdu</u>	Hamilton, Virginia*
<u>Time-Ago Last: More Tales of Jahdu</u>	Hamilton, Virginia*
<u>The Drinking Gourd</u>	Monjo, F. N.
<u>Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions</u>	Musgrove, Margaret

The author verified the titles and authors supplied by the project staff with the exception of those marked with an asterisk.

APPENDIX B

Introduce yourself.

I'm going to ask you to write an autobiography for me this morning. (Write the word "autobiography" on the chalkboard.) An autobiography is a story you tell about your own life. So why don't we call our stories "Story of My Life?" (Write "Story of My Life" on the chalkboard.) Your paper won't be very long because we are going to write for only 20 minutes.

Before we start writing, let's talk about tense in a story. The word tense means time. Past tense is when something has already happened. Present tense means what is happening now. It doesn't necessarily mean just in this minute, but maybe in this month or this school year. Future tense means what will happen later. In our autobiographies it probably means what we hope will happen.

To give you examples of how tense or time works in writing, I'm going to read you some sentences I wrote about myself.

We'll have 20 minutes for writing the stories of our lives. If you have a word you can't spell, try spelling it the way you think it should be. If you really have trouble with a word, raise your hand and Ms. _____ or I will come to your desk. Some words you might need are listed here on the board. (Print born, hospital, Bryan, Texas, St. Joseph's, brother, sister on the chalkboard.) Are there any questions about what you are supposed to do? Each of you will be given two sheets of paper and a pencil. I don't expect you to write a paper two pages long. But if you have trouble and need to start over, you already have extra paper.

_____, would you hand out the pencils for me? _____, would you help me give out the paper? Two sheets to each person. Are there any last questions? All right, let's start.

Thank you very much for your help. Thank you, Ms. _____.