

Reading/Writing Relationships: An Intervention Study*

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Students in two sixth-grade classes in each of two schools ($N=104$) were stratified by sex and ability and randomly assigned to one of the following groups for

1. instruction in a model of persuasion with writing practice;
2. instruction in a model of persuasion with reading practice;
3. practice in reading, but no instruction in the model; and
4. group discussion activities (control group).

Pretests and posttests required subjects to write a recall protocol for a persuasive reading and to write two persuasive compositions.

Groups 1 and 2 scored significantly higher than the control group on the posttest but not on the pretest, using fewer reasons and more elaborations of reasons per 100 words, and more conclusions than the control group. There were no significant differences between groups on the number of idea units recalled.

Persuasive writing can be improved by instruction.

Des élèves inscrits dans deux classes de sixième année mais fréquentant des écoles différentes ($N=104$) ont fait l'objet d'une stratification en fonction de leur sexe et ont été répartis au hasard dans quatre groupes:

1. Un premier groupe a reçu un enseignement sur l'art d'argumenter dans un texte, suivi d'exercices de composition;
2. Un deuxième groupe a reçu un enseignement sur l'art d'argumenter dans un texte, suivi d'exercices de lecture;
3. Un troisième groupe a effectué des exercices de lecture sans avoir reçu un enseignement sur l'art d'argumenter dans un texte;
4. Un quatrième groupe a discuté en équipes (groupe de contrôle).

Dans les prétests et les post-tests, les élèves devaient écrire un protocole basé sur la lecture d'un texte comprenant une argumentation et rédiger deux compositions comprenant aussi une argumentation. Les groupes 1 et 2 ont obtenu des résultats nettement supérieurs à ceux du groupe de contrôle, au post-test, mais non au prétest, les groupes 1 et 2 fournissant moins de raisons, mais utilisant plus d'arguments par 100 mots et énonçant plus de conclusions que le groupe de contrôle. Il n'y a pas eu de différences significatives entre les groupes du point de vue du nombre d'idées évoquées. J'en conclus que l'enseignement peut amener les enfants à rédiger de meilleurs textes dans lesquels une argumentation est développée.

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Three bodies of background literature led me to do this study of three different interventions on sixth-grade students' writing and reading of persuasive discourse: one on the development of the ability to write persuasive discourse, a second on reading/writing relationships, and a third on schema theory as an explanation of reading and writing.

Students generally do poorly in persuasive writing (or argumentation) (Applebee, Langer, & Mullis, 1986; Conry & Rodgers, 1978; National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1980; Pringle & Freedman, 1985). They write less and score lower grades for persuasion than for narration or description (Carlman, 1984; Crowhurst, 1980, 1986, 1987; Hidi & Hildyard, 1981; Rosen, 1969), and sometimes write narration when asked to persuade (Crowhurst, 1983a; Wilkinson, Barnsley, Hanna, & Swan, 1980). Persuasive discourse makes more cognitive demands than narration or description (Bereiter, 1978; Moffett, 1968). Further, students lack schemata for written persuasion (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1982). Bereiter and Scardamalia hypothesize that oral language schemata—acquired as a child engages in conversation from earliest years—must later be adapted for written discourse. Such schemata as narrative transfer easily from the oral mode to the written; persuasion does not because of heavy dependence in the oral mode on input from a conversational partner. To write successfully and autonomously in the persuasive mode, a child must develop a persuasion schema for written discourse. Instruction may not improve persuasive writing if it is poorly done because it is cognitively too difficult. But if a young writer's persuasive writing is badly done for lack of a schema, instruction may be directly helpful.

There has been little research about the precise interrelationships between reading and writing or on ways in which the teaching of one can facilitate skill in the other (Stotsky, 1984). Both experienced teachers and researchers "suggest a modest general correlation between overall reading performance and writing achievement" (Tierney & Leys, 1984, p. 14; see also review in Belanger, 1987). However, correlational studies shed no light on causation; they do not tell us whether more reading leads to better writing, whether more writing contributes to better reading, or whether both good reading and good writing are due to some more general language or cognitive ability.

A number of studies have found that writing of various kinds—especially paraphrasing, outlining, and summarizing—improves comprehension and retention of expository text in subjects such as science and social studies in elementary school, high school, and college (Bretzing & Kulhavy, 1979; Glover, Plake, Roberts, Zimmer, & Palmere, 1981; Kulhavy, Dyer, & Silver, 1975; Taylor & Beach, 1984; Taylor & Berkowitz, 1980).

Experiments to improve writing through reading instruction (e.g., in-

struction in vocabulary, or in paragraph reading skills) generally have not found such improvement (see reviews in Belanger, 1987; Stotsky, 1984). However, some studies have shown that reading specific kinds of discourse (that is, extra reading of a specific kind as against instruction in reading skills) improved writing. DeVries (1970), for example, found that grade 5 students who for nine weeks did extra expository reading instead of writing, wrote better expository compositions at posttest time than students who wrote two themes a week.

Schema theory offers a promising direction for the examination of interrelationships between reading and writing. In the past decade, theory and research in several disciplines indicate that reading and composing are similar processes. They require active construction of meanings dependent upon prior knowledge structures or schemata (Anderson, 1977; Petrosky, 1982; Rumelhart, 1980; Tierney & Pearson, 1984). Reading and writing require not only knowledge of the topic, but also knowledge of rhetorical structures—story grammars, for example, and patterns of expository prose (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1982; Calfee & Curlee, 1983; Crismore, 1982; Meyer, 1982; Squire, 1984).

Crismore (1982) writes that knowledge of text structures might be developed through writing, that students who have learned to compose a certain type of text will more easily be able to comprehend material of that particular type (p. 236). Falk (1979), however, doubts that overt teaching of text types can succeed without substantial prior experience reading; the acquisition of writing is a form of natural language acquisition that “must be learned through the tacit internalization of patterns and principles that are acquired through extensive exposure to and practical experience with the use of language in actual, natural contexts and situations” (p. 440).

If we can agree that reading and writing are constructive processes dependent on knowledge structures, there are differing opinions about how instruction can facilitate knowledge of rhetorical structures.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

My research began with two general questions:

1. Can students' writing of persuasion be improved by instruction? and
2. Will instruction and practice reading improve persuasive writing and, conversely, will instruction and practice writing improve the reading of persuasive writing?

My specific hypotheses were:

1. Groups receiving
 - a. instruction in a model structure for persuasive writing plus practice writing persuasion; or

- b. instruction in a model structure for persuasive writing plus practice reading persuasion; or
 - c. practice reading and discussing persuasive pieces but no instruction in the model structure
will have significantly higher posttest scores than the control group for writing quality of posttest compositions.
2. Groups a, b, and c in 1 will have significantly higher posttest scores than the control group for the proportion of idea units recalled in the reading test.

METHOD

Subjects

Subjects in two sixth-grade classes in each of two schools ($N=110$) in a middle-class suburban area were separated by sex, then stratified into high, medium and low ability groups on the basis of reading comprehension scores (Gates McGinitie Reading Test, Survey D, Form 1). Students scoring above the 75th percentile were considered high, and those scoring under the 40th percentile were considered low. Students in each class were then assigned by a stratified random assignment procedure to four groups—three instructional groups and one control group. After eliminations because of missed tests, and further random elimination of four students to equalize groups, the final sample was 92 students, 23 per group.

Materials

I wrote two persuasive pieces for use as reading tests. *Marvelous Manitoba* was 543 words long with a Dale-Chall readability at the top of the grade 5–6 level (formula raw score=5.83). *Los Angeles* was 576 words long with a readability at the bottom of the grade 7–8 level (formula raw score=6.08). Each reading was segmented into idea units; there were 73 in *Marvelous Manitoba* and 78 in *Los Angeles*.

Printed assignment sheets (see Appendix) were prepared for the four writing topics used as writing pretests and posttests.

Procedure

Pretests and Posttests. One reading and two writing pretests and posttests were done, respectively, the week before and the week after the instructional period. Tests were administered to whole classes with 45 minutes for each test. Reading tests involved writing a recall protocol of the assigned

reading; students were to read the passage carefully, to turn each page face downward on the desk as they finished reading it, and when they had finished to write down everything they could remember.

Each of the writing tests involved writing a persuasive composition, there being two such compositions—each done on a separate day—for the pretest and two for the posttest. Writing assignments were administered by means of printed assignment sheets. Subjects in each ability group in each instructional group in each class were randomly assigned to either *group A* or *group B*. Orders of topics of reading and writing tests were counterbalanced for groups A and B.

Interventions. Instruction—given for 45 minutes twice a week for five weeks—was as follows:

Writing group. In the first lesson, students saw a model of persuasive discourse consisting of:

- a. a chart showing an outline of the structure of the persuasive piece:

A STATEMENT OF BELIEF—usually in first paragraph.

REASON FOR—there may be 3 or more.

SUPPORTING IDEAS—tell more about REASON.

CONCLUSION—Comes at end. Sums up.

- b. a reading exemplifying the model.

In subsequent lessons they practiced writing, revising four persuasive pieces. Students recalled and described the structural elements of persuasion already presented. Students brainstormed reasons, pro and con, for the topic of the day, for example, “It is wrong to keep whales in captivity in an aquarium.” Students wrote in support of either the pro or the con side. Student pairs checked one another’s first drafts for various structural elements, also commenting on especially good reasons, and making suggestions for improvement as appropriate. Students wrote a revised version which received written teacher comment as to the persuasiveness of the composition and/or the effective use of various structural elements.

Reading+instruction group: Students saw the model of persuasive writing as described above. In each succeeding lesson, they had guided reading of a persuasive reading especially written for the study. Instruction emphasized the readings’ structure and content. Students were to identify the statement of belief which appeared in the first paragraph; to pick out the first reason supporting the statement of belief; and so on. There were five pairs of persuasive readings, a pro and a con reading for each of five controversial questions. After the first reading, students discussed the persuasiveness of the reading and suggested counter-arguments. After both readings, students shared opinions on the topic.

Reading+discussion group: Students received instruction and practice in group discussion skills. In six lessons, they read and discussed either one or

two of the same persuasive readings as group 2, but had no instruction in the structure of persuasion. The remaining four lessons dealt with other group tasks also from group 4. They believed the purpose of their activities was to develop skill in group discussion—as at one level it was.

Control group: Students received instruction and practice in group discussion skills and did various group tasks.

At both schools, groups 3 and 4 met together in the same classroom to engage in small-group discussion under the supervision of the investigator. Each student in group 3 was assigned to one of two small discussion groups; students in group 4 were assigned to two different small discussion groups. The whole group was given brief instruction on effective techniques for group discussion and a set of “grouptalk” rules (Moffett & Wagner, 1976) to be observed in their small group discussions. For the four small groups, discussion tasks were the same for four of the intervention sessions, but for six of the sessions, discussion tasks for group 3 were based on persuasive readings while group 4 did other assorted group tasks. Group 4 was planned as a control group having no exposure to persuasive reading or writing. The purpose of group 3 was to allow a comparison between a group which read the persuasive readings and had instruction in the model, and a group which read the persuasive readings but had no exposure to the model.

In each of the two schools, each of groups 1 and 2 was taught by one of the two classroom teachers. All reading and writing lessons were prepared by the investigator.

Scoring

Writing tests. Compositions—typed with spelling corrected—were assigned a holistic quality score from 1 to 6 by four experienced sixth-grade teachers. Raters received training on compositions written on the same topics by other sixth graders. Using criteria and models for each point on the six-point scale, judges scored on content, organization and structure, expression (usage, vocabulary, “voice”), and sentence structure. Topics 1 and 2, with pretests and posttests intermingled, were rated on one Saturday, topics 3 and 4 on a second Saturday. Topics 1 and 2 were the topics for *pretest assignment 1* for group A and group B, respectively, and for *posttest assignment 1* for group B and group A, respectively. Topics 3 and 4 served as assignment 2, with similar counterbalancing. Inter-rater reliability for composition quality scores on the four topics, calculated using Ebel’s (1979) formula, ranged from .92 to .95. Scores for the two pretest compositions were summed, as were scores for the two posttest compositions. The minimum score per test was thus 8 and the maximum 48 (a score of 1 to 6 by each of four raters on each of two compositions).

Reading tests. For each reading test, I prepared a template listing the idea units (Johnson, 1970; Meyer & McConkie, 1975). Two graduate assistants divided the recall protocols into idea units with inter-rater agreement of 95 percent. Two graduate assistants scored recall protocols against the appropriate text template to determine the total number of idea units recalled. Paraphrased information was considered acceptable. Inter-rater agreement was 79.1 percent. Disagreements were resolved in consultation with me.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

I analyzed writing quality scores using an ANOVA in a 2 (test) x 2 (assignment) x 4 (judge) x 4 (group) design with repeated measures on the first factor. On the reading test, the proportion of idea units recalled was analyzed in a 2 (test) x 4 (group) design with repeated measures on the first factor.

In both analyses, the effect of interest was the test by group interaction. Bonferroni *t* statistics produced planned pairwise comparisons between means, testing for significance at the .05 level. Pretest and posttest means of each of groups 1, 2 and 3 were compared with the pretest and posttest means, respectively, of the control group.

RESULTS

Writing

The ANOVA for writing quality scores revealed a significant main effect for test, $F(1,88)=31.59$, $p<.001$, and a significant test by group interaction, $F(3,88)=4.90$, $p<.01$. Results for the posttest were higher than results for the pretest. Planned pairwise comparisons of means in test by group cells using Bonferroni *t* statistics revealed that, on the pretest, the reading+instruction group scored lower than the control group whereas, on the posttest, both the writing group and the reading+instruction group scored higher than the control group (critical difference=1.63). Affirmative answers were thus obtained for Hypotheses 1a and 1b but not for Hypothesis 1c. Results of the ANOVA appear in Table 1, means and standard deviations for test by group cells in Table 2.

The ANOVA also revealed a significant main effect for judge, $F(3,264)=3.25$, $p<.05$. Tukey's HSD test revealed that judge 4 ($X=11.94$) scored significantly lower than judges 1 ($X=12.30$) and 3 ($X=12.42$), the critical value for HSD being .29 ($p<.01$). The fact that one judge systematically gave somewhat lower scores was considered not to be significant since the effect was evenly distributed across groups and tests.

TABLE 1
Analysis of Variance for Writing Quality Scores

<i>Source of Variance</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>
Group	3	27.73	2.26
Error	88	12.25	
Test	1	133.92	31.59 ***
Test × Group	3	20.79	4.90 **
Error	88	4.24	
Assignment	1	1.32	0.67
Assignment × Group	3	0.97	0.50
Error	88	1.96	
Test × Assignment	1	6.52	3.52
Test × Assignment × Group	3	0.68	0.37
Error	88	1.86	
Judge	3	1.31	3.25 *
Judge × Group	9	0.32	0.79
Error	264	0.40	
Test × Judge	3	0.79	2.27
Test × Judge × Group	9	0.39	1.12
Error	264	0.35	
Assignment × Judge	3	1.01	2.44
Assignment × Judge × Group	9	0.37	0.90
Error	264	0.41	
Test × Assignment × Judge	3	0.24	0.69
T × A × J × G	9	0.30	0.87
Error	264	0.35	

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

Additional analyses showed differences between posttest compositions of the writing and reading+instruction groups and the control group. The experimenter and a trained and experienced student assistant identified and counted the following in each pretest and posttest composition of the three groups: reasons, elaborations of reasons, conclusions, and the number of words. The number of reasons and the number of elaborations in each composition were expressed as proportions of the number of words and multiplied by 100 to give the number per 100 words. (This was not done for conclusions since there was not more than one conclusion per composition.) ANOVAs were performed for the number of conclusions, and for the

TABLE 2
Means and Standard Deviations for Various Dependent Measures in Writing Tests

Measure		Test Group			
		Writing	Reading+Reading+Control	Instruction	Discussion
Writing quality	Pre	23.0 (8.7)	20.7 (7.5)	21.7 (8.8)	23.1 (7.0)
	Post	32.5 (7.5)	27.0 (10.5)	24.0 (7.4)	24.3 (7.0)
Reasons per 100 words	Pre	4.5 (2.0)	3.9 (1.4)	N/A	4.2 (1.4)
	Post	3.0 (1.6)	2.9 (1.7)	N/A	3.5 (2.3)
Elaborations per 100 words	Pre	0.9 (0.8)	1.0 (0.7)	N/A	1.4 (0.7)
	Post	1.7 (0.5)	1.3 (0.6)	N/A	1.1 (0.7)
Conclusions	Pre	0.5 (0.7)	0.4 (0.6)	N/A	0.5 (0.7)
	Post	1.6 (0.7)	0.9 (0.9)	N/A	0.5 (0.7)

number of reasons and elaborations per 100 words in a 2 (test) x 4 (group) design with repeated measures on the first factor. Bonferroni *t* statistics were used to make planned pairwise comparisons between means. The ANOVA for the number of reasons per 100 words revealed a significant main effect for test, $F(1,66)=15.48$, $p<.001$; the number of reasons was smaller for the posttest than for the pretest. There were, however, no significant differences between groups. Pretest and posttest means and standard deviations for the number of reasons per 100 words for the three groups are presented in Table 2.

The ANOVA for the number of elaborations per 100 words revealed a significant main effect for test, $F(1,66)=5.52$, $p<.05$, and a significant test by group interaction, $F(1,66)=8.06$, $p<.001$. Bonferroni *t* statistics revealed that the writing group was significantly lower than the control group on the pretest but significantly higher than the control group on the posttest. (See Table 2 for means and standard deviations.)

The ANOVA for the number of conclusions revealed significant main effects for test, $F(1,66)=24.14$, $p<.001$, and group, $F(1,66)=6.25$, $p<.01$, and a significant test by group interaction, $F(1,66)=9.14$, $p<.001$. Bonferroni *t* statistics revealed that there were no differences between groups on the pretest, but that on the posttest, the writing group scored significantly higher than the control group. (See Table 2 for means.)

Reading

The ANOVA for reading scores revealed no significant effects for group ($F(1,88)=0.67$), for test ($F(1,88)=1.75$), or for the test by group interaction ($F(1,88)=0.61$). Hypothesis 2 was not confirmed.

DISCUSSION

The research shows that the persuasive writing of students in the upper elementary school can be improved by instruction. Two of the three instructional groups—the writing group, and the reading+instruction group—scored significantly higher than the control group on writing quality on the posttest.

It is possible that composition length—a factor commonly associated with quality differences (for example, Diederich, French, & Carlton, 1961; Nold & Freedman, 1977)—may have contributed to judgements of higher quality for the writing group than for the control group, given that means for posttest compositions were 134 words for the writing group as against 112 words for the control. Length, however, was not a contributing factor to quality differences between the reading+instruction group and the control group since posttest means were approximately the same (115 words for reading+instruction; 112 words for control). Moreover, differences between the writing group and the control involved much more than a difference in length.

In posttest compositions, students in the writing group used significantly more elaborations and significantly more conclusions than the control group. They also used fewer reasons than the control group in the posttest, and had a larger decrease from pretest to posttest in the number of reasons used than the control group had, but these differences were not significant. The reading+instruction group also used more elaborations and conclusions and fewer reasons on the posttest than on the pretest, and used more elaborations and conclusions and fewer reasons than the control group on the posttest, though none of the differences was significant. In sum, then, instruction in the model plus either writing practice or reading practice tended to result in fewer, more elaborated reasons and in more conclusions.

These factors—fewer and better elaborated reasons, and the use of some kind of concluding statement—resulted in compositions different in kind from most pretest compositions, from most compositions written by the control group, and from persuasive compositions commonly written by sixth graders.

According to the literature, most students do persuasive writing poorly in the elementary years. Compositions are often very short (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1982) and sometimes lapse into narrative (Crowhurst, 1983a; Wilkinson et al., 1980) or read like a list of baldly stated, unelaborated reasons (Crowhurst, 1983b). Very few compositions in the present study were narratives, but many were short and list-like. Pretest compositions A, B and C in the appendix are good examples of this kind of composition—list-like and ending abruptly. Posttest compositions A, B and C, written by the

same three students, are not merely longer, they are different in kind. A majority of students in the writing group and many in the reading+instruction group made a noticeable effort, in posttest compositions, to state reasons for their point of view and to elaborate and support those reasons. Students in the control group did this much less often. The difference in elaboration is not a trifling one. Cooper, Cherry, Copley, Fleischer, Pollard and Sartisky (1984), examining the arguments and elaborations used by 50 freshman writers in persuasive compositions, found that competent writers did not use *more* arguments than weaker writers, as they had predicted; there was, however, a marked difference between the papers written by competent and weak writers in the degree of elaboration.

There is some evidence that instruction in the persuasion model helped students—or at least some of them—not merely to generate reasons and support, but to organize what they had to say. Examples from a student helped in this way appear in Pretest and Posttest D (see Appendix). The student in the writing group who wrote these compositions did above-average writing on the pretest: the pretest composition is longer than average; and the student has envisaged some likely adverse consequences of allowing students the freedom to decide what they will study when they go to school. However, her composition lacks organization. Most of her composition reads like a string of consequences.

The children might only do a couple of subjects . . . They wouldn't learn anything in any other subjects. And then [they] would start failing . . . [They] would . . . drop out of school . . . When they wanted to get a job, . . . [they] would get fired.

The string is reminiscent of Bereiter's (1980) description of immature writing as *associative writing*, the kind of writing that results from "writing down whatever comes to mind, in the order in which it comes to mind" (p. 83). The associative string lacks a superordinate idea that would tie the sentences together. The concisely expressed statement which begins her last sentence ("The students are too young to make good choices") sounds like an appropriate superordinate idea, but is separated from the string by an unrelated—and difficult to understand—sentence, and has another, different consequence ("so some of the choices they make might end up them not liking them"). The posttest composition is much better organized with three clearly stated and well-developed reasons. Writer D is well able to think of appropriate material, as evidenced by her pretest composition, but the model outline presented in instruction has helped her to organize her ideas.

My second research question concerns the effect of writing on reading and of reading on writing. As to the effect of writing on reading, there was no indication of a positive effect. Not only was there no difference between the

writing group and the control group on the reading posttest, there were no differences between either of the reading groups (i.e., reading+instruction and reading+discussion) and the control group. The absence of results, even for the groups that had instruction and/or practice in reading, raises questions about the nature of the reading tests. It is possible that the tests were too long and difficult. Since all four classes were well above national and provincial averages on standardized reading tests, and since the study was conducted in the middle of the school year, readability levels at the upper grade 5–6 and low grade 7–8 levels were judged as satisfactory. However, for any subsequent study, test readings should be shortened and simplified.

Results on the effect of reading on writing are not as clear. Students in the reading+instruction group presented with a model of persuasive writing, and who read and discussed persuasive readings exemplifying the model, scored significantly higher on the posttest than the control group, even though on the pretest they had scored significantly lower than the control group. Given that improvement in writing is usually very slow to occur, student gains in the reading+instruction group are notable, especially since they did no writing at all. I don't know, however, how far this improvement was due to the model presented, and how far to development of a persuasion schema through reading.

The study was to distinguish between the reading+instruction group and the reading+discussion group which read and discussed the persuasive readings but had no instruction in the structure of persuasive writing. This distinction would have made it possible to separate out the effect of the model presented from the effect of reading alone. There were, however, procedural difficulties. Since the instructor was supervising the two small discussions groups that comprised group 3 and the two that comprised group 4, it was difficult to ensure all members of the small groups in group 3 did read the persuasive pieces as assigned. Some students' reading was cursory or incomplete. Considering these procedural difficulties and the notable gains of the reading+instruction group, this question deserves more study.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The results of this study indicate that persuasive writing, generally poorly done by students in the school system, can be improved by instruction. Students in the two groups who were presented with a simple model of persuasive writing performed better on the writing posttest than the control group. Their posttest compositions were better organized, with fewer reasons—some of them elaborated—than the list-like compositions com-

mon in pretest and posttest compositions by students without instruction. Posttest compositions of the writing and reading+instruction groups were more likely to have some kind of concluding statement as against the very abrupt endings common in other compositions. Although persuasive discourse is more cognitively demanding than narrative, instruction can improve student performance.

Teachers and researchers who know how slowly improvement in writing usually occurs will find it especially interesting that improvement occurred in the reading+instruction group despite the fact they did no writing. Unfortunately, procedural problems prevent us from deciding how far this improvement may have been due to the presentation of the model, and how far to the development of a persuasion schema as a result of reading.

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APPENDIX

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Do you think that homework should be cut out for elementary school children? Write a composition to your principal and tell him what you think. Use all the reasons you can think of to persuade him.
2. Do you think that children should be allowed to come to school when they want to and do whatever they like when they get there? Write a composition to your principal and tell him what you think. Use all the reasons you can think of to persuade him.
3. Do you think that sixth graders should be given a clothing allowance of fifty dollars each month so that they can buy their own clothes? Some parents are wondering if this would be a good idea. Write a composition for

these parents and tell them what you think. Use all the reasons you can think of to persuade them.

4. Do you think that Vancouver is a good place to live? A 22-year-old person from Australia is planning to move to Canada. This person wants to know if Vancouver would be a good city to live in. Write a composition for this young Australian and say what you think. Use all the reasons you can think of to persuade him/her.

EXAMPLES OF PRE AND POST COMPOSITIONS

Pretest A

Yes I do think it should be cut. Students are in school from 9 to 3, 5 days a week. What isn't done in one day can be done the next. Many people have after-school activities wich get in the way of doing homework. Five hours a day is plenty to get every thing done.

Posttest A

Children should not be allowd to come to school when they want and do what they want. There are many reasons why this is so.

In the first place, children need a education. Schools are for teaching, and if there's nobody to teach why have schools and teacheres? Many children wouldn't come to school at all, and if they did they probably wouldn't learn anything.

Secondly, if only the children who wanted to learn came to school, many less teacheres would be needed. This means many more teacheres would be out of a job.

In conclusion, children should definitley be kept in school. This way children will get an education and more teacheres will have work.

Pretest B

To me I like Vancouver because I lived here all my life. I like Vancouver because it isn't as cold as Calgary, Manitoba or any of those places. Vancouver has quite a lot of criminals and some drugs. Vancouver has a lot of Chinese. Vancouver has good food. It also has high living rates and lots of rain. I like it because it doesn't get too cold. It also doesn't get too hot.

Posttest B

Children should definetly not get fifty dollars a month for clothing. Firstly it would cost too much money for the parents. If the parents have a lot of

children they would be wasting a lot of money.

Secondly, I think it would be too much responsibility for the children. It would take a lot of time to choose clothes. The children may get the wrong size of a shoe, shirt, pant or anything else. They also may get some clothes their parents don't like.

Thirdly, if the children get \$50.00 a month, that money might buy a lot of clothes. Clothes usually last long so if they get new clothes every month they may get a closetful of clothes.

Fourthly, the children most likely would get some change. They would probably waste it on buying junk food, toys or any other things.

That is why children should not get \$50.00 a month for clothing.

Pretest C

Vancouver is a good place to live for some reasons. In Vancouver people are very nice. If you like skiing in the winter you have a choice between numerous mountains. There are quite a few good colleges and universities. There are nice places to live too. In Vancouver there are no earthquakes.

Some of the things aren't very nice though. Like there is too much rain, which causes mud slides near river banks and such. There aren't very many job opportunities around. There is a high cost of living.

Posttest C

Homework is a very important part of our lives. Homework should be given out to all ages.

One reason why it should be given out is it prepares us for years to come. In business you have lots of responsibilities and work is one of them.

Another reason to have homework is it lets your parents know how you're doing in school and how well. If your parents see something wrong they can arrange counselling.

A third reason why you should have homework is you can take and work on it there instead of working on it in class. If you worked on it in class you would miss a lot of important information.

But some people say homework isn't good for you because it is too much work for the brain.

On the whole I think homework is essential to have in grade school.

Pretest D

If children could do whatever they wanted to then who knows what they'll do. Some children might be doing math and some might be doing spelling. It would make it very hard on the teacher. The children might only do a

couple subjects in the whole year. They wouldn't learn anything in any other subjects. And then the students would start failing and they would have a big mix-up. The kids would also drop out of school since they've done all the subjects they wanted to. When they wanted to get a job, the boss of that job would have expected that person to have known all their subjects but the kid maybe hasn't known math and then he would get fired because he wouldn't of known any math. Some might tease other kids in knowing all about their subject and the other kids wouldn't know anything about their subject. The students are too young to make good choices so some of the choices they make might end up them not liking them.

Posttest D

Sixth graders should be given fifty dollars each month for allowance so that they can buy their own clothes. Here are some reasons that support this statement.

In the first place, the children would be able to pick what clothes they want. Children like to be in clothes they want and their most comfortable in. As for I, I like to be in clothes that fit me and that I look good in.

The second reason is that it is a lot easier for the parents. Parents don't always like buying clothes. Maybe for themselves but not always for the children. The parents wouldn't have to worry about what clothes their children picked. As long as their children like the clothes that's probably fine with the parents.

In the third place is that children would like it a lot more. More children would be walking around a lot happier. Some parents force their kids to wear what they think is best. When my mom was little their was a girl in her class that dressed very old fashioned. She dressed so old fashioned that nobody liked her because she was different. She said her mom wanted her to dress her that way so she had to.

So you see sixth graders should be given money to buy there own clothes. It would make the sixth grader happier and also the parents.