

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Susan Elizabeth Kidd entitled "A Comparison of the Effectiveness of Teacher Evaluation and Peer Evaluation in a Second Grade Creative Writing Program with Respect to Mechanics, Maturity, and Originality." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Elementary Education.

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A COMPARISON OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHER EVALUATION
AND PEER EVALUATION IN A SECOND GRADE CREATIVE
WRITING PROGRAM WITH RESPECT TO MECHANICS,
MATURITY, AND ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to investigate the effectiveness of two creative writing evaluative procedures. The traditional method of teacher evaluation was compared to the less-widely used method of peer evaluation.

The experimental study involved the two second grade classes at Lanier Elementary School in Maryville, Tennessee. The design was the nonequivalent control group. Both groups were taught by the same teacher for three thirty-minute sessions per week for ten weeks. During this time both groups were taught the same lessons and given the same subsequent assignments. The only difference was that Group A used the teacher evaluation method and Group B used the peer evaluation method.

The subjects in both groups were pretested and posttested by means of their actual writings. These writings were scored in three areas—mechanics, maturity, and originality. Because of the objectivity of the frequency counts involved in the mechanics and maturity scores, the researcher computed these. A panel of three professional educators acted as judges for the originality scores which were assessed according to the Alpren revision of The Carlson Analytical Originality Scale.

The post-writing test scores were adjusted by means of the pre-writing test scores to compensate for any initial differences using the analysis of covariance. The means of the adjusted post-writing test scores were then compared for significant differences at the .05 level of confidence.

An analysis of the data revealed that both Group A, the teacher evaluation group, and Group B, the peer evaluation group, showed progress in the three major areas of scoring as determined by the group means of the pretests and posttests. However, in two areas, mechanics and maturity, Group B made significantly more progress at the .05 level of confidence. In the area of originality, no significant difference appeared in progress rates.

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CHAPTER I

THE STUDY

I. INTRODUCTION

What is meant by the expression "creative writing"? Many perceive it as only imaginative, informal writing—the opposite of the more formal expository writing. Any original composition in any form, however, is unique for it evolves from personal knowledge, experience, and ability. Thus, for the purpose of this study and in accordance with Witty (48, p. 139), creative writing will be defined as "original composition of any type written at any time."

Creative writing is believed to be of primary importance in the educational process. Conrad (10, p. 21) asserted that "writing is the one art that is connected at every point with the aims and purposes of general education." It is considered an invaluable tool for providing a meaningful and functional approach to the development of language skills. Madden (26, p. 54) reported that writing succeeded in integrating the total curriculum.

. . . writing is clearly the most useful activity in the curriculum for integrating concepts . . . [it] is one part of the language arts program that allows children to put all their communication skills together in an active, expressive way to convey an idea to someone else.

According to Petty and Bowen (31, p. 5), writing combines the ability to think, talk, spell, punctuate, and produce sentences; however, its values are not restricted to the basic language arts

skills, but envelop a much broader and richer parameter. Conrad (10, p. 5) observed that self-expression is an important aspect of creative writing.

It gives an opportunity--in many cases that only opportunity--for the student's emotional and imaginative life to receive recognition and training within the school. And since it is during the school years that this training is most needed, the task of teaching creative writing becomes highly important to the success of the whole educational enterprise.

Lowenfield (25, pp. 539-540) also regarded writing as a medium for personal development. He stated that writing develops self-confidence and the ability to express freely; it provides a means of self-realization and success; it aids in better understanding of the individual needs; and it develops independent and critical thinking.

Despite these stated attributes, Applegate (3, p.11) identified creative writing as the most neglected art in the classroom. According to Madden (25, p. 54), The National Assessment of Educational Progress reported that many students leave school without knowing how to write adequately. More specifically, Wolfe (49, p. 146) indicated that 50 percent of teenagers could not put together simple sentences, use commas, and express simple ideas. Wheeler (46, p. 1) revealed that at the University of California at Berkeley, an institution where students come from the top 12.5 percent of high school graduating classes, nearly half of the entering freshmen were required to take remedial courses because of their writing inadequacies.

Pages of reports have been compiled showing the deficit of writing achievement in the educational process, but little research

has been done in discovering effective ways to teach writing. Smith (39, p. 213) admitted that educators are now realizing that they themselves know little about the act of writing and even less about its evaluation and methods to improve writing skills. Friedman and Fowler (15, p. 1) contended that even though most schools provide opportunities to write, few offer opportunities to write better. Research is needed in specific creative writing teaching practices resulting in empirical evidence showing which techniques are most effective.

II. THE PROBLEM

One aspect of writing instruction which is in need of research as to its effectiveness is the evaluation of children's writing. Teachers have long been frustrated by the lack of clear-cut criteria for the evaluation of creative writing. Some educators have neatly side-stepped the issue by categorizing creative writing as an art that cannot be taught much less evaluated. According to this theory, Bowles (7, p. 7) concluded that writing is a mysterious blend of imagination, experience, talent, practice and dedication. Other educators have spoken out against that attention on "self-expression" with no limitations, theorizing with Evans (13, p. 524) that "freedom, which is to say mastery, in any field, including writing, depends paradoxically upon the imposition of standards." However, many educators fall somewhere in between these two extremes, agreeing with Petty and Bowen (31, pp. 5-6) that without some type of evaluation each written product can be no better nor no worse than the previous product, yet also

realizing that a teacher who gives mechanics priority over content and spontaneity breeds failure. The question, therefore, is not whether to evaluate; the real issue lies in how to evaluate so as to promote better writing.

III. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to compare the effectiveness of teacher evaluation and peer evaluation in a second grade creative writing program with respect to mechanics, maturity, and originality.

Understandably, the evaluative abilities of primary grade children do not equate with those of professionally-trained teachers, but it was neither the aim nor the purpose of this study to compare evaluative abilities. This study was designed to compare the processes of teacher evaluation and peer evaluation as to their effects on the progress in a creative writing program. For instance, which evaluative procedure would elicit more progress in the area of mechanics? Would a child's capitalization ability be reinforced more in an evaluative process where the student was given another child's paper to "grade" and succeeded in finding two capitalization errors (even though there may have been a total of five such errors), or would better results ensue if the teacher marked all capitalization errors on the child's own paper and returned it? Would sentence maturity improve more by a child evaluating one certain aspect of another child's paper such as word variety at the beginning of sentences by means of a simple frequency count, or would it be more beneficial for the teacher to point out

strengths and weaknesses with such comments as "I liked your colorful adjectives" or "Try not to begin so many sentences with 'then'"? In the area of originality, would a child be more stimulated by exposure to a variety of other children's ideas in a peer evaluation program, or would larger gains be made by teacher comments on individual papers such as "The invented words you used were great" or "Not everybody lives happily ever after"? These are examples of the questions addressed in this study.

IV. IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

As Applegate (3, pp. 159-160) pointed out, we often educate "leaners" rather than "learners." Her belief is that a teacher is too often seen as a "dictator." The teacher does all the assessing; therefore, the student is relegated to a "leaner's" position—dependent on the teacher for correction. Following this idea, Tressler (45, p. 407) stated that the "most important power in English improvement" is the student's ability to detect and correct errors.

One way to develop such power may be through peer evaluation. In peer evaluation the student learns to detect and correct not only his or her mistakes, but also the mistakes of other students. Teachers and educators have questioned the ability of students to perform this task. Studies by Lagana (22) and Zively (50) have shown that high school students can effectively grade the compositions of their peers. Are elementary children capable of peer evaluation also? Sager (35) found that with the aid of a simple guide, sixth grade children could

writing skills through peer evaluation. Research is needed in primary grades as to the effectiveness of such a program.

If peer evaluation throughout the elementary school is proven effective, the other values of this method will serve to enhance the writing program. In peer evaluation, the student is no longer dependent solely on the teacher for new forms of expression and style. The child has the opportunity of being exposed to other students' strengths of expression. Peer evaluation also releases the teacher from the often overwhelming burden of grading papers. Applegate (3, p. 11) surmised that the time factor involved in grading papers has led to much of the creative writing skills being buried in workbooks and drill-type activities which are easily and quickly graded. However, in effective peer evaluation the teacher is freed to indulge in numerous writing assignments, knowing that the writings can be given the attention they deserve.

V. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Creative Writing

For the purpose of this study, creative writing was defined in accordance with Witty's definition (48, p. 139). It is any "original composition of any type written at any time."

Frequency Count

A frequency count consisted of tallying a certain feature. In this study, the following items were subjected to frequency counts: to

number of incorrect placements and/or absences of capital letters, total number of needed capital letters, total number of incorrect placements and/or absences of full stops (i.e., periods, question marks, or exclamation points), total number of needed full stops, total number of words, and total number of T-units (see definition).

Group A—Teacher Evaluation Group

The teacher evaluated all papers. The evaluation consisted of marking mechanical errors and making suggestions and comments concerning maturity and originality. The teacher made mostly positive comments, but negative comments were used when the teacher deemed suitable. The teacher chose from the four grades used in the school system: "E" for excellent, "G" for good, "S" for satisfactory, and "U" for unsatisfactory. The papers were then returned to the students.

Group B—Peer Evaluation Group

The students evaluated the writings. The teacher, being aware of the children's individual writing capabilities, informally (and without the knowledge of the children) divided the class into two groups. The first group consisted of the better writers, the second group of those children of lesser writing ability. For the evaluation, the teacher assigned partners prior to the actual writing time, always matching a child from the first group with a child from the second group. After completion of their stories, the children met with their partners to evaluate each others' papers. A simple checklist which varied according to the lesson plan was used during these sessions.

Maturity

Maturity of writing involved the capability of the writer to manipulate language. The average length of the T-unit (see definition) as described by Hunt (21) was used to measure maturity in this study.

Mechanics

In this study, mechanics was limited to proper capitalization and the correct placement of full stops (i.e., periods, questions marks, and exclamation points). Spelling is usually included in this category, but because of the age level of the subjects, the researcher chose to omit this item for fear it might inhibit written vocabulary as a measure of maturity and originality.

Originality

The new and fresh treatment of language, situations, and ideas composed the originality aspect of writing in this study. Originality was measured by the Alpren revision of The Carlson Analytical Originality Scale (1).

T-Unit

The T-unit is a unit of maturity developed by Hunt (21). It is defined as an independent clause plus all attached or embedded dependent clauses.

VI. HYPOTHESES

1. There will be no significant difference between Group A and Group B in mean mechanics writing scores at the .05 level of confidence.

2. There will be no significant difference between Group A and Group B in mean maturity writing scores at the .05 level of confidence.

3. There will be no significant difference between Group A and Group B in mean originality writing scores at the .05 level of confidence.

VII. ASSUMPTIONS

1. Creative writing can be taught.

2. The teacher's personality and attitude are important factors in the teaching of creative writing; therefore, the same teacher taught both groups.

3. The Alpren revision of The Carlson Analytical Originality Scale can be used effectively for compositions written by second graders. It was originally developed for use in the intermediate grade level.

4. Maturity of writing can be objectively measured through the determination of the average length of the T-unit as described by Hunt (21).

VIII. LIMITATIONS

1. The study was limited to the two sections of second grades at Lanier Elementary School; therefore, the generalizations of the results are limited.

2. The two groups of subjects were used intact which resulted in lack of randomness.

3. Scheduling conflicts prevented the alternating of instructional time at the midpoint of the treatment period to eliminate a possible time variable.

4. The originality scores as measured by the Alpren revision of The Carlson Analytical Originality Scale were subject to rater variability because of the subjectivity of the material.

IX. OVERVIEW OF PROCEDURES

The two second grade sections at Lanier Elementary School were used for Group A and Group B. Both groups were taught by the same teacher for three thirty-minute sessions per week for ten weeks. During this time both groups were taught the same lessons and given the same subsequent assignments (Appendix A). The only difference was that Group A used the teacher evaluation method and Group B used the peer evaluation method.

The subjects in both groups were pretested and posttested by means of their actual writings. These writings were scored in three areas—mechanics, maturity, and originality. Because of the objectivity of the frequency counts involved in the mechanics and maturity scores, the researcher computed these. A panel of three professional educators acted as judges for the originality scores.

Mechanics was scored in two subset areas. In the area of capitalization, the number of incorrect placements and/or absences of capital letters was divided by the number of needed capital letters. In the area of punctuation, the number of incorrect placements and/or

absences of full stops (i.e., periods, question marks, and exclamation points) was divided by the number of needed full stops. A total mechanics score was computed by the combination of the two subset scores. This score was not representative of the average of the two. All the incorrect placements and/or absences of capitals and full stops were determined. This number was divided by the number of needed capitals and full stops. Thus, the resulting score was not an average but a new ratio. Maturity was scored by the average length of the T-unit. Originality was scored according to the Alpren revision of The Carlson Analytical Originality Scale.

The post-writing test scores were adjusted by means of the pre-writing test scores to compensate for any initial differences using the analysis of covariance. The means of the adjusted post-writing test scores of the two groups were then compared for significant differences.

X. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter I contains an introduction to the problem, the problem, the purpose of the study, the importance of the study, definition of terms, hypotheses, assumptions, limitations, an overview of procedures, and an outline of the organization of the study. Chapter II contains a review of related literature and research. Chapter III describes the procedures including the subjects, design, description of writing program, evaluative procedures, testing tools, test administration, test scoring, and analysis of data. Chapter IV presents and analyzes the data collected in the study. Chapter V contains the summary, findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

Although the value of creative writing and its merits have been highly praised, comparatively little research has been devoted to this area as Shane and Mulry (36, p. 9) pointed out:

Interest in creative writing continues to be high, but definite research in the area remains at low ebb. . . . There is literature available which hopefully presents viewpoints and techniques for helping children learn to write creatively, but there is little if any basic research to substantiate these positions with evidence.

For the purpose of this study, only literature and research applicable to the evaluation of creative writing has been included. The aspects of evaluation were divided into four major categories: (1) Evaluation Variables, (2) Implications of Evaluating Various Factors, (3) Methods of Evaluation, and (4) Status of the Evaluator.

I. EVALUATION VARIABLES

In this age of scientific method, the evaluation of writing has been plagued with its lack of control of certain variables. Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer (8) concluded in their review of composition research that the writer variable, the rater variable, and the colleague variable have clouded the reliability of research in creative writing.

Writer variable, the lack of control of student performance due to the physical health or the emotional state of the writer, was the subject of a study by Anderson (2). He found that 71 percent of the fifty-five eighth grade students that he examined showed evidence of

composition fluctuation. To control this variable, Diederich (11) proposed that at least two papers written on two different occasions be evaluated, the rating of the better paper being used as the measure of performance. In his study of college students, he discovered that 25 percent of the group changed their marks as a result of writing a second essay, but less than 5 percent changed their marks as the result of writing a third.

Rater variable is another area that must be contended with in the evaluation of writing. In the report by Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer (8, pp. 6-12), rater variable was defined as the tendency of the rater to vary in his or her own standards. Fatigue may cause raters to become severe, lenient, or erratic in their evaluation. The report stressed the need for more objective scales to lessen this variable. Such scales would help aid in controlling the possibility of personal feelings coloring the evaluation process. Writer anonymity was also suggested to eliminate this factor.

An associated variable outlined in the same research report by Braddock and others (8, p. 12) was colleague variable, the tendency of several raters to vary from each other in their evaluations. Stressing the need for a common set of criteria, the report concluded that unless raters are evaluating for the same qualities they cannot rate with validity or reliability. Wiseman (47, p. 206) disagreed with this belief, however. He pointed out that "diversity of viewpoint" was advantageous, for each composition was "illuminated by beams from different angles."

II. IMPLICATIONS OF EVALUATING VARIOUS FACTORS

The most heated arguments in the evaluation of writing stem from the lack of research signifying which parts of a composition should be evaluated and to what degree. These arguments generally clustered around mechanics (i.e., spelling, punctuation, capitalization, form), rhetoric (i.e., vocabulary, style, maturity), and originality (i.e., creativity).

Because mechanical errors are easily defined and observed, Mellon (28, p. 33) suggested that teachers have relied heavily on them, usually at the sacrifice of rhetorical development. Healy (20) indicated in her study concerned with the factors involved in the rating of sixth grade pupils' compositions that form received more weight in the evaluative process by the teachers than did quality. Rupley (34, p. 586) attempted to explain this phenomena by theorizing that those areas of language arts with explicit criteria such as mechanics and grammar seemed to get the most emphasis. Those aspects of writing lacking well-defined teaching process variables such as maturity and originality were often slighted.

Writers and educators such as Ruth Strickland (40), Maurice Applegate (3), and Paul Witty (48) advocated the deemphasis on mechanics and grammar with a shift to an emphasis on expression of ideas. Personke (30) agreed that strict standards only set limits to frustrate and deter. Torbe (43, p. 59) eloquently stressed that teachers should

be more concerned with "intellectual performance" rather than "linguistic etiquette." Fernald (14, p. 13) summed up this side of the issue:

The child may be required to sit in a certain position, conform to specific ways of making the details of his letters, and spell his words correctly. When finally he does all these things, he may be allowed to express an idea in written form. Usually some adult will tell him what idea he should be eager to express. The result is that the little child who was bursting with ideas he wanted to put in writing has lost them in the formalities of learning to write and spell and at the same time has been negatively conditioned toward these activities.

Nikoloff (29) compared the writings of children taught by "less strict" teachers with writings of children taught by "more strict" teachers. According to Nikoloff, "less strict" teachers were defined as those who emphasized expression of ideas rather than mechanics, accepted every child's written expression for recognition, separated creative and editing functions in written expression, provided frequent opportunity for writing of an imaginative and personal nature, and diagnosed for future teaching rather than finding fault. "More strict" teachers were those who did not do these things. According to results from the Sequential Tests of Educational Progress Essay Test (STEP), no significant difference appeared in the two groups' scores.

Despite lack of research to support the theory, most educators agreed that the correction of mechanical skill and grammar drills should be secondary to development of maturity and originality (Golub, 17; Mellon, 28; Tiedt and Tiedt, 42). Even though research has failed to show that it is a better method, neither has it proven it a weaker method.

There are those educators who felt, however, that the shift has been too drastic. Dubois (12, pp. 666-667) argued for a proper balance. He stressed that children do need feedback from teachers in all skill areas. Without teacher correction, Dubois said that students would continue to make the same mistakes. Greene and Petty (18, pp. 295, 319) agreed that rhetoric should receive a greater amount of emphasis than mechanics, but they also declared the continuing need for mechanical correction. They insisted that the use or misuse of punctuation and capitals develops into a habit with young children and that it is the teacher's responsibility to correct these undesirable habits.

III. METHODS OF EVALUATION

In the review of related literature and research, three major approaches to the evaluation of writing were uncovered: holistic rating, atomistic rating, and objective testing.

Holistic rating, as the name implies, involves communication as a whole, not detailed description. Holistic evaluation, according to Smelstor (38, p. 13) "attempts to assess the overall quality of a composition, and although various aspects of content and form are considered, no marking and tallying of these aspects is required." Several procedures of this type rating were found: the rater matched the writing with a similar piece in a graded series of sample pieces; the rater assessed the writing for certain features characteristic of that type of writing; a grade or letter was assigned to the writing in a purely impressionistic manner.

A holistic measure of matching a composition to a sample piece in a graded series was developed by Thorndike (41). He used actual writings of high school students to develop this scale. The essay scale, as it has been termed, was not widely used because of the difficulty in "matching" all the various aspects of one composition to a sample piece.

A more popular method of holistic measure which has been widely used is the assessing of certain characteristics through the use of an analytic guide. Diederich (11) aided in the development of these scales for high school use. The idea spread to elementary guides. Most of these guides, however, tended to deemphasize mechanics in favor of originality. Torrance and Gupta (44) developed the Imaginative Stories Test which holistically assesses nine characteristics of originality: picturesqueness, vividness, flavor, personal element, original solution, original setting or plot, humor, invented words or names, and an unusual twist in style or content. Interest in this test is assessed in nine categories also: conversational tone, naturalness, use of quotations, variety in kinds of sentences, variety in length of sentence structure, personal touch, humor, questions and answers, and feeling of character. Each item is considered separately. If the feature is present in the story, one point is scored. If the feature is not present in the story, no point is awarded.

A similar but more detailed scale was developed by Carlson (9). The Carlson Analytical Originality Scale is divided into five sections: story structure, novelty, emotion, individuality, style of story.

Each section contains from four to fourteen items which are scaled from zero to five.

A simplified revision of the Carlson scale was developed by Alpren (1). The thirty-six items on the Carlson instrument were reduced to twenty items. Alpren theorized that a simple scale would be of more use as a feedback device for children. In her study of fifth grade children, she discovered that the Carlson instrument had an overall negative effect as a feedback device upon the writing performance of the subjects. The Alpren revision had an overall positive effect as a feedback device; however, the Carlson instrument was not developed to be used in this manner.

Another analytical scale for elementary composition was developed by Glazer (16). This scale tends to emphasize style and form over originality. The Glazer Narrative Scale is composed of eighteen items which are subdivided into five sections: plot, theme, setting, characterization, and style. Each item is scored from one to three.

The last holistic method under consideration is assessment in a purely impressionistic manner. No characteristics are outlined; no samples are given for reference. Because of its lack of objectivity, Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Shoer (8, pp. 11-12) reported that few researchers rely totally on this method.

Another approach to evaluation is the atomistic rating. Lloyd-Jones (23, p. 41) discussed this method which assesses particular features, usually through the use of frequency counts. The counts may tally such scores as total number of words, number of correct

punctuation marks, or average length of sentences. Atomistic ratings have been commonly found in grammar, usage, and mechanics.

Progress in establishing such objective measures in seemingly subjective territory has been made. Hunt (21) devised the T-unit (terminal unit) to measure sentence maturity. He defined the T-unit as a main clause and its subordinating clauses, regardless of punctuation. Hunt suggested that the more words per T-unit, the more mature the writing. T-unit analysis involves two steps: counting the number of T-units and the number of total words and dividing the number of T-units into the number of words in the total paper. It was the conclusion of Blake and Tuttle (7, p. 2) that the average length of the T-unit has been accepted as one of the best measures of syntactic maturity.

Loban (24), in his longitudinal study of children's writing, used a similar measure which he called a "communication unit." For the purpose of his research, Loban defined a communication unit as an independent clause with its modifiers. Likewise, he computed the average length of the communication unit to measure sentence maturity.

Another unit to measure sentence maturity was developed by Hess and Shipman (cited in Berse, 4, p. 56). They computed average pre-verb length by counting all the words preceding the main verb of each sentence in the composition and dividing this by the total number of sentences. Their theory was that this measure succeeded in reflecting the "richness of modifying and qualifying language associated with complex and fluent speech."

An index for the maturity of written language in which each part of speech was awarded a certain "weight" (i.e., point value) was also used by Loban (24) in his longitudinal study. The Elaboration Index provided valuable insight into specific strategies of language maturity. Such a scale has been modified in other studies so that instead of awarding point values for the parts of speech, these items were tallied with a frequency count. In this method, certain parts of speech can be scrutinized in isolation. To measure maturity Harris (19) included frequency counts of adjectival clauses and phrases. In the Assessment of Writing Skills instrument by Friedman and Fowler (15), the total number of modifying words as assessed by a frequency count was used to gather information on maturity.

Although atomistic ratings have the potential of describing in fairly objective terms, the overall communication factor of a composition, as measured in a holistic method, may be obscured in a purely atomistic rating. For this reason an instrument was developed by Friedman and Fowler (15) which combined frequency counts and a holistic measure. In the Assessment of Writing Skills instrument, three areas of writing were measured by frequency counts: productivity, maturity, and mechanics. The overall quality was then ranked in a holistic measure with criteria listed for each ranking. According to Friedman and Fowler, this combination assessed the overall growth through the holistic score and provided feedback regarding specific skill development and needs for instruction through the frequency counts.

A third method of evaluation, generally avoided by advocates of creative writing, is the objective test as a measurement of writing ability. According to McCraig (27), objective testing for writing skills evolved from the false assumption that teaching children about written English was the same as teaching them to write. McCraig challenged this assumption, declaring that knowing about was not the same as knowing how. In a correlational study he did with writing-related skills on two objective tests (Michigan Assessment of Basic Skills: Mechanics of Written English and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills: Punctuation, Capitalization, and Usage) compared to criterion-referenced writing samples, McCraig found no relationship between the scores. Powill (33, p. 3) disagreed with this finding. She stated that objective tests do have high reliability with writing ability, but she stressed that they are an indirect measure and at best analogous assessments of writing.

IV. STATUS OF EVALUATOR

Many educators agreed that correction is necessary in the evaluation process. Others concluded, however, that teacher correction is apparently ineffectual. The research data in this area appeared to be contradictory.

A study by Biberstine (5) showed a harmful effect of any type of criticism by a teacher on written composition in the fourth grade. Contrariwise, other studies at the elementary school level showed a positive effect on writing progress with a combination of negative and

positive criticism by the teacher (Alpren, 1; Nikoloff, 29). Seemingly more research is needed to determine the effectiveness of teacher evaluation in the elementary grades.

Although little research has been done on the effectiveness of teacher evaluation in the elementary school, even less has been done on another option—peer evaluation. Pierson (32, pp. 26-27) advocated the use of peer evaluation stating that students were more receptive to peer opinion than teacher opinion and that the incentive of writing for an audience was added in peer evaluation.

Most of the studies that have been done in this area were on the high school level. As early as 1912, high school boys showed "fair ability in detecting the essential faults and excellences" in their peers' writings in a study conducted by Tressler (45). The students' ratings in this study were compared to the teacher ratings, however. The effectiveness of the evaluation process as a factor of writing progress was not tested. Two more high school studies by Lagana (22) and Zively (50) showed peer evaluation as effective or more effective in writing gains when compared to teacher evaluation.

Only one study was found concerning peer evaluation in a creative writing program at the elementary school level. With the aid of a four-point descriptive scale, Sager (35) taught a sixth grade experimental group to rate other students' writings. The scale was a combination of mechanics and style. Each of the following items was given a rating of 0, 1, 2, or 3—corresponding to poor, fair, good, or excellent.

1. vocabulary—the use of words to express a particular thought or idea
2. elaboration—an abundance of related ideas which flows smoothly from one idea to the next
3. organization—the arrangement of ideas in order
4. structure—the way language forms are used to convey meaning.

The control group was taught using conventional teacher evaluation and procedures from the school curriculum. Posttests were given to both groups and scored by adult judges using the Sager Writing Scale. The conclusion was drawn that sixth grade children can use rating scales in a peer evaluation structure and improve their writing skills as effectively as in a teacher evaluation structure.

V. SUMMARY

For years researchers of creative writing have been deterred by the lack of variable control. Recent refinement of procedures has sharply decreased the effect of writer variable, rater variable, and colleague variable so that more reliable research can take place in this much needed area.

Research in creative writing was once highly dependent on the objective measurements of mechanics and form. Support for an emphasis on style and sentence maturity arose, but new instruments and scales were needed before effective evaluation of these areas could take place. Holistic and atomistic measurements were developed for this purpose.

Most of the research to date has focused on the development of procedures for reliable evaluating of creative writing rather than on comparison of different evaluative techniques of teaching creative

writing to establish the most effective treatment for enhancing student progress. The sparse research in the technique of teacher evaluation appeared to be contradictory. The study found on peer evaluation in the elementary school appeared promising, but one study can hardly be termed conclusive. Thus, with the use of the new instruments and scales and with the gained knowledge of controlling the variables, more extensive research is needed to establish the most effective evaluative techniques for improving the quality of children's writings.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES

To study the effectiveness of teacher evaluation as compared to peer evaluation in a second grade creative writing program with respect to mechanics, maturity, and originality, the following procedures were used. For the purpose of discussion these procedures have been divided into six sections: (1) Subjects, (2) Design, (3) Testing Tools, (4) Test Administration, (5) Test Scoring, and (6) Analysis of Data.

I. SUBJECTS

Subjects for this study were the second grade students at Lanier Elementary School during the 1980-1981 school year. Lanier Elementary is a twenty-one teacher, one principal school in a rural section of Blount County, Tennessee. The school includes kindergarten through eighth grade.

Each of the forty-three students enrolled in second grade was given a consent form for the research project (Appendix D). Two students returned negative replies. These two students did receive creative writing instruction since the program was being used as a part of the regular language arts program, but their scores were not included in the analysis. Another student was unable to participate because of a schedule conflict at the time of instruction. In the course of the research an additional three students were excluded from the final statistical treatment because of absence during the pretest

or transfer of schools. Consequently, thirty-seven of the forty-three second graders were used as subjects in the final analysis.

The groups were used intact. The subjects ranged in age from seven to nine years. They were assigned to one of the two second grade sections at the beginning of the year by random selection within an informal stratification procedure in an effort to heterogeneously group students with regard to academic ability. Exceptions to this placement resulted in lack of randomness. The exceptions were the division of discipline problems and parental request for a certain section.

II. DESIGN

Because of the lack of randomness, the design employed was the nonequivalent control group design. A pre-writing test was given to both groups. Treatment then began which consisted of three thirty-minute sessions on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. The same creative writing lesson plans were used in both groups. Children not finishing their stories in the regularly scheduled time period were allowed to turn them in later. An additional five to ten minutes was needed in Group B for peer evaluation, but the teacher did not set aside a regularly-scheduled time for this. It was done individually at the children's convenience sometime during the day of the writing lesson.

Group A received treatment from 12:30 to 1:00 and Group B from 8:30 to 9:00. Because of scheduling conflicts the two times could not be switched at the midpoint of the experiment to eliminate a possible

time variable. The post-writing test was given to both groups at the conclusion of the ten-week treatment period.

III. DESCRIPTION OF WRITING PROGRAM

Ten creative writing units were designed by the researcher for use in both groups during the ten-week treatment period. Each unit represented one week of work (i.e., three lesson plans). The first lesson plan for each unit served as an introduction to that particular unit, usually in the form of a group activity. The remaining two lesson plans for each unit consisted of writing assignments designed to complement the particular unit objective.

Each unit dealt with a different aspect of creative writing. The first nine units were concerned with description, comparisons, sentence combination, sequencing, unusual titles and names, sentence variety, personification, dialogue, and special effects respectively. The tenth unit was used as a review. A more detailed description of the lesson plans appears in Appendix A.

IV. EVALUATIVE PROCEDURES

In Group A, the teacher evaluation group, the writing papers were graded by the teacher. The teacher marked mechanical errors dealing with capital letters and full stops. Comments were written on the papers concerning maturity and originality. Suggestions to improve maturity focused on using more "painting" words (i.e., adjectives) and/or beginning sentences with a variety of different words.

Suggestions to improve originality usually challenged children to be more creative in their plots (e.g., "Anybody can trap a lion that way. Can you be more creative?"). The teacher made mostly positive comments on the children's papers, but negative comments were used sparingly (e.g., "Please don't forget the capital letters in your title again"). After the teacher completed checking for mechanical errors and writing comments concerning maturity and/or originality, a "holistic" grade was assigned to the paper. The teacher chose from the four grades used in the school system: "E" for excellent, "G" for good, "S" for satisfactory, and "U" for unsatisfactory. The papers were returned to the students during the next creative writing lesson. The teacher would take a few minutes to explain common mistakes and to read exceptional excerpts from individual papers.

In Group B, the peer evaluation group, the students evaluated the papers. The teacher would assign partners prior to the actual writing time. This "pairing" rotated with each child having a different partner for each assignment; however, a child of "greater" writing ability was always paired with a child of "lesser" writing ability. After completion of the stories the children met with their partners to evaluate the papers. This was done with the aid of a checklist which varied according to the objective of the particular unit. These checklists appear in Appendix B. For mechanical markings the children were instructed to circle any incorrect placements and/or absences of capital letters and/or full stops. These were the only markings made on the actual writing paper. The remaining part of the evaluative procedure was recorded on the checklist.

The checklists were stapled to the papers and given to the teacher upon completion. The teacher looked over the evaluations. If any incorrect corrections had been made (e.g., a period after a sentence fragment), the teacher asked the "checker," not the writer, the reason for the particular correction. When the "checker" understood the mistake, he or she would go back to the writer and explain the reason for the incorrect correction. The teacher only discussed incorrect corrections, not corrections that were needed but not found. The papers along with the checklists were then returned to the students at the end of the day.

During peer evaluation the teacher stressed that this procedure provided an opportunity to help each other. The checklists were designed to accentuate the positive rather than the negative so that the children would not feel that they were being criticized by their friends.

V. TESTING TOOLS

Different testing tools were used for the three different areas of measurement in creative writing: mechanics, maturity, and originality. Each tool was used to describe certain characteristics of a student's actual composition.

Three scores were determined in mechanics: capitalization, punctuation, and a total. To obtain these scores a method similar to the one utilized by Friedman and Fowler (15) in their Assessment of Writing Skills was used. In this instrument the capitalization and

punctuation scores were obtained by tallying the number of needed capital letters (punctuation marks) and the number of correct capital letters (punctuation marks). The score was then computed by dividing the number of correct capital letters (punctuation marks) by the number of needed capital letters (punctuation marks). After careful analysis the researcher decided a clearer picture could be obtained by using frequency counts for incorrect placements and/or absences of capital letters (punctuation marks) and dividing these counts by the total number of needed capital letters (punctuation marks). The computation as described in the Assessment of Writing Skills accounted for capital letters and punctuation marks that were missing, but not for those incorrectly placed (e.g., a period after an introductory clause). The researcher felt the revised method would provide a better description of the ability of the child. Thus, the score represented a percentage of mechanical errors. Progress was determined by a decline in scores. Because of the age group of the subjects only full stops (i.e., periods, question marks, and exclamation points) were considered in the punctuation score. Many children used quotation marks in their writings (correctly and incorrectly), but these were not taken into consideration.

The average length of a T-unit (Hunt, 21) was used to determine the score in the area of maturity. This was obtained by counting the total number of words in the composition and dividing by the number of T-units.

The score for the originality of a composition was determined by the Alpren revision of The Carlson Analytical Originality Scale (1).

The Alpren revision consists of two parts: story make-up and novelty. Each part contains ten items which are scored 1 (poor), 2 (below average), 3 (above average), 4 (excellent), or N (not applicable). Adult judges had interrater reliability scores of .76, .80, and .82 in Alpren's research.

VI. TEST ADMINISTRATION

The pre-writing test, which consisted of writing a story on an assigned topic, was given to both groups twice on two consecutive days. Copies of the instructions for the pre-writing test and the post-writing test appear in Appendix C. The children were then asked to choose the "better" of the two stories. This was done to help control the fluctuation of writer performance reported by Diederich (11) and Anderson (2). The researcher chose not to grade both compositions in all three areas and use the highest score in each area as Diederich suggested because the highest scores might not all come from the same pre-writing test (i.e., the first pre-writing test might yield the highest maturity score while the second pre-writing test might yield the highest mechanic and originality scores). Since this method would not necessarily provide a true representation of one story, the researcher decided that the individual child would be the best judge as to which story represented more time, effort, and thought.

The two pre-writing tests were similar in topic. The children were told not to worry about spelling. (The teacher asked for clarification later if needed.) No time limit was imposed. The post-writing test

was administered after ten weeks of treatment in the same manner. To help control topic variability, the post-writing test topics were similar to the pre-writing test topics.

VII. TEST SCORING

The objective scores involved in mechanics and maturity were computed by the researcher. The originality score because of its subjective nature was scored by three professional judges (three primary grade teachers). These judges were chosen because of their awareness of capabilities of second grade compositions having worked with this age. Each judge was instructed in the correct use and application of the Alpren revision of The Carlson Analytical Originality Scale. Two sample stories were rated together for instructional purposes.

Interrater reliability was determined by giving all three judges copies of the same four stories. The results of their evaluations indicated a reliability of .78 as obtained by the Kendall coefficient of concordance formula (in Siegal, 37, pp. 229-238). Thereafter, the judges were each given envelopes which contained an equal number of stories.

To aid in the control of rater variability on individual progress in originality, each judge evaluated both pre-writing test and post-writing test for any one child. This was done to eliminate the possibility of a consistently high-scoring judge rating a pre-writing test and a consistently low-scoring judge rating the same child's

post-writing test. In such a case a true picture of progress or regression would not appear.

The stories were typed and randomly numbered to eliminate the handwriting factor and to assure writer anonymity. Spelling errors were corrected in the typed stories. The judges were unaware of which stories were pre-writing tests and which were post-writing tests.

Test results were presented in terms of group mean scores, F values, and significances of F in each of the five scoring areas.

VIII. ANALYSIS OF DATA

The five post-writing test scores were adjusted for initial differences using the pretest as a covariate. This was necessary because of lack of randomness. A value of F and the significance of F were determined in each of the five areas.

IX. SUMMARY

To compare the effectiveness of teacher evaluation and peer evaluation the researcher used as subjects the students in the two second grade sections at Lanier Elementary School in Blount County, Tennessee. The nonequivalent control group design was employed. Each group was taught the same creative writing lesson plans, but the evaluative procedures differed. Group A received teacher evaluation, and Group B participated in peer evaluation.

Pretests and posttests were given which consisted of actual writings. These writing tests were scored in three major areas—

mechanics, maturity, and originality. The post-writing test scores were then adjusted by the analysis of covariance using the pre-writing test scores as covariates and analyzed for significant differences.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

I. INTRODUCTION

The study consisted of thirty-seven second grade students at Lanier Elementary School in Blount County, Tennessee. The groups were not randomly selected but used intact. The control group, Group A, was composed of nineteen students. The experimental group, Group B, consisted of eighteen students. The design used was nonequivalent control group. The pretest was given in the following manner. Two stories were written by each child on two consecutive days. Each child selected his or her "better" story. These stories served as the pretests. Treatment was given to both groups for ten weeks. This consisted of three thirty-minute sessions per week. Both groups received the same creative writing lessons during this time, but Group A received teacher evaluation, and Group B participated in peer evaluation. Two stories were written at the end of the treatment period. The children again chose their "better" stories which served as the posttests.

Pre-writing tests and post-writing tests were measured in the areas of mechanics (two subsets and an inclusive total score), maturity, and originality. The posttest scores were then analyzed by the analysis of covariance for any significant differences using the pretests to adjust the scores for any initial differences.

II. PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

A pre-writing test and a post-writing test were scored for each subject in the three major areas—mechanics (two subsets and one total), maturity, and originality—resulting in five scores for each individual test. Progress was made in both Group A, the teacher evaluation group, and Group B, the peer evaluation group, in each of the five scoring areas according to the group mean scores. Table I presents the pretest and posttest mean scores for each group in mechanics (capitalization, punctuation, and total), maturity, and originality. Progress in mechanics was shown by a declining score (i.e., decreasing the percentage of mechanical errors). Progress in maturity and originality was shown by a rising score.

TABLE I
GROUP MEANS OF PRETESTS AND POSTTESTS FOR MECHANICS,
MATURITY, AND ORIGINALITY

	Group A		Group B	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
Mechanics (Capitalization)	.48	.25	.28	.8
Mechanics (Punctuation)	.30	.22	.34	.18
Mechanics (Total)	.41	.24	.30	.12
Maturity	6.85	7.12	6.37	8.05
Originality	29.21	35.26	30.83	37.72

In the area of mechanics, Table I shows Group B had a lower pretest mean score in capitalization errors (i.e., a lower percentage of errors) than Group A. Both groups, however, decreased their percentage of capitalization errors according to the posttest mean scores. The percentage of punctuation errors were quite similar for both groups determined by the means of the pretest and posttest, both showing progress with declining scores, but seemingly not as much progress was made in punctuation as in capitalization. The total mechanics pretest means again showed Group B making fewer mechanical errors initially, but both groups succeeded in decreasing their percentages of mechanical errors as shown by the posttest mean scores.

Maturity mean scores, representative of the average length of a T-unit, were quite comparable for the pretests with Group A averaging approximately one-half word more per T-unit than Group B. Yet, ten weeks later, the posttest means showed Group A with an average of 7.12 words per T-unit—a mean gain of only .27 words. However, Group B showed a jump to 8.05—a mean gain of 1.68 words per T-unit.

According to the mean scores of the Alpren revision of The Carlson Analytical Originality Scale, the pretest and posttest scores were quite comparable for the two groups. Based on this 80-point scale, the initial difference between the groups was only 1.62 as shown by the pretest mean scores, and the posttest mean scores revealed a difference of only 2.46. Both groups did improve, however, at a remarkably consistent rate, Group A showing a mean gain of 6.05 points and Group B showing a mean gain of 6.89 points on the 80-point scale.

Since the groups used were not randomly selected, the data as it appears in Table I could not be used to analyze progress for significant differences. The posttest scores were adjusted using the pretests as covariates by means of the analysis of covariance. This was computed by the ANCOVA program at The University of Tennessee Computing Center in Knoxville. This analysis for the three major areas under consideration are discussed separately.

Mechanics

In the subset areas of capitalization and punctuation, the F did prove to be greater than 1 in each case. It was concluded, however, that the significance of F was not acceptable at the .05 level of confidence for either of these two subset areas. Table II presents the F value and the significance of F in the areas of capitalization and punctuation.

The total mechanics score produced an interesting result. This score was not representative of a simple average of the two subset scores; it was a new ratio score determined by computing the sum of all the incorrect placements and/or absences of capitals and full stops and dividing this number by the sum of needed capitals and full stops. Although both subset F's were greater than 1, their level of significance was not acceptable; however, when the scores were computed for the total mechanics using the new ratios and adjusting them with the pretest as a covariate, the F was again greater than 1, but this time it proved to be significant at the .05 level of confidence. Thus, although there

TABLE II
CUMULATIVE DATA OF ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE
USING PRETEST SCORE AS A COVARIATE

	F Value	Significance of F
Mechanics (Capitalization)	1.890	0.178
Mechanics (Punctuation)	1.226	0.276
Mechanics (Total)	4.212	0.048*
Maturity	4.863	0.034*
Originality	0.173	0.680

* Significant at the .05 level of confidence in favor of the peer evaluation group.

was no significant differences in the isolated subset areas of capitalization and punctuation, when the data for these scores were combined to form new total mechanics scores, a significant difference did appear in favor of Group B, the peer evaluation group. Table II presents the F value and the significance of F for the total mechanics score.

The null hypothesis, stating that there would be no significant difference between Group A and Group B in mean mechanics writing scores at the .05 level of confidence, was rejected. Even though the two mean subset scores did not prove significant, when the new ratios were formed for the total mechanics scores, Group B, using peer evaluation, scored significantly higher than Group A.

Maturity

When the analysis of covariance was done on the posttest maturity scores using the pretest maturity scores as covariates, F was proven significant at the .05 level of confidence. Group B using peer evaluation, made significantly more progress in this area than Group A, using teacher evaluation. Table II presents the value of F and the significance of F in the area of maturity.

The null hypothesis, stating that there would be no significant difference between Group A and Group B in mean maturity writing scores at the .05 level of confidence, was rejected. Group B scored significantly higher than Group A in the area of maturity.

Originality

The originality scores were determined by three professional judges according to the Alpren revision of The Carlson Analytical Originality Scale. Each rater was given the same four stories before actual judging began. These four stories were used to determine interrater reliability. An interrater reliability of .78 was determined by the Kendall's coefficient of concordance as described by Siegal (37, pp. 229-238).

When the analysis of covariance was done on the posttest originality scores using the pretest originality scores as covariates, the F value resulted in being less than 1. Since F was less than 1, it was concluded that a significant difference did not exist. Table II presents the value of F and the significance of F in the area of originality.

The null hypothesis, stating that there would be no significant difference between Group A and Group B in mean originality writing scores at the .05 level of confidence, was not rejected. Group A and Group B made comparable progress in this area.

III. SUMMARY

Both Group A, the teacher evaluation group, and Group B, the peer evaluation group, showed progress in the three major areas of scoring as determined by the group means of the pretests and posttests. However, in two areas, mechanics and maturity, Group B made significantly more progress, at the .05 level of confidence. In the area of originality, no significant difference appeared.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to compare the effectiveness of teacher evaluation and peer evaluation in a second grade creative writing program. Three components of creative writing were analyzed in the study—mechanics, maturity, and originality.

Lagana (22), Tressler (45), and Zively (50) reported that peer evaluation was effective in high school writing programs; however, the only major research relating to peer evaluation in an elementary creative writing program was done by Sager (35). She concluded that sixth grade students could use the Sager Writing Scale in a peer evaluation structure and improve their writing skills as effectively as in a teacher evaluation structure. No research was found using peer evaluation for writing instruction in the primary grades.

The subjects in the study were thirty-seven second graders at Lanier Elementary, a rural school in Blount County, Tennessee. The second grade groups were used intact.

Pretests and posttests were obtained by means of actual writings. The study involved ten weeks of treatment in which the same creative writing lessons were taught by the same teacher to both groups. However, in Group A, the control group, the teacher evaluated the children's

stories, and in Group B, the experimental group, the children evaluated other children's papers according to checklists based on lesson objectives.

Two subset scores, capitalization and punctuation, were obtained in the area of mechanics by means of frequency counts. A total mechanics score was also utilized in the same manner. The average length of a T-unit as described by Hunt (21) was used to determine sentence maturity. Originality was scored by the Alpren revision of The Carlson Analytical Originality Scale. The researcher determined the objective scores of mechanics and maturity, but, due to the subjective nature of the originality score, a panel of three judges was used for this evaluation. The interrater reliability of the three judges was computed by the Kendall coefficient of concordance formula as explained by Siegal (37, pp. 229-238).

The posttest scores of the two groups were compared for significant differences using the pretest scores to adjust for any initial differences by means of the analysis of covariance.

II. FINDINGS

The data presented in this study were obtained from actual writings of the subjects. Scores were obtained on pre-writing tests and post-writing tests in three major areas—mechanics (two subsets and one total), maturity, and originality.

Both Group A and Group B showed progress in all areas as shown by the mean scores of the pre-writing and post-writing tests. This

progress was compared for significant differences using the analysis of covariance with the pretest as a covariate.

In the area of mechanics, two subset scores (capitalization and punctuation) were obtained. No significant difference was found between the two groups in these areas. However, a third mechanics score was obtained by adding the sum of all mechanical mistakes (i.e., capitalization and punctuation) and dividing by the sum of all needed mechanical markings. In this total mechanics score, Group B, using peer evaluation, scored significantly higher than Group A at the .05 level of confidence.

In the area of maturity, both groups showed progress according to the mean scores of the pre-writing and post-writing tests, but using the analysis of covariance it was determined that Group B scored significantly higher than Group A at the .05 level of confidence.

No significant difference was found in the area of originality between Groups A and B although each showed progress in this area as determined by the means of the pre-writing and post-writing tests. Judges scoring in this area obtained a .78 interrater reliability coefficient.

III. CONCLUSIONS

It was the purpose of this study to test the effectiveness of peer evaluation as compared to teacher evaluation in a second grade creative writing program. Although peer evaluation was not expected to equate with teacher evaluation, it was hoped that giving children the opportunities to find strengths and weaknesses in other children's writings would serve to make them better writers.

In the area of mechanics, children participating in peer evaluation scored significantly higher than children involved in teacher evaluation. This discovery reinforced the statement by Tressler (45, p. 407) that the "most important power in English improvement" is the student's ability to detect and correct errors. The researcher observed in the course of the study that many children in the teacher evaluation group continued to make the same mechanical mistakes regardless of teacher correction on previous papers. In peer evaluation, however, the child that recognized a mechanical mistake in another child's paper and explained to the other child the reason it was considered an error was less apt to repeat that mistake in his or her paper.

Not only did children participating in peer evaluation score significantly higher than their teacher-evaluated counterparts in mechanics, they also scored significantly higher in the area of maturity. Perhaps Group B's exposure to other children's varied sentence patterns (e.g., prepositional phrases, subordinate clauses) served as a modeling tool for those children with more limited sentence patterns. As the new sentence patterns were used, the length of the average T-unit naturally expanded.

No significant difference was found in the area of originality. Both groups progressed some in this area but at approximately the same rate. This might suggest that originality is just that—original—and that it does not lend itself to modeling or imitation of others' writings as did mechanics and maturity. In mechanics the format never wavered (e.g., capital letters always went at the beginning of

sentences), and in maturity the T-unit could noticeably be extended by the modeling of somewhat stable sentence patterns (e.g., beginning a sentence with a subordinate conjunction such as "when" instead of the subject). However, in the area of originality, the transference was not as applicable since each writing topic was different (e.g., exposure to a unique way to trap a lion could not be imitated in a story about a lost rocket). Slight gains were shown in both groups, however. On a 80-point scale the mean gains for Group A and Group B were 6.05 and 6.89 respectively. This perhaps suggests that the gains in originality were not due to the method of evaluation but due to the creative potential of the subject. Further research is needed to determine if similar gains could be made using no evaluation.

It must be stressed at this point that the researcher was not trying to test the theory that teacher evaluation should be replaced by peer evaluation. It is the belief of the researcher that teacher direction and evaluation will always be needed in a creative writing program. The purpose of the study was to test if the quality of a creative writing program could be improved by the inclusion of peer evaluation. Because of the need to control as many variables as possible, the teacher was unable to evaluate any creative writing papers in the peer evaluation group during the ten-week treatment period. Even though this technique would not be recommended without intermittent teacher evaluation, it was necessary for the validity of the research.

After careful analysis of the data, the researcher concluded that peer evaluation could enhance a creative writing program. However, as in the teaching of any subject matter, the attitude of the teacher is quite important in order for this approach or any other approach to be successful. Seemingly, however, peer evaluation when introduced with an encouraging, positive attitude and teamed with effective teacher direction would prove at least as successful and perhaps more successful than continuous teacher evaluation in a creative writing program. This conclusion, however, must be interpreted within the assumptions and limitations for this study.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are suggested for further study.

1. Research exploring the different components of creative writing.
2. Replication of studies similar to this study with a larger population and at different grade levels.
3. Research comparing combined teacher-peer evaluation and traditional teacher evaluation in a creative writing program.
4. Research testing the significance of IQ on progress in a peer evaluation program.
5. Research comparing homogeneous and heterogeneous ability groupings in peer evaluation.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

CREATIVE WRITING LESSON PLANS

UNIT 1

Description

Objective

To aid children in expanding their use of descriptive language.

Day 1

Children play the game "Detective." The "detective" leaves the room and a "missing person" is selected. The "detective" returns, and the children take turns giving clues as to the "missing person's" identity. These clues must be given in a complete sentence (e.g., "The missing person has brown hair," or "The missing person has on a blue velvet shirt"). The "detective" uses these clues to guess the identity of the "missing person."

Day 2

Each child writes a description of a friend. At the conclusion of the lesson these stories are read as riddles. The children try to identify the person being described.

Day 3

Each child chooses an animal and writes a description of it.

UNIT 2

Comparisons

Objective

To help the children understand comparisons and how to utilize them in their writings.

Day 1

The children work as a group completing comparisons such as "soft as a _____," "white as a _____," and "tall as a _____." The children are then divided into small groups and given two or three similar comparisons to complete. The children see how many different words they can think of to complete each comparison.

Day 2

Each child draws a picture of a cloud and writes a description of it using comparisons. The following words are put on the board as "sentence sparkers":

white as _____

fluffy as _____

high as _____

light as _____

Day 3

Each child draws a picture of a lion and writes a description of it using comparisons. The children are instructed to write a comparison for each of the following lion's parts: teeth, roar, claws, mane, fur, etc.

UNIT 3

Sentence Combination

Objective

To help children add interest to their sentences by combining two or three short sentences.

Day 1

In a group the children practice combining two or three short sentences to produce a longer one (e.g., "The clown is funny" and "The clown stood on his head" are combined to produce "The funny clown stood on his head").

Day 2

Each child writes sentences about the different acts in a circus. Sentence combination is emphasized.

Day 3

Each child writes in detail about one circus act. Emphasis is again on sentence combination.

UNIT 4
Sequencing

Objective

To help children relate sequenced events in their writings.

Day 1

The children are divided into small groups. Each group is given a set of sentences which when put in the proper order will constitute a story. The children work together to put the story in its proper order.

Day 2

Each child writes an autobiography. One sentence is used for each year of his or her life (e.g., "When I was one I played in my playpen. When I was two I had the measles. When I was three I swallowed a marble . . ."). These sentences are put on individual pages, illustrated, and then stapled together to make a book.

Day 3

Each child chooses a famous person and writes about that person's life beginning with the childhood.

UNIT 5

Unusual Titles and Names

Objective

To stimulate an interest in creating original titles and names for story characters.

Day 1

The teacher reads several short ghost stories, and the children discuss creative titles for each.

The children discuss possible names for the following character types: a little ghost that is scared of everything, the old complaining ghost that nobody likes, a monster with two heads, a monster with glasses that likes to read, a mean little boy that is always making trouble, a sweet little girl that everybody likes.

Day 2

Each child writes a story about the ghost family that lives in his or her house. Emphasis is on creative names for the characters and an unusual title.

Day 3

Each child writes a story about a pet monster. The child must name the monster and tell something unusual that happens when the child and the monster go for a walk.

UNIT 6

Sentence Variety

Objective

To help children begin their sentences with a variety of words.

Day 1

The children are given the following sentences:

I woke up one morning.
I had turned into a midget.
I was only three inches high.
I hopped out of bed and called for mother.
I couldn't make her hear me.
I climbed down the sheets.
I had to take a bath in a soap dish.

The children are instructed to change each sentence so it tells the same thing, but they must change it so it no longer begins with "I." The children do this in small groups. Examples from the different groups are then read to show the variety of ways to say the same thing.

Day 2

Each child writes a story about waking up and discovering that he or she is a giant. The children are told not to begin more than one sentence with "I" or "then." They must tell what happens to them on this unusual day and how they solve the problem.

Day 3

Each child writes a story about waking up and discovering that he or she is invisible. Again, the children are told not to begin more than one sentence with "I" or "then." They must tell about the funny tricks they can pull and how they turn back to normal.

UNIT 7

Personification

Objective

To increase the children's abilities to imagine themselves as objects.

Day 1

The children close their eyes and pretend to be kites. The teacher directs their thinking by asking questions concerning where they are, what they are doing, what they look like, and how they feel. Similar exercises are done with being a raindrop and being a baseball.

Day 2

Each child writes a story pretending to be a pencil. The children are instructed to begin by telling how they are awoken and proceed through a pencil's daily routine.

Day 3

Each child writes a story pretending to be a cookie in a cookie jar. The children are instructed to tell what kind of cookie they are and what happens in the cookie jar.

UNIT 8

Dialogue

Objective

To introduce the use of dialogue in story writing and the correct use of quotation marks.

Day 1

Two children are asked to carry on a conversation using jokes that they know. As the children make their statements or questions the teacher writes them on the board along with which person said them. In this manner the two parts of a dialogue sentence are shown: the "talking" part and the part that tells who did the talking. Other children may practice conversing with jokes or riddles with the teacher writing the conversation on the board. The children are then paired with a partner and told to write the dialogue for a joke or riddle using themselves as the speakers.

Day 2

Each child writes a conversation between himself or herself and a favorite movie star. They are told to ask the star questions and then write the star's replies.

Day 3

Each child writes a story about the case of the missing pencils. They are told that one morning all the pencils in the school are gone. It is up to them to find the culprit. Emphasize the use of dialogue in the investigation.

UNIT 9

Special Effects

Objective

To introduce the children to the use of special effect words in order to add to the interest of their stories.

Day 1

The teacher leads a discussion of "sound" words such as "pow," "zap," and "clankety-clank." The children are then put in pairs and given a super-hero comic book. They are told to list all the "sound" or special effect words that they can find.

Day 2

Each child writes a story on being superman or superwoman. The children are told they must save Lanier Elementary School from one of the evil enemies. First they must figure out what kind of danger the school is in, and then they must decide on a way to save it. Encourage the use of special effect words.

Day 3

Each child writes a story about a space adventure. They are told that they can go anywhere they wish in the solar system, but something dangerous must happen to them on the way. Encourage the use of special effect words.

UNIT 10

Review

Objective

To give the children opportunities to practice their creative writing skills.

Day 1

Each child writes a story about an adventure in the time of dinosaurs. They are told that they swallowed a magic pill that took them back to prehistoric times. They must tell of the danger that they face and how they succeed in getting back to the present time.

Day 2

The teacher reads a short story about Paul Bunyan. The concept of the "tall tale" is introduced. Each child then writes a Paul Bunyan adventure story.

Day 3

Each child is told to select a favorite fairy tale and to change some things in the fairy tale to make it much funnier. Each child then writes the "new" version with its new title.

UNIT 2
Comparisons

This paper belongs to _____

It was checked by _____

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Is the title written correctly? | yes | no |
| 2. Does every sentence start with a capital letter? | yes | no |
| 3. Does every sentence end with a period? | yes | no |
| 4. Do all the sentences make sense? | yes | no |
| 5. Does every sentence have a comparison? | yes | no |
| 6. This is my favorite comparison sentence in your paper. | | |

UNIT 3

Sentence Combination

This paper belongs to _____

It was checked by _____

- | | | |
|--|---------|----|
| 1. Is the title written correctly? | yes | no |
| 2. Do all the sentences make sense? | yes | no |
| 3. Do all the sentences start with capital letters and end with periods? | yes | no |
| 4. How many sentences are there? | . _____ | |
| 5. How many words does each sentence have? | | |

1. _____

7. _____

2. _____

8. _____

3. _____

9. _____

4. _____

10. _____

5. _____

11. _____

6. _____

12. _____

UNIT 4
Sequencing

This paper belongs to _____

It was checked by _____

1. Good Things

a. How many comparisons were there? _____

b. How many sentences were there? _____

c. How many second grade sentences were
there (ten words or more)? _____

2. Bad Things

a. How many capital letters were forgotten? _____

b. How many periods were forgotten? _____

c. How many words were left out by accident? _____

3. This was the first thing that happened in the story.

4. This was the last thing that happened in the story.

UNIT 5

Unusual Titles and Names

This paper belongs to _____

It was checked by _____

1. Good Things

- a. How many comparisons were there? _____
- b. How many sentences were there? _____
- c. How many second grade sentences were there (ten words or more)? _____

2. Bad Things

- a. How many capital letters were forgotten? _____
- b. How many periods were forgotten? _____
- c. How many words were left out by accident? _____

3. These are the names of the characters in the story.

4. This is another good title that you could have used.

UNIT 6

Sentence Variety

This paper belongs to _____

It was checked by _____

1. Write the first word of every sentence.

1. _____

8. _____

2. _____

9. _____

3. _____

10. _____

4. _____

11. _____

5. _____

12. _____

6. _____

13. _____

7. _____

14. _____

2. If any word is listed more than two times, help the writer rewrite one of the sentences.

UNIT 7

Personification

This paper belongs to _____

It was checked by _____

1. Good Things

- a. How many comparisons were there? _____
- b. How many sentences were there? _____
- c. How many second grade sentences were there (ten or more words)? _____

2. Bad Things

- a. How many capital letters were forgotten? _____
- b. How many periods were forgotten? _____
- c. How many words were left out by accident? _____

3. This was my favorite sentence.

UNIT 8

Dialogue

This paper belongs to _____

It was checked by _____

1. This is the number of mistakes I found. _____

2. This is the number of sentences in the story. _____

3. These are the things I enjoyed about your paper. (check them)

_____ You had a lot of long second grade sentences.

_____ Every sentence made sense.

_____ Your handwriting was very neat and easy to read.

_____ You put some comparisons in your paper.

_____ Your title was very creative.

_____ Your sentences started with lots of different words.

4. These are three of the "talking" phrases that you wrote.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

UNIT 9
Special Effects

This paper belongs to _____

It was checked by _____

1. This is the number of mistakes I found. _____

2. This is the number of sentences in the story. _____

3. These are the things I enjoyed about your paper. (check them)

_____ You had a lot of long second grade sentences.

_____ Every sentence made sense.

_____ Your handwriting was very neat and easy to read.

_____ You put some comparisons in your paper.

_____ Your title was very creative.

_____ Your sentences started with lots of different words.

_____ You had some talking phrases in your story.

4. These are three of the special effect words that I really enjoyed.

UNIT 10

Review

This paper belongs to _____

It was checked by _____

1. This is the number of mistakes I found. _____

2. This is the number of sentences in the story. _____

3. These things were in your story.

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| a. Lots of second grade sentences | yes | no |
| b. Neat handwriting | yes | no |
| c. Comparisons | yes | no |
| d. A creative title | yes | no |
| e. Different words at the beginning of sentences | yes | no |
| f. Talking phrases | yes | no |
| g. Special effect words | yes | no |

APPENDIX C

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PRETESTING AND POSTTESTING

F Following are the introductory statements made by the teacher prior to the pre-writing tests and the post-writing tests.

Day 1 of Pretest

Today, boys and girls, something very exciting has happened at the zoo--an animal has escaped! Guess whose responsibility it is to catch this animal--YOU! First you must decide which animal escaped. Then you must come up with a plan to catch this animal and put him back where he belongs. I think this is a smart animal. I guess you'll have to come up with a tricky plan. Don't worry about spelling. You may begin.

Day 2 of Pretest

Do you remember the zoo we talked about yesterday? Well, it still has problems. Another animal has escaped. The poor zookeeper is going crazy! Looks like you're going to have to help him out again today. Decide what animal escaped this time. Then think of a smart plan to catch him. Remember, don't worry about spelling. You may begin.

Day 1 of Posttest

The zookeeper of the best zoo in the world has a big problem. He has one of every kind of animal in the world in his zoo, but he has one cage left over--and nothing to put in it. He's looked everywhere for an animal that nobody has ever seen before to go in this zoo, but he hasn't had very good luck. Now he's called on you to help him out. It's your mission to go somewhere--ANYWHERE--to find a creature that nobody has ever seen or heard of before. You better have a sneaky plan to catch him or he'll get away from you too. Don't worry about spelling. You may begin.

Day 2 of Posttest

Do you remember the zookeeper we talked about yesterday? Well, he's become a bit greedy. He's gone out and bought another empty cage, and he wants you to go find another strange creature--one that nobody has ever seen or heard of before, of course. Looks like you've got another dangerous mission ahead of you. Remember you can go ANYWHERE, but be careful and be tricky. Don't worry about spelling. You may begin.

APPENDIX D

CONSENT FORM

January 19, 1981

Dear Parents:

As part of my graduate studies at the University of Tennessee, I plan to conduct a study in the second grade classroom at Lanier Elementary concerning the evaluation of creative writing.

Your child has been working in a creative writing program since the beginning of the year. It has been the goal of this program to provide an encouraging environment where your child can practice communicating his or her thoughts on paper. Therefore, the "red pencil" has been used sparingly with more emphasis on logical thought and creativity rather than on mechanics such as spelling.

I would now like to see if this program can be enhanced by using the children to "check" the writings. Hopefully the children will learn to recognize mistakes and strengths in other children's writings and thus be more efficient, confident, and creative in their own writings.

For the purpose of the study, both second grade classes will receive the same instruction in creative writing. Only the evaluation method will differ. In one class the creative writing program will continue in the regular manner with the teacher doing all the evaluating. In the other class the students will "check" their own papers with a friend. In this setting they will have the opportunity to find their mistakes and correct them. At the end of ten weeks both classes will be tested to rate the progress in each group.

The results of the study will be recorded in my thesis, but no students' names will be used. In order to carry out this study, however, permission must be obtained by the parents or guardians of each student. Therefore, it is necessary that you complete this form and return it to me.

If you have any questions concerning the study, please feel free to contact me. If at anytime during the study you would like to withdraw your consent you may do so.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Susan Kidd
856-3004 (school phone)

☐

(Print child's name)

may participate in the
creative writing study.

☐

(Print child's name)

may not participate in the
creative writing study.

Your signature:

VITA

Susan Elizabeth Kidd was born in Maryville, Tennessee on May 18, 1955. She completed her elementary and secondary education in the Alcoa City School System. In 1977, she graduated summa cum laude from Carson-Newman College, obtaining a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in English.

After teaching one year in the Johnson County School System in Mountain City, Tennessee, she was employed by the Blount County School System in Maryville, Tennessee where she has taught since August of 1978.

In 1979, she entered the graduate school of The University of Tennessee at Knoxville. As part of her graduate studies, she worked in a British primary school in Exeter, England during the summer of 1980. In June of 1981, she received the Master of Science degree in Elementary Education.