

Improving Writing Skills of Second-Grade English Speakers of Other Languages
Students With a Tutored Writing Program

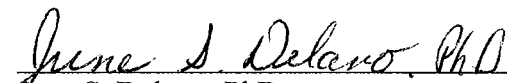
by
Onaidy Moran

An Applied Dissertation Submitted to the
Fischler School of Education and Human Services
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

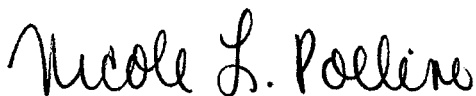
Nova Southeastern University
2007

Approval Page

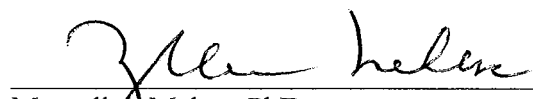
This applied dissertation was submitted by Onaidy Moran under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Fischler School of Education and Human Services and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.


June S. Delano, PhD
Committee Chair

9-11-2007
Date


Nicole Pollino, PhD
Committee Member

9.17.07
Date


Maryellen Maher, PhD
Executive Dean for Research and Evaluation

10/9/07
Date

Acknowledgments

This applied dissertation is dedicated with great love to my children, Catherine Hernandez and Michael Alan Hernandez. Additionally, it is dedicated to my dear mother, Miriam Ramos, for her constant love, caring, and support. “And without faith it is impossible to please him. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.” Hebrew 11:6.

Abstract

Improving Writing Skills of Second-Grade English Speakers of Other Languages Students With a Tutored Writing Program. Moran, Onaidy, 2007: Applied Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Fischler School of Education and Human Services. ESOL/Writing Skills/Process Writing/Grade 2/

This program was developed to help English speakers of other languages (ESOL) students in 2nd grade improve writing skills. The research problem that this study addressed was the deficiency of writing skills for 20 ESOL students in 2nd grade. Immigrants' children were not achieving optimal standards, and it became an educational crisis (S. Rimm, J. Garbarino, J. D. Anderson, & C. Carger, 1997).

This study consisted of a 12-week implementation period. The writer utilized various research approaches and taught writing techniques to increase language mastery. The students produced a pen pal letter publication as suggested by D. Clippard (1998). A parent survey evaluated the effectiveness of the home and school folder. Additionally, a student survey determined the use of art with 2nd language comprehension. Pre- and posttests in writing and vocabulary assessment served as score comparisons. The data evaluated determined an improvement of the writers' scores.

According to the data analysis measurements of the pre- and posttests in writing, all students made significant writing gains. The highest improvement was up to 4 points utilizing a 6-point rubric scale for grading. In the pre- and posttests in vocabulary, a dramatic improvement was evident in grades from 0 in the pretest up to a letter grade of an A in the posttest. Additionally, much improvement was noted with observations and comparisons of activities from the beginning to the end of the implementation. Therefore, both measurements demonstrated an increase in writing skills and vocabulary word recognition.

Table of Contents

	Page
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Nature of the Problem	1
Statement of the Problem	1
Purpose of the Study.....	4
Research Questions	5
Definition of Terms	5
Chapter 2: Literature Review	8
Existing Problems From the Literature	8
Evidence From the Literature.....	10
Solutions From the Literature.....	14
Chapter 3: Methodology.....	20
Participants	20
Data Collection Instruments.....	21
Procedures	22
Anticipated Outcomes	22
Research Design--Weekly Activities	24
Assessments.....	29
Advantages	29
Disadvantages.....	30
Limitations.....	30
Chapter 4: Results	32
Pre- and Posttest on Writing.....	33
Pre- and Posttest on Vocabulary	34
Student Expressive Attitude Survey.....	36
Parental Home and School Folder Survey	37
Chapter 5: Discussion.....	40
Discussion of Conclusion.....	40
Implications of the Findings.....	41
Limitations of the Study	42
Recommendations	42
References	44
Appendixes	
A Pre- and Postwriting Prompt Test.....	47
B Parental Home and School Folder Survey.....	49
C Student Expressive Art Survey.....	52
D Supplemental Material for Skill Practice.....	54

Tables

1	Grading Scale With 12 Answers Scores	34
2	Vocabulary Test Results--Pre- and Posttests	35
3	Writing Assessment Results--Pre- and Posttests	36
4	Student Expressive Attitude Survey Results	37
5	Parental Home and School Folder Survey Results	38

Chapter 1: Introduction

Nature of the Problem

The problem was to improve the ability of English for speaker of other languages (ESOL) students in second grade with a tutoring writing program. ESOL student writing was extremely poor due to the second-language acquisition process. Furthermore, writing was one of the most difficult and challenging tasks for ESOL students to acquire at a rapid rate.

Statement of the Problem

The research problem that this study addressed was the deficiency of writing skills for 20 ESOL students in second grade. Today, educators are encountering a challenge of student diversity whose home languages and cultures differ from the mainstream culture in the classrooms. An escalating number of children from increasingly diverse backgrounds and special needs are entering the country. Immigrant children are not achieving optimal standards, and it is becoming an educational crisis (Rimm, Garbarino, Anderson, & Carger, 1997).

This study was conducted at an elementary school, which was established in 1974. There were 728 students enrolled at the study site. The racial composition of the school was distributed as follows: 5% White, 48% Black, 50% Hispanic, and 1% Asian Indian. The school staff consisted of 58 full-time staff members and 11 part-time staff members.

At the study site, the ESOL classes were small and taught in English using ESOL strategies. The ESOL classes were provided through a pullout program that students attend during the language arts session. The students were taught separately from native English-speaking students. Students were placed in the ESOL program according to the parents' classification on the Home Language Survey. Those students were administered

the English Language Proficiency Assessment. Their ESOL level was determined according to the Oral Language Proficiency Scale Test for prekindergarten through fifth grade.

The population of ESOL students was composed of 141 students, the majority of whom were of Cuban nationality. The majority of ESOL students who enrolled at the site had never been served in an academic ESOL program before. Spanish had been the only and the main academic language for the predominance of ESOL students.

The problem of second-language learner in writing was addressed by Roca de Larios, Manchon, and Murphy (2006). The cross-sectional study was intended to provide answers in the cognitive operations involved in the second-language writer. The results demonstrated that second-language learners dedicate twice as much time formulating problems than native speakers. The formulation of problems is referred to as the process of converting thoughts into language. Cumming (1990) stated, "Writing involves a fundamental dialectic between content and rhetorical concerns (i.e., between what to say and how to say it) as well as ongoing efforts to resolve the discrepancies that may arise" (p. 484).

Therefore, the assumption concerning second-language learner writers encountered various discrepancies or writing problems compared to native speakers when faced with the task of translation. According to Roca de Larios et al. (2006), the translating process is organized in a "complex network of relationships--into a linear piece of written language" (p. 3).

Additionally, Cumming (2001) stated that, regardless of "similarities between first language (L1) and second language (L2) writing, in the L2 condition writers seemed to devote much attention while they write to decisions about the form of the second

language or to finding resources such as appropriate words” (p. 5). However, according to the above mentioned research, findings were contradictory and confirmed the existence of similarities and differences surrounded by the writing processes in native and foreign speakers.

Additionally, Cumming (2001) suggested that the way a language skill is transferred between languages is an area to be investigated and analyzed. Acquiring language skills is a cognitive process with cultural consequences that varies in values and attitudes. Language is effectively processed, depending on the communication view of the culture.

Further exploration is necessary in the category of incorporating higher levels of thinking skills through narrative or expository writing in literature research. According to Manchon (2002) further research is necessary in controlling the second-language learners’ contributions of proficiency and obtaining writing ability to provide an in-depth knowledge concerning the writing process. Therefore, controlling for such factors as age and writing background is beneficial in exploring differences in the way writers deal with preparing a plan (Manchon).

Additional research is needed on activating various levels of thinking skills in order for ESOL students to meet higher academic expectations. Furthermore, manufacturing educational and improved materials with higher order thinking skills is imperative to decrease the educational research gap of ESOL students and meet the appropriate assessment criteria through the educational process. In summary, with the large number of immigrants entering the United States, the instruction of ESOL students to meet the requisite of higher learning institutions is a field for exploration.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to improve writing skills of ESOL students in second grade. The main reason for implementing this research was the teaching experience of the writer with ESOL students who exhibit extremely low to no writing skills in elementary school during the second-language acquisition process. According to the Pew Hispanic Center (as cited in Lewis, 2006), the Hispanic population in the United States is increasing, and the population of young students portrays a remarkable challenge for public schools nationwide. Lewis indicated, "The Pew study of six southern states revealed that the number of Hispanics increased on average by more than 300 % in the last decade" (p. 72). Additionally, the Pew study found the majority of immigrants to be young men who eventually brought their families. Therefore, the effect of Hispanic immigration is beginning to emerge by increasing public school enrollments (Lewis).

The role of the writer was to be a facilitator and instructor and to counsel the students as needed. The writer utilized ESOL strategies and the Sunshine States Standards to meet language arts grade-level expectations. Several ESOL techniques that were implemented into the lessons automatically were the following: total physical response (TPR), audiovisuals equipment, computer and technology, picture and word cards, repetition and pausing, and students drawing for counseling purpose. Additionally, the writer was to grade, evaluate, observe, and analyze ESOL students' academic assignments.

The role of the student was to become an active participant in the Tutoring Writing Program. Students completed all assignments and tests presented by the writer in cooperative groups. Students' work samples were included in the portfolios. The home and school folder served as a record of progress from the language acquisition level by

involving parents and helping to increase students' academic grades.

Research Questions

The following research questions were based on the professional experience of the writer to provide a solution for improving second-grade ESOL students writing English:

1. What procedures had the best effect on second-grade ESOL students' writing?
2. How does parental involvement assist in students learning to write better?
3. How does student's expressive art work promote writing skills of ESOL students?

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined for this study.

Limited English proficient (LEP). This is a reference for identifying students whose primary or native language is not English and who have difficulty in using English (e.g., reading, writing, speaking, and listening) and that the opportunity to participate effectively in school may be denied when English is the exclusive language of instruction. Such students require ESOL and bilingual education services. Students must receive 2 hours of language arts, reading, and ESOL instruction daily.

Self-contained teacher. This person teaches all academic subject area and delivers 2 hours of language arts, reading, and ESOL instruction.

Resource teacher. This is the designated qualified teacher in a school who provides instructional aid and service to ESOL students. The instructor must be certified in ESOL, and appropriate strategies are the focus of the program.

Pullout model. Students are removed from their regular classroom and provided with instruction for 2 hours by the ESOL-allocated teacher in language arts, reading, and ESOL areas. This may be reinforced in another form by allowing the ESOL teacher to

provide instruction for 1 hour and the classroom teacher for the other hour. The instructional model allows the ESOL-allocated teacher to provide assistance during language art instruction for 1 or 2 hours with the regular classroom teacher. The pullout model was used by the writer during the implementation period to improve writing skills.

TPR. This is a direct strategy and visual approach developed by J. A. James (2000; e.g., saying a word and demonstrating with action). Therefore, the writer incorporated the TPR approach to enhance lesson comprehension for ESOL students.

Parental involvement. This defines the home interaction of parent and student. Parent participation began by approving the notification letter in the student's home language that was sent home once at the initial entry date into the study. According to the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, parents must be notified each school year of the student participation or any programmatic change in the ESOL program,, no later than 30 days after the beginning of the school year, according to the U.S. Department of Education (n.d.). Copies of the annual letters are filed in the ESOL program record folder. Also, the letters can be accessed online through records and forms management (FM No. 6576 and No. 4649).

Academic improvement plan. This is a plan designed by the school's instructional personnel to obtain information regarding the student's progress. Parents meet with counselors, teachers, psychologist, and administrators to discuss ideas to help the student succeed. All LEP students who are in need of Academic Improvement Plans must be assessed by the guidelines set forth in the Comprehensive Reading Plan LEP Assessment Modifications and within the calendar year.

ESOL codes and strategies. These involve utilizing and adapting teaching materials to make the content comprehensible for LEP students with specific teaching

methods (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc., 2006).

The English language proficiency assessment. This is a test that is administered for ESOL program entry, reentry, yearly level update, and exiting. The test provides the student's current ESOL level, which is to remain the same for a period of 6 months until the student is reevaluated to enter the next level. The levels are from 1 through 5, indicating low, intermediate, and high.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Existing Problems From the Literature

In the area of developing proper writing skills for ESOL students in second grade, the research of theory and practice has provided some positive outcomes. As society changes, the occurrence of new complications become apparent. More immigrant students challenge education requirements. Therefore, innovative learning research was imperative to demonstrate successful solutions to the problem existing in the ESOL population.

The domain of ESOL instruction was clearly identified as an evident trend in the transformation of techniques utilized in today's classrooms. For example, Meyer, Madden, and McGrath (2000) found in the data trend report an increase in the number of ESOL students in public schools of approximately 2 million students from 1993 to 1994 and 3 million students from 1999 to 2000. The sample survey data are from the Schools and Staffing Survey. In the United State, from the years 1993-1994 and 1999-2000, the number of ESOL students was increased by 900,000. The Midwest, South, and West demonstrated an increase of the numbers of the ESOL student population.

Meyer et al. (2000) stated that the West and the South had the largest population of LEP public school students with more than half of the national total during the 1999-2000 school year. The implication imposed on an educator is the responsibility to utilize ESOL strategies. ESOL strategies enhance the understanding of a particular subject or information. An educator should become culturally aware of each student's background and academic needs. The large influx of immigrants stated by Meyer et al. was similar to the writer's setting where there was an increase in the number of ESOL students needing remediation in writing English.

Research by Ernst-Salvit, Moore, and Maloney (2002) indicated a variety of

background information and research to enhance the writing of ESOL students in the classrooms. Forty-two percent of all public school teachers studied had at least one LEP student in their classrooms. Therefore, the ESOL students writing system may be completely different. For example, the language may be written from right to left and top to bottom or letters may be written to extend above and below the line. Ernst-Slavit et al. provided evidence of grammatical writing problems that ESOL students had in this study.

Additionally, immigrant students are presenting psychosocial problems. D. C. S. James (1997) stated, “Immigrants are vulnerable to social, emotional, and academic difficulties, but they lack support systems” (p. 51). Schools services that are offered to immigrants are not used to the full advantage. Restriction on the evaluation process, bilingualism, and the language of the assessor are several reasons for immigrant students to have a high risk in socialization. Therefore, the necessity of culturally trained counselors is constantly increased in the health field. As students with social and emotional needs become more preeminent in schools, health personnel must be qualified to work and recognize acculturation problems in schools facilities (D. C. S. James).

Chamness and Hidehiro (2004) stated that recognizing and meeting the needs of at least 3.5 million ESOL students in the United States are essential to revolutionize American schools dramatically. Numerous schools lack programs to remediate and service the immigration population. Furthermore, teachers are not correctly trained to work and provide ESOL students with specific techniques or methods to master academic achievement. However, according to Chamness and Hidehiro, “recent government education policy has attempted to bring immigrant students to ‘proficient’ levels of English within three years, a policy that contradicts language research that demonstrates that students need five to seven years in language programs to attain academic

proficiency” (p. 787). Therefore, teaching approaches to mainstream ESOL students into the classroom is indeed in requirement of solutions.

A significant educational trend exists between individuals finishing high school and obtaining bachelor’s degrees. The inequality of high school completion between White, Black, and Hispanic has slowly improved throughout the years. In 2000, the high completion racial percentile was as follows: White (88%), Black (86%), and Hispanic (63%) for adults. Additionally, the Hispanic population is at the lowest percentile in high school completion due to the low education of immigrants (Morrison, 2001).

Furthermore, Morrison (2001) presented the data released from the Bureau of the U.S. Census in the years 1988 and 2000 that demonstrated continuous gaps among Hispanics in college education. Morrison stated, “In 2000, only 10 percent of Hispanics held a bachelor degree in comparison to 18 percent of Blacks and 30 percent of Whites” (p. 34). However, the Hispanic percentile has continued to deteriorate in the educational acquisition process.

Therefore, it is evident that, with the data presented in these studies, Hispanic individuals are encountering problems in the educational attainment. This problem impacts social stability affecting individuals to be labeled in an “underclass” status. Legislators should identify this trend and commit to provide services and programs to ease the education preparation process Morrison (2001).

Evidence From the Literature

In viewing ESOL teacher instruction, Bristor, Pelaez, and Crawley (2000) at Florida Atlantic University restructured its undergraduate teacher preparation program to provide a bachelor’s degree in elementary education with ESOL endorsement. This program prepared teachers to meet the needs of ESOL students in regular classroom

settings. For example, Bristor et al. provided phonological awareness strategies and whole language reading activities in their program. This activated background knowledge of the student.

Waggoner and O'Malley (1985) conducted a survey of public school teachers. The research found that 70% of classroom instructors with ESOL students did not have any educational training in ESOL methodology, approach, or techniques. Improving ESOL students writing skills was this writer's focus, and the necessity of accredited teachers was imperative to provide the proper instructional strategy.

Pinker (2000), one of the world's leading cognitive scientists, explored the ambiguity of language. He stated how language works and how people begin speaking. The reason language changes during a period of time and explanations for individuals' irregularities were examined in his literature. The modified words and rules theory relates to the phenomenon of regular and irregular verb forms that are generated by rules and irregular forms that are retrieved from memory. Pinker stated, "The memory is associated with linking patterns and words with words" (p. 276) to create a given statement or phrase.

Pinker (2000) stated that "language may be created by using computer simulations of neural networks" (p. 269). The main idea of Pinker referred to language becoming a mental dictionary of memorized words and grammatical creative rules. In addition, there is a great deal of information that may be acquired through children's grammatical mistakes. The author stated that the brain is a system of devices used for different tasks. Pinker also wrote, "Whether the rule or the association, the brain loses the benefit of variables and the rules that connects them together" (p. 146). Pinker's publication of the memory theory was a useful tool for this writer to obtain an understanding of the second-

language process of ESOL students in this study.

In an effort to increase student achievement, the Connecticut superintendents' participants presented strategies to enhance instruction. A school reform was created by the Connecticut Center for School Change. The superintendents who were involved supported the idea that professionals learn through multiple experiences by evaluating problems with peers, rather than through workshops. Participants collaborated to attempt new concepts, review each other's work, offer alternative suggestions, and provide support. Various classroom problems were evident. For example, classroom activities did not challenge and students were not engaged in learning through instructional materials. Students were not asked to develop questions. Therefore, the cooperative learning of the superintendents obtained the need to link concepts about leadership that were acquired in their community of practice back to the districts. The group's discussions revealed that, according to Rallis, Tedder, and Lachman (2006), there was still "much work to be done" (p. 1).

As educational industries demand more accountability, the need for achievement tests has become a prominent trend to offer equality for all students. ESOL students are assessed on the same basis as other students to demonstrate academic learning acquisition progress. Flexibilities are determined depending on each state (Valdez, 2003). There were three reasons for administering achievement tests to ESOL students.

The first reason presented by Valdes (2003) stated that "the general public supports and, in fact, demands the use of standardized tests as the cure for the ills of public education in the United States" (p. 1). Obtaining information on achievement progress of students and accountability is the main cause for the general public to encourage the use of assessments. Therefore, standardized test scores demonstrate a

student's performance and achievement level in comparison to others taking the same test. Validating student achievement and school effectiveness is a form of providing accountability for the minority population. This is an evident trend after the publication of *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

Valdez (2003) stated that the federal system aims to close the achievement gap between minority and majority students. ESOL students were having the opportunity to outperform other ethnicity groups to close the achievement gap. Furthermore, LEP students may need 5 to 10 years to attain grade-level norms on standardized tests.

The second reason provided by Wirt and Kirst (1997) reflected the new objective goal of the federal function in education to establish equity and accountability. The focus of equity and accountability in U.S. education was to promote unity in the achievement gap of minority and majority students. However, political budget cuts in education caused an impact on the resources issued by federal legislation.

The third reason to incorporate achievement tests was to guide classroom instruction and curriculum. Consequently, state-mandated tests are assumed to have the power to change and modify the instructional process as teachers and students become familiar with the test strategies. Furthermore, planning is the result of the performance assessment identifying room for improvement. Therefore, staff members with organizational plans affected individual student work performance (Behuniak, 2002).

Additionally, assessing ESOL students often present a problem for instructors in obtaining appropriate and alternative measurements necessary for academic evaluation. Alternative assessments provide a wide range of methods to assess ESOL students from oral interviews to physical demonstrations. Furthermore, alternative assessment offers the

expansion of adequate academic progress and acquisition stage or level. Huerta-Macias (1995) stated, “Students are evaluated on what they integrate and produce rather than on what they are able to recall” (p. 9).

Solutions From the Literature

As the education system encounters problems with ESOL students and academic effectiveness, research is providing new solutions. Teaching and learning may be enhanced when participants’ own experiences are connected with what they know and what the new environment offers. The level of student responses to teachers’ questions develops a student’s ability to be organized with semantic maps or outlines. In addition, graphic organizers provide an outline for the prewriting process. This process allows for basic essay writing-producing narratives and connections of language developments by Ernst-Salvit et al. (2002).

The Zhang and Schumm (2000) study demonstrated positive effects of the keyword method on LEP students to enhance vocabulary recall, comprehension, and writing skills. The keyword method used visual imagery as a memory instrument. The research in second-language learning emphasized the importance of using images, photos, cartoons, and pictures. The findings of this study implicated that the keyword method can help LEP students to become more strategic, independent learners and empowered by finding tricks or secrets to learning new complex words.

Furthermore, Zhang and Schumm (2000) affirmed that students need to be taught different learning strategies to be used in appropriate learning situations. These strategies help monitor the learning processes and help students become competent in resolving different problems with different methods. The keyword method serves as a potential technique for classroom instructors. This method may enhance vocabulary retention in

writing assignments of students of a diverse cultural, linguistic, and low-academic conditions presented in the study population.

Research conducted by Valle, McEachern, and Sabina (1999) concluded that expressive arts, drawings, and writings are used to counsel newly arrived refugee students for assisting their adjustment to U.S. schools and culture. Children who are suffering psychological pain from the distress of illegal abandonment, confinement, family grievance, and new friends and country can be helped to express their emotions and feelings by group counseling. Several guidance counseling techniques involve creative drawing and writings. Children's expressive artwork and writings were used for analysis and problem identification and to assess the progress of adaptation from school and community.

Furthermore, in the research by Valle et al. (1999), the children were taught problem-solving and decision-making skills. The children's academic grades showed improvement in all subjects. In addition, classroom behavior and attendance were increased after the first grading period. It was this writer's experience that immigrant students are arriving with various family isolation problems and, obviously, require a counseling transitional period.

Holbein, Bristor, and Yahya (2001) concluded that using television and videotapes motivates writing. Visual literacy research suggested that the integration of imagery into instruction can result in the promotion of writing and the improvement of the student's comprehension. Reading, writing, and dramatizing scripts enhanced language usage and reading comprehension by requiring group cooperation. This engaged the students in the affective and cognitive processes through literacy interactions. Television was also used to illustrate appropriate language for ESOL students. This

research showed improvement in elementary students' ability to comprehend narratives presented in movies, television, and audiovisual formats, which was one of this writer's strands to increase writing skills and cognitive learning.

Additionally, Perin's (2002) task repetition was an effective strategy to develop writing efficiency. The use of resource textbook and repetition of key ideas improved written summaries and review. The research suggested that repetition of meaningful literacy activity had prospects of assisting the learning process. This task helped students understand how written text is structured, grasp the logic of a subject, monitor the understanding of content or subject matter, and build the knowledge for discussion. The research findings indicated that, when students were prepared based on strategies, pausing 3 minutes between sections of assignments, summarizing in writing what has been read, and regular repetition enhanced students' acquisition skills in acceleration. Furthermore, this research provided a positive technique to increase ESOL students' instruction comprehension that affected this writer's target group.

Clippard (1998) used the writers' workshop approach to promote writing skills and writing self-efficacy for learning disabled or deficit students. Students who were in the writers' workshop enjoyed writing more, observed themselves as better writers, and self-esteem was increased in regard to writing. The writers' workshop approach is complementary to excessive writing education by utilizing technology instruction. Although, students did not score higher on writing tests, the scores were higher on the pre- and postwriting examples. Students were more competent in planning, creating, producing, and draft revising. This research presented a positive activity to increase writing scores as a solution to this writer's student problem.

Bennett and Rolheiser (2001) discussed and explained various instructional

strategies. A deliberation of the selected cooperative learning model was further examined. Cooperative learning is an instructional method utilizing small groups. This model allows for students to learn by working together toward a given goal. Students are organized into small groups after receiving teacher instruction. Then, participants work through to understand and complete the assignment as a successful group. Collaborative efforts result in participants striving for shared benefit for all group members to gain each other's labors (Bennett & Rolheiser).

Why use cooperative learning? An extensive history of research on the cooperative learning model exists. Since the first research study in 1898, nearly 600 experimental studies and over 100 associated studies have been conducted (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). Students' learning goals may be structured to promote cooperative, competitive, or individualistic efforts in a positive manner. Rather than contributing to the negativism of competition, students learn to work together.

Dinan (2006) incorporated cooperative learning since 1993 into his organic chemistry team-oriented classroom. The time and activities used at the start of the academic year to initiate cooperative learning was the key to a successful school year. For example, the 1st day of school may start with an activity that involves the students to work in groups to, according to Dinan, "review the syllabus, learn each other's names, and play a cooperative decision-making game" (p. 1). Designing well-prepared exercises for the first 2 days of school promotes positive learning attitudes. Therefore, good communication skills, trust, and a feeling of collaboration to become better learners are the accomplishment of the cooperative learning approach.

Zha, Kelly, and Park (2006) investigated the communicative competence of ESOL students using electronic discussion boards. This study focused on ESOL students in

elementary school utilizing the electronic discussion groups to enhance cooperative language communication. During a 6-week period, three messages by 28 ESL students at low performance were posted and analyzed. The Internet and the cooperative learning model were used as educational tools to increase communication competence. This study found that students had a higher participation rate in collaborative activities and tasks than they had in individual activities. Students' use of written language for personal expression and enjoyment increased. Furthermore, students corrected their use of language when influenced by their peers' messages.

Educators may utilize electronic discussion boards as a learning environment to encourage students to observe their peers' written language. Egbert (2002) claimed that ESOL students are able to learn to use the technology environments, interact socially, and complete work tasks in a meaningful way with others. Using Internet technology communication as a language-learning environment can help teachers implement appropriate standards for ESOL instruction (Egbert, 2001).

Studies have recognized that learners have a higher participation rate in electronic discussion groups in comparison to face-to-face communication. This difference is considered to transpire because Internet usage offers an equal chance for learners with a diverse cultural background and personalities. Therefore, increasing participation and use of language promotes peer collaboration and language acquisition (Beauvois, 1994; Gonzalez-Bueno, 1998; Kern, 1995).

Further exploration is necessary in the category of incorporating higher levels of thinking skills through narrative or expository writing. In order for ESOL students to meet higher academic expectations, additional research should focus on activating various levels of thinking skills. In addition, manufacturing educational and improved materials

with higher order thinking skills is imperative to prepare students to meet the appropriate assessment criteria through the educational process. In summary, with the large number of immigrants entering the United States, the instruction of ESOL students to meet the requisite of higher learning institutions and increase in academic achievement for low-level performers is a field for exploration (Rallis et al., 2006).

Chapter 3: Methodology

This study was conducted at an elementary school in the southeastern United States. The purpose of this study was to improve the writing skills of ESOL students in second grade.

The methodology segment included scheduling of activities and evaluations that are discussed below. Additionally, skills in practice and various factors to the study are addressed.

Participants

The population of this study consisted of 20 ESOL level, heterogeneous, and Hispanic students in second grade. The main purpose for utilizing ESOL students in the second grade as the target sample was evident in the extremely low level of the writing scores in class assignments and test scores from prewriting prompt assessments in comparison to native speakers.

According to the prewriting assessment administered at the beginning of the 2005-2006 school year, 21 of the ESOL students received a no score, and 1 student obtained a low score as determined by a rubric grading scale. A nonrandom, purposive sample of 20 ESOL students in second grade was used to conduct this study.

Early intervention in second grade was this writer's main focus in order to prepare and increase ESOL students' levels of performance in the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) Writing+ and Standardized Achievement Test in second grade. The writing process is one of the most difficult skills to remediate and the last one to be acquired for a second-language learner. As a result, ESOL students were not performing at high levels of achievement on the FCAT Writing+, Standardized Achievement Test, or monthly writing prompt assessments.

Data Collection Instruments

The observation of participants' activities was the form of data collection utilized in this study for evaluation. The following consists of the instruments' identification that was used after the lessons and activities were mastered: The same pre- and postwriting prompts (see Appendix A) and vocabulary test were administered at the beginning and at the end of the implementation. The narrative writing prompt for second grade was as follows: Write a paragraph about ways to save the Earth. The purpose for utilizing the above specified data for collection of instruments was to determine and monitor the progress of ESOL students' academic learning gain.

The writer administered pre- and postassessments on vocabulary to serve as score comparisons from the audiovisual comprehension (Holbein et al., 2001). The writer reviewed and practiced with students various language art lessons to increase language mastery. As a culminating activity, the students produced a pen pal letter publication as suggested by Clippard (1998). A parent survey was evaluated to question the effectiveness of the home and school folder (see Appendix B). Additionally, students completed an expressive art survey to determine if the use of art increased second language comprehension (see Appendix C).

The statistical analysis consisted of end results and assessment scores from the collection of data that were compared and measured according to the categorized outcomes. The data collected were analyzed and entered utilizing the SPSS, Version 13.0. The calculation of the mean, median, mode, and standard deviation for the data set was used to obtain a descriptive analysis. The means and standard deviation from the pre- and postwriting prompts and vocabulary assessment of the ESOL students were compared. After obtaining the appropriate analyses and calculations from the data collection, the

writer was able to compare and contrast the variables to determine whether or not ESOL students' writing skills increased.

Procedures

This study was conducted in a second-grade, elementary, ESOL class. The intervention included a 12-week implementation period, including writing activities in a tutoring writing program presented and instructed by the writer. Each lesson was devoted to 30 minutes of daily instruction from Monday to Thursday for a total of a 24-hour implementation period. Prior to participation, students and their parents signed an informed consent form approved by the campus Institutional Review Board.

The strategy recommended by Holbein et al. (2001) was the integration of audiovisual into the listening of a story. The inclusion of Valle et al.'s (1999) approach of art and drawings was incorporated into the writing journals to improve writing skills. Finally, as a culminating activity, the writer chose to produce a pen pal letter publication with the writers' workshop as suggested by Clippard (1998). The writers' workshop approach generated higher writing skills and better writing samples. The students visited the computer lab to use the word processor as a motivational tool to complete a final draft of the pen pal letters. Additionally, several supplemental materials were utilized to develop and design the curriculum for the writing program (see Appendix D).

Anticipated Outcomes

This researcher expected the following outcomes and results from the study: After the process of the study, the targeted ESOL second-grade population would increase its writing skills as demonstrated in the pre- and postwriting prompts and vocabulary assessment. The students would produce a pen pal letter publication using Clippard (1998) writers' workshop methods to promote editing and grammatical skills. Holbein et

al.'s (2001) audiovisual integration increased ESOL students' vocabulary comprehension.

Parental involvement would be demonstrated by increasing interaction with the home and school communication folder. The creation of students' art expressions related to emotional feelings and conflict resolution reflected a positive environment adjustment. The mastery of goals and objectives for LEP students was evident in the teacher's grade book that included assignments and tests scores compared throughout the implementation period.

Writing assignments would be evaluated holistically. Scoring was done using a scoring rubric scale of 0 through 6, similar to the state's Writers Writing Assessment Test. The following explains the criteria used: (a) A score of 0 indicated a nonscorable assignment that may be illegible, was not in English, or the prompt was restated; (b) 1 indicated an assignment that was barely focused on the topic and purpose, had few relevant details, had no clear organization or pattern, and had many mistakes; (c) 2 indicated an assignment that was partially focused on topic and purpose but contained many irrelevant details. Order of events may be confusing and lack of completeness (many mistakes); (d) 3 indicated an assignment that was focused on topic and purpose in certain places but had some irrelevant events and details. Some events may be left out of order, abrupt beginning or ending, missing events, and may lack a sense of completeness (frequent mistakes); (e) 4 indicated an assignment that was, for the most part, focused on topic and purpose. Most events are in order and middle is adequately developed, but beginning is uninteresting or ending may be unsatisfactory (a few mistakes); (f) 5 indicated an assignment that was focused on topic and purpose. Writing has an interesting beginning, well-developed middle with events told in order, and the ending resolves the problem with a sense of completion (almost no mistakes); (g) 6 indicated an assignment

that was focused on topic and purpose with an interesting beginning introducing characters and problem. A well-developed middle deals with a problem, presents events in order, and ending shows how problem is worked out (many details and almost no mistakes in sentence structure).

In addition, the incorporation of researched programs provided a positive advantage that has proven to be effective from their experiments. For instance, Holbein et al. (2001) implemented various visual media equipments to increase ESOL comprehension and language understanding. The writers' workshop idea of Clippard (1998) motivated students' achievement in a cooperative environment. According to the research of Valle et al. (1999), the use of expressive art and drawing helped improve school environment adjustment. In conclusion, the integration of informal and formal assessment promoted the opportunity to observe students' performances and help achieve the goals of the research questions.

Research Design--Weekly Activities

This writer devoted 30 minutes of daily instruction to ESOL students in second grade for the Tutoring Writing Program. In addition, picture word dictionaries were used to help students' complete daily activities. All assignments and writing prompt tests were graded to reflect each student's analysis of the 12-week implementation period.

The activities for the 1st week consisted of the explanation of the Tutoring Writing Program and a discussion of the student and parent information and consent form. Students were placed in groups of three. The home and school connection folder was explained, sent home daily with the writer's comments, and returned with parents' initials. The pretest on vocabulary and the pretest on the writing prompt (see Appendix A) for writing skills evaluation were administered. A prewriting web planning strategy was

introduced on the topic, My Favorite Time of the Year.

The activities for the 2nd week were to introduce a journal free-writing activity on a favorite book and draw a picture. The differences between a narrative and an expository writing were explained. The students completed a web on a narrative topic and wrote a narrative on what happened when you did something special with a friend? An expressive art picture of the above essay story was drawn, and one sentence telling something to a friend was written.

The activities for the 3rd week were to work on a journal free-writing activity on a favorite school subject and draw a picture. A web and a story on an expository topic, My Favorite Thing to Do After School were completed. The students were to draw an expressive art picture of the above essay story, and a sentence of the favorite thing to do after school was described. Students were invited to make food books by thinking of foods that begin with each of the consonants, write their names, and draw pictures.

The activities for the 4th week were for students to complete a journal free-writing activity on words that were funny and draw pictures for each word. What is a sentence was introduced and explained to the students. Sentence definition and rules of a sentence were reviewed. The book on sentence practice to correct sentences was assigned. Students reviewed a piece of their journal writings to see if they could improve them by checking for capitalization and punctuation. Punctuation marks were explained, and the students practiced in the following examples: (a) I am seven today, (b) The dog sut by my bed, (c) What is in the bagg, (d) We run all the way to school yesterday?, and (e) What is hiz name?

The activities for Week 5 were a journal free-writing activity on things that could be better at school and draw pictures for each word. What a sentence is was reviewed, and

the practice book on Cans of Sentences was assigned. A character sketch was explained and discussed. A character sketch sample was illustrated on the board about the story of Little Red Riding Hood. The writer discussed and reviewed with students the guidelines for writing a character sketch. The students listened to a story with audiovisual equipment. Students were asked to write a character sketch of the story and complete the practice book on the Character Sketch Graph.

The activities for Week 6 were a journal free-writing activity on what students like about writing and draw pictures for each word. The writer taught and explained to students that adding details can help make their characters come alive for readers. The students practiced and reread the story. Students applied, reviewed, and practiced adding details by completing practice book on Improving Writing Skills. Students looked at the character sketches to see if they could add details to make their characters more interesting. The students wrote a paragraph about changing the ending of the story. They included a main idea with three supporting detail sentences, a picture about the story, and retold the story orally.

The activity for Week 7 was a prewriting activity. Students wrote their own stories, answered the following questions in their writing journal, and drew pictures for each answer: (a) What was your story about?, (b) Who was the main character?, (c) What was happened in your story?, and (d) How would your end story?

A prewriting, organizing, and planning activity was used to remind students that a story has characters that solve a problem at the end. Students used the story planner sample to model how to plan what to write about in a story. Copies to students to use and plan the story together were distributed. Students completed the story map with a beginning, middle, and end for the drafting of the story map activity.

The activities for Week 8 were a journal free-writing on an important person they knew about and draw a picture. Students continued to work in the end section of the story map. They drafted and created a title. Explanations were provided to students that titles tell what the story is about in an interesting manner. Students worked in groups to read each others drafts and think about their titles. Students used the practice book on the Revision Check List on revising their stories. Improving sentence writing included a review with students on the board, and they completed the assignment in the practice book on Improving Writing.

The activities for Week 9 were a journal free-writing activity on sometimes I wish . . . and draw a picture. A proof-reading activity was developed for students to reread their papers carefully to correct capitalization, punctuation, and spelling errors. Students were prompted to use the Proof Reading Checklist in the practice book. Students made final copies of their stories, drew pictures, and decided on how to share their stories with the class (publishing and evaluating activity). Students created a shared writing with a recipe book by choosing ingredients for a “silly” sandwich on construction paper.

The activities for Week 10 were a journal free-writing on favorite foods and draw pictures for each type of food. An introduction and explanation were given to students on how to use a Microsoft word processor. Students practiced writing and printing the week’s journal writing in the computer. The writer reviewed and discussed the process of a letter with students. Students completed a friendly letter sample together on the board.

The activities for Week 11 were a journal free-writing activity on a new friend and draw a picture. The students wrote and discussed the purpose for writing a letter (letters must include heading, salutations, body, closing, and signature). The writer guided students in writing a friendly letter. Students wrote their pen pal letters individually in the

computer. Students reread and edited each others' letters.

The activity for Week 12 was for students to complete, revise, and print the pen pal letters. The writer distributed the Parent Home and School Folder Survey to parents (see Appendix B). The writer explained and discussed with students the remittance for the outside of mailing envelopes. Students completed addressing the pen pals envelopes and designed a stamp. Students' letters were distributed by the writer to another class. The students were administered the postwriting prompt test, Write a story about saving the Earth (see Appendix A). Students developed a journal free-writing activity on if they learned anything new in the Tutoring Writing Program and were asked to draw a picture. The writer administered the posttest on vocabulary. The students wrote, read, and shared feelings about coming to school or being in America. Students demonstrated their favorite journal free-writing entry and their pictures. Student completed the Student Expressive Art Survey (see Appendix C).

The design justification and key objective for developing this design was to demonstrate the various activities of each participant during the process of this study. A quantitative design was employed to interpret, describe, and explain the meaning of the collected numerical data exposed to individual statistical analysis. Therefore, the writer focused on the design process and the outcomes to determine appropriate judgments or conclusions. The design illustrated specific techniques to be implemented in order to improve grammatical errors and comprehension in writing skills of ESOL students in second grade. The parents of the students in second grade became active participants by communicating with their children's achievements and reading the comments in the connection folders. The improvement showed a result of the implementation of the home and school connection folder.

The research problem and questions mentioned were resolved by completing the activities of this study. One of the limitations in this study was the number of changing participants throughout the study due to students' withdrawal or entering the school. The student transition rate at this school was very high. Additionally, the lack of students' ability or focusing may have impacted the consistency and the learning acquisition process. Therefore, the mentioned limitations might have inhibited the ESOL students from the opportunity to increase their writing skills.

Assessments

This researcher utilized the following assessments: the pre- and postwriting prompts to measure punctuation and grammatical writing skills. The production of a pen pal letter using Clippard (1998) writers' workshop was evaluated. Holbein et al.'s (2001) audiovisual integration was assessed with word recognition in the pre- and posttest on vocabulary. A parent home and school folder questionnaire served to obtain information regarding its effectiveness. Additionally, a student survey provided evidence of expressive art, promoting understanding and adjustment.

Advantages

Advantages considered by this writer were the integration of approaches, strategies, and techniques to provide a solution for the poor writing skills of ESOL students in second grade. The literature review provided appropriate advantages of the learning acquisition through a number of researched programs that offered academic solutions. Furthermore, as a demonstration of writing improvement, ESOL students' assignments and pre- and postwriting prompt tests presented opportunities for language mastery. The writer provided one-on-one instruction to the students by guiding, discussing, explaining, translating, and modeling, which served as an advantage to the

writing acquisition process.

Learners gained enhanced writing skills through the consistency of writing skills strategies and modeling activities. In addition, the home and school connection folder was used to provide parental and teacher communication to help students become better writers. In summary, this writer considered the implementation of the various methods mentioned to serve as a model for this study.

Disadvantages

A prevailing disadvantage that provided a major challenge to ESOL students was in the area of narrative writing and the lack of parental assistance for home-learning assignments. The monthly writing prompts and daily narrative writing assessment scores of ESOL students revealed a dramatic need for improvement in writing. This required the instruction process to be structured in an extreme way. Additionally, grammatical errors continued to be problematic and needed reinforcement, according to the School Improvement Plan for the 2005-2006 school year. A possible threat to the internal validity of this study was the students' attendance. The inconsistency of the students' attendance due to families transferring to another state or another school impacted and affected the writer's program. The writer encountered students entering and leaving during the middle of the program. However, the fluctuation of students' enrollment did not greatly affect and reduce the writing academic objective results.

Limitations

A limitation of this study was highly related to students' absences. Low scores were often connected to individuals who were constantly absent from school. Absences provoking a cause-and-effect situation affected the overall school scores, especially in the writer's state where schools are labeled by a state grade score, and attendance creates a

dramatic impact. Furthermore, if the students are continuously absent, they cannot master performance skills necessary to meet the objective presented on the FCAT.

Chapter 4: Results

The following are the three qualitative research questions that were used in this study:

1. What procedures had the best effect on second' grade ESOL students' writing?
2. How does parental involvement assist in students learning to write better?
3. How does student expressive art work promote writing skills of ESOL students?

As a result of this 12-week study, the improvement of writing skills was validated by the pre- and posttests on writing and the vocabulary test. The pre- and posttests on writing were scored utilizing the holistic score--participant data. The scoring was prepared on a 6-point rubric scale. The vocabulary test provided the level of word recognition, identification, and comprehension of the participants--sample data. The writing test and the vocabulary test were administered at the beginning and end of the 12-week implementation period.

A teacher-made attitude survey was measured by the writer to determine student self-esteem--participant sample (see Appendix C). The concentration of the survey was to obtain student attitudes toward academic achievement using art. Additionally, a parent survey that consisted of the effectiveness of the home and school folder for parental involvement was evaluated--participant sample (see Appendix B). The surveys were evaluated according to a Likert scale. Additionally, the pen pal letter student sample demonstrated an increase in writing skills, vocabulary, and grammar. The results were examined according to each particular response. Both surveys were administered at the end of the 12-week implementation period.

Due to a low student enrollment, only 11 students participated and completed the

study at the site. The statistical analysis of individual student progress in writing was done utilizing SPSS, Version 13.0. This analysis was done by calculating the mean, median, mode, and the standard deviation for the pre- and posttests on writing and vocabulary. The purpose of this analysis was to record specific improvements in the participants' writing and vocabulary comprehension. The results demonstrated a comparison between the levels of achievement between the first and the last pre- and posttests on writing and vocabulary.

Pre- and Posttests on Writing

All participants demonstrated a significant improvement of at least 2 points or higher on the posttest on the writing assessment as measured by using the 6-point rubric scale. The posttest on writing was compared to the scores of the pretest on writing that presented an extremely low to a 0 score for some participants. Assessments, according to scores, were as follows:

1. Two students had an increase of 2 points.
2. Five students had an increase of 3 points.
3. Three students had an increase of 4 points.
4. One student had an increase of 5 points.

This analysis indicated that the participants mean score or average was dramatically increased from 1.09 points in the pretest on writing compared up to 4.45 points in the posttest using the holistic rubric score of 0 to 6 points. According to Darren and Malley (2006), the median scores provided a measure of central tendency; the middle point in a distribution of values in the pretest was 1.00 and a score of 4.00 in the posttest. The mode demonstrated the most frequently occurring value to be a score of 0 in pretest to a score of 3 in the posttest. The standard deviation describes how closely all the

different numbers, scores, and so forth gather around the calculated average of the data (Darren & Malley). According to the results obtained from the SPSS, Version 13.0, the standard deviation in the pretest was 1.375, and, in the posttest, it was 1.214. All of the above scores provided evidence of gains from the pre- and posttests on writing skills.

Pre- and Posttests on Vocabulary

The vocabulary test was graded using the following grading scale and the scores for the 12 answers as shown in Table 1. Based on the scores from the grading scale, all participants made a major improvement in the vocabulary posttest (see Table 2).

Table 1

Grading Scale With 12 Answers Scores

Letter grades	%	Wrong answers
A	90-100	0
B	80-89	1
C	70-79	2
D	60-69	3
F	0-59	4

Twelve words were used for the vocabulary test at the beginning and at the end of the 12-week period. The pretest on vocabulary was extremely low. Six of the 11 students had an F or lower score on the pretest. In contrast, on the posttest, 9 students made an A (excellent), and 2 students made a B (good) on the posttest. The increase was significant from low scores at the beginning to high scores at the end of the implementation.

Table 2

*Vocabulary Test Results--Pre-
and Posttests*

Participant	Pretest	Posttest
1	0	A
2	0	A
3	F	A
4	D	A
5	D	B
6	B	A
7	0	A
8	F	B
9	A	A
10	F	A
11	B	A

Based on the comparison of the posttest on vocabulary, all participants' scores were increased. According to the scores, 54% of the participants showed an increase of four letter grades. Eighteen percent showed an increase of three letter grades. No decrease was noted in the scores. One student did not make any gains due to the fact that his vocabulary test score was the highest at the beginning and at the end of the study.

According to the scores from the pre- and posttests on writing (see Table 3) and vocabulary, all participants made an increase in their scores. The most gains were made in

the vocabulary test where all the participants scored between 80% to 100%. The least gain was made in the writing area where two participants made an increase of only 2 points. However, according to the scores, there was an overall increase made in all categories for each participant.

Table 3

*Writing Assessment Results--Pre-
and Posttests*

Participant	Pretest	Posttest
1	0	4
2	0	3
3	2	6
4	0	3
5	1	4
6	3	5
7	1	5
8	0	3
9	4	6
10	0	4
11	1	6

Student Expressive Attitude Survey

The majority of the participants exhibited a more positive attitude toward

themselves and school measured by the Student Expressive Art Survey (see Appendix C). Detailed tallies of the participants' responses are shown in Table 4. Results indicated that 10 participants liked going to school. Seven participants felt good when writing and drawing. Ten participants indicated that they were good students and liked to draw. Nine students enjoyed the writing assignments with drawings. Only 3 students believed that pictures helped understand English. The majority of the students had a good attitude toward school and expressed that the use of art increased their vocabulary comprehension.

Table 4

Student Expressive Attitude Survey Results

Survey question	No. of participants		
	Always	Sometimes	Never
I like going to school.	10	1	0
I feel good when I write and draw.	7	4	0
Pictures help me understand English.	3	8	0
I am a good student, and I like to draw.	10	1	0
I enjoy writing assignments with my pictures.	9	1	1

Parental Home and School Folder Survey

The majority of the parents revealed a better understanding toward school and student's academic achievement measured by the Parental Home and School Folder Survey (see Appendix B). Detailed tallies of the parents' responses are shown in Table 5.

Results indicated that all 11 parents liked the home and school folder. Eight parents communicated more with their children. Ten parents knew how the student was doing academically. Ten parents were more involved in their children's learning. Seven parents recognized that communication was easier with the teacher. It was evident that the majority of the parents had a good experience with the home and school folder to communicate better with their children. However, 4 parents out of the 11 continued to lack communication and interaction with the teacher.

Table 5

Parental Home and School Folder Survey Results

Survey question	No. of participants		
	Always	Sometimes	Never
I like the home and school folder.	11	0	0
I communicate more with my child.	8	3	0
I know how my child is doing academically.	10	1	0
I can communicate with the teacher easier.	7	4	0
I am more involved in my child's learning.	10	1	0

These results were rewarding by observing the data that demonstrated an increase in students' writing performance. The vocabulary was improved throughout the writing process. Spelling, word recognition, and comprehension were evident in the writing activities. The information obtained from the student survey supported the theories on drawing pictures to increase language comprehension. In the Parental Home and School

Folder Survey, parents were satisfied with the process that increased communication with their children. However, according to the survey, communication between parents and the teacher was not always successful, and these gains were not increased.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This study was designed to improve the writing skills of ESOL students in second grade. According to the measurements taken from the pre- and posttests on writing and the vocabulary test, a significant improvement was observed by the writer. This writer believes that improvement in the students' writing skills throughout the study was dramatically increased. The writer observed that methods, activities, and the writers' workshop with the use of computers were extremely successful. ESOL students were able to produce a pen pal letter while having fun at the same time. Participants enjoyed the use of computers, and the new skills were quickly learned.

The Student Expressive Art Survey demonstrated that expressive art work promoted the writing skills of ESOL participants. Students were able to understand vocabulary and text meaning through pictures. Participation was increased with writing activities that included drawings. The overall writing experience was more enjoyable when art was incorporated into the writing assignments.

The Parental Home and School Folder Survey indicated that parental involvement assisted in students learning to write better. Students were enthusiastic to show the folder containing parents' signatures to the writer. Students were able to share activities that they were working on and learning about throughout the program with their parents. This increased students' writing performance as the necessity to improve writing skills was evident. Additionally, the writer was able to communicate with the parents specific activities and improvements in the study. Most parents were active participants and corresponded continuously with the writer.

Discussion of Conclusion

The literature research findings provided appropriate support to improve writing

skills of ESOL students. The audiovisual comprehension indicated by Holbein et al. (2001) was used as participants listen to a story. Participants listened to understand the story repetitiously, which increased vocabulary comprehension and pronunciation in ESOL students. This was evident in the gains on the posttest on vocabulary.

Valle et al.'s (1999) approach of art and drawings were present in all of the journal writings of the students. Students were presented with various topics to write freely about in their journals in order to increase their creative writing skills. Furthermore, students were prompted to draw pictures to correspond with their journal writing. Writing was improved through the use of journal activities, and ideas were transformed into art, which increased their comprehension levels.

The students produced a pen pal letter publication as suggested by Clippard (1998) that demonstrated effective writing techniques by the participants at the end of the implementation. This activity required various steps. The participants were taught how to write a friendly letter. Then, training in the use of a computer word processor was correlated with the production of the pen pal letter.

The literature review that was utilized as support to enrich the learning experience of writers was effective. The main researchers' methods that were utilized in this study were Holbein et al. (2001), Valle et al. (1999), and Clippard (1998). According to the pre- and postwriting scores, students' writing skills were significantly increased with the incorporation of research data approaches.

Implications of the Findings

This study was designed to improve writing skills of ESOL students in second grade. According to the measurements of the pre- and posttests on writing and the vocabulary test, all participants made learning gains in writing. Vocabulary recognition

and writing skills were extremely low at the beginning of the implementation. However, with constant training, repetition, explanation, and one-to-one training, students' writing skills were improved significantly.

Limitations of the Study

One of the most considerable limitations within the study was attendance and late arrival. Attendance was a major issue. Various students were constantly absent, which made it difficult to stay on the same activity and daily lessons. Therefore, it was a constant challenge for the writer to retrieve students from their daily classroom instruction in order to make up activities and retraining lessons that were missed. Additionally, tardiness affected the development for each day's instruction. Participants who continued to arrive late for up to 30 minutes were instructed after the allocated time by the writer. These limitations required extra time by the writer to prepare appropriate activities at various time during the school day.

Furthermore, participant enrollment in the study was extremely difficult to acquire. The writer made numerous attempts to recruit students to participate in the study. Personal calls were made to each second-grade ESOL student, letters were written, various fliers were sent home, announcement were made in the morning and afternoon, and information was included in bulletins to parents to obtain participation. After much hard work by the writer to obtain the ideal 20 ESOL students previously identified in the study, only 11 students were enrolled in the writing program.

Recommendations

The ESOL participants in second grade made consistent improvement in their writing skills. However, the 30 minutes allocated for daily implementation were not sufficient. Several students required additional time in completing activities or needed

one-to-one instruction, especially the exceptional student education students. It is recommended by the writer that additional time should be allocated. Participants require a minimum of 45 minutes to an hour to capture and understand writing concepts fully.

Additionally, recruiting participants for the study promoted challenges and frustration for the writer. It is this writer's recommendation that alternative methods of recruiting participants be carefully identified before this study is tried again. Proper planning and well-established time for this study will increase the number of participants.

References

- Beauvois, M. H. (1994). E-talk: Attitudes and motivation in computer-assisted classroom discussion. *Computers and the Humanities*, 28(5), 177-190.
- Behuniak, P. (2002). Cosumer-reference testing. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 84, 199-207.
- Bennett, G., & Rolheiser, C. (2001). *Beyond Monet: The artful science of instructional intergration*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Bookation.
- Bristor, V. J., Pelaez, G. M., & Crawley, S. (2000). An integrated elementary education ESOL teacher preparatory program. *Journal of Action in Teacher Education*, 22(2), 25-32.
- Chamness, P., & Hidehiro, E. (2004). Understanding and meeting the needs of ESL students. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 85, 786-791.
- Clippard, D. (1998). Efficacy of writers' workshop for students with significant writing deficits. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 13, 17-26.
- Cumming, A. (1990). Metalinguistic and ideational thinking in second language composition. *Written Communication*, 7, 482-511.
- Cumming, A. (2001). Learning to write in a second language: Two decades of research. *International Journal of English Studies*, 1, 1-23.
- Darren, G., & Malley, P. (2006). *SPSS for windows step by step: A simple guide and reference, 13.0 update* (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education.
- Dinan, F. J. (2006). Opening day: Getting started in a cooperative classroom. *Journal of College Science Teaching*, 35(4), 12-14.
- Egbert, J. (2001). Active learning through computer-enhanced activities. *Teaching English With Technology*, 7, 3. Retrieved June 25, 2006, from http://www.iatefl.org.pl/sig/call/j_article3.htm
- Egbert, J. (2002). A project for everyone: English language learners and technology in content area classroom. *Learning and Leading With Technology*, 29(8), 36-54.
- Ernst-Salvit, G., Moore, M., & Maloney, C. (2002). Changing lives: Teaching English and literature to ESL students. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 46, 116-128.
- Gonzalez-Bueno, M. (1998). The effects of electronic mail on Spanish L2 discourse. *Language Learning and Technology*, 1(2), 55-70.

- Holbein, M. F., Bristor, V. J., & Yahya, N. (2001). A model for using television and video to motivate writing. *Journal of Reading Horizons*, 41(3), 175-187.
- Huerta-Macias, A. (1995). Alternative assessment: Responses to commonly asked questions. *TESOL Journal*, 5, 8-10.
- James, D. C. S. (1997). Psychosocial risks of immigrant students. *The Education Digest*, 63(4), 51-53.
- James, J. A. (2000). *Learning another language through actions* (6th ed.). Los Gatos, CA: Sky Oaks.
- Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (1989). *Cooperation and competition: Theory and research*. Edina, MN: Interaction Book.
- Kern, R. G. (1995). Restructuring classroom interaction with networked computers: Effects on quantity and characteristics of language production. *The Modern Language Journal*, 79, 457-476.
- Lewis, A. C. (2006). Hispanic growth. *The Education Digest*, 71(7), 71-72.
- Manchon, R. M. (2002, October). *Using concurrent protocols to explore L2 writing processes: Methodological issues in the collection and analysis of data*. Paper presented at the symposium on Second Language Writing, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN.
- Meyer, D., Madden, D., & McGrath, J. D. (2000). English language learner students in U.S. public schools: 1994 and 2000. *Education Statistics Quarterly*, 6(3). Retrieved January 20, 2006, from http://www.nces.ed.gov/programs/quarterly/vol_6/6_3/3_4.asp
- Morrison, P. A. (2001). *A demographic perspective on our nation's future*. Washington, DC: RAND.
- The National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform*. Washington, DC: The Commission on Excellence in Education. Retrieved December 2, 2005, from <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/index.html>
- Perin, D. (2002). Repetition and the informational writing of developmental students. *Journal of Developmental Education*, 2(1), 2-18.
- Pinker, S. (2000). *Words and rules: The ingredients of language*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Rallis, S., Tedder, J., & Lachman, A. (2006). Superintendents in classrooms: From collegial conversation to collaborative action. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 87, 537-545.

- Rimm, S., Garbarino, J., Anderson, J. D., & Carger, C. (1997). The changing lives of children. *Educational Leadership Journal*, 54, 6-16.
- Roca de Larios, J., Manchon, R. M., & Murphy, L. (2006). Generating text in native and foreign language writing: A temporal analysis of problem- solving formulation processes. *Modern Language Journal*, 90, 100-114.
- Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (2006). *ESL standards for pre-k-12 students*. Retrieved January 5, 2006, from <http://www.tesol.org/assock/k12standards/index.htm>
- U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.). *Facts and terms every parent should know about NCLB*. Retrieved January 10, 2006, from <http://www.ed.gov/nclb/overview/intro/parents/parentfacts.html>
- Valdez, L. (2003). Accountability and equity: Compatible goals of high stakes testing? *TESOL Matter*, 13(2), 1-6.
- Valle, P. D., McEachern, A. G., & Sabina, M. Q. (1999). Using drawings and writings in a group counseling experience with Cuban rafters children, "los balseritos." *Journal of Guidance and Counseling*, 14(4), 20-28.
- Waggoner, D., & O' Malley, J. M. (1985). Teacher of limited English proficient children in the United States. *The Journal for the National Association for Bilingual Education*, 9(3), 25-42.
- Wirt, F. M., & Kirst, M. W. (1997). *The political dynamics of American education*. Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.
- Zha, S., Kelly, P., & Park, M. (2006). An investigation of communicative competence of ESL students using electronic discussion boards. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 38, 349-367.
- Zhang, Z., & Schumm, J. S. (2000). Exploring effects of the key method on limited English proficient students' vocabulary recall and comprehension. *Reading Research and Instruction*, 39(3), 202-221.

Appendix A

Pre- and Postwriting Prompt Test

Pre- and Postwriting Prompt Test

People are doing many things to save the Earth. They are recycling paper, cans, and bottles. They are not wasting water.

Think about what you are doing or can do to save the Earth.

Write a story about saving the Earth.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Appendix B

Parental Home and School Folder Survey

Parental Home and School Folder Survey

The following survey determined parent's attitude toward school and student's academic achievement. The Likert scale was used to measure parent responses into various categories. The responses were graded as follows: *Always*--5 points, *Sometimes*---3 points, and *Never*--0 points. The evaluation of the responses on the five-question survey was ranged from 0 to 25 points.

Circle One Response

1. I like the home and school folder.	Always	Sometimes	Never
2. I communicate more with my child.	Always	Sometimes	Never
3. I know how my child is doing academically.	Always	Sometimes	Never
4. I can communicate with the teacher easier.	Always	Sometimes	Never
5. I am more involved in my child's learning.	Always	Sometimes	Never

Encuesta sobre la carpeta de comunicación

La siguiente encuesta determinará las actitudes de los padres hacia el logro académico de la escuela y del estudiante. La escala de Likert fue utilizada para medir respuestas de los padres en varias categorías. Las respuestas fueron calificadas como sigue: *Siempre*--5 puntos, *A veces*--3 puntos, and *Nunca*--0 puntos. El average de las respuestas de la encuesta fueron evaluadas de 0 a veinticinco puntos.

Círcula una respuesta

1. Me gusta la carpeta de comunicación.	Siempre	A veces	Nunca
2. Me comunico mas con mi hijo/a.	Siempre	A veces	Nunca
3. Sé como mi hijo/a está haciendo académicamente.	Siempre	A veces	Nunca
4. Puedo comunicarme con el profesor más fácil.	Siempre	A veces	Nunca
5. Estoy mas involucrado en el aprendizaje de mi hijo/a.	Siempre	A veces	Nunca

Appendix C

Student Expressive Art Survey

Student Expressive Art Survey

The following survey determined student art attitude to expressive feelings toward school and academic skills. The Likert scale was used to measure student responses into various categories. The responses were graded as follows: *Always*--5 points, *Sometimes*--3 points, and *Never*--0 points. The range of the responses on the five-question survey was from 0 to 25 points.

Circle One Response

1. I like going to school.	Always	Sometimes	Never
2. I feel good when I write and draw.	Always	Sometimes	Never
3. Pictures help me understand English.	Always	Sometimes	Never
4. I am a good student and I like to draw.	Always	Sometimes	Never
5. I enjoy writing assignments with my pictures.	Always	Sometimes	Never

Appendix D

Supplemental Material for Skill Practice

Supplemental Material for Skill Practice

Alpha's pen pals. (n.d.). Retrieved June 10, 2006, from http://www.thinkalphahabits.com/images/teach_guide99.pdf

Cooper, D. J., & Pikulski, J. J. (2003). *Reading Florida teacher's edition: Theme one, second grade*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Cooper, D. J., & Pikulski, J. J. (2003). *Reading practice book: Teacher's annotated edition, Level 2.1*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Writing topics. (n.d.). Retrieved June 12, 2004, from <http://thewritesource.com/topics.htm>