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Videotaping: A tool for self-evaluation in language arts processes

Linda Marie Niblack

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VIDEOTAPEING:
A TOOL FOR SELF-EVALUATION IN LANGUAGE ARTS PROCESSES

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Education: Reading Option

by
Linda Marie Niblack
June 1994
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ABSTRACT

Public Schools looking toward and beyond the year 2000, are beginning to question the way in which children are being taught, assessed and evaluated. Recent advances in cognitive psychology--the science of how we learn--have profound implications for elementary schools. The changing view of children as empty vessels that are filled up with knowledge, to the modern cognitive approach that defines children more as natural scientists bent on making sense of the world, indicates that children are seen as thinkers. At the heart of the revisions in California’s goal of the thinking curriculum, and authentic assessment is the idea that thinking pervades students' lives from kindergarten onward.

Standardized testing fails to address how children learn. The use of authentic assessment and portfolio assessment are being urged. One of the primary functions of assessment is to inform students of their progress in reaching desired performance levels and to help teachers identify what students know and still need to learn. Portfolio assessment provides for participation by the students in their own assessment, particularly in the Language Arts. Through collaborative meetings between the student and teacher, and discussions of the pieces of selected student work, evaluation occurs. This collaborative evaluation meets the needs of the student as thinker, and teacher, as evaluator.

Children also engage in evaluation in their language learning naturally. This is a part of the student’s own personal form of evaluation. Our task as educators is to invite children to learn. We want to enhance the student’s ability to think critically about their process. Involving students in self-evaluation from the time they start school is one way of monitoring their progress. The use of
technology in that process is an effective assessment tool.

The use of videotape and multimedia technology as a learning process in educational institutions is becoming more noticed and is increasing in acceptance as an assessment tool. A review of current literature supports technology development as crucially important to our future and recognize it as an important curricular component for all school age children. Political leaders, by approving the Technology in Education Act of 1993, also support technology in the classroom.

This project represents an ethnographic study of second grade children using video technology to facilitate self-evaluation in the reading/writing processes. The resulting videotape contains a representative selection of students' initial readings of a self-selected piece, their observation and evaluation of their reading, and serves as the data for this project.

The results show that children who read one of their own written stories were better able to self-evaluate than the children who read from a selected book. Children who choose to read a work in progress, self-evaluated to a greater degree than children who read an edited piece. The self esteem of all of the children was enhanced by their participation. The children were able to see, and hear, all of the things that they were doing well.

Using the camcorder, and videotape of the students as they read for self-evaluation, is another tool for teachers to use in their repertoire of teaching strategies as they build on the children's own experiences, backgrounds and thinking strategies.
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Chapter One: Statement of Problem

Public Schools, looking toward and beyond the year 2000, are beginning to question the way in which children are being assessed and evaluated. Traditionally, two types of tests have been used: teacher-made (evaluation; the analyzing of data) and standardized (assessment; the gathering of data). The intent of both is the same: to measure quantitatively a student's attainment of the information and skills specified by the curriculum (Bertrand, 1991, p. 19).

Teacher-made tests are usually used to provide grades, while standardized test results are used to make or assist in making larger decisions about the student, the school, and the school system. These standardized achievement tests fall into one of two classifications: norm-referenced tests, intended to provide a measure of performance that is interpretable in terms of an individual's relative standing in some known group; and criterion referenced, which attempt to provide a measure of performance that is interpretable in terms of clearly defined and relatively narrow domains of learning. Both use the same kinds of questions, and both require a relevant sample of items representing the domain. The quality of the items is judged by the same standards of validity and reliability, and both are "usually constructed so that the scores are amenable to statistical manipulation and interpretation" (p. 20).

Bertrand (1991) has further deduced that traditional evaluation has evolved from:

1) time honored practices; 2) a view of desirable educational outcomes as products (knowledge of facts); 3) the desire to make evaluation objective; 4) a belief that it is good to discriminate and separate learners as early as the elementary level; and 5) a belief in the accuracy and reliability of scientific measure (p. 23-24).

Prepackaged programs, or what Frank Smith (1985) calls "programmatic" (p. ix), that is, "sets of materials, workbooks, activity kits,
guidelines, manuals, record sheets, objectives, television series, and computer-based instructional sequences" (Bertrand, 1991, p.24), which take the instructional decision making and the evaluation process out of the hands of the teacher, and the student, have been developed to meet the testing criteria. The authors and publishers of the programs never see the students or teachers and must therefore "construct assessments that are unconnected with anything else going on in the class" (p.25). These types of programs, used as curricula, are failing to meet the needs of children, and, Bertrand states, influential commentators are “calling for schools that empower teachers and students and that give them context and meaning in daily activities. Their (the commentators) feeling is that evaluation needs to be contextually meaningful and under the control of teachers and students" (p. 25).

*It’s Elementary!,* the report of the elementary grades task force convened by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of California, addresses assessment and evaluation by first addressing the changes in elementary schools; change in the make-up of the student population; in society’s expectations about what elementary school should accomplish; and in our understanding of how children learn (California Department of Education, 1992, p. xi).

The school population of today brings a rich mix of “experiential, ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural backgrounds into the classrooms, and these different nuances must be recognized, appreciated, and accommodated by the instructional program” (p. xi). The mission of California’s elementary schools is to nurture the intellectual, physical, emotional, and moral capacities of the children to the fullest extent possible. Students in well-run classrooms absorb invaluable lessons about developing tolerance for others and mutual respect,
about cooperating to achieve a team’s goals, and about gaining a love for learning that will last a lifetime, internalizing such essential values as honesty, fairness, generosity, compassion, and a humane reverence for life that is part of the school curriculum (p. xiii).

Finally, It’s Elementary! addresses how children learn. Recent advances in cognitive psychology—the science of how we learn—have, according to the article, "profound implications for the elementary school curriculum" (p. xiii). Traditional grade school curriculum consisted of a hierarchical sequence of basic academic skills that students were expected to acquire. The children were thought to be:

empty vessels that the teacher filled up with knowledge by pouring in an agreed-on inventory of skills in an agreed-on order [from simple to complex, with the most complex ‘skills’ of thinking and problem solving reserved for the later years of education] (p. xiii).

Modern cognitive research has found that children are actually more like "natural scientists bent on making sense of the world" (p. xiv), thus, all children are capable of sophisticated thought processes from the beginning of their formal education. The implications of this view of children is stated in Lauren Resnick and Leopold Klopfer’s (1989, p. 2) Toward the Thinking Curriculum, "...the entire educational program must be reconceived and revitalized so that thinking pervades student’s lives from kindergarten onward...."

California is making a fundamental revision of its assessment program at the elementary level. The purpose of these revisions, or changes, is to develop an assessment "scheme consistent with the ambitious goals of the thinking curriculum...an ‘authentic’ assessment program..." (California Department of Education, 1992, p. 66). While schools are designing their “authentic” assessment criteria, through innovation, trial, and refinement, four principles
underlying such a system of monitoring student achievement have already begun to emerge:

1. Assessments in the new system will rely largely on exemplary tasks that give information about student performance.
2. The tasks assigned will be complex (involving the marshaling of many learning behaviors), open-ended (with many possible solutions), and intellectually coherent (resulting in a single work-product.)
3. The primary functions of assessment are to inform students of their progress in reaching desired performance levels and to help teachers identify what students know and still need to learn.
4. Another main function of testing is to provide information to the various clients served by public education, including parents, taxpayers, school board members, and legislators (p.66-67).

The authentic assessment practices are likely to differ in these ways; they may include integrated reading-writing assessments; the evaluation of student writings or of other work samples collected in portfolios; investigations conducted by small groups of students; and the staging of hands-on problem solving activities (p.67).

If the primary functions of assessment are to inform students of their progress in reaching desired performance levels and to help teachers identify what students know and still need to learn (see #3, above), then designing assessment tools that allow active participation by the student in the learning/evaluating processes will fulfill both needs. Portfolio assessment provides for that participation in all curricula area, but particularly in Language Arts. Students select pieces of their work to be placed in the portfolio in collaboration with the teacher. It is during those collaborative meetings that the teacher is able to evaluate, through questioning of the student, and the products of the student, the needs of the student. Reardon (1991, p.103) calls this collaborative evaluation.

Children also engage in evaluation in their language learning naturally.
According to Reardon (1991): "self-evaluation is a natural part of the student's own learning. Children engage in evaluation without our help, and we need to understand their personal forms of evaluation" (p.101). If our task as educators is to teach children how to learn, then we want to enhance the students' ability to think critically about their progress. Involving children in self-evaluation from the time they start school is one way of monitoring their progress (Wilson, 1992).

Self-evaluation is a critical component of this project. As the author's school began to restructure, the children were encouraged to think more critically about their progress through the language arts processes. As a result of observations of the student's inability to self-evaluate their own reading/writing, this project was developed. The project demonstrates that children are better able to self-evaluate, or self-assess, their learning, if given the opportunity to see and hear themselves. The self-evaluating process was done through a videotaping in a learning situation, in this case, in the language arts processes of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

The use of videotape and multimedia technology as a learning process in educational institutions, is becoming more noticed and is increasing in acceptance as an assessment tool. Teachers from California to Florida, and as far north as Canada are joining video exchange clubs (Armenani, 1993). They seek new and different learning experiences for themselves and the children in their classrooms. Some ask for videos about the region in which others live, to give their students a look at other states, cities, and countries. Some seek tapes of classroom activities for new ideas and teaching strategies, and all are video enthusiasts who see video technology as a welcomed learning tool for their students. Video is thus used as a teaching tool, an informant, as supplemental curriculum, as visual representation and as an alternative meaning system in
creative arts.

Some schools are using the cam corder as a way to implement performance based assessment (Holzberg, 1993). The videotape of students creating a project or explaining their work becomes a permanent record of student’s collaboration and work, and can serve as a vehicle for students to evaluate themselves.

Lookatch (1992) also makes a statement for the video as an assessment tool, the “video case study,” which provides an essential assessment component for the students' “portfolio.” The video tool would allow teachers to observe students’ ability to apply learned facts, to read, write and think in real-life contexts. Could children, then, use the video as a self-evaluative assessor?

How would video/multimedia as an assessment tool be applicable to the generally accepted reading models; sound/symbol or decoding, skills and whole language? Reading, in the sound/symbol model, is an offshoot of oral language and is dependent upon developing and manipulating the relationship between the sounds of language and their graphic symbols. Language is perceived as a pyramid, the base of which is sound/symbol relationships, the top of which is meaning (Harste, Burke, 1977, p. 3). This approach (also called a phonics approach) helps children learn the letter/sound correspondences so that they can sound out or "decode" words. Children are taught basic letter/sound correspondences and rules for sounding out words. Learning to read means learning to pronounce words, or getting meaning from certain combinations of letters. Most proponents of a phonics approach seem to think that once words are identified, meaning will take care of itself. They emphasize rapid and fluent "decoding" rather than comprehension (Weaver, 1988, p.42). Writing would consist of phonetic worksheets and copying from the board. All
activities have an emphasis on product, with the teacher in strict control of
curriculum. Students would have no reason to self-evaluate in their writing
other than spelling, as the piece would be "correctly" done as prescribed. If
used in this model, students videotaped as they read would focus on the
correctness of their pronunciation of the words.

A skills model, which views reading as one of our language arts listening,
speaking, reading and writing, see the four language arts as being discrete
skills which share common abilities. A diagram would resemble a pie, from
which individual slices can be extracted for instruction, and the task is to
develop skill hierarchies. The distinctive feature or key to reading success is
the word, thus new vocabulary items are introduced prior to reading, followed
by a series of comprehension questions. Workbook activities then provide skill
practice on usage. This model states that one makes sense out of reading by
stringing words together (Harste, Burke, 1977, p. 3). This is also called sight
word or "look-say" approach. Proponents of this model claim to be concerned
that meaning be emphasized from the outset of instruction. The stress is on
helping children develop a stock of words that the children recognize on sight.
Teachers might use flash cards and other devices to help children to recognize
basic words. If children can begin with about one hundred basic sight words,
they will be able to read about half the words in any text they might ordinarily
encounter. The sight word approach also seems to assume that once words
are identified, meaning will take care of itself (Weaver, 1988, p.42). The
curriculum for a skills approach is basically produced by outside sources,
written by a publishing company with diverse interests, thus exhibiting bits and
pieces of skills; a basal reading series for example. Children are reading
contrived stories with simplified language to fit into the skill being emphasized,
using the "new" vocabulary words introduced before the reading. The writing is also a product to demonstrate mastery of the new skill. Lessons in writing are directed to the correctness of the skill taught, a letter to teach letter writing, all students writing a letter at the same time as prescribed by the teacher. The teacher is in control of the curriculum, as long as the basal series is followed, and any stories generated would also be a teacher decision. Students videotaped reading for self-evaluation in this model, would focus on the words read, and the correctness of the assignment.

Whole language views reading as one of four ways in which the abstract concept of language is realized, and assumes not only that the systems of language are shared, but that they are interdependent and interactive aspects of a single process. A representation of this model is illustrated as a sphere composed of a core of meaning enwrapped in a syntactic structure and sheathed with a letter/sound system. When language aspects are focused upon for instructional purposes, the sphere is penetrated and all three systems are extracted simultaneously. Reading is always focused upon comprehending, and built upon the oral language base of the reader. Reading, according to this view, differs from speaking only by the addition of the grapheme component. Reading educators ought to build upon the strong language systems already developed by the child when teaching reading (Harste, Burke, 1977, p. 4).

Building upon the language and experiences of the child when approaching reading and writing means several things:

1. Children are expected to learn to read and write as they learned to talk- gradually, naturally, with a minimum of direct instruction, and with encouragement rather than discouragement of constant corrections.
2. Learning is emphasized more than teaching: the teacher makes detailed observations of the children's needs, then guides their development accordingly.
3. Children read and write every day- and they are never asked to read
artificially simplified or contrived language, or to write something that
does not have a "real" purpose and audience.
4. Reading, writing, and oral language are not considered separate
components of the curriculum,... they permeate everything the children
are doing....
5. There is no division between first "learning to read" and later "reading
to learn," .... From the very beginning, children are presented with and
couraged to compose whole texts-real language written for real
purposes and a real audience (Weaver, 1988, p.44-45).

A whole language classroom is child and meaning centered. Meaning is
the result of one's transactions, and experiences. Children are empowered for
determining their learning, and the curriculum is negotiated within the
community of learners with the focus on process. As the children work through
the reading/writing processes, they are observed by the teacher. The teacher
as evaluator empowers learners with the responsibility for self-evaluation
(Harp,1991, p.101). Often in a collaborative evaluation session (student[s] and
teacher) the children are assisted by focusing attention on a particular facet of
language or language learning. The evaluation may begin with "reflective
questions posed to a single child during a conference, a small group of children
or the whole class. Later such questions become part of the children's own
inner evaluative conversations-part of the repertoire of self-evaluation"
(Reardon, 1991, p.103). Thus, children in a whole language classroom,
videotaped for self-evaluation of their reading/writing, would be able to reflect,
think, and evaluate their "performance".

One of the key components in a whole language classroom is student
choice and decision making (Routman,1991, p. 437) ; choice of reading
materials, of writing topics and choice of the focus of a curricular unit of study.
Choice is also consistent within this project. Students will decide whether or not
to participate. They will select their own instrument for self-evaluation, reading
from one of their own written pieces, in progress or completed; reading from a self selected book or story. Reflection (thinking seriously) is also an integral part of a whole language classroom and of this project; reflection as a group to assist each other in discussion of the reading/writing processes; reflection to aid in self-evaluation at the beginning and end of their viewing; and reflection after completion of the project to determine if videotaping is viable as a tool for further development of the self-evaluative process.

This project also fulfills an authentic assessment requirement within the "portfolio" assessment suggested by It's Elementary! (California Department of Education, 1992, p. 66-67), as student performance. It also provides feedback to students on their progress. One other suggestion from It's Elementary! is to invest in technology to help promote the thinking curriculum (p. 46). This is one activity to satisfy two components; demonstration of the thinking strategies of children, focused on meaning, and the use of technology to further enhance their learning experiences and increase student self-evaluation.

Technology in the classroom will soon become the norm instead of the exception. Giving children the opportunity to utilize the technology in a constructive, learning environment, dedicated to seeking meaning and helping children to make sense of their world will produce children who are able and willing to meet the year 2000.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

The purpose of this section is to investigate current literature that explores the use of technology in the classroom and the role of technology in assessment; the thinking processes of children; the self-evaluation process and the application of self-evaluation by children in school.

Technology in the Classroom

Technology and technology education is a major push in many school districts. Ernest Savage (1993, p. 41) describes technology education as the "study of technology and its effects on individuals, society, and civilization." He further states that technology "is a body of knowledge and the systematic application of resources to produce outcomes in response to human wants and needs" (p. 41). Sanders (1991) indicates that technology denotes "doing", and stresses that technology is more than computers and tools, and more than simple ideas. It is a synthesis of knowledge, tools and skills used to solve problems. Lauda (1988) states that it is the study of the technical means used for survival, including the origin, nature of, structure and use of human contrivances in societal context. Oaks and Pedras (1992) use the definition of technology education, as currently practiced, from the American Industrial Arts Association (1985) as a "comprehensive, action-based educational program concerned with technical means, their evolution, utilization, and significance; with its organization, personnel systems, techniques, resources and products; and their sociocultural impact" (p.25).

Oaks and Pedras (1992) state that our recent evolution in advanced technological development is crucially important to our future and is now being recognized as the nucleus of an important curriculum component for all school age children. Teachers, they add, now have the challenge and opportunity to
integrate, from a Holistic approach, technology concepts and skills into their curriculum. Students who are not educated in the modern advances of our technological society "will be ill-prepared for the world of work in the 21st century. It is therefore incumbent upon all educators to modify traditional curriculum to reflect contemporary technology" (p.13).

The Elementary Grades Task Force Report, It's Elementary! (California Department of Education, 1992) addresses technology and the thinking curriculum. It recommends that school districts invest in technology to promote the thinking curriculum. Electronic knowledge processing and retrieval systems and accompanying educational software can "amplify the elementary school teacher's instructional capabilities in myriad of ways" (p.46). Teachers use the computer for classroom management and attendance; networking in a resource bank for curriculum planning and for diagnostic applications of student work.

For children, technological tools in use in California's elementary schools to support the thinking curriculum include: document processors to communicate the written word; simulation of lab experiments in ideal conditions without danger; role-playing as world leaders in historic times and observing the consequences; videotaping a school performance making the final product available for community viewing; use of nutrient analysis software to analyze their meals and diets; use of laser disks, large screen monitors and VCR's to retrieve and manipulate visual images of historic events or natural phenomena; and to gain access to areas of the curriculum by means of a wide variety of video programs.

Technology is a "tool for improving curriculum and instruction, not an end in itself" (p.48). Teachers need to check carefully as technology-based materials are selected, the Task Force cautions, to ensure that the materials
remain consistent with the precepts of the thinking curriculum. The Task Force foresees an increasingly prominent role for technology in increasing the "productivity of teachers and expanding the student’s learning world" (p.49).

Political leaders also view the use of technology in education as vital to the growing needs of a future work force. The Technology in Education Act of 1993, was proposed to make "our elementary and secondary schools a part of the information technology revolution" (Bingaman, Cochran, Kennedy, 1993). The Technology in Education Act of 1993 proposes to change the way children are taught and prepare them for the jobs of tomorrow. The legislation will give the U. S. Department of Education a stronger and more visible role, with its primary responsibility being to encourage state and local education agencies to integrate technology in all education programs and to coordinate technology efforts across all levels of the federal government. The authors of the Act further state that "technology can do a great deal to extend educational opportunities to all students and raise the level of performance of our schools and our students" (p.6).

Technology for use in the classroom is changing, advancing in development and rapidly improving. Only a few years ago the technology available consisted of record players, tape recorders, overhead and film strip projectors. The well stocked classroom or school today may include audio systems that are sophisticated yet child-friendly, computers and printers, PC viewers, camcorders with accompanying playback equipment and laser disk players. Newer computers have CD ROM with audio/visual capabilities, and some schools are using interactive technology.

Do schools really need interactive technology? This question was put to several educational technology leaders by Technology and Learning (1993).
They each stated that technology was important to a degree, however, the uses of the technology drew differing comments. Stewart Alsop, Editor-in-Chief of InfoWord, Publisher of P.C. Letter and the President of the Foundation for Educational Software, states, "Technology is as important as we make it. Right now in education it's a frill because we haven't implemented it in a mainstream way." He also alludes to the fact that many schools continue to function without technology. "There are two fundamental shifts taking place in our schools right now," he states. "We're rethinking the way we believe schools should operate, and at the same time, we're trying to figure out how to use technology." He sees the two questions being addressed independently, and until "we decide what we're trying to do, it will be extremely difficult to figure out how the technology can help" (p.16).

Jenelle Leonard, Senior Director of Instructional Technology for the Texas Education Agency (Austin, TX) and former Director of the Computer Training Laboratory for the Washington D.C. Public Schools, has a different point of view. She states, "When you look at educating students for the 21st century, technology is absolutely essential." She states further that our responsibility is "to provide quality instruction and to prepare students for the world of work or higher education." Also, "Our students will be better prepared for a world where technology is commonplace if they have opportunities to use the technology during the learning process" (p.16).

Tom Snyder, Founder and CEO, Tom Snyder Productions, states, "Computers have a vital role to play in helping teachers analyze data, access curriculum information, and manipulate information they're called upon to manipulate." He states that teachers should have and use "computerized tools" to help in their "almost impossible task" (of being responsible for far too many
kids). But as for the students, Mr. Snyder states, "I have yet to see a single computer experience other than word processing that's any more valuable than what they (his two children, ages five and eight) can do on their own with refrigerator magnets." Kids spend much of the time on the computer, he states, playing solitary games that are "often addictive and tend to decrease the child's ability to focus. Teaching, learning and playing are all social activities. If the computer contributes to that, great" (p. 17).

Janet Van Dam, Coordinator, Computing and Technology, Oakland Schools, a regional educational service center in Waterford, MI. states that "technology is mission critical as schooling moves from teacher-centered to student-centered." Major educational shifts inherent in school restructuring or reform, she states, "require and depend upon access to enabling technologies." Regardless of economic conditions, Ms. Van Dam continued, "it is the responsibility of educators to provide a learning environment that prepares students for their future. To presume that technology is peripheral to this process is more than irresponsible, it's malpractice!" (p.17).

Many agree with Ms. Van Dam. School sites across the country are using interactive technology. Students and their teachers are using their technology to gather information and to create new and exciting additions to the curriculum. Students at Arbita Springs Elementary School in Arbita Springs, Louisiana, use their computers and software programs to produce a multimedia database documenting the town's cultural diversity (Holzberg, 1993). They record interviews and talks of representatives from different ethnic communities on video and cassette tapes. The students then use computer technology to help them share their new knowledge. They use the word processor to transcribe the interviews, write stories about the presentations they have
attended, and publish a book to take home to share with their families. They create "culture stacks" (using the software program) for each of the culture groups that they have studies. The goal is to transform unrelated cultural facts into a series of connected stacks. The stacks contain more than textural information, they offer pictures and movies of pertinent and interesting customs and traditions. Video sequences are brought in by using a special computer board which captures and digitizes video footage directly from VHS tape, then saves it in the appropriate format. The children become authorities on the cultures they study. The school library provides a computer for access to this multimedia curriculum for students conducting research.

Students on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota use similar technology to do an in-depth look at their own culture. These students use cameras, camcorders and computers to record, illustrate, and animate stories that are personally meaningful and store on computer information stacks. The Lakota legends are shared with students at Edgewater High School, Orlando, Florida. The students learn about Lakota legend by viewing the stacks. They add computer movies digitized from additional footage taken by their teacher. The teachers of these students hope to transfer these animated legends and movies onto CD ROM discs.

Computers and multimedia authoring tools make it possible for students to organize and present information in ways they find meaningful. Holzberg (1993) states that in addition to strengthening "conventional reading and writing skills, these tools encourage students to find new links among bit and pieces of data. Throughout the country, kids of all ages are working cooperatively to create interactive multimedia reports they can share with others" (p.37).

Interactive technology is being applied to the training of teachers. In the
instance, two-way, interactive A/V is applied to the supervision of student teachers. The project, initiated at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, addressed the question: "What can be done to improve the undergraduate teacher education program in order to better prepare college students to become successful teachers?" (Clawson, Weiner, 1993, p. 67). The student teaching experience, traditionally considered an important component in the preparation of teachers, and supervision of this experience is vital. Often student teachers and their supervisors are separated geographically by a distance that inhibits frequent contact. The University finally found the components of appropriate technology, defined as a system that provided taped observation of the public school classroom and interactive communication between the classroom and a site on the university campus. After testing, the system was ready for the student teacher. At the beginning of the semester, the university supervisor conferenced with the cooperating teacher and the student teacher to review the guidelines for reflecting on teaching and the use of the communication system.

The use of the integrated communication system for supervision enabled the supervisor to contribute more effectively to the student teaching experience. Both the cooperating teacher and the students teacher indicated that the frequent interaction between the supervisor and the classroom, built a more trusting relationship. An advantage of being able to view a videotape of the class session prior to post-conference meant that the cooperating teacher could "see each student..., as well as observing her (the student teacher) interactions with the class more effectively than when she was in front of the class" (p.69). The student teacher indicated that it "was reassuring to know that I was not left out there all by myself" (p.69). A significant finding showed that being able to
play back a taped session to the field site and engage in interactive dialogue
was extremely helpful to the supervisory process and contributed to the student
teacher’s ability to critically analyze the effectiveness of (her) classroom skills.

Role of Technology in Assessment

Video technology as an assessment tool is being tested in Texas to
address teacher assessment (Bradley, 1992, p.1). Here, a group of teachers-in-
training for the assessment, view a taping of a scene from a classroom and are
given time to prepare written feedback on the teacher’s instructional approach,
performance and ability to meet the stated goals. Teachers then address those
areas of need. Martin and Mayerson (1992, P. 114) suggest that teachers use
video technology as an assessment of their own teaching style, in their own
classrooms. Schaffer and Thompson (1992, p.80) stress that the focus, in any
attempt to improve performance, be on the results and not the activity. They
suggest that the taping be keyed to specific results, small-scale, focused
outcomes and short-term do-able goals.

What is the role of technology in terms of student assessment? Is there a
place for technology and assessment in the movement for national standards?
The New Standards Project (NSP) advocates national academic performance
standards. The project’s goal according to Marc Tucker, co-director, “is to build
a national examination system in such a way that it will lead to improving the
performance of American students to the point that they meet internationally
competitive standards” (Mageau, [Ed], 1993, p.18). At this point, NSP has not
addressed technology, however, it is “inevitable that the NSP will address the
question of technological literacy ...” Tucker adds, and the form it will take will be
the question.

Eva Baker, director of the Center for Research in Evaluation, Standards,
and Student Testing at U.C.L.A. states that technology should play an important role in assessing student's performance in meeting the new standards. There are programs that would "make it possible to have technology-based performance assessment" (p.18).

Tucker agrees. "we are moving toward an examination system heavily based on portfolios and projects. Increasingly, the projects that students do will employ computers and communications technology" (p.18).

Portfolio assessment is the emphasis of a software program that uses graphics, audio, and video to help teachers manage the record keeping and overwhelming amount of paperwork they must compile to get a "picture of the 'whole student'" (Brady, [Ed.], 1993, p.13-15). The program, designed as a file drawer, includes both General Information and Assessment Cards for each student. The Assessment Cards are primarily used for academic proficiencies—reading, writing, math, and oral communications. The language arts areas include audio and video cards where teachers may store samples of student's oral readings, presentations, participation in cooperative groups, and more.

Evaluator Annette Hamlin comments,

The sound and video samples in the program have proven to be a delight to students, and a motivational factor as well. Hearing and seeing themselves on tape seems to make their performance more 'real', and encourages them to revise and improve (p.15).

Maggie Hill writes, in Electronic Learning, The New Literacy: Beyond the three R's, (1992), that it is no longer enough just to read and write. In a world, she states, where "information comes in many forms- text, audio, graphic, video- and where the amount of information is increasing at exponentially staggering rates, the literacy skills of the last 20 centuries will not take our students into the next one" (p.28). She lists the literacy skills for the 21st century:
Assessing
Reading-text both in print and digital forms
Listening-in person, video conferences, and on the phone
Researching-print and online

Thinking
Discriminating, analyzing, and interpreting textual, numeric, audio, and visual information

Communicating
Writing - on paper and online
Speaking - English and at least one other language
Presenting- orally and with multimedia (p.29)

David Rose, executive director of CAST, a technology curriculum development house in Peabody, MA, states, “We need to prepare students for the literacy of the world that they will inherit”. Literacy will not be simpler, he continues, it will challenge students intellectually. Kids will have a “broader array of tools to communicate with. Schools need to help students become critics of their own information by helping them become better at thinking about themselves” (p.29).

Thinking Process of Children

School districts across the country are developing curriculum for the "student as thinker”. Thinking students, according to John Gould, assistant superintendent of curriculum, Norristown (PA) Area School District, are learners “who can process information, create both personal and collaborative meanings, and produce products or performances that will enable them to apply the information to real situations that affect their lives” (p.29) A thinking curriculum addresses the child’s natural curiosity as a seeker of meaning, to
motivate through meaningful learning experiences that harness the child's inquisitive nature to the task at hand. A thinking curriculum calls for recognition that all real learning involves thinking, and that thinking can be nurtured and cultivated in everyone.

Carol Lidz, in Practitioner's Guide to Dynamic Assessment (1991), states that "theories explicating the neuropsychological foundations of thinking provide the foundations for understanding thinking as a dynamic, active, and integrated process" (123). Also, that the "nature of the dynamic assessment situation is to set up the conditions for thinking to occur, to assess the degree to which thinking is in evidence, and to induce the occurrence of thinking in relation to the tasks presented" (p.124). Lidz is discussing the "characteristics of thinking and the extent to which these characteristics can be assessed and promoted in the learner" (p.124), thereby justifying the thinking curriculum stances taken by numerous school districts.

Luria, in describing the mental activity called thinking, proposes that "thinking arises only when the subject has an appropriate motive which makes the task urgent and its solution essential, and when the subject is confronted by a situation for which he has no ready-made (in-born or habitual) solution...." (cited in Lidz, 1991). And Haywood (1987), discussing cognitive development (thinking process) in children, states that "mediated learning experiences (MLE) are thought to be essential for the adequate cognitive development of children," and the goal is to "acquire the fundamental cognitive functions that underlie the ability to learn effectively across many and varied content fields" (p.1). Therefore, introducing a child to new thinking strategies, sets up a confrontation to think as proposed by Luria, and mediates a learning experience for the child, as described by Haywood.
Self-evaluation Process

Karen Mayo (1993, p.130) refers to the act of thinking about thinking as metacognition and states that there are two precise behaviors: self-appraisal and self-management. Here the “learner is required to set goals for his/her learning.” Also, “the learner is required to assess the degree to which the goals are being met, which occur through a process referred to as self-inquiry; ‘How am I doing? Did I understand what the passage (in reading) stated?’” Finally the learner must “modify the strategies being used if he/she determines that the predetermined goals are not being met” (p.133). Others would refer to this thinking about thinking as reflecting or reflexive thinking.

Short and Burke (1991) state that:

the challenges which we pursue as learners increase our awareness of our learning and the learning of others around us. As we borrow other points of view, we discover that we can mentally stand both inside and outside of an event at the same time. We suddenly realize that we can look at that event from both our own perspective and that of someone else. The realization that we can be in two places at once forms the basis for reflection” (p.21).

Learners need time to reflect on what they are learning and the processes they have used in that learning. When learners reflect, they come to value the strategies they are developing (Burke, Harste, Short, 1988 p. 286). And finally, to be reflexive means that, as researchers, learners are able to:

take a step away and then look back on what they’ve done, on what they’re doing and where their learning might lead. A reflexive stance empowers learners to look around; they focus not only on the topic at hand, but also on the periphery and beyond- on the spin-offs, the connectors made and not made” (Watson, Burke, Harste 1989, p.14).

Self-evaluation by Children

The introduction of reflecting and self-evaluating by students can lead to
interesting observations. Hansen (1992) states, “As the teachers included more and more opportunities for their students to reflect and plan, their initial surprise at their students’ ability to evaluate themselves changed to an assumption that their students could evaluate their growth” (p.32).

Jean Church agrees. She observed a young student inspecting his writings done previously in the year. The child excitedly recognized his growth over the months. Church states that the child had revealed the importance of the learner taking responsibility for his learning and that some of the records kept must serve to help students make self-evaluations. Often in the past learners have been “left out of the process of record keeping and evaluation.” Because of this, Church states, many students are simply “unaware that they are learning anything.” Just as teachers find it essential to keep asking themselves, ‘What are we learning?’ it is also “essential for the students to continually be challenged to think about and express what they are learning. This helps them begin to build internal standards for judging what constitutes good work” (p. 179).

Throughout the year, state Sugarman, Allen and Keller-Cogan (1993) ask students questions that teach them to self-assess (p.46). Csongor adds that “students need to learn about themselves. A knowledge of self facilitates security, self-reliance and self-confidence. We can place more responsibility on students’ shoulders for the evaluation of their own performance, attitude and behavior” (p.366-367).

Learners in a whole language bilingual and multicultural classrooms, states King, (1991, p.167) have a stake in their own learning. A large part of evaluation is self-evaluation, that is, learners decide if they are doing what they want and if and how to do better.
The foremost goal of evaluation is self-evaluation, states Routman (1991, p.342), that is, the analysis of our own attitudes and processes so that we can use the information to promote continued growth and learning. The purpose of self-evaluation is to enable an individual to function independently, intelligently, and productively.

Self-evaluation is a natural part of the student's own learning (Reardon, 1991, P. 101). Teachers assist the application of self-evaluation by their students in numerous ways. Some teachers find that reflection logs, a place for students to think about and comment on their learning, are important tools for fostering self-evaluation (Routman, 1991, p.349).

Reflection on reading involves self-evaluation and self-reporting. Teachers aid the students by asking students to reflect on their reading by posing questions such as: How do you think you did with your reading?; When did the reading go well?; Where did you have trouble? (Watson & Henson, 1991, P.58-59).

Self-evaluation can take many other forms, such as class responses to teachers' evaluation questions, a self-evaluation checklist for teachers, individual evaluative responses for literature-group discussions, portfolios, weekly evaluations, reports cards, self-evaluations by students, and report cards on teachers by students (Routman, 1991, p 343). Joni Weed (1991, p.94) uses the end of the day for group time. "It's very important for us to reflect on our day and to collect our thoughts". Involving students in group reflection guides them for individual reflection and evaluation.

In whole language classrooms built around inquiry, that is students and teacher seeking or investigating subject information and their own learning, self-evaluation is the norm. These classrooms demonstrate and accept
vulnerability, or risk taking, and see it as a spur to real learning. They experience a sense of community in their learning, making room for, promoting and supporting the efforts of individuals. The community of learners insist that their learning is generative—that it leads to action, to more extensive and intensive knowledge and to further action. These learners demand democracy, insisting that all voices be heard, allowing the formerly silent and silenced members of the group to raise their voices when they see fit to do so. These learners recognize that inquiry is reflexive, they see themselves and each other as instruments for their own learning (Watson, Burke, Harste, 1989, p. 12-14).

Through collaborative evaluation meetings, and careful kid watching, teachers are able to find out what students think about reading and writing, the strategies they use when reading and writing, and how they use reading and writing to make meaning, to evaluate the relevance of knowledge, to verify and revise their own thinking and ultimately to direct their own learning. Teachers see and hear children as they self-evaluate, things that standardized and criterion-referenced tests cannot report (Siu-Runyan, 1989, p. 109). These outdated tests cannot watch children as they self-assess. They do not acknowledge that “children self-assess their own work when they reread their composition and say ‘I like what I’ve produced. It’s good!’” (Glazer, 1993, p.88).

Thus, the literature research has shown that technology in the classroom and as an assessment tool is viable and growing in acceptance. It further supports “student as thinker”, stating that thinking is a dynamic, active, and integrated process. The research points out that children can and do self-evaluate, or self-assess naturally and regularly, and with mediation from their teachers, the process will continue to grow in diverse areas. This research, then, validates the assumption of this project; that children can and do self-
evaluate, and that technology will be an assistance to their self-evaluating processes.
Chapter Three: Goals and Limitations

Routmann says that the foremost goal of evaluation is self-evaluation, the analysis of our own attitudes and processes so that we can use the information to promote continued growth and learning. The purpose of self-evaluation is to enable an individual to function independently, intelligently, and productively (1991, p. 342). When children have difficulty self-evaluating, teachers mediate their learning. The goal of this project is to mediate second grade students in self-evaluation by providing that experience, enhanced with technology.

Children working through the language arts processes-listening, speaking, reading, and writing- verbalize as they think. This verbalization is their evaluation-in-progress. However, students often have difficulty expressing themselves about this process. These students are effective as peer editors, and are able to assess information presented to them orally. They are not able to edit and assess their own reading/writing to the same extent. By providing the students an opportunity to see, and hear, themselves as they read their writing or a story selection, the students will be able to self-evaluate their learning more readily.

A videotape, that consists of an initial reading of selected pieces by second grade students, their observation and the evaluation of their reading, will serve as the data in this ethnographic study.

While all children in the classroom, including limited English speakers, can utilize this process, there are some limitations. Parental permission is required before videotaping takes place. Parent letters, signed and returned with students, and kept on file, releases the class for continued filming. Videotaping in a classroom, unless done on a regular basis, can be a disruptive agent. Children become more accustomed to having the camcorder in the
classroom with more frequent usage.

The camcorder, with a built-in microphone picks up all background noise, thus the quality of the students' reading is rather poor, particularly if a student has a very quiet voice. A tabletop microphone is recommended for future tapings.

With the teacher as camera person, the rest of the class must remain focused on their work. This is often difficult for some children. If children are taught the use of the technique of filming, the process can become a regular function in the classroom. Many children, at second grade, are already familiar with the camcorder, and can become the camera person with little training.

For this project, a small palmcorder was used. This small unobtrusive camera is less intimidating than the larger camcorders. The students were more comfortable with the small object held by the teacher. The smaller camcorder is also much easier to use. However, transferring the small cassette film to a larger VHS tape could prove to be a complicated procedure at this point.

The quality of the original film was compromised during the transfer of the 8 millimeter tapes to the VHS format, producing a grainy and often lined tape. Equipment for this procedure was not available until late in the project and the resulting film, although poor in tape quality is high in content quality. It is hoped that the reader will take into consideration the limitations of this first attempt and view the video of the study with content in mind. The children seen in the video represent the goal of this project, that children are better able to self-evaluate with video technology.
Appendix A: Discussion of Project

Eight year old Phillip came to our editing conference with his new story in hand. His eyes, behind his Mickey Mouse glasses, sparkled, and his snaggle toothed grin spread across his happy face. He had a great story to share. As he read his work to me, I noted, again, the style of his writing: he writes just like he talks. All of the interjections he uses in his language was in his story. If he had been telling the story instead of writing, with all of the explanations and the excitement in his voice, the story would have been perfectly clear. However, for a reader, it would be difficult to decipher his meaning.

Phillip is an avid reader and writer. He serves as a peer editor in our second grade class. He, and the other children who act as editors, consistently find the editing process with their peers a rewarding experience. They are able to point out the areas of the work of others that need revision or correction. The peer editors, however, do not seem to be able to evaluate their own work to the same degree. It was this same problem, popping up again and again, that led to this project.

If the children are able to help their peers, what could I do to help them to help themselves? I know that children do self-evaluate. I encourage them to try out their strategies and to talk about the process as they go through their writing. They are always so excited when they finish a draft. I needed to keep the excitement, to build upon it, but to channel them into more effective evaluating.

The idea of using the camcorder as the tool to facilitate their evaluating, came as the class finished filming their short pieces about what they had learned during the one hundred days in school. Kids love to see themselves on the monitor. While they watched the film, I watched their faces. As each child
appeared, that child either laughed aloud or hid his/her face. Why not use the camcorder to record their work, and then let the kids see and hear themselves to assist in their evaluation? When I suggested it to the class, they were all in favor of the experiment.

To facilitate their evaluating, we met in conference group. “What could you say to yourself to help in your reading and writing?” I asked them. “How did I do in my reading?” was the first suggested question, and then they were stumped. “What about your writing?” I probed. They had difficulty expressing what they already knew. I tried again. “Do you ever have a story in your head, then after you write it, it doesn’t sound like the one you thought you had in your head?” A cacophony of voices built as they all began to tell about the same experience. From that group discussion, the kids formulated the rest of the questions to think about during observation and evaluation of their selected readings.

1. How did I do in my reading?
2. Do the words in my story make sense?
3. Do my words sound good together?
4. Is my story going to sound good?
5. Do I really want my story this way?
6. Do I like my story this way?
7. Can I write better next time?
8. What could I do better next time?
9. Should I write a little longer (understood as “write more”) to make more sense?
10. Am I sure I want to write this?

We set the recording area up in an isolated area of the room to insure
privacy for the reader, and to eliminate as much room noise as possible. I located a palmcorder for the close work so that the children would not be intimidated by the larger camcorder. As I worked with each child, the class continued with their own writing and reading, and the instructional aide was there to work with and assist the class. The procedure of the initial recording took several days. After the 8 millimeter film was transferred to the VHS format, we set the television monitor and VCR up in the recording area. The second session would take considerably longer, as the children would be filmed as they watched their first reading (observation) and then through their evaluating of their "performance" as they liked to call it.

The kids found the experience fun and productive. Most are eager to continue with this activity. Although all of the children want to be in the finished film for this project, it is unrealistic, time wise, to watch 30 students reading, observing and evaluating. Therefore, I have selected 10 of the students who seem to exhibit the behaviors (of evaluation) that would allow others to see the potential of this activity.
Appendix B: Student Background and Dialog on Videotape

The following text describes the children's reading/writing background and the dialog between the students and myself during the evaluation process.

Keona read a story she had written. Keona is an average reader. She uses invented spelling and has begun to use past tenses in her writing; had talked, etc. I was surprised at her response, she rarely notes that her stories need revision. As she watches, she smiled.

T: (teacher) “What question did you decide to talk about?”
K: “Is the story going to sound good?”
T: Did your story sound good?”
K: “Huh uh.”
T: “How come?”
K: “I don’t know.”
T: “What could you do to make it sound better?”
K: “Write more.”
T: “What part could you write more about?”
K: “Right here.”
T: “What does that part say?”
K: “He is nice.”
T: “What could you add to that?”
K: “He is nice too, and we had a great time.”
T: “That would finish it off better?”
K: “Yeah.”
T: “You’d feel more comfortable about doing that?”
K: “Yeah.”
T: Anything else you want to add about it?”
K: (Shakes head "no").
T: "Did the story make sense to you? Except for the ending?"
K: "Yeah."
T: What are you going to do about it now?"
K: "Write more."

Phillip read his story called "Two Little Monkeys". Phillip is a class editor. He is a prolific writer, and writes as he talks. He often does not recognize the differences between written language and oral language. He is able to see the connection as a peer editor, but not with his own writings. His responses are exciting, he began to talk as soon as the tape was finished, and keyed into the inconsistency in his story and his less than fluent reading. During his observation, Phillip follows the story with his finger and mouths the words. He looks up often, especially when his reading wasn’t smooth, and frowned.

P: "I don’t like my story. It doesn’t make sense. Like right here. This part, ‘That’s his name, too’, that doesn’t make sense. I don’t want that in there. I don’t like that."
T: "What are you going to do."
P: "Erase it or something, correct it. Probably write better. Read a little bit faster."
T: "What else?"
P: "Like ‘almost’, I put an ‘a’, but I circled it like, I know... Write better and read a little bit faster."
T: "Anything else?"
P: "I don’t think I like my story. I think I’ll change it."
T: "You’re going to talk about how you read."
P: "My story, I don't like the part when I said 'That's his name too', I don't like that. My story doesn't make sense—gotta read better. Gotta read faster. When I was following along— I don't like the way I read. I kept stopping and going. Stopping and going. Stopping, going. So I don't like that. I needa like pay more attention to the words and what I'm reading, too, and make sense."

T: "Anything else?"

P: (Shakes head, no).

T: "Was this a fun experience?"

P: "Pretty fun."

T: "Do you want to do it again?"

P: "Maybe.... yeah, yeah, I'll do it again."

Harold read his story about a lucky koala tree. Harold reads and writes well. He is an underachieving student and needs prodding to extend himself. His stories are well written, but not usually fully developed. Harold read quietly along during observation.

T: "Did you think of a question to address?"

H: "Yeah." (Points to question: Do I like my story this way?) "I liked it."

T: "Anything that you could do to make it better?"

H: "Read it better."

T: "... What would help?"

H: "If the words were right- in this place."

T: "Anything else?"

H: "No."

T: "Did you have a hard time with this story?"
H: “No.”
T: “How did you decide to write this story?”
H: “The picture had koalas in it. They were going up a tree, so I copied it, and I put a lucky koala tree.”
T: “Anything else?”
H: “Nope.”

Zoe wrote and read in Spanish. Zoe is another prolific writer. She usually writes one and sometimes two stories at one session. She acts as peer editor for Spanish students. Her level of reading/writing increases daily. She has good self esteem, and is a happy child. She follows along with her finger as she observes.

T: “Do you want to say anything about it?”
Z: “I did good.” (Huge smile).
T: “Yes, you did good. Is there anything about your story that you would want to change?”
Z: “No.”
T: “Everything sounded good?”
Z: “Yes.”
T: “Everything made sense?”
Z: “Yes.”

Ashley read a little, easy book. Ashley does little reading and writes strings of letters together. She copies from books or the board. Her willingness to read for taping was a big step for her. She has worked on this little book with the teacher and at home. This story is memorized, and as she watches, she read along a little, hides behind the book, covers her mouth, and smiles a great deal.
T: "How do you think you did?"
A: "Fine."
T: "Is there anything you could do to make your reading better?"
A: "Umm hum."
T: "What do you think you could do?"
A: "I should stop being shy."
T: "Anything else?"
A: "uh uh (shakes head, no)."

Christos is an advanced reader, however, he is very social, which leads to little written work being completed. The story he read has taken a great deal of time for him to complete. He is a very capable peer editor, but usually not with his own work. He follows his story with his finger, and nods his head at the end of sentences.

T: "Did you pick a question you want to talk about?"
C: "umm-(very quietly) sounds pretty good."
T: "You think you did a good job?"
C: "Yeah."
T: "Is there anything else you want to say? You read it well?"
C: "Yeah."
T: "Did the story make sense to you?"
C: "Yeah."
T: "Would you change anything?"
C: "Um, no."
T: "Did you change it before you read it?"
C: "Yeah."
T: "Yeah, you did. What was it you changed before you read it?"
C: "I forgot."
T: "But there was some editing you did before, then?"
C: "Yeah."
T: "Anything else?"
C: "No."

Candies likes to finish things quickly, often leaving out parts of her intended story. She seems to be more aware of her capabilities than most second graders. She knows what she is going to address before observing her reading. She wiggles in her chair, glances at the television screen, her paper and the teacher. She smiles broadly as her story is finished.

T: "You decided what you're going to talk about?"
C: "Yeah."
T: "What?"
C: "That one (points to a question)."
T: "What's that one...Should I...."
C: "Should I write a little more longer."
T: "What do you think?"
C: "Yeah."
T: "Why?"
C: "Because it didn't.... Because it needed to be longer."
T: "How come?"
C: "It didn't sound good being short."
T: "It's too short. What so you think you could put in it to make it better?"
C: "That I caught the butterfly, and it was flying around. I let it go and it starts flying around."
T: “Anything else?”
C: “It flew on a daisy and fell asleep.”
T: “You have a whole story there, don’t you? Is that the one you’re going to write?”
C: “Yeah.”
T: “OK. How did you read?”
C: “OK.”
T: “Want to say anything else?”
C: “No.”

John is methodical about everything he does. He is easily frustrated in his writing, and has some difficulty getting on his paper the ideas he has in his head. When he finishes a piece, he is finished. Revising and editing is something he is hesitant to do. He has a tendency to cry if things do not go well for him. He listens quietly to his triangle story.

T: “Is there a question you’d like to talk about?”
J: “Is...yikes.” (Points to a question.)
T: “Is the story going to sound good? Did you think your story sounded good?”
J: “Umm. Yeah.”
T: “What part sounded good to you?”
J: “The part.... The third and second lines.”
T: “What do they say?”
J: “Triangles have a sharp point. I like to draw triangles.”
T: “Anything else about your story?”
J: “Um. No.”
T: “How did you do in your reading? How do you think you did in
Andy read two stories. Andy reads well, and finds meaning in his reading. His writing, however, is often disjointed and hurriedly done. He is confident in his writing, and enjoys sharing his stories with others. He has a nice sense of humor, and uses it often. He uses invented spelling in his writing. He follows along on his paper.

T: “You want to talk about the bird one first?”
A: “There’s nothin’ to talk about.”
T: “How do you think it sounds?”
A: “OK.”
T: “Was there anything you wanted to say about it?”
A: “I can write longer. Right there.”
T: “How would you make it longer? What would you put in it if you were going to write more?”
A: I dunno. I’d just think of some stuff.”
T: “Do you think if you described the birds, described the colors, that would help?”
A: “Let me see something. We forgot something. (Points to a sentence in his story) ‘I like the hummingbird.’”
T: “You read that.”
A: “It didn’t say on there (points to the screen).”
T: “Yeah, it did. You don’t want to say anything else about this one?”
A: “No”
T: “How did you do in your reading of it?”
A: "Fine."

T: "Want to read the second one?"

A: "Yeah."

T: "I'm going to play it. Follow along."

Andy follows along, he quietly mouthing the words.

T: "How about this story? Any comments on this one?"

A: "No. I wrote a lot on this one, but I like the... I wrote a lot on the magic story I'm writing."

T: "Tell me about the water story. How long did it take you to write that one?"

A: "Like, two days."

T: "Two days? Did you have to rewrite parts of it?"

A: "Um hum (nods head yes)."

T: "Yes, we did some editing on that before you finished it, didn't we? Why did we do editing on it?"

A: "Because the words weren't spelled right."

T: "Any other reason?"

A: (shakes head no).

T: "Did you have a beginning, a middle and an end?"

A: "Did I?"

T: "Did you?"

A: "I dunno."

T: "You don't remember?"

A: (shakes head no).

T: "Any other comments?"

A: (shakes head no).
T: “Everything sounds good to you?”
A: “Yeah.”

Jessica was reading (in Spanish) very little, and was writing less at the beginning of the year. She has begun to write complete stories and now reads just at grade level. She is also beginning to speak with confidence, where at first she never opened her mouth. She works very well with her peers and is able to contribute to group projects more readily. Jessica read along in Spanish quietly, following with her finger.

T: “How did you do in your reading?”
J: (thinks awhile, no comment).
T: “Good?”
J: “I messed up one time.”
T: “Did you? Where did you mess up?”
J: “I don’t remember.”
T: “Right down here? (points on paper).”
J: “Yeah.”
T: “Did you fix it?”
J: “When I was talking, I fix it.”
T: “Yeah, you did. Tell me about your story. Do you like the story the way it is?”
J: “Yeah.”
T: “Does it make sense?”
J: “Yeah.”
T: “Could you write more to make it a bigger story?”
J: “Yeah.”
T: “What would you add to make it a bigger story?”
J: (thinks awhile, makes no comment).

T: "Could you talk more about un perro and el gato?"

J: "Yeah."

T: "That would make it bigger. Anything else you want to say about it?"

J: "No."

T: "Did you like how you sounded?"

J: "Yeah."

T: "You did a good job, didn't you?"

This sampling of students represents one-third of the children who participated in this project. Participation was voluntary, but all of the children were eager to be in the study. Students selected the piece that they would read for evaluation. Many chose to read one of their own stories, completed or in progress. Others read a story that they liked, and some read a literature piece. Selections from larger books and stories were shortened. The children were allowed as much time to read as they could comfortably handle. Some read an entire selection, while others read only a few paragraphs and children reading from a literature selection were asked to retell they story.
Appendix C: Results and Observations

This project has very interesting results. The children who read one of their own written stories were better able to self-evaluate than the children who read from a selected book. Children who chose to read a work in progress, self-evaluated to a greater degree than children who read an edited piece. Few children selected questions to think about prior to observation and evaluation, and all needed extra questioning from the researcher. Phillip and Candies knew right away what they wanted to discuss, Phillip began before any questions were asked of him. Candies knew what needed to be done in her story, but needed prodding before putting her needs into words. Keona recognized that she wanted to revise her story, something she rarely does, and Ashley sensed that she needed to develop some confidence and be less "shy" to aide in her reading.

The self esteem of all of the children was enhanced by their participation. Children who consistently ask for "words" to be spelled, or what a word is, saw and heard that they are capable of finding their own meaning in their work, either from the books they read or from their own written stories. They could see, and hear, all of the things that they were doing well. John was able to sense that his story and his reading was "good", as his huge smile and single word response indicated. Jessica, who normally is very quiet, was able to express that she "fixed" the part where she "messed up." She later began to approach the teacher, and began to speak with much more confidence than ever before.

The students who read books and literature selections, focused on how they read, and how they retold the story. Many responded with a "good", and a few indicated that they could retell better. (These are not shown in the video,
time being the factor, the film would have been very long.) Continued use of
the video for self-evaluation in reading for meaning will improve their critical
thinking in this area.

Leaving the choice of reading material to the children was an
enlightening experience. The children tended to select pieces that they liked,
but clearly had difficulty reading aloud. Two selected Rumplestiltskin, a
literature piece the class had just finished. Although a favorite, it is a difficult
piece for many of the children to read aloud. The class had worked on the story
in collaboration, and even listened to the fairy tale on tape. Few of the better
readers were able to read through it fluently. One student was encouraged to
find another story, and did, the other struggled through several pages. Both of
these children found that they understood the stories they finally read, but did
notice that the story was difficult to read.

To enable children to think critically about their learning, they need to be
introduced to the higher level strategies for self-evaluating. Those higher level
thinking skills are developmental to a degree. The strategies, demonstrated and
consistently used, as mediated learning experiences, will then be internalized
by the children. Our task as educators is to facilitate children as they learn. We
want to enhance the students' ability to think critically about their progress.
Involving children in self-evaluation from the time they start school is one way of
monitoring their progress (Wilson, 1992), and allows children to claim
ownership and responsibility for their learning. Using the camcorder, and
videotape of the students as they read for self-evaluation, is another tool for
teachers to use in their repertoire of teaching strategies as they build on the
kids' own experiences, backgrounds and thinking strategies.

Will I make changes for the next filming? Yes. I want the children to
continue to feel successful in their evaluating. I observed that the children who chose to read rough drafts of their stories, were more confident to continue the process. The next videotaping will be for the purpose of evaluating works in progress instead of final products. The children will still select the pieces to be evaluated.

The set up for the taping will also be more conducive for the classroom. While the children and I felt more comfortable with the smaller palmcorder, the used of that camera requires the full time of the camera person. Using a larger camcorder, on a tripod, focused and cued for the reader, can be operated by a student who is trained to start and stop the machine, thereby releasing me for other tasks. The children are less intimidated by the camera now, and the larger one should not be a problem. A table top microphone will reduce much of the room noise.

The time between initial reading, observation and evaluation, for the purpose of this project, required many days. The future filmings will have immediate playback for the children, thus giving them the opportunity for evaluating when the work is still fresh. This will also allow for increased opportunities for evaluations, for building on the childrens' experiences, background and thinking strategies, which is, after all, what this project is all about.
References


