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The effects of parent volunteers on a child's literacy growth

Francesca Marie Formolo

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THE EFFECTS OF PARENT VOLUNTEERS ON A CHILD'S LITERACY GROWTH

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: Bilingual/Crosscultural Option

by
Francesca Marie Formolo

December 1995
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Abstract

Research has shown that the more active parents are in their child's education the more likely their child is to achieve academic success. Based on these findings this research project focused on how parent volunteers influenced their child's literacy growth. It is hypothesized that as the parent spends time in the classroom they are given more opportunities to interact with other members of the classroom community. It is believed that this interaction will influence the way in which the parent works with their child and have a positive influence on their child's literacy growth.

The sample for this study consisted of eight students and four parent volunteers. The students were divided into two groups of four, one group had parent volunteers and the second group did not have parent volunteers in the classroom. Interactive journal writing samples were collected and assessed to find out if there was a significant difference between the two groups of students. This research project suggested that the group with parent volunteers scored higher than the group without parent volunteers.
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Chapter One

Introduction

The process of becoming literate is important to educators and parents alike. To successfully teach literacy one needs to understand that reading and writing consists of separate processes that are also interwoven. We need to understand that students need to be involved in both reading and writing to help literacy acquisition (Mooney, 1990). Interactive journal writing is an excellent literacy activity because the adult and child are involved in meaningful communication in which both interact by reading and writing to each other (Flores, 1990). In most interactive journals the child is writing to a teacher, but would there be a difference if a child’s parent became involved in this written interaction?

Research studies have been conducted on the benefits of interactive journals and parent volunteers as separate areas of focus, but there is a lack of research on parent volunteers and the use of interactive journals. Would the interactive journal activity become more important to the student because they were writing to their parent rather than the teacher? Further, as the parent becomes empowered with the knowledge of how their child comes to
know reading and writing, will this knowledge transfer to the home and become a part of family life?

This chapter will provide background information on the social context of interactive journals and parent involvement in the writing process. The reader will also be provided with the statement of the problem, the research question, and the theoretical framework.

Background to the Study

Within the area of bilingual education there is great concern for how an English language learner comes to understand the writing process. Research is discovering new information about literacy acquisition that may be changing the way teachers are instructing the non-English speaker in writing (Flores, 1990). Many instructors are finding that social interaction helps the writing process. Interactive journal writing is just one of several teaching strategies that uses social interaction to help students understand the writing process and other social situations need to be incorporated with journals. Some suggested interactive situations are shared book experiences, reading and copying environmental
labels, reading and writing patterned/repetitive stories through cooperative stories.

Unfortunately language minority parents are being left behind as educators learn new methods to teach the writing process. Many of these parents have to struggle with speaking in their second language, are unaware of how their child becomes literate and have difficulty helping them in the writing process. We have a responsibility as educators to help the language minority parent understand the teaching strategies that are being used and how research supports these changes.

✓ It is recommended that an educator can help language minority parents become more aware and knowledgeable of the writing process by encouraging parental involvement. Parental involvement can be encouraged by increased communication through parent letters or meetings (Saland & Schliff, 1988; Ramirez, 1990) organized by the teacher to inform the parents of strategies that they can use at home to help simplify the writing process.

Another suggestion in which parental involvement can be encouraged is by inviting the parents into the classroom to work with their child, interact with the teacher, other parents and
students. As a volunteer the parent could observe what the teacher does in the classroom to teach the students and participate in actual teaching methods. By inviting parents into the classroom they are given the opportunity to learn through a variety of experiences and observations how their child goes through the writing process.

The Problem

Statement of the Problem

According to Fuentes (1986) an active parent does make a difference in the academic growth of their child. So then, if a language minority parent becomes active in their child’s education by volunteering in the classroom, would there be a positive or negative effect on their child’s written growth? There is not much research concerning the impact an active parent volunteer has on their child’s literacy growth.

Research Question

Does a language minority parent volunteer influence their child’s literacy growth through the use of interactive journals?
Definition of Terms

Parent Volunteers:

A parent volunteer is one who comes into the classroom at least once a week, stays for the morning, and assists with groups and preparation of materials. This person is reliable and comes on a regular basis.

Literacy Growth:

Literacy growth is the process by which a child comes to know writing skills. For this project there will be five stages in the development of children's writing: 1. presyllabic, 2. syllabic, 3. syllabic/alphabetic, 4. alphabetic, and 5. early writer. (Flores, 1990; Batzle, 1992)

Interactive Journals:

An interactive journal is a notebook for the child to draw pictures in and write about their drawing. As the child reads their writing, the adult is responsible for responding to the child based on what the child wrote. In this way the child is given an opportunity to share their knowledge with an adult, while the adult is sharing their knowledge of how to write through their response. During this interaction the child learns reading and writing in a child centered
Theoretical Framework

Social interaction occurs when two or more people exchange information. There is reciprocity and both participants are actively involved in the exchange of information, bringing together two sets of cultural experiences based on individual backgrounds (Garton, 1992). This exchange of knowledge between two people provokes learning; that is to say, that the learner constructs knowledge as a result of their own thoughts and actions, facilitated through the mediation of language and social interactions with others.

An adaption of Cortes' (1986) Contextual Interaction Model has been constructed to explain how the exchange of information about literacy development takes place in the various social contexts of this project. (see Figure 1)

At the top of the model is the social context provided by the home environment. This is where the parent and child begin the literacy process through social interaction with family and other community members. In this context most students are exposed to literacy by having stories read to them, looking at the newspaper, or
Figure 1
Contextual Interaction Model

Societal Context of Parent Volunteers and Child's Written Growth

Family
Education Level
Attitudes/Perceptions of School Culture

School Context
The School Educational Process

School Interactions
Parent Support Groups
Staff Attitudes

Classroom Interactions
Parents
Other Students
Positive Teacher-Parent Interactions

Student Qualities
Academic Skills
Attitudes towards School
Self-image
Motivation

Outcomes
Proficiency in the Writing Process
by being taught to write their name. Other students, however, arrive at school with very little of this rich preparation by the family. A family’s educational perceptions toward school, and culture may be influencing factors to how much exposure to literature a student receives before entering school.

The second section to the model focuses on the school context, or the educational process. This section is divided into three subsections: school interactions, classroom interactions, and student’s qualities. When a parent and student begin the educational process they are given the opportunity to interact with different members within this social context such as teachers, family members of their peers, and principals. These members can share their knowledge of the writing process with them, which could help their child in the written literacy growth.

This brings us to the second classification of the school context, the interactions that take place within the classroom. Both the parent and the student will begin interacting with greater frequency with the classroom teacher, other parents from the class, teacher assistant, and other children that are not family members. Since these interactions will occur with more frequency, this is
where the most exchange of information on the writing process will take place. The parent volunteer will be given the opportunity to see what other children are learning in order to compare what their child has learned. The parent volunteer might decide to add to their support at home, again adding or rejecting new information on the writing process based on what they already know. The child, on the other hand, is also interacting with their peers who are sharing their knowledge of the writing process with them. In turn, the child will either accept or reject information based on what they already know.

The third subsection deals specifically with the individual student, since this is the person who is coming to know the writing process. Academic preparation from the home environment will play a large role in the child's written growth. If a child receives large amounts of literacy exposure at home, the less likely the child is to have problems when coming to know the writing process. Many times a young child's attitude toward school will depend on the family's attitudes toward education. If a family places value on education then the child will be motivated to come to school and excited to learn about the literacy process.
The arrows in between these three subsections suggest that social interaction is being exchanged between these contexts. So it can be concluded that the student’s qualities may be enhanced depending on the information of the writing process that the child adds or rejects to their prior knowledge.

The ultimate goal is to become proficient in the writing process. The outcome will be the focus of this study. As a parent volunteer and a student interact within these social contexts, will there be an influence on the student’s written growth as collected in their interactive journal?
Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

The literature review focuses on the research question: How does a parent volunteer influence their child’s literacy growth through interactive journals? This review will begin with an examination of both early and more recent research concerning the social context of parental involvement and their child’s education. The second section focuses on literacy growth and the process a child goes through as he/she comes to know how to write. This section will finish the review focusing on interactive journals as a teaching strategy used to help literacy acquisition through social interaction between an “expert” and “learner.”

Parental Involvement

Early Studies

According to the Contextual Interaction Model, a child’s educational foundation begins at home when the child socially interacts with family members. This interaction continues as the child’s formal education begins in which the parent is given the opportunity to become involved in the educational process. Research
has shown evidence that parental involvement in their child’s education helps in school achievement, and has been encouraged since the 1960’s, (Fuentes, 1986).

There are two forms of parental involvement: a passive influence or direct involvement, (Rosenbusch, 1987). An example of the way that a parent passively influences a child’s achievement is by their attitude toward education and the value of school. A parent’s positive or negative attitude toward the benefits that come out of education is a passive, almost innate, way they influence their child’s attitude toward school. Usually when the parent’s attitudes support the benefits of education the child’s attitude, motivation, and self-esteem will be higher in the classroom than the child whose parents maintain a negative, defeated attitude toward the benefits of education.

There have been projects organized to create a positive attitude toward education in language minority families. It is the hopes that this passive influence of the family’s viewpoint will more positively influence the child. Unfortunately, this philosophy is based on the “deficit hypothesis” (Auerbach, 1989) which assumes that language minority parents lack the essential skills to
promote school success in their children. Auerbach included extensive research that found indirect, passive factors in the home environment that positively influenced the language minority child’s achievement in literacy acquisition.

The Harvard Families and Literacy Study completed by Chall & Snow in 1982 discovered a strong passive involvement through the availability of a high level of literacy used in the homes of working-class, minority, and language minority students. Delgado-Gaitan (1987) supports this finding in her study on Mexican immigrants in which families used a wide range of text types such as letters written by family members, newspapers and children books which exposed their children to literature.

Rosenbusch (1987) contrasts passive parental influence with direct involvement in which the parent’s role is seen through their active participation in the school. Recently there has been a push toward helping the language minority family become more directly involved in the American school system with the hopes of creating a more positive attitude toward the majority language and culture. Direct involvement can be as demanding as working in the Parent/Teacher Association, volunteering in the classroom, or participating
in fund raising activities. Other, examples of direct involvement would be attending programs, writing or calling the teacher when concerned about an event in school, or attending parent/teacher conferences.

Early research describes how the social context of the family passively influences the child's education, but is lacking in details that describe how direct involvement can influence the child academic achievement. Research has shown that there is a strong passive influence in the language minority home (Delgado-Gaitan, 1987), but is there strong direct parental involvement?

Recent Studies

In more recent research there has been a trend to encourage direct involvement through parent education projects. Ramirez (1990) points out that minority parents are depending on educators to help them strengthen their ability to raise their children and improve their role as the child's first teacher. Another challenge faced by language minority parents is a language barrier. Since many parents are unable to speak or read English it can be difficult for them to understand how the educational system works (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992). Through education projects such as the Family
English Literacy Program or the Even Start Program (Ramirez, 1990) parents are gaining valuable knowledge on acquiring English as a second language and teaching methods that can be used at home to help their children achieve academic success.

This notion of educating the parents is reiterated by Farris (1991) who suggested ways in which a teacher can encourage illiterate parents to instill a desire to read and write in their children. Farris states that teachers need to take on part of the responsibility to get parents to participate with their child's academic success. One suggestion for accomplishing this goal would be by having parent sessions that shows them how to promote and nurture literacy in the home.

In addition to direct involvement the Contextual Interaction Model points out that there are passive influences such as cultural beliefs that affect the social interactions between family members and the school context. According to Delgado-Gaitan (1992) it would be a new experience for many Mexican parents to voice concerns to the teacher about their child's progress or behavior. In the six families studied by Delgado-Gaitan, there were two distinct ways parents reacted to negative reports from the teacher. Some parents
accepted the teacher's report without question and punished the child, while others called or wrote a note to the teacher requesting more information.

This reaction is significant because when parents solicit more details from the teacher they are provided with additional information and send a message to the teacher and administrator that they care about their child's education. Whereas the parents that didn't solicit additional information demonstrate a lack of interest according to the American culture. This "lack of interest" is interpreted by the teacher and administrator that the parents aren't concerned with their child's education (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992).

Recent research elaborates on the benefits of direct involvement through parent education projects that attempt to teach teaching methods skills along with English as a second language. It is also pointed out that we still need to bridge the American culture and the minority culture in order to improve the passive influences that come from cultural misunderstandings.
Summary

Early studies and recent studies tend to support each another in the area of parental involvement and passive influences found in the home social context. Early studies attempt to invalidate the "deficit hypothesis" by stating that the language minority parent can positively influence a child's academic success through passive influences such as attitudes/perceptions toward education and having literature available in the home. While direct involvement isn't elaborated on, early research does point out that this form of influence on a child's education is more active and visual as parents are physically more involved in the school.

Recent studies support the notion of direct involvement by encouraging parent education projects in which educators facilitate English acquisition and teach teaching methods skills. Further elaboration is given on cultural passive influences that affect the interpretation of parent reaction by the school context. Many times an appropriate reaction in the language minority's culture is interpreted as a lack of interest by the American culture.
Literacy Acquisition

Early Studies

Acquiring literacy is a process that can be distinguished by different stages within the process of psychogenesis. According to Goodman (1986) "...psychogenesis can be defined as the history of an idea or concept as influenced by the learner’s personal intellectual activity." In other words, psychogenesis focuses on the development of literacy. In order to better understand this definition, Ferreiro (1986) breaks down the psychogenetic process into three stages of literacy development.

In the first stage the child is able to distinguish between pictures and the written print. That is to say, the child concludes that the same types of lines are used to draw or write, but the difference is in the organization and meaning of the lines. Letters are an arbitrary representation of an object, drawings are what and object looks like. The second stage occurs when the child understands that the organization of letters will influence their meaning. In other words, if letters are organized in a different order, then this changes the meaning of the word. Finally, in the third level the child has realized that letters follow a phonetic
hypothesis, in which there are rules that govern the letters in order to determine the proper letter sound when writing or reading.

Research shows that the use of social interaction facilitates the development of literacy (Auerback, 1989; Ferreiro, 1986; Goodman, 1986; Pontecorvo & Zucchermaglio, 1986) within the social context of the classroom as seen in the Contextual Interaction Model. Ferreiro (1986) suggests that since children learn in social, not isolated situations, there are certain pedagogical implications for educators. In the classroom students need to be offered opportunities to socially interact with peers, or other students of similar academic background, and “experts,” or adults/older students. As the learner interacts with the “expert” or peer he/she is able to test learned information about the literacy process against the understandings of others. Students are then able to work together to develop ways to take learned information and appropriate it to their individual learning style.

Pontecorvo and Zucchermaglio (1986) further describes how the learner interacts with the “expert” and peer in two types of social contexts: asymmetrical and symmetrical. Asymmetrical social interaction is between an “expert” and learner. The “expert”
is the person who has more experience and broadens the cognitive knowledge of the learner through a process known as scaffolding. Scaffolding is an instructional structure that supports the learner in the early stages of knowledge acquisition. Symmetrical social interaction occurs when equal peers help each other learn new information through the use of social interaction and building upon each others' prior knowledge.

Early studies demonstrated the importance of social interaction between "experts" and peers as the learner develops literacy proficiency. These social interactions can be asymmetrical, between "expert" and learner, or symmetrical, between peers. In order to facilitate psychogenesis it is important for the teacher to provide both asymmetrical and symmetrical social interactions as the learner develops literacy proficiency. Early studies did not explain how an instructor can facilitate literacy development through the use of both types of social interaction.

Recent Studies

According to Garton (1992), Vygotsky believed that language development depends on cognitive factors such as prior knowledge, memory, attention, etc., and social forces. It is pointed out that
social forces, or social interactions, are necessary for the
development of the higher mental function of concept development,
logical reasoning and judgement. Through social interaction the
cchild gradually assumes more responsibility and becomes more self-
directed.

A teaching method that allows children to learn how to write
through the use of cognitive factors and social forces is interactive
journal writing. Interactive journal writing is a way of using
written language in a learning situation that is real, meaningful, and
socially constructed between the student and teacher (Flores, 1990).

In an interactive journal the child is asked to “write” an entry in
whatever way they can. Frequently this can be in the form of
scribbles, pictures, letters, or their name. The teacher’s, or the
“expert’s,” role is to respond in writing to what the child “wrote.”
Through the use of interactive journals the students can attain
success because they are able to work at their own cognitive level
in the writing process. Social interaction is utilized when the
teacher writes a response to the student’s journal entry.

According to Flores (1990) the learner comes to know that
writing is a form of communication that is different from spoken
language. The student experiences ownership because they are allowed to choose their own topic and write on a daily basis. In this social context, the child is allowed to experience the function and process of literacy while developing a close personal relationship with the teacher through writing. As an educator, one is able to assess and record the students' literacy growth. There is opportunity for individual social interaction on a daily basis, and the teacher has the opportunity to mediate how the child comes to the writing process. Within this setting the teacher is given the valuable opportunity to learn about each child's interests, ideas, culture, etc.

In order to help the instructor assess literacy growth within journal entries, Batzle (1992) identifies three stages of writing development: early, emergent, and fluent. The emergent writer is imitating writing through the use of scribbles, picture, letters from his/her name, and is able to read what they wrote. The early writer has grasped the concept that written language is really speech written down. Some characteristics of this stage are approximate spelling of words, initial and final consonant sounds are being used correctly, and print in the environment is being used in order to
facilitate the writing process. Finally, the fluent writer is writing with ease because he/she is able to control writing conventions and letter formations. At this stage the writer has shifted from the mechanics of writing to the development of a written topic, subject, or story. For example there is a beginning, middle and end of a written journal entry. The child shows concern for the quality of what was written and is able to self-edit in order to form revisions of written work.

Flores (1990) has described the writing process in four stages: presyllabic, syllabic, syllabic/alphabetic and alphabetic. Some characteristics of the presyllabic stage include scribbling, writing letters or numbers, and the ability to distinguish between drawing and writing. In the syllabic stage, the writer begins to consistently represent each syllable in a word with one symbol, usually a letter or number, but not necessarily the correct letter or number. At the syllabic/alphabetic stage the writer is now able to represent the sound/letter correspondences in a word, thus showing how the child is coming to know the phonetic hypothesis. Finally, in the alphabetic stage the writer seems to be using sound/letter association, or the phonetic hypothesis, as the driving force in writing, and frequently
an adult can read what the child has written.

While researchers agree that there are different stages in the writing process, it seems that Batzle (1992) extends the stages into a higher level of thinking. Many characteristics of an emergent and early writer are similar to Flores' (1990) four stages, but the fluent writer tends to include the higher thinking skills of formulating a story line that makes sense and being able to self-edit.

The goal of the Contextual Interaction Model is to help the learner become proficient in the writing process through the use of social interaction. Recent studies have supported early studies on the importance of social interaction in the development of literacy but the focus was on interactive journals, a teaching method that incorporated the use of social interaction and literacy development.

Summary

It seems that early and recent research tends to build upon each other. The research supports the notion that as a child acquires literacy there are different stages that build upon each other. Whether there are three or four stages, each stage has criteria that must be mastered as the child comes to know literacy.

Social interaction has been found to facilitate the literacy
process. Social contexts can be formed between two peers or an "expert", such as a teacher or a parent, and a learner. In either context, research shows that a person's learning development can be stimulated through social interaction.

Interactive journal writing is a teaching method that incorporates asymmetrical and symmetrical social interactions. The student writes a story in a journal, being allowed to interact with their peers as they develop their journal entry. Upon completion of the entry, the "expert" is able to interact with the learner as he/she write a response to the journal entry.

Summary of Review of Literature

The review of the literature was broken down into two sections. The first section on parental involvement presented research concerning the importance of parents as active and passive participants in the school. Both early and recent research tend to show a positive relationship between parental involvement and academic success. The second section of the review focused on literacy growth and interactive journals. In this section literature was discussed that shows how a child acquires literacy through stages that are socially influenced. It is suggested that interactive
journals might be one teaching strategy that uses the social contexts found in the Contextual Interaction Model in order to facilitate literacy acquisition.

There was a lack of research found that integrated the active parent and literacy growth. The research question is based on the premise that an active parent does make a difference in academic growth. This project attempts to show a correlation between literacy growth and an active parent that volunteers in the classroom.
Chapter Three

Design/Methodology

This research project is an interpretative case study that focused on eight kindergarten students, their parents, and interactive journal writing. These students were partitioned into two groups of four. One group had a parent volunteering in the classroom, while the second group did not. One activity the parent volunteer participated in was writing in interactive journals with a small group of students as the teacher offered assistance and guidance. Frequently the parent could work directly with their own child in their journal.

The study lasted eleven months to learn if parent volunteering in the classroom influences a student’s written growth. The study used interactive journals to compare the writing growth between the two groups of students.

Data Needed

Necessary data for this study were students’ writing samples that assessed the level of literacy growth. All students were assessed based on a new writing rubric (see Figure 2) compiled from sample rubrics developed by Flores (1990) and Batzle (1992).
Figure 2

**Characteristics of Literacy Growth**

**Presyllabic**
* scribbles, numbers, random letters
* copies text
* able to distinguish between drawing and writing
* uses drawings in their written language
* left to right movement when writing and reading

**Syllabic**
* uses a written symbol, such as scribbles, numbers, or letters, per syllable in a word
* able to read what they wrote
* letter/sound approximations are more accurate

**Syllabic/Alphabetic**
* uses initial and final consonants/vowels
* begins using invented spelling
* coming to know the phonetic hypothesis
* experiments with punctuation

**Alphabetic**
* phonetic hypothesis is a driving force in writing
* invented spelling is evident
* an adult can read what was written
* understands how to use periods
* places space between words
* begins using personal voice in writing

**Early Writer**
* places capitals at the beginning of sentences
* is aware of commas, question and exclamation marks
* recognizes misspellings
* complete sentences with a beginning, middle and end
* uses personal voice in writing
A new rubric was compiled to break down Batzle's emergent writer into written growth stages that built upon one another as identified in Flores' rubric of literacy growth. The early writer stage was added to show further literacy growth that was not included in Flores' original rubric.

The characteristics of Batzle's emergent writer stage were integrated into Flores' four primary characteristics of literacy growth: presyllabic, syllabic, syllabic/alphabetic, and alphabetic. Since Flores' rubric lacked in further detailed characteristics of higher writing stages, the early writer is primarily taken from Batzle's rubric.

A presyllabic writer is identifiable through the usage of scribbles or drawings that might include numbers and random letter formations or copied text. This child writes from left to right and knows the difference between what he/she has written and their picture.

As the child moves into the syllabic stage he/she can read what they wrote based on their writing rather than on their picture. When a "word" is written the reader can identify a written symbol per syllable in a word. The syllabic writer writes "words" with
more phonetic accuracy.

During the syllabic/alphabetic stage the reader will find that the child uses initial and final consonants or vowels in their "words." Often the early writer will invent a way to spell a "word" as the child connects phonetic rules to letter/sound symbols that form a word. Finally the journal entry at this stage will include experimentation with punctuation.

In the alphabetic stage an adult can read what the child has written since invented spelling is more accurate as the phonetic hypothesis becomes mastered by the writer. Other characteristics that simplify reading during this stage are that the child uses the period properly and leaves spaces between words. In this stage the child begins to experiment with writing on their own instead of copying a sentence starter or print from the environment.

The highest stage necessary for this study is the early writer stage in which the child is beginning to conform to conventional writing that follows known grammar rules. In this stage the reader will see the child place capitals at the beginning of sentences and becomes aware of other punctuation besides the period. Sentences convey a complete thought that contain the writer's personal voice.
rather than copying from the environment. Frequently the writer will begin recognizing when a word is misspelled, so the self-correcting process in writing has begun.

Subjects

The subjects involved in this research were the parent volunteers, students whose parent volunteers and students whose parent did not volunteer in the classroom. Each group will be described according to their background and instructional training.

Students

There were eight Hispanic kindergartners from low income background with Spanish as their primary language involved in this study. The first group of students, three girls and one boy, who had parents volunteering in the classroom entered kindergarten as presyllabic writers. The second group of students, three girls and one boy, who did not have parents volunteering in the classroom were chosen based on gender and their presyllabic stage of writing.

To prepare the subjects for journal writing the teacher began an adaptation of interactive journal writing the second week of school. Instead of allowing the subjects to draw and write picture on their own the students were read a story in which they had to
draw a picture of their favorite part of the story. This adaptation was necessary to coincide with the homework read aloud program that includes a form of interactive writing at home.

Students were then asked to describe their picture by writing in Spanish about what they drew. Since this was the first time most of these students were asked to write many did not think they knew how to write. The teacher explained the different ways their writing might look like. Some students might be writing with a variety of letters, numbers, or lines and curves (scribbles). Students were instructed to focus on what they wanted to say through their writing rather than their drawing.

Parent Volunteers

There were four parent volunteers participating in this study. All are of Hispanic descent and can be considered as coming from low socio-economic backgrounds. One mother is a single parent, raising her children with the help of her parents, and she is unemployed. Two other mothers are supported by the child's father and are not employed. Only one mother is employed and has two jobs for additional income and lives with the child’s father. Two of the mothers speak, read, and write English and Spanish fluently, while
the remaining two are only literate in Spanish.

The four volunteers have a variety of training. The mother who works out of the home is a trained bilingual teaching assistant and has worked with kindergartners for seven years. She has attended meetings on literacy development of the young child. Another mother has been working as a parent volunteer for two years, while the other two mothers have been volunteers for the first time this year. All participants helped in organizing work for the students and directed small groups instruction.

Parents were first allowed to observe interactive journals several times before being asked to run their own groups of seven to nine students. During the observations the parent volunteer listened and responded to students’ writing during journal writing time with teacher guidance. When responding to a journal entry the adult needs to listen to what the child “reads” in their writing and writes back to the child based on what the child “read.” It is important that the adult does not write down what the child says, but writes a response that builds upon the child’s written message. Until the child can read what the adult writes it is up to the adult to mediate by reading to the child what they wrote. If the parent volunteer was
unsure of how to respond to an entry, then the teacher would be available as support.

**Read Aloud Homework Program**

At this time it is important to explain the homework read aloud program since this program contains many interactive journal writing qualities. Once the eight students began writing at home with their parents the journal writing at school showed much growth and improvement.

In January all parents were asked to attend an informative meeting that explained the new homework read aloud program that their child was to begin receiving. As previously mentioned, within this program is a component in which the students are expected to draw a picture of their favorite part of the story they have heard. Below their picture the students were expected to write about their picture, just like their journal. The parents observed a video taping of the teacher interacting with several students as they completed the homework included in the read aloud program. The purpose of this tape was to show parents how to allow their child to write according to their ability and asking the child to read what they wrote. Parents were not expected to respond to their child’s writing
in the homework program.

**Methodology**

This will be a case study of how two groups of students come to know the writing process. The focus of the study will be the students' writing growth based on information collected in their interactive journals. The writing growth of the group of students with parent volunteers will be compared to the writing growth of the group of students without parent volunteers. The students were taught how to write in their journals in small cooperative groups of seven to nine students. At first, the students were shown how to draw a picture and write about their picture. Students were given an example of conventional writing when the teacher responded to what the student wrote.

As a student writes in his/her journal, the teacher is observing how the child writes so that literacy growth can be assessed. Included in each journal is the rubric of the characteristics of literacy growth that helped the assessment of each child.

**Data Collection**

The data collected will be writing samples from the subjects'
interactive journals. Students will write in their journals once a week in small group instruction. A teacher, assistant, or parent volunteer will respond to the child's writing. There were thirty-three samples from each of the eight student participants, creating 264 journal entries.

**Type of Analysis**

There will be two types of analysis. A quantitative one which gives each stage of the writing process a numerical value that will be used to compare the two groups. There will also be a qualitative analysis of student work which involves an examination of the characteristics displayed in children's writing samples as they progress over time.

For the quantitative analysis, journal samples were collected for eleven months and assigned a score each month. The presyllabic stage is given a value of one, syllabic a value of two, syllabic/alphabetic a value of three, alphabetic a value of four, and early writer a value of five. Each student will have a total score for the eleven months, and these scores will be aggregated to arrive at a group score. From the group score a group mean will be calculated for each group. This will allow for a comparison of mean scores for
the two groups. The higher score will help decide if parent volunteering in the classroom influences a child’s written growth.

For the qualitative analysis the students will be assessed to find out what stage in the writing process each child has reached during each of the eleven months. Each child will write in their journal approximately three to four times a month. The teacher will then choose the best sample for that month to assess written growth according to the new rubric of the characteristics of literacy growth. Characteristics mastered in the writing sample will determine which stage the child has reached in the writing process during that particular month. In other words, if the child’s journal entry shows that most of the presyllabic characteristics have been mastered and has begun experimenting with syllabic characteristics then the child will be placed into the higher stage.
Chapter Four
Analysis and Results

Data collection began in July 1994 and continued until May 1995. Data analysis is organized into two separate subsections: subjects with parent volunteers and subjects without volunteers. These sections shall describe the literacy development of each child, as seen in a qualitative and quantitative analysis of their individual interactive journals.

Through individual interactive journals a qualitative analysis of each subjects' written growth will be presented to give detailed descriptions of individual literacy growth. With this information one can differentiate between the characteristics of the five stages as the child comes to know the writing process. This description will include a quantitative analysis of each child's final score. A comparison of the mean scores between the two groups will be included in the results.

Subjects with Parent Volunteer

Diana Macias

Diana had chicken pox in July, so data collection did not begin until August 15. (see Appendix A) Diana was working at the
presyllabic stage in which she could distinguish between pictures and words, wrote from left to right and read what she wrote. It is noteworthy that Diana's drawings are done with clarity and detail not seen in other students included in this study. (see Figure 3) On August 31, while responding to the story Caps for Sale, Diana took the time to organize the caps according to the different colors like the man did in the story. Based on the response of the parent volunteer, evidently Diana was describing the part in the story when the monkeys threw down the caps and the man picked them up to organize them. The detailed drawing is significant because it shows Diana's maturity of her eye/hand coordination that is necessary to copy or write letters that might be necessary in future writings.

During the next two months Diana remains in the presyllabic stage as she comes to know the writing process. In September Diana starts mixing numbers with her letters, but remains focused on the meaning her written language is conveying. Once Diana began copying print from the environment during November, she quit mixing numbers with written language and she began experimenting with the location of the period. In December Diana begins to move into the syllabic stage since she has been reading what she wrote all
A mi me gusta como escribiaste que los chingos tiraron las gorras y el hombre las levanto.

- red
- purple
- black
- blue
these months.

Diana remains in the syllabic stage from December until the end of March. On February 22 Diana writes the words "la" and "nina" within her entry, thus showing that she is beginning to write letter/sound approximations with more accuracy. (see Figure 4) With the introduction of lines at the bottom of the page, it is easier for Diana to write from left to right and organize her sentences. In this sample Diana can go from top to bottom when starting a new line.

The effects of the homework read aloud program begins to spread into Diana's journal writing in March. The sentence pattern "A mi me gusta la parte...." is still heavily relied upon to begin writing, but initial and final consonants/vowels are being used to spell words that finish the sentence starter. On April 6 an adult can read her entry, thus placing Diana in the alphabetic stage. (see Figure 5) In this sample there are invented spelling and the phonetic hypothesis as a driving forces to her writing. Diana has not experimented much with the period, but in this entry the location of the period is correct.

In summary, Diana spent four months, August - November, in
Figure 4

Writing Sample of Diana Macias on February 22

FEB 22

lariha croo

roo yo

Yo tengo roo roo

A mí también me gusta Jordana.

Diana
AMi MEGUST CADO
LARCI SE DESAYO
JUMAMI HADAPAN
¿Tu crees que se desmayó de un susto? ¿i
the presyllabic stage, three months, December - February, in the syllabic stage, one month, March, in the syllabic/alphabetic stage, and reached the alphabetic stage in April and May. (see Figure 6) At this point Diana needs to use her personal voice rather than relying on the sentence starter and begin formatting her sentences with the proper punctuation and spacing between words. Based on the qualitative data collected, Diana reached the alphabetic stage which is given a numerical value of four in the quantitative analysis.

Angel Salazar

Data collection begins in July through the end of May for Angel. (see Appendix B) In July Angel relies primarily on his pictures to convey meaning, but is aware of the fact that he should be reading his scribbles. Thus Angel knows that there is a difference between pictures and symbolic scribbles as writing, identifying him as a presyllabic writer. He begins incorporating letters and numbers in September and has mastered the left to right directional movement when writing and reading his scribbles. As Angel learned different letters and numbers he began incorporating this knowledge into his writing during September.

Angel remained in the first stage until November 9 in which he
Figure 6

Literacy Growth of Diana Macias

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Writer</th>
<th>Alphabetic</th>
<th>Syllabic/Alphabetic</th>
<th>Syllabic</th>
<th>Presyllabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

copied from text in the environment and wrote left to right, placing
him into the syllabic stage. Based on the response from the
volunteer it seems that Angel puts his own meaning on the written
print rather than reading what he copied. (see Figure 7) Angel
copied “o do gras a mi ma” (“Yo doy gracias a mi mama.”) which
means that he’s thankful to his mother. Yet according to what the
volunteer wrote, he is thankful for his father because he takes him
to lots of places. During the following months Angel practices
letter/sound approximations as he comes to know the phonetic
hypothesis. In January and February one sees more accurate
drawings, further growth with periods and longer sentences.

Angel makes tremendous growth in March as he grows into the
syllabic/alphabetic stage. On March 28 Angel is putting spaces
between his words, can identify and write down initial and final
consonants/vowels, and begins using invented spelling. (see Figure
8) This growth may be the result of the interaction taking place at
home with his mother during the homework read aloud program since
the teacher has not worked with the students to “teach” them how
to put spaces between their words.

Angel only spends one month in this stage before he moves into
A mi me gusta
come escribiste
que fu-te das gracias
A tu papá que te
manda a todas partes
A mi me gustan las hormigas.

La pte Mahora No Lo
the alphabetic stage during the months of April and May. At this
time invented spelling is evident as the phonetic hypothesis
becomes the driving force when Angel writes and reads in his
journal. Although he is placing spaces between his words, Angel
needs to work on punctuation and branch away from the sentence
starter of “A mi me gusta la parte....”

In Summary, Angel spent three months in the presyllabic stage,
July - September, four months in the syllabic stage, November -
February, one month in syllabic/alphabetic, March, and achieved the
alphabetic stage in April - May. (see Figure 9) Angel needs to
become more aware of grammar rules such as misspelled words,
capitals, commas, or question marks before moving into the early
writer stage. Based on the qualitative data Angel has reached the
alphabetic stage which is given a numerical value of four in the
quantitative analysis.

Jennifer Rodriguez

As with the others, Jennifer’s data collection (see Appendix C)
begins in the presyllabic stage, willing to take risks in writing, but
unable to read what she wrote, thus expressing meaning through
drawings. Jennifer began reading what she wrote in August, so she
Figure 9

Literacy Growth of Angel Salazar

Early Writer
- Alphabetic
- Syllabic/Alphabetic
- Syllabic
- Presyllabic

made a connection between her symbolic scribbles as a means to communicate rather than the pictures. During September the scribbles began taking the form of letters mixed with numbers. To facilitate sentence formation Jennifer began copying print from the classroom environment during November.

In December Jennifer moves into the syllabic stage since she has mastered all characteristics in the first stage, and could read what she wrote since August. At this point Jennifer’s sentences flow from left to right and letters/numbers become her primary form of written language. In January Jennifer introduced her personal voice by writing about her vacation and what Santa Claus had given her. (see Figure 10)

When the read aloud program was introduced in February there was a major difference observed in the way that Jennifer approached writing in her journal. Jennifer began repeating words repeatedly, sounding them out, trying to figure out the right letter that went with the sounds she was hearing/saying.

On March 30 the length of writing grew tremendously. (see Figure 11) It was not possible for the teacher to write down everything she wrote, so it is not certain yet if there is a symbol
Figure 10

Writing Sample of Jennifer Rodriguez on January 6

A mi me gusta
mucho Santa
Claus ¡quién traiga
muchos regalos!
A mensa y eso
BAN AÑO AÑABO
MOM ZADGERAS
A mi me gusta bailar.
per syllable, but she was reading what she wrote letter by letter. The length of this entry is noteworthy since Jennifer is still struggling as she sounds out letters to decide what to write down. She spent at least fifteen minutes writing this entry.

At the beginning of April, during free explore time, Jennifer drew a picture of an ice cream cone and wrote the word "hLaDo" (helado). As she wrote she was interacting with another student who helped her understand how to write this word accurately. This places her into the syllabic/alphabetic stage since this writing uses initial, middle, and final consonants/vowels. The accuracy of the spelling of this word is important since the Spanish "h" is silent.

At this point the instructor tried to explain to Jennifer that she did not need to write so much, but that writing one word was enough during journal writing time. She struggles so much with the phonetic hypothesis when trying to write that Jennifer might feel more success if she could write one word accurately rather than a sentence that did not make sense. But Jennifer chose to write complete sentences, sounding out every step of the way.

On May 18 Jennifer wrote with tremendous accuracy in her entry when working with a volunteer. (see Figure 12) This entry is
Figure 12

Writing Sample of Jennifer Rodriguez on May 18

MAY 18 1995

A mi me Gusta que su mama lo arruyaba, y lo arruyaba.
in response to the story *I'll Love You Forever* and Jennifer's favorite part was when the mother rocked the child back and forth, back and forth. In Jennifer's writing she accurately writes the word "lo" and comes very close to the spelling of "ArullB" (arullaba). She seems to have written three separate sentences, as there are two periods at the end of the lines, thus she is coming to know how to use the period.

In summary, Jennifer remained in the presyllabic stage for four months, July - November, spent four months in the syllabic stage, December-March, and reached the beginnings of the syllabic/alphabetic stage in April and May. (see Figure 13) While Jennifer continues to come to know the phonetic hypothesis she needs to become more aware of letter and number reversals. According to the qualitative data collected Jennifer reached the syllabic/alphabetic stage, which is given a numerical value of three in the quantitative analysis.

**Vivian Garcia**

From the data collection of Vivian (see Appendix D) one can see that she begins as a high presyllabic writer who has already come to know several characteristics in the writing process. She can write
Figure 13

Literacy Growth of Jennifer Rodriguez

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Writer</th>
<th>Alphabetic</th>
<th>Syllabic/Alphabetic</th>
<th>Syllabic</th>
<th>Presyllabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

with letters in a left to right directional movement, distinguish between pictures and written language, and read back what she wrote. There is no evidence of scribbles, nor does Vivian mix letters and numbers. She has already internalized this information and knows the proper time to use these skills.

So it is no surprise that by September 21 Vivian begins to use the phonetic hypothesis to form words like PeRO, (perro), and GADO, (gato), as she identifies her pictures, placing her into the syllabic stage. (see Figure 14) In this sample Vivian copied words and sentence patterns from examples to write “AMIME...,” which demonstrates that she is coping the beginning of my sentence “A mi me....”

Much independent growth is seen on November 9 when Vivian begins writing on her own: UioDGrasArturo, (Yo doy gracias a Arturo.), yOiODGraSA mi MaMa, (Yo doy gracias a mi mama.), JOLED GrsA A MiPaPa, (Yo le doy gracias a mi papa.). (see Figure 15) In this entry Vivian has written three complete sentences that can be read by an adult without Vivian’s help, thus placing her as a high syllabic/alphabetic writer.

Since the rest of the journal entries are a combination of
Figure 14

Writing Sample of Vivian Garcia on September 21

AMENBIGPRO IEN GAO
A mi me gusta que le das gracias a tu mamá, papá y Arturo porque te cuidan bien.
phonetics and copying. Vivian was not placed into the alphabetic stage until her December entry. Evidently the phonetic hypothesis was the driving force behind her written language as one can now read what she wrote and the period is being placed in the proper location.

Vivian remains in the alphabetic stage from the months of December through February. During this time she demonstrates all characteristics in this stage except the usage of her personal voice in her writing. Vivian is beginning to self-edit while struggling with words she does not know, and she becomes aware of words that she spells incorrectly. Vivian can read what the teacher writes to her and responds to the question.

Vivian did not move into the next stage since she has not broken away from the sentence starter of "A mi me gusta la parte...." and needs to use more of her personal voice in her writing. She only broke away from the pattern once, on March 2, when she was placed into the early writer stage. During the months of March through May Vivian's writing grew with clarity as she began using spaces between her words and used complete sentences to convey her thoughts.
In summary, Vivian remained in the presyllabic stage for two months, July - August, spent only one month in the syllabic stage, September, and one month in the syllabic/alphabetic stage, November, spent three months in the alphabetic stage, December - February, and was the only one to achieve the early writer stage in March - May. (see Figure 16) Based on the qualitative data collected Vivian reached the early writer stage, which is given a numerical value of five in the quantitative analysis.

Summary of Students with Parent Volunteers

As previously mentioned in chapter three, the quantitative analysis was attained by placing a numerical value on each stage in the rubric. This formed a scale from one to five. During the six months of data collection, all students showed growth in the writing process. (see Table 1) This table shows the beginning and ending numerical value of each stage that each subject attained and the difference between the stages.

Vivian shows the most growth over the year by reaching the early writer stage. There is a difference of a positive four (+4) between the initial and final stages. Diana and Angel are both strong alphabetic writers, which shows a difference of a positive
Figure 16

Literacy Growth of Vivian Garcia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Writer</th>
<th>Alphabetic</th>
<th>Syllabic/Alphabetic</th>
<th>Syllabic</th>
<th>Presyllabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table 1

**Literacy Growth of Students with Parent Volunteers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Initial Stage</th>
<th>Final Stage</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vivian Garcia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>+4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diana Macias</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angel Salazar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Rodriguez</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
three (+3) between the initial and final stages. Jennifer has achieved the syllabic/alphabetic stage, which is a positive two (+2) between the initial and final stages.

Subjects without Parent Volunteers

Krystal Corona

During data collection (see Appendix E) Krystal remained in the presyllabic stage for two months. She could distinguish between drawing and written language, write with scribbles and letters from her name, but her drawings were what she read to convey messages to the reader. During these months evidently Krystal can write from left to right and mix numbers in her writing once she broke away from writing her name as a representation of her written communication.

In September Krystal worked with parent volunteers that were being trained in interactive journal writing by the instructor. Unfortunately Krystal would not take a risk in writing in her journal until she worked with the bilingual assistant on September 22. (see Figure 17) In this sample Krystal used invented spelling to write the word CAVAIO, (caballo), to label her picture. Krystal is now beginning to represent the sound/letter correspondence of
Figure 17

Writing Sample of Krystal Corona on September 22.

A mi me gusto tu caballo y me gusto como lo escribiste.
initial and final consonants and vowels which places her beyond the syllabic stage and into the syllabic/alphabetic stage. There is a lack of evidence that Krystal has copied text from the environment, but her letter/sound approximations are more accurate and the final entry of the month shows a written symbol per syllable in a word.

Krystal continues to explore the phonetic hypothesis as she builds into sentence/pattern writing and copying print from the environment. On November 28 she copied a previously taught sentence pattern, “A mi me gusta...,” to form the sentence: “A Mi me Gusta estAB PSCaDo,” (A mi me gusta cuando estaba pescando.) (see Figure 18) During most of November Krystal is copying my examples, but on this session she was responding to the story Hiawatha and was not able to look at an example. She may be building on her previous entries by copying this sentence pattern and finishing with her own words.

During the months of December and January Krystal moves into the alphabetic stage, as she is experimenting with punctuation, using the phonetic hypothesis as the driving force in writing, begins to use spaces between words, and an adult can read what she wrote. On February 16th Krystal wrote a sentence that did not follow the
AMIO GUSTO
ESTA
AB
PESCADO

A mí también me gusta cuando ellos estaban pescando.
sentence starter, but communicated a complete thought that accurately described her drawing. (see Figure 19) Since her personal voice is being used in her writing she was placed into the early writer stage. In this sample she can place the proper spacing between her words and has mastered the location of the period. Krystal is also able to read what the teacher writes to her in the journal.

During the months that follow, Krystal grows in forming a beginning, middle and ending in her sentences and there are very few misspelled words. Krystal can use the comma and accents properly when responding to my questions. She uses a capital letter at the beginning of the sentence starter, but needs to transfer this knowledge when she begins the sentence with her own words.

In summary, Krystal was in the presyllabic stage for two months, July - August, skipped to the syllabic/alphabetic stage for three months, September - November, remained in the alphabetic stage for two months, December - January, and achieved the early writer stage for four months, February - May. (See Figure 20) At this point Krystal needs to become more aware of punctuation and misspelled words. Based on the qualitative data collected Krystal
el oso está en
la escalera. Va a subir
a otro piso.
Figure 20

Literacy Growth of Krystal Corona

Early Writer
Alphabetic
Syllabic/Alphabetic
Syllabic
Presyllabic

reached the early writer stage, which is given a numerical value of five in the quantitative analysis.

Nancy Vaca

Nancy’s data collection (see Appendix F) shows that upon entering kindergarten Nancy has already come to know several characteristics of the presyllabic stage. She can distinguish between pictures and written words, uses scribbles to convey meaning, and can read what she wrote. During August Nancy’s scribbles form letters as she begins to mix letters from her name into her journal writing. There is only one entry in September since Nancy missed much school when her mother had a baby and could not bring her. At this time Nancy wrote with letters, but would not read what she wrote for the parent volunteer.

In November and December Nancy is copying print from the environment and secures the left to right directional movement, which places her in the syllabic stage. At this point Nancy has shown that she has mastered all the characteristics of the previous stage, but need to focus on letter/sound approximations. Nancy relies on copying text from past entries or the environment.

In January Nancy began writing more and using a written
symbol per syllable in a word, but it became apparent she needed more structure in her journal to know where to continue writing when completing a sentence and going onto another page. (see Figure 21) Nancy begins writing in the proper place, but when she runs out of space she writes above her sentence, unsure of where to go to complete her thought.

In February Nancy secures letter/sound approximations and grows into the syllabic/alphabetic stage. As Nancy is coming to know the phonetic hypothesis she is using initial and final consonants/vowels in her invented spelling of unknown words.

On March 31 an adult could read what Nancy wrote without clarification from her, placing her into the alphabetic stage. (see Figure 22) In this sample the phonetic hypothesis is her driving force as she writes "A mi m Gusta cuanDo Ellos FurERN a matar a La MoDRSa." (A mi me gusta cuando ellos fueron a matar a la morsa.) It is difficult to know if Nancy is putting spaces between her words and she has not used her personal voice in her writing.

In summary Nancy was in the presyllabic stage for four months, July - October, syllabic stage for three months, November - January, remained in the syllabic/alphabetic stage for only one
Dr. mija,
los pingüinos
juegan y nadan
bonitos cuando
están en el
agua.

PIN

EL

ICUN

NO ME

CUANDO

AMIM COSTA
Writing Sample of Nancy Vaca on March 31

MAR 31 1995

¿Has visto a una marabu? Sí

MIRELA MAR 31 95

DOELHO FUEPM
month, February, and achieved the alphabetic stage for three months, March - May. (see Figure 23) Further journal entries need to show a greater focus on proper usage of punctuation and spacing between words to facilitate reading of what she wrote. According to the qualitative data collected Nancy reached the alphabetic stage, which is given an numerical value of four in the quantitative analysis.

**Dania Partida**

As data collection (see Appendix G) began Dania was unwilling to take a risk in writing and, at times, could not bring herself to even draw a picture, placing her into the presyllabic stage. Although Dania did not progress further than the first stage, August was a better month for Dania, as she began interpreting her pictures, wrote her name, and used drawings in her written language.

In September Dania’s presyllabic writing skills continue to grow as she incorporates letters and numbers when writing and begins to experiment with writing from left to right. On November 28 Dania wrote a longer sentence using the left to right directional movement, but writes from bottom to top instead of the conventional writing of top to bottom. (see Figure 24) While Dania
Figure 23

**Literacy Growth of Nancy Vaca**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Writer</th>
<th>Alphabetic</th>
<th>Syllabic/Alphabetic</th>
<th>Syllabic</th>
<th>Presyllabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

![Graph showing literacy growth stages over time]
Figure 24

Writing Sample of Dania Partida on November 28

Que bonito es
arullar a un
bebe para que
se duerma.

RH KHOIDUDF
E AONTOMHIV
is moving into the next stage, she still has not copied text from the environment and continues to read her pictures rather than what she wrote. It is not certain whether Dania has made the distinction between drawing and writing.

During the months of December through February Dania can distinguish between her drawings and written work as she reads her words rather than the picture. Although Dania has not copied text from the environment she moves into the syllabic stage since she has begun to experiment with the period by placing it at the beginning of the sentence rather than at the end, and can read back what she wrote, following a left to right directional movement. In these entries Dania is beginning to use a written symbol per syllable in a word, but needs to work on letter/sound approximations.

The only time in which Dania copied text was on March 9th, in which she copied from the story *Mama, Do You Love Me?* in English. Upon reading what she wrote Dania read her sentence in Spanish rather than English. By the end of March Dania has mastered the location of the period, but has not come to know the phonetic hypothesis well enough to write letter/sound approximations accurately.
During April and May Dania continues to work in the syllabic stage as she struggles with identifying the correct letter with the sound she hears in her sentence. On May 22 Dania completed her first sentence, but for some reason was not satisfied and erased what she wrote. (see Figure 25) In this sample Dania seemed to have placed the period incorrectly, but this could have been caused because she was tired as she worked for quite a while on her sentence. In previous entries the location of the period is correctly placed at the end of her sentence.

In summary, Dania spent five months in the presyllabic stage, July - November, and six months in the syllabic stage, December - May. (see Figure 26) Dania needs to be given more time to internalize the phonetic hypothesis so that she can write the correct letter according to the sound she hears. Based on the qualitative data collected Dania reached the syllabic stage, which is given a numerical value of two in the quantitative analysis.

David Cabrera

David's data collection (see Appendix H) shows that when he entered kindergarten he was working in the presyllabic stage in which he was writing with letters and read back what he wrote. In
Figure 25

Writing Sample of Dania Partida on May 22
Figure 26

*Literacy Growth of Dania Partida*

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alphabetic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Syllabic/Alphabetic</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Syllabic</td>
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<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presyllabic</td>
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<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
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<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
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<td>•</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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August he started to write his name, but when asked to read what he wrote David described his drawings rather than reading his name. Thus one is unsure if David knows the difference between his drawings and written language at this time of the year. During September David pulled away from writing his name and mixed letters with numbers. In many entries it seems as if David is writing upside down.

On November 10 David copied the teacher’s writing example “A mi me gusta el pavo.” but changed one word to write “A Mi Me GuSta Mi Pavo.” (see Figure 27) This sample demonstrates the David can write from left to right and return to start a new line following the correct conventional way of writing from top to bottom. In this entry the parent volunteer interacted with David when responding to his writing, so it cannot be determined if David read back what he wrote according to the copied text. Another unique feature about this entry is the way that David chose to draw on the left page and wrote on the following page.

In December and January David grows into the syllabic stage as he is reading his writing rather than his picture which shows that he can distinguish between drawing and writing. From January
Figure 27

Writing Sample of David Cabrera on November 10
through March David experiments with the period while he continues to come to know the phonetic hypothesis.

During April and May David struggles as he tries to write the correct letter with the sound he hears in his sentence. On May 22 the teacher took dictation on the opposite page to determine if David can place a written symbol per syllable in a word. (see Figure 28) There might be too many symbols ("LatEFtsa Arir") than the meaning that David attempted to communicate ("Salio la luna.") Yet the picture he drew supported what he read. When asked to respond to the teacher's question David could not sound out the word "amarillo" phonetically when the teacher attempted to facilitate in letter/sound approximations. David wrote "ARNC" for the word "amarillo."

In summary David spent six months in the presyllabic stage, July - December, and five months in the syllabic stage, January - May. (see Figure 29) David needs to continue to practice writing a symbol per syllable as he grows into letter/sound approximations. According to the qualitative data collected David attained the syllabic stage, which is given a value of two in the quantitative analysis.
Figure 28

Writing Sample of David Cabrera on May 22

¿Qué color es la luna?

ARNC
Figure 29

Literacy Growth of David Cabrera

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Writer</th>
<th>Alphabetic</th>
<th>Syllabic/Alphabetic</th>
<th>Syllabic</th>
<th>Presyllabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of Students without Parent Volunteers

As with the previous group of students, each stage has been given a numerical value of one to five for the quantitative analysis of the data collection. During the eleven months of data collection all students show growth in the writing process, (See Table 2). This table shows the beginning and ending numerical value of each stage that each subject attained and the difference between initial and final stages.

Krystal achieved the most growth by reaching the early writer stage. There is a difference of a positive four (+4) between the initial and final stages. Nancy is working in the alphabetic stage, thus showing a difference of a positive three (+3) between the initial and final stages. Dania and David show the least amount of growth, reaching the syllabic stage. This is a difference of a positive one (+1) between the initial and final stages.
Table 2

Literacy Growth of Students without Parent Volunteers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Initial Stage</th>
<th>Final Stage</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Krystal Corona</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>+4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy Vaca</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dania Partida</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Cabrera</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results

How does parent volunteering in the classroom influence a child’s literacy growth through interactive journals? In the quantitative analysis of the two groups, one can note that the students with parent volunteers reached an average score of four. This score was obtained by adding the numerical values of each stage, which totaled sixteen. This number was then divided by four, which corresponds to the number of participants in the study. Thus, achieving an average score of four, which corresponds to the alphabetic stage.

The students without parent volunteers reached an average score of 3.25, which was obtained by adding the numerical values of each stage, which totaled thirteen. This number was then divided by four, the amount of participants in the study. This average score of 3.25 was reached, which corresponds to the syllabic/alphabetic stage.

Based on the quantitative data a student attains greater written growth when a parent volunteers in the classroom than the student who does not have a parent volunteer. This is determined because the alphabetic stage is higher than the syllabic/alphabetic
stage. Thus, the results suggest that the students with parent volunteers showed greater literacy growth than the students who did not have their parents volunteering in the classroom.

When comparing the qualitative data collected there are differences found between the two groups. Those subjects with parent volunteers wrote sentences that were more complex and longer. For 75% of the subjects, an adult could read what was written without the child's mediation. These children could use the phonetic hypothesis to write with accuracy and left proper spacing between their words. The one child who was unable to accurately identify letter sounds in journal entries was verbally sounding out words as she wrote. Fifty percent of the students with parent volunteers can identify and discuss a mistake in spelling and begin to self-correct their errors. This skill was not seen in the group of students without parent volunteers.

When comparing the group without parent volunteers only 50% of the subjects could write complex and long sentences. As with the other students, the invented spelling was accurate enough to be able to read what these two children wrote, but it was more difficult since neither used proper spacing between words. The remaining
50% of the students were still struggling to write a sound/symbol per syllable and were unable to identify the proper sound for a letter in a word.

These qualitative findings suggest that the subjects with a parent volunteer are further along in the writing process than the subjects who did not have the additional support of a parent volunteer. This is determined based on the percentage of students that were able to write sentences that an adult could read without mediation from the child. Another factor that supports these findings is the ability of discussing and identifying errors made in a journal entry that the students with a volunteer were able to do. This skill was not seen in the journal entries of the students who did not have a volunteer in the classroom.
Chapter Five
Discussion

Interpretation

This study focused on the parent/student groups and their influence on students' interactive journal writing. According to the basis of Cortes' Contextual Interaction Model, a parent worked in the classroom regularly which gave them the opportunity to socially interact with teachers, parents, and other students. Through social interaction in the school context the parent gained insights and knowledge of how their child came to know reading and writing. Based on the data collected, as the parent's understanding of the writing process grew there was a positive effect on the interaction between the child and parent.

While the parent interacted with a variety of people, the student's qualities were also being affected. The child grew through their social experiences between the teacher, students, and other adults. The child's knowledge about written communication will also be affected as they learn another way to convey an idea or thought to another person.

To show that parent volunteering helped a child's writing
growth, this study compared the written language growth of two groups of four students in which one group had a parent volunteer and those who did not have a parent volunteer. The quantitative data was used to clarify written growth based on the characteristics of literacy growth that were organized into five stages and given a numerical value. Based on the quantitative data the students with parent volunteers were writing at the alphabetic stage, which is higher than the syllabic/alphabetic stage achieved by the students without parent volunteers. This result implies that when a parent volunteered in the classroom there was an impact on their child's writing growth. (See Table 3)

Upon interpretation of the qualitative data collected from the student's journal writing differences can be seen even between two students that reached the same stage. The journal entries allowed one to identify the characteristics within a stage that each child has mastered.

For example, when comparing Vivian's and Krystal's April journal entries (see Figure 30) the qualitative differences show that Vivian's mastery of the early writer stage is higher than Krystal's. While both children are using spaces between words Vivian's spaces
Table 3

Comparison of Literacy Growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Numerical Value</th>
<th>Final Stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students with Parent Volunteers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>alphabetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students without Parent Volunteers</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>syllabic/alphabetic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Krystal
A mí me gusta cuando el negro nos estamos

Vivian
A mí me gusta la parte cuando Lion King se pone las hojas.
¿Se mira bonito el Lion King? Sí
are more distinctive. In future entries Vivian continues to use the spaces while Krystal frequently writes words close together. A major difference is that Vivian has started self-correcting her words when she misspells them, a skill that has not yet been shown by Krystal.

**Conclusions**

While both groups did make literacy growth, the group who had a parent volunteering in the classroom showed greater growth than the group who did not have a parent volunteering in the classroom. As previously mentioned, the quantitative data showed a .75 difference between the two groups, which can be significant when one analyzes the level each group attained with the stages. The group of students that were working in the syllabic/alphabetic stage were at the very beginning of mastery of this stage. It is during this stage that the child comes to know the phonetic hypothesis which is a key factor in the writing process. Since the group with parent volunteers had mastered this skill, and were working in the alphabetic stage, they were able to write with more clarity and complexity. Based on this result one can conclude that when a parent volunteered in the classroom it had a positive effect on the
child's writing growth.

This is further supported in the qualitative analysis of the results. As seen when examining the qualitative characteristics of Vivian's and Krystal's writing growth it becomes apparent that the differences within a stage can be significant. Krystal needs to master skills that Vivian has already come to know within the early writer stage. It can be concluded that the qualitative differences between the two groups showed a positive effect on a child's writing growth when they had a parent volunteering in the classroom.

Implications

These conclusions showed that literacy growth was facilitated when a parent volunteered in the classroom. Based on these conclusions drawn from the results we may speculate that students do better in interactive journals when their parent volunteers, than when they do not volunteer. This positive correlation between parental involvement and literacy growth implies that as educators we need to involve parents as much as possible in the educational process. If a parent is unable to spend the time as a volunteering in the classroom, then alternative methods of involvement can be
suggested that would encourage the parents to support what is being taught in the classroom.

While there was a positive effect of volunteers on their child's writing growth, one needs to keep in mind the data collected on Krystal who was able to achieve the early writer stage without a parent volunteer in the classroom. Vivian was able to benefit by her mother working with her in the classroom, whereas Krystal’s major writing interaction was with the teacher. This brings to focus the role of the teacher and the difference a teacher can make in a child’s literacy growth. While Krystal had strong support from home, her writing growth seemed to have been facilitated through the interactions she had with the classroom teacher.

In summary, while writing growth is facilitate through interactions between the teacher and the student, when one gets the parents to become more involved in the writing process it was shown that there was a greater impact on a child’s writing growth than when the parent did not volunteer.
Journal Entries of Diana Macias

August 15, 1994 & September 07, 1994

Aa m i D
iamind
November 10, 1994 & December 09, 1994

El pavo,AYS

Amo Irene que te pase bien no me llames.

¿Qué sucede tan bonito como el cuento! Me gusta mucho el dibujo de la niña y la mano.
Journal Entries of Diana Macias

January 06, 1995 & February 22, 1995

Creo que Sula te dio fuego a muchas reglas porque eres una niña linda.

Diana
Journal Entries of Diana Macias

March 29, 1995 & April 06, 1995

AMIMECSTACAN
OTRORMMSTVCH

Otro. Las hormigas marroquen por mucho tiempo.

AMIMECUSTCADA
LACI SEPAMAYO

HUMAMI NADANARI

d-f crees q se desemp de s a 169712
Journal Entry of Diana Macias

May 17, 1995

[Handwritten text not legible]
Appendix B

Writing Samples of Angel Salazar
Journal Entries of Angel Salazar

July 12, 1994 & August 15, 1994

outro

Que bueno que hablemos de
escribir "mi familia" con
mucha

\[\text{Some text is handwritten in the image.}\]
Journal Entries of Angel Salazar

December 09, 1994 & January 11, 1995

1/1/95

Yo quería ir también al parque de diversiones como Mario.

A mí me gusta, también cuando las regiñas estaban jugando en la nieve.
February 15, 1995 & March 28, 1995

A mi, me gustan los hormigas.
Journal Entries of Angel Salazar

April 07, 1995 & May 15, 1995

A mi me gusta cuaderno

Timon simpá tratar

Son buenos amigos, ¿cómo sí?

SUPA, ¡AGUANTO!

¿Me entiendes, hermano?... see...
Appendix C

Writing Samples of Jennifer Rodriguez
Journal Entries of Jennifer Rodriguez

July 15, 1994 & August 31, 1994

A mí me gusta que estabas aquí con tu familia.

A mí me gusta como escribiste que estaba gelado porque te azotaron los chingones.
A mi me gusta lo que escribís porque el cabello va más la frente.

SEP 20 94

Me siento que a diarte gusten tus pasos. A mí también me gustan.

Animé lenta caminada.

av}
Journal Entries of Jennifer Rodriguez

December 09, 1994 & January 06, 1995

Que suerte que la niña está feliz con su mamá.

Aroise

No me gusta mucho Santa Clus, quien trae muchos regalos.
Journal Entries of Jennifer Rodriguez

February 16, 1995 & March 30, 1995

A la casa

Peró la niña va a regresar.

Amansa la vez
Banánolabar
Nona dorcas
A mí no gusta bailar.
Appendix D

Writing Samples of Vivian Garcia
A mí me gusta tu dibujo y lo que escribiste, que hay una orilla subiendo.

Me gusta cómo escribiste que estás jugando con tu mamá y la pelota.
Journal Entries of Vivian Garcia

September 21, 1994 & November 09, 1994

Gado

João

Grisa

AM

Papa

Xacdo Stanard

Joledo
Journal Entries of Vivian Garcia

December 08, 1994 & January 06, 1995

A mi me gusta este árbol. Mi árbol que estaba en Michigan era pequeño, pero muy bonito.

Ami me gustaba también. Espero que un día me príncipe venga.

Con Deseo.

[Drawing of a girl reading a book and a boy with a pencil]

[Drawing of a Christmas tree]
Journal Entries of Vivian Garcia

February 22, 1995 & March 02, 1995

A mi MegaStip

¿Puedes subir la cana tuya?

El niño está por MiDo.

Que honito está el niño.
Journal Entries of Vivian Garcia
April 06, 1995 & May 17, 1995

A mi me gusta la Parte Cuando La Reina

Papa, ¿Te Gustó la Partecua Doel

¿Se mira bonito el Lion King? Sí.
Appendix E

Writing Samples of Krystal Corona
Journal Entries of Krystal Corona

July 13, 1994 & August 30, 1994
Journal Entries of Krystal Corona

September 22, 1994 & November 28, 1994

A mi también me gusta cuando ellos estaban pesando.

Pescado

Gusto

Est

¿

was
Journal Entries of Krystal Corona

December 09, 1994 & January 12, 1995

Ami me gusta
el bebe mii Nina

Sí, riendo, el
juego del partido
es muy bonito.

No me gusta
ver el señor
escondiendo
las pequitos.

Yo no quería
venir con él
por el señor
Le puse
BSO a mi.

Cuestó
 País lo

El señor

Le puse
BSO a mi.
el oso está en
la escalerita a subir
a otro piso.

A mí me gusta a las 6.

A mi hermana no le gusta
marchar a correr conmigo.
Journal Entries of Krystal Corona

April 04, 1995 & May 23, 1995

Ami me gusta contar
el negro aso estar.

¿Puedes darme alguien en
tu casa quien venga si quiere ir.

Ami me gusta
comer insecto.

¿Cómo son tus hojas? No te comas
Appendix F

Writing Samples of Nancy Vaca
Journal Entries of Nancy Vaca

July 13, 1994 & August 30, 1994
Journal Entries of Nancy Vaca

September 13, 1994 & November 14, 1994

A mi me gustó el que escribires pero más me gusta cuando su cuerpo te raya los animales.

Si las hojas se rayan a la zacate.
Journal Entries of Nancy Vaca

December 09, 1994 & January 11, 1995

Cuando mi hijo:

Sí, uno puede quebrar las muñecas. Me gusta mucho a tu hijito.

Cuando mi hijito:

Sí, mucha, los pequeños juegan y nadan contentos. Ellas en el agua.

PIN

EL

CUAT

NO

ME

Cuando mi hijo:

AMIMI GUSTA
Journal Entries of Nancy Vaca

February 22, 1995 & March 31, 1995

AM Chileto

El Oso

Me rubia el oso

¿Has visto a una murciélago? SÍ
Journal Entries of Nancy Vaca
April 06, 1995 & May 30, 1995

A mi me Gusta
El serpiente
SALIR
La M. eriza se
Salio del capullo.
Appendix G

Writing Samples of Dania Partida
Journal Entries of Dania Partida

August 15, 1994 & August 30, 1994

Dania Partida

Tienes muchas relativas

A mí me gusta como escribiste que los cambios están ayudando, las cosas

Ten más
Journal Entries of Dania Partida

September 29, 1994 & November 28, 1994

Una moneta
esta en el libro

E I H L S O I E F
A A M F E
A A I E R A

Que hace que
atraiga a un bebé para que
se disemine

R H R O I D U 7 D
F I A O - H T M W H I V
Journal Entries of Dania Partida

December 09, 1994 & January 18, 1995

[Handwritten text not legible]
Journal Entries of Dania Partida

February 21, 1995 & March 09, 1995

El policía era simpático.
Anirreondas.
A mi me gusta tu familia de pingüinos.
Appendix H

Writing Samples of David Cabrera
Me gusta cómo escribiste "David" y su familia.

A mí me gusta como escribiste la araña.
Journal Entry of David Cabrera

September 28, 1994

A mi me gustó lo que escribiste, que el caballo vive en la granja.
Journal Entry of David Cabrera

November 10, 1994

David

A mi

melo

Sto mi

pavo.
Journal Entries of David Cabrera

December 09, 1994 & January 12, 1995

---

David

---

Walter

---

E P K 9

Si la corona

E P K 8

Pero no lo entiendo.
Día Amanecer

El oso se va a quitar
el botón.

Aceitarra

A mi me gusta la
playa.
Yo tengo miedo de los tiburones.
References


