The development of writing using funds of knowledge and whole language with secondary ESL students

Madeleine Marie Haas

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF WRITING USING FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE
AND WHOLE LANGUAGE WITH SECONDARY ESL STUDENTS

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

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education: Bilingual/Cross Cultural

by
Madeleine Marie Haas
July 1993
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Approved by:

Estéban Díaz, First Reader

Juan M. Gutierrez, Second Reader
ABSTRACT

This project examines the development of writing using funds of knowledge and whole language with High School ESL students. Traditional ESL methods are not meeting the needs of these students. Alternatives to traditional methods are examined that accelerate, rather than remediate, Hispanic students.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project would not have been possible without the love and support of my mother, Ruth, my dearest husband, Steve, and my ever patient children, Amy and Nicolas.

Additionally, a warm hug goes to Dr. Esteban Diaz, who patiently guided, questioned, and prodded me through completion.
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INTRODUCTION

The development of writing skills is fundamental to a student’s ability to demonstrate that he or she has mastered a language. In order to graduate from High School students must pass state required proficiency tests which demand the use of writing and critical thinking skills. ESL students have great difficulty in meeting this requirement. Unfortunately, for ESL students, traditional methods of remediation to bring up low levels of literacy are not working. These students still remain at very low reading and writing levels using traditional ESL methods. Alternative pedagogical choices are needed.

Studies have shown that 45% of Hispanic high school students fail to graduate from High School (Kollars 1988). Hispanic newcomers who enter school at high school age are the most disadvantaged. In order to pass proficiency tests, and be academically competitive with mainstream English fluent students, ESL students’ speaking, reading, and writing skills must be attained within a short period of time. Traditional methods are not meeting these students’ needs. The structure of instruction is fragmented and disempowering (Crawford 1989, Cummins 1989, Flores 1982).

Fortunately there has been a great surge in research that will assist the academic development of Hispanic students. In the last quarter of a century a significant
amount of language research has been carried out. The findings of many of these studies have influenced educators' insights into the development of language abilities. Researchers have discovered that the process of first and second language acquisition are similar in nature. This has helped to reorganize second language instruction.

Research now shows that educators have underestimated the learning potential of second language development students. A shift from low level skills instruction to a "higher ground" is vital to these students' success. We must accelerate, not remediate, their education (Levin 1989).

This project incorporates recent research coupled with a holistic approach to literacy which examines the development of writing with High School ESL students.

In a holistic view of language learning, language needs to be kept whole, meaningful, and relevant to learners (Goodman 1989). Students learn as they construct their own knowledge. Knowledge is not simply transmitted from teacher to student. Oral language occurs in speech events. Written language occurs in literacy events. In holistic approaches to learning, speech and writing events are developed in meaningful context.

Goodman (1986) explains that when we learn language we are "first able to use whole utterances" and that "Only later can we see the parts in the whole and begin to
experiment with their relationship to each other and to the meaning of the whole" (p. 19). Parts are harder to learn than wholes because they are more abstract. Students need the whole to provide a context for the parts.

Unfortunately, instruction in schools has too often been organized from part to whole. Traditional "part to whole" approaches to teaching and learning are "logical but not psychological" (Freeman & Freeman, 1992). "Part to whole" approaches to learning are commonly used in traditional high school ESL instruction. Much time is spent on grammar, sentence structure, and paragraphing techniques. Students are remediated rather than empowered to use their second language writing abilities in a natural student centered developmental process.

Vygotsky (1978) wrote that the cooperation between student and teacher is the most important element in the educational process. His famous concept of "Zone of Proximal Development" stressed the importance of social interaction in the process of learning. He questioned what an individual accomplishes on his or her own, compared to what one accomplishes with the guided help of another, and then finally on his or her own after guidance. His famous concept of "Zone of Proximal Development" refers to the importance of this interactive relationship of student and facilitator.

Language minority students have much to gain from
teachers who perceive themselves as facilitators in the process of learning. Authentic and interactive activities which empower learners to take ownership of their learning are needed for true literacy to develop (K. Goodman, 1989).

Teachers who want students to reach higher levels of development in the process of writing must attend to its social functions and provide meaningful student centered activities. True literacy is obtainable when students realize that writing is meaningful and has immediate purpose; language is learned through language (Halliday 1984).

This project will review literature in the areas of language acquisition, writing, whole language, and cultural studies of Hispanic students' funds of knowledge. This research has been applied and implemented in the form of three writing activities. Fourteen ESL I students participated in this study. Their development of writing proficiency has been compared to ESL II students, who were taught using traditional methods of teaching second language learners.

The results of this study lead to pedagogical choices that accelerate and empower Hispanic second language learners.
In both first and second language settings, language acquisition has led to the investigation of literacy development. Research on writing takes place within the larger framework of language acquisition and development. Research on the acquisition of writing reaches conclusions that are very similar to the acquisition of spoken language (Hudelson 1989).

Alice Horning (1987) has developed a writing theory based on the hypothesis: "Basic writers learn to write as other learners master a second language because for them, academic written language is a whole new language" (p. 5). She goes on to state that, "the written form of language is a distinct linguistic system, a theorem which is supported by abundant research data" (p. 7). She formulated her writing acquisition theory around Krashen's five hypotheses.

Krashen's theory (1982) of second language acquisition, based on research from applied linguistics, consists of five hypotheses. These hypotheses can be paralleled to the process of writing development.

**Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis**

The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis states that second language is acquired in a similar way to that of first language. The acquisition is a subconscious process that is constructed for a specific purpose in a meaningful context;
the real world context of social discourse. It happens when we are interested in a topic, feel relaxed, and understand what is being said or read. Acquirers aren't totally aware of the fact that they are acquiring a language. It is a natural process based on interaction and the human need to socialize.

Writing, as well as speaking, is a form of socialization. More time can be spent on developing what one wants to say for a specific purpose in a real world context. Just as learners make sense of spoken language, learners process understanding of written language. They determine how to construct their own meaning.

The Natural Order Hypothesis

The Natural Order Hypothesis claims that grammatical structures are acquired in a predictable way. This order in the first language is different from that in the second language, although some similarities do exist.

Second language learners without native-like control of English will work to create meaning in written form, and will make and test out varied hypotheses about how English is written.

The Monitor Hypothesis

The "monitor" refers to the internal editor in a person's mind. In Krashen's view, the "monitor" is necessary in language learning. This monitor is also necessary in the writing process during the editing phase.
It has little involvement in developing oral fluency; in fact, an overuse of the "monitor" can inhibit oral fluency. This "monitor" is an asset in writing when more time is available to rewrite and re-edit one's work.

The Input Hypothesis

The Input Hypothesis states that we will acquire a language if we receive understandable messages. An important point of this hypothesis indicates that meaning is essential and structure will follow. "Comprehensible input" is essential to acquisition of a second language, and must occur in the context of natural language use.

The Affective Filter Hypothesis

This hypothesis maintains that language is most efficiently acquired in a risk-free classroom setting. An environment which promotes self-esteem and values the first language and culture of the student, lessens anxiety. Risk taking and negotiating meaning encourages the language acquisition process. It is a more natural environment, similar to the first language environment where children are accepted at their level of speech emergence and encouraged in a language-rich comprehensible surrounding.

The three primary variables stressed in the hypothesis are:

1. Motivation

Highly motivated second language students generally do better.
2. Self-Confidence

Second language is facilitated by high self-esteem.

3. Anxiety

Low levels of anxiety facilitates second language acquisition.

A teacher's attitude towards writing plays a critical role in students' writing development. The beliefs and assumptions that teachers hold about writing have an effect on whether students see themselves as writers.

Language acquisition and the development of writing ability occur in the same way; writing ability is not learned, but acquired through reading for meaning and genuine interest or pleasure. When reading is taking place, structures of grammar and rules for writing will be presented to the writer through the written word. Rules and structures will be acquired if the reader is "open" to the input. The Affective Filter is low when the reader is focused on the message he is reading.

"As in the case with oral language acquisition, competence in writing does not come from the study of form directly--the rules that describe written language or reader- based prose are simply too complex and numerous to be explicitly taught and consciously learned. We gain competence in oral language: by understanding messages encoded in written language, by reading for meaning. In this way, we gain a subconscious feel for written language, we acquire this code as a second dialect" (Krashen 1984 p. 27).

Investigators have pointed to the distinction between contextualized and decontextualized language as fundamental
to understanding the nature of student’s language and literacy development (Bruner, 1975; Donaldson, 1978; Olson, 1977). The terms used by investigators have differed, but they all point to the extent in which meaning is being communicated as supported by contextual cues (such as gestural and intonation cues present in face-to-face interaction), or dependent on only linguistic cues that are largely independent of the immediate communication context.

To discuss the difference between contextualized and decontextualized language, it is important to review Jim Cummins (1981) cognitive and conceptualized model. See Figure 1.

The extremes of the context-embedded/context-reduced continuum are distinguished by the fact that in context-embedded communication the participants can actively negotiate meaning (e.g., by providing feedback that the message has not been understood), and the language is supported by a wide range of meaningful interpersonal and situational cues. Context-reduced communication, on the other hand, relies primarily (or, at the extreme of the continuum, exclusively) on linguistic cues to meaning, and thus successful interpretation of the message depends heavily on knowledge of the language itself. In general, context-embedded communication is more typical of the everyday world outside the classroom whereas many of the linguistic demands of the classroom (e.g., manipulating
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text) reflect communicative activities that are close to the context-reduced end of the continuum.

The upper parts of the vertical continuum consist of communicative tasks and activities in which the linguistic tools have become largely automatized and thus require little active cognitive involvement for appropriate performance. At the lower end of the continuum are tasks and activities in which the linguistic tools have not become automatized, and thus require active cognitive involvement. Persuading another individual that your point of view is correct, and writing an essay, are examples of quadrant C and D skills respectively.

The framework elaborates on the conversational/academic (or BICS/CALP) distinction by highlighting important dimensions of conversational and academic communication. Thus, conversational abilities (quadrant A) often develop relatively quickly among ESL students because these forms of communication are supported by interpersonal and contextual cues and make relatively few cognitive demands on the individual. Mastery of the academic functions of language (quadrant D), on the other hand, is a more formidable task because such uses require high levels of cognitive involvement, and are only minimally supported by contextual or interpersonal cues.

Cummins found that it took immigrant students about two years to develop conversational proficiency (quadrant A),
but five to seven years to reach grade level norms in academic tasks (quadrant D).

David and Yvonne Freeman suggest another way to look at the difference in the time it takes to achieve each of two kinds of proficiency. Context, both external and internal, can determine what students understand and learn in their second language. Students learn language and academic content faster when it is embedded in context (Freeman, Freeman 1991).

Educators often view context as something "external" to the learner. The Freemans develop the concept that context can include both external context and internal context. When students use background to make sense of new ideas, learners find the information less cognitively demanding. Background knowledge helps determine how cognitively demanding something is. The prior knowledge can be considered as part of the context. Language that is context embedded is less cognitively demanding than language that is context reduced (Freeman, Freeman 1991).

Goodman (1984) explains that much of learning involves making predictions. Context cues are needed in all learning. We arrive at meaning by using the cues. This is another connection between context and cognitive demand. The more background there is, the easier it is to make predictions.

A Russian socio-historian psychologist, L. S. Vygotsky
(1962), believed that word meaning develops in a way from whole to part in a context embedded social environment:

In regard to meaning...the first word of the child is a whole sentence. Semantically, the child starts from the whole, from a meaningful complex and only later begins to master the separate semantic units, the meanings of words, and to divide his formerly undifferentiated thoughts into those units (p. 126).

This is evident with second language learners in beginning writing. This early stage of writing is exemplified by students representing words by first and last sounds. Sonia, a native Greek speaker, wrote IW+MH to represent "I went to my house" (Cambourne and Turbill, 1987, p. 46). Goodman (1986) explains this occurrence in early stages of writing. He indicates that when we learn language we are "first able to use whole utterances" and "only later can we see the parts in the whole and begin to experiment with their relationships to each other and to the meaning of the whole" p. 19). Goodman’s thinking confirms Vygotsky’s belief, students learn from whole to part. Learning small pieces of information is more difficult than exposure to the whole concept, and then understanding the pieces that make up that whole.

Hispanic students who enter the United States at high school age have a broad range of academic and social experiences. Their primary language has been developed; theoretically, then, their primary language can be utilized
to acquire second language. Hakuta (1990) views native language proficiency as a strong indicator of second language development. Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle (1977) suggest that older students are better second language learners because they have achieved a higher level of cognitive maturity in their first language.

As language is needed for academic success, Cummins (1982) explains that cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) can be transferred from Spanish to English. Hakuta gives the example that "a child learning about velocity in Spanish should be able to transfer this knowledge to English without having to relearn the concepts as long as the relevant vocabulary (in English) is available (1990, p.7).

To communicate and to be understood are basic universal human needs. Language and cognition are socially motivated. Societies are made up of cultures and beliefs of these cultures. Language and understanding are ingrained in culture. Language develops in cultures for authentic purpose. Interaction is necessary to use language. Language's basic purpose is to communicate with others.

Researchers have placed emphasis of shared language and the development of thought and language. Vygotsky (1978) stressed the importance of social interaction in the process of learning. He questioned what an individual accomplishes on his or her own, compared to what one accomplishes with the help of others. The distance between these two
accomplishments is what Vygotsky termed the "Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)." This zone was defined as, "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky 1978, p. 86). Expressed simply, the ZPD is the interpersonal space where minds meet and new understandings arise through interaction and questioning (Cummins 1989). Moll points out that central to Vygotsky's notion of the ZPD are "the specific ways that adults (or peers) socially mediate or interactionally create circumstances for learning" (1989, Pg. 59).

Students internalize the help received by their teachers in a problem solving process, and eventually are capable of using the knowledge they have learned to achieve independent success in future problem solving situations (Moll & Diaz, 1985). Students reach independent achievement through social discourse.

Recognizing a student's level of skill (starting point of the zone of proximal development) is fundamental to developing strategies for language minority students (Diaz, Moll and Mehan, 1986).

Freire (1970) explains that students are not "banks" into which teachers "deposit" knowledge, but learning must have a relationship to students' needs and interests. Smith
(1983) indicates that people do not learn when; 1) they already know the information, 2) they don't understand the information, or 3) they don't want to take a risk. Unfortunately, too often all these conditions exist in secondary language development classes.

From the end of the 1800's to the middle of the 1900's, foreign languages were taught by the grammar-translation method; students studied verbs, memorized lists, and translated English to target language and vice versa. Little emphasis was put on the spoken language (Larsen-Freeman, 1986). Audio-lingual methods were developed in which structures were listened to and mastered through constant repetitive drills. Both of these methods are part to whole structures that proved unsuccessful. Actually, communication was a problem in real situations. These methods were teacher controlled, and students were "banks" to be filled with no social interaction, or limited at best.

Teachers often teach how they were taught. Foreign Language and/or English teachers have often been given the "chore" of teaching language development to students in high schools. Often, these teachers have some knowledge of new techniques in language development practices due to the work of Teachers of English to Speakers of other Languages, Incorporated (TESOL) and state evaluation committees and credentialing governing boards. Unfortunately, high schools require standardized tests. Standardized tests encourage
educators to teach bits and pieces in order to pass basic skills tests. True literacy is not the emphasis. This issue has the effect throughout the educational process in the United States. The high school drop-out rate for language minority students is high; nearly 45% fail to complete high school (Kollars, 1988). Traditional methods are not working. The structure of instruction is fragmented and disempowering (Crawford, 1989, Cummins, 1989, Flores, 1982).

Instructional change is emphasized by Diaz et al. (1986). They contend that "classroom practices not only underestimate and constrain what children display intellectually, but distort explanations of school performance." Through empirical studies of reading and writing in a Mexican-American community of San Diego, a context-specific approach was developed which includes: (a) studying the cultural environment of the home, (b) relating the home cultural learning environment of the home, and (c) accurately assessing the child's cognitive development and establishing an appropriate zone of proximal development (Shotthafer, 1992). Embedding learning in authentic community-based writing is the basis for writing activity in these studies. Topics were developed which were of interest and a concern of the students and their community. The context of the lessons was organized and sensitive to students' "zone of proximal development." Culturally
relevant topics drew on students’ personal experiences and gave students an empowered voice. The emphasis of student knowledge and strengths provide resources for improving student’s performance. Through these studies, Diaz and Moll concluded that:

To succeed in school one does not need a special culture; we know now, thanks to ethnographic work, that success and failure is in the social organization of schooling, in the organization of the experience itself (1987).

Moll continued studies of working-class Hispanic students in Arizona. He examined the instruction that these students usually encounter. The examination again showed rote drill practice and intellectually limited lessons. The curriculum is a low level structure of complexity which reflects students’ perceived or tested levels of English language fluency. The Hispanic students are considered "at risk" with socially and intellectually limiting family backgrounds or limitations in what has been described in research as "funds of background experience".

The basis for this project was that the households of language minority and working class families are an important cognitive and social resource for educators. The term, "Funds of Knowledge" is used for the "essential bodies of knowledge and information that households use to survive, to get ahead, or to thrive" (Moll, Greenberg, Velez-Ibanez, 1990). The project had three elements: analysis of the use of funds of knowledge and skills within the community,
creation of an after-school environment for exploring classroom practice, and observation of classrooms and analysis of changed teaching strategies. Re-orientation of teachers' instructional practices is necessary for this pedagogical implementation. Teachers' roles are redefined, and as a consequence, what is expected of students changes as well.

A paradigm shift is needed in the theoretical perspectives which have been used. Educators have underestimated the learning potential of minority language students. A shift from low level skills instruction to a "Higher Ground" is vital to these students' success. We must accelerate, not remediate, their education (Levin, 1989). As Goldberg and Gallimore (1991) have stated:

"The prospect of reforming schools depend on a better understanding of the interplay between research knowledge and local knowledge. The more we know about the dynamics of this interplay, the more likely it is that the research can have an effect on the nature and effectiveness of schools (p. 2).

Moll (1992) indicates that "practical change can be socially arranged by using and developing the students', teachers' and communities' socio-cultural resources, their funds of knowledge, in the service of change."

A related perspective of learning can be seen in the whole language movement based on research (Goodman, 1989). It integrates the holistic, psychological research of Piaget and Vygotsky's social functional-linguistic research of
Michael Halliday. It is a perspective about language and language development, not an exacting method (Atweyer, Edelsky & Flores, 1989; K. S. Goodman, 1986).

"Whole language goes beyond the simple delineation of a series of teaching strategies to describe a shift in the way in which teachers think about and practice their art" (Rich, 1983, p. 165).

Whole language incorporates the Vygotskian perspective of whole to part teaching and learning. Students are not expected to learn bits and pieces of isolated drills and exercises. The activities are authentic and interactive, empowering learners to take ownership of learning (K. Goodman, 1989, Edelsky & Smith, 1989). The whole language approach includes reading aloud or telling stories, authentic writing, reading real literature, talking about the process of reading and writing, and students helping each other (Watson & Crowley, 1988).

Dewey's idea about starting instruction where the learner is, agrees with Vygotsky's beginning "zone of proximal development" (Dewey & Bentley, 1949, Vygotsky, 1978). Recognizing differences among learners' culture, value systems, experiences, needs, interests, and language validates the use of this approach for all learners. Language minority students have much to gain from this approach (K. Goodman, 1989).

K. Goodman and Y. Goodman (1978) and many others
provide and understand the reading process and how it develops. Graves (1975, 1981) and Britton (1987), Cleary (1990), Unger (1986), Bettancourt and Phinney (1988), offer complimentary observations of writing. Whole language integrates this knowledge into a holistic approach to support and develop "true literacy". "We learn language through language" (Halliday, 1984).

Whole language weaves current research into an empowering strategy for learning. Several researchers have developed six principles that are applicable to second language classes (Freeman and Freeman, 1992).

Whole Language Principles for Bilingual/Second Language Learners:

1. Learning proceeds from whole to part.
2. Lessons should be learner centered because learning is the active construction of the student.
3. Lesson should have meaning and purpose to the student now.
4. Learning takes place in meaningful interaction.
5. In a second language, oral and written language are acquired simultaneously.
6. Learning should take place in the first language to build concepts and facilitate the acquisition of English.
7. Learning potential is expanded through faith in the learners.

Whole language teachers of second language students do
not see bilingualism as a deficit as implied by Cummins and other proponents of bilingual education. It has been proposed that students need to develop their first language in order to develop cognitively. Freeman and Freeman (1991) have indicated that, "In the case of Hispanics, the child, the child's family, and the child's culture have traditionally been blamed for the lack of success in the schools." This idea of deficit has been the basis for instructional models for Spanish-speaking students since the beginning of the century.

Barbara Flores (1993) has listed "deficits" in chronological order that educators and the public have used to explain failure of Hispanics in our schools.

1. 1920s Spanish speaking children were considered mentally retarded due to language difficulty.
2. 1930s Bilingualism and its effects upon the reading aspects of language was considered a problem.
3. 1940s Because of their "language problem", Mexican children should be segregated.
4. 1950s Schools must provide for deficiencies by providing "a rich and satisfying program."
5. 1960s The child's home and language were the primary cause of school failure.
6. 1970s If bilingual children could switch, mix their languages, it is an indication that they know neither well.
7. 1980s Students arrive in school with social, cognitive, and linguistic deficits that need to be remedied.

In order to empower Hispanic students, Moll's "community knowledge" model of implementing household funds of knowledge, coupled with whole language, proposes an optimistic socially arranged pedagogy. Hispanic students are not without enriched backgrounds of knowledge. They have knowledge banks that have not been tapped due to educators' inability to provide adequate avenues of discourse. For Hispanic students, this problem has existed for almost a century, as Barbara Flores so clearly points out.

In summary, the traditional "part to whole" approaches to teaching and learning are "logical but are not psychological" (Freeman & Freeman 1992). Bits and pieces are more difficult to learn separate from the whole context. Language embedded in context is less cognitively demanding than context reduced language. Currently, traditional methods of teaching are most common in high school language acquisition classes.

Vygotsky's (1962, 1968) studies of the interactive relationship of thought, oral and written language, and socio-cultural influences support structures of education that work from whole to part. It is important when looking at ESL high school students' writings, to examine literature pertaining to writers within this group.
Cleary (1990) examined the reasons for students' disinterest and dislike for writing as they matured. Several factors were identified that significantly influenced older students' attitudes toward writing. Students exhibit feelings of anxiety due to inability to please the teacher. Lack of self confidence arises due to inappropriate praising and criticism. Due to structured grading of student work, writing becomes a chore, risk taking becomes minimal, opportunity to discover, communicate one's feeling to an audience, or provide critical thinking diminishes. Stimulation of adolescents' sense of efficacy in their world is the most critical factor motivating writing (Shotthafer 1992). The teacher plays a great part in the success of adolescent writing. A demonstration of sincere interest and encouragement is needed. A trusted peer audience motivates and gives confidence to adolescent writers. Unger (1986) has stated students exhibiting the greatest anxiety towards writing "are most often the victims of a low teacher expectancy" (p. 30). He stresses that "writing is communication". Lack of success in writing is "infinitely more personal" than unsuccessful experiences in other academic areas. The student who perceives himself as an unsuccessful writer receives the message of being an "ineffective communicator". This feeling of inadequacy is compounded for a second language learner.

Memos or letters sent to peers or teacher can be used
to motivate writers in an unapprehensive manner. This activity can be established on a biweekly or weekly schedule. This provides a means to communicate without fear of evaluation (Unger 1986).

Bettancourt and Phinney (1988) found that undergraduate students possessed more negative attitudes when writing Spanish than when writing English. They indicated that this was possibly due to rule-governed instructional practices of Spanish instructors who emphasized mechanics more than content. These studies concluded that process orientated whole product instruction helps apprehension in second language learners.

Daly et al. (1988) examined teachers components of "good writing", "bad writing", and "best writing assignment" (p. 157). The study revealed that teachers apprehensive of writing focused on mechanics and structure. Teachers with little apprehension of writing focused on student expression and effort; and thought expression and content were more valuable than rules. These teachers also used activities that were more creative and student developed, involving the writing process.

Students need to feel the sense of empowerment that self-initiated activities provide, indicates Hudson (1988). Students are more apt to gain the sense of ownership if their writing topics are self initiated or selected.

Staton and Shuy (1988) argue that decontextualization
of writing activities omit the natural language environment for social interaction. School writing often retards mastery of communication skills.

Britton (1987) advocates student letter exchanges. He reported that:

interpersonal communication developed quite rapidly in these areas: (a) ability to initiate topics, (b) replies to letters they received, (c) increasing anticipation of their reader's responses and difficulties in responding, (d) use of conventional formats of greetings and closing, (e) recapitulation of signals that, by their cross referencing, bring coherence to their writing (p. 9).

Vygotsky's theory that social interaction is requisite to cognitive development is referred to by Daiute and Dalton (1988). They maintain that collaborative writing experiences provide a vehicle of opportunity to learn ways in which the audience's opinion and understanding (or even misunderstanding) may interact to instill more planning, precise wording, and more consideration for the audience.

Students' writings improved when students were engaged in these types of verbal communication: (a) "talking to suggest alternatives", (b) "monitoring and clarifying form," (c) "evaluating, explaining, and negotiating," (d) "...expressing rhetorical value," and (e) "explaining and checking facts" (p. 262).

Writing develops when students realize that writing is meaningful and has an immediate purpose. Teachers who want students to value writing and reach higher development in
the process of writing must attend to its social function and provide meaningful student centered activities. Whole language approaches weave current research into an empowering strategy for learning, which can be used to develop the process of writing for secondary ESL students.
PROJECT DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Design

Hispanic students who enter the United States at high school age have a broad range of academic and social experiences. Their primary language has been developed; theoretically, then, their primary language can be utilized to acquire second language. This foundation in the primary language gives these students a high potential for success. Unfortunately, studies have shown that 45% of Hispanic high school students fail to graduate (Kollars, 1988).

High school proficiency tests demand the use of writing and critical thinking skills. These are areas in which minority language students lag behind their mainstream peers. They cannot graduate without successfully passing these proficiency tests. Traditional methods of remediation which are commonly used in high schools to "bring up low-levels of literacy" are not working. Students still remain at very low reading and writing levels.

Hispanic newcomers who enter high schools are the most disadvantaged. Speaking, reading and writing skills must be learned within a short amount of time in order to be competitive with the mainstream student in the job market or for further education. The possibility of graduation or passing necessary proficiency tests is low. Traditional ESL methods are not meeting the reading and writing needs of newcomer students. Alternative pedagogy is needed.
With the need for pedagogical change in secondary ESL teaching methodology in mind, the general purpose of this project was to: (a) examine methods of writing which motivate writing of "at risk" Hispanic ESL students; (b) develop writing through a "whole context approach" rather than through rote "bits and pieces" methodologies; (c) incorporate the use of Funds of Knowledge to validate students' culture and purpose, for reading and writing was also examined as a choice of pedagogy.

Subjects and Setting

Fourteen fluent Spanish speakers were the subjects for focus of this study. The group was predominately Mexican, with one Columbian student and one Salvadorian student. Students were equally mixed in gender with an average age of sixteen. All subjects were members of a newcomers ESL I class. Most of the students worked outside the home while attending school. Their academic background and motivation varied greatly. Two out of fourteen students lived in a traditional two parent household. Six lived with older siblings or relatives without their parents. Another six students lived in single parent households; five lived with their mother, one with her father. Other family members or friends were usually sharing expenses. Five out of fourteen students had permanent legal residency status. None of these students had traveled back to Mexico due to financial hardship. Few had traveled out of a twenty-mile radius from
school since their arrival in the United States.

The following table gives insight into the subjects prior educational backgrounds and the educational background and occupations of their parents. See Table 1.

The educational profile includes six columns. The column labeled "Years in Primaria" indicates the number of years completed in elementary school outside of the United States. All students in the study completed elementary school.

The column labeled "Years in Secondaria" indicates the number of years of education completed following elementary school outside of the United States. Students' education beyond elementary school varied from zero to three years.

The parents highest level of education outside of the United States is listed in the appropriate column. It is interesting to note that all students included in the study have completed as many years of education or more than their most educated parent. Only two students completed less years of education than their parents.

A column which included parents' occupations indicated all parents work in service related jobs. Most occupations listed are seasonal jobs in the area where the study was conducted.

Spanish Assessment of Basic Education (SABE) scores are listed. The highest score attainable is 100 percentile. This test assesses basic educational achievement in Spanish.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT</th>
<th>YEARS IN PRIMARIA</th>
<th>YEARS IN SECONDARIA</th>
<th>PARENTS HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUC. OUTSIDE THE U.S.</th>
<th>OCCUPATION OF PARENTS</th>
<th>SABE</th>
<th>IPT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Stella</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Gardening</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Miguel</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Office/Factory</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Juan</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Jose</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Pablo</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Noe</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Rural Worker</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Lili</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Factory/Rest.</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Roberto</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Aide</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Hotel</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Fabiola</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Hotel/Rural</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Armando</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Emma</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Hotel</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Mauro</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Yamelit</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Idea Proficiency Test (IPT) scores are listed. This test is an oral proficiency test in English. The IPT is scored on a scale of zero to five. Zero indicating non-English speaking; five indicating fluent English speaking.

Testing was administered eight months prior to the final results of this study. It is important to note that the IPT only indicates oral English proficiency.

Subjects attended a high school with a student population of 1068. Students were from working class and government assisted families. The racial makeup of the school included 62% Hispanic, 32.5% Anglo, 5% African American, and .05% Asian.

Ten percent of the Hispanic population were enrolled in language development classes for two 55-minute periods a day. Sheltered content area classes included Basic Math, Math Tech, Algebra, Geometry, Health/Driver’s Ed., Science, History and Physical Education. American History and Art were offered in Spanish. Bilingual aides were provided for all language development classes and sheltered classes. The head of the Counseling Department maintained all language development students in her student load. She is of Mexican-American descent and was both sympathetic and aware of language development student’s needs. Appropriate placement and counseling were secured through her unconditional consideration and concern.
Prior to the second semester study, most students had been exposed to a 1,000 English word vocabulary list. Writing and reading had been introduced simultaneously with oral language development. A whole language approach to second language learning had been used the first semester incorporating primary language with the acquisition of secondary language.

Objectives

This project analyzes the impact of a whole language approach in the development of writing with newcomer ESL students. The two main objectives were (a) incorporation of the "Seven Whole Language Principles for Bilingual Learners" in a secondary classroom, and (b) incorporation of a "Funds of Knowledge" writing unit emphasizing social and cultural aspects for learning.

To accomplish these objectives three writing related activities have been developed. They are: (a) student letter exchange; (b) writing and illustrating a book; and (c) student research of Medical Funds of Knowledge.

Data and Collection of Data

The data needed to analyze the results of the objectives stated include samples of (a) student letter exchange, (b) book writing project, (c) Funds of Knowledge thematic unit results of folk medicine remedies in a collaborative writing project, (d) student responses to each project based on a questionnaire, and (e) student test
scores on a Spanish Assessment of Basic Education (SABE), a standard achievement test in Spanish, and Idea Proficiency Test (IPT), an oral proficiency test in English, student’s prior education, and parent’s education and occupations.

Students’ work was collected and placed in portfolios. Each of the activities were responded to by the students using a teacher developed questionnaire, which was distributed by a colleague. The questionnaires were placed in portfolios. Test scores and IPT scores were obtained from student cumulative files. Students’ educational backgrounds were also attained from cumulative files. Parents’ educational backgrounds and occupations were obtained in person from parents at Open House. Permission was given to include this data from parents.

Activities
Student letter exchange

Procedures

1. Students were provided with a careful and detailed explanation of the letter exchange. This explanation informed students that they would be writing to an unknown person in an ESL II class. In order to participate in the activity, students were asked to commit to writing two letters a week. All letters were kept in individual spiral notebooks that were delivered every other day.

2. Friendly letter format was introduced, including:
   a. Date placement, date sequence (month, day,
year)

b. Greeting placement (suggestions, Dear, Hi, Hello....)

c. Placement of the body of the letter
d. Suggestions for the body
e. Closing and Signature (suggestion: From, Respectfully Yours, From, etc.)

f. Correct punctuation and capitalization was presented, practiced, and reviewed.

g. Actual layout (paragraph form, skipping spaces, indentation) was modeled and reviewed.

3. Teacher modeled the writing of a friendly letter, using mapping. The mapping technique is illustrated in Figure 2.

4. A specified minimum length of one paragraph, no less than seven sentences, was expected.

5. Emphasis was on the importance of comprehensible communication. Formal correctness of vocabulary, spelling and sentence structure was de-emphasized. Writing for pleasure was stressed.

6. Co-operative groups of three were organized to facilitate the writing and editing process.

7. Students were instructed to write even if they were not answered due to absences. They were encouraged to write about how they felt about not being answered.

The purpose of this activity was to provide an
Directions:

Tell enough about yourself to be interesting but not too much so. Try to pretend you are meeting at a party; think of the kinds of questions you ask when trying to get to know someone.
authentic purpose for writing. According to research, written language supports the development of oral language. This activity provided an avenue for risk taking in writing. Meaningful social interaction was achieved through student exchanges of communication. The student letter exchange provided development of language acquisition using all seven of the whole language principals through listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

**Book Writing and Illustration**

Students had listened to and read various children’s folk tales. Collaborative books had been written. Setting, characters, sequence, plot, and endings had been consistently discussed. Previewing of literature had been delivered in Spanish. Oral and individual reading had been implemented in English.

The writing process had been presented in prior lessons using this format.

**Procedures**

1. **Pre-writing**

   Students developed vocabulary and language. They generated ideas (mapping, clustering).

2. **Composing**

   An idea from pre-writing was developed and given form. The composing process was oral or transcribed by others in English or Spanish.

3. **Sharing**
Students shared work with a partner or group.
Responses were positive and constructive.

4. Revising
Students added, deleted, and re-arranged work based on responses or idea changes.

5. Editing
Students corrected errors.

Objective

Students will write and illustrate a five to eight page illustrated book. The book will be read to second grade ESL students in a feeder elementary school.

Assignment Guidelines

1. Five principles of the writing process were used.
2. Students pre-wrote, composed, and shared in the language of choice.
3. Students worked in groups of two or three. Student partners were student chosen.
4. Dictionaries, personal glossaries, and both teacher and aide were available for help.
5. Proper sequencing was required.
6. Writing for a second grade audience was emphasized.
7. Illustrations consistent with the story were expected.
8. Characters and setting development were expected.
9. High school monolingual examples of the same project were read and presented by ninth, tenth, and
eleventh grade peers.

10. Teacher written and illustrated book was presented.

11. Teacher presentation included original pre-writing and mapping techniques used for the example.

12. Questions were developed.
   a. Where does the story take place (city, country, forest, space)?
   b. Who are the main characters (people, animals, monsters, etc.)?
   c. What was the plot?
   d. What happened in the end?
   e. Is your story an adventure, romance or based on history?
   f. Will characters talk or will you explain what happened?

Directions For Book Writing

"Don't limit your story to simple vocabulary. Your idea and personal way of explaining the story is important. Help will be given to attain the results you want."

The purpose of this activity was to develop a culminating activity in folk tales to include all the elements of literature which the students had been exposed to, such as setting, character, and dialog; and to give students an opportunity to use their creative gifts in an unthreatening way. After reading folk tales, students wrote original folk tales. Working in collaborative learning
groups, students revised, edited, illustrated, and published books to be read to second grade elementary language minority students.

**Medical Funds of Knowledge**

This activity was based on the premise that every family has "funds of knowledge." These funds are valued resources in any culture, yet little emphasis is put on this endless resource in the structure of schools. Moll (1990) challenged the commonly held view of Latino and other working-class households as somehow lacking knowledge or intellectual vitality. The purpose of this activity was to demonstrate students' prior knowledge and to develop a student centered activity using the seven whole language principles in a medical unit constructed and researched by students. Using a similar unit of medical resources as used in Moll's study, the teacher constructed the ground work for a unit incorporating a whole language approach. Emphasis was put on student centeredness and voice. The activity was a collaborative activity.

**Procedures**

1. A class discussion was opened posing the questions, "What is Medicine?", "What is it used for?", "Write any responses, student voice is important". Emphasis was put on risk taking. All answers that came to mind regarding medicine were valid. Mapping on the board was used to document answers.
2. Two student secretaries wrote information on a large piece of butcher paper for future use.

3. Responses in English or Spanish were accepted.

4. Students were grouped co-operatively and asked to place responses into two main categories: Contemporary Medicine and Folk Medicine.

5. Students were then given sub-categories for each main category. These words were translated if necessary.

**Contemporary Medicine**

- a. Drugs
- b. First aid procedures
- c. Medical Systems
- d. Midwifery

**Folk Medicine**

- a. Folk veterinary medicine
- b. Folk cures
- c. Herbal knowledge
- d. Diagnostics

Brainstorming within co-operative groups to fill in gaps of sub-categories was assigned.

6. Students were informed that they would be completing a project based on medicine. The importance of obtaining all the information pertaining to this category was explained. "Think about what you know personally from your life experiences, and ask all your family what they know, and how they know this information."
7. Students were given one week to gather information. They were not to use references other than family and friends or school mates at this point. The purpose was to establish what was collectively known through personal experiences, and information supplied from family or community members.

8. Students had difficulty acquiring the information needed. This will be discussed in results of the project.

9. In order to continue the activity, students were asked what category or sub-category was most representative of personal knowledge and experience. Co-operative groups were formed in order to decide which of the categories or subcategories would be chosen.

10. All groups voted and agreed, "Folk Cures" remedies would be used for research purposes.

11. Mapping strategies were again used to develop possibilities of research of research. See Figure 3.

12. Students decided, after much discussion, that a book of remedies would be developed collaboratively.

13. Two Mexican-American teachers were invited to discuss their experiences with folk medicine.

14. Through student discussion, students decided more was needed to complete this unit.

15. Information about AIDS and contraception was needed. (The way this decision was arrived at, will be stated in results.)
FIGURE 3
Mapping Technique of Developing Possibilities of Research.
16. A bilingual county presenter on AIDS and contraception was invited.

17. Students wrote "remedios" individually and compiled a class book.

18. Typing and editing was student based.
RESULTS

As was noted previously, the general purpose of this project was to (a) examine methods of writing which motivate "at risk" Hispanic ESL students, (b) develop writing through a "whole context approach" rather than through rote "bits and pieces" methodologies, and (c) examine the use of "Funds of Knowledge" as a vehicle for the development of writing ability.

SCORING AND ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

Each activity was analyzed using a holistic grading process. Three experienced scorers were used. If scorers disagreed, the papers were rescored. Each piece of writing was assigned a score between 1 and 4. A score of 1 indicated the lowest level of writing proficiency. Students who displayed this score consistently were considered ESL I writing proficient students. Scores increase as writing proficiency increases. A score of 4 indicates native-like fluency in English grammar, vocabulary, and over-all writing competency. The writing proficiency scores directly related to the placement of students in appropriate ESL classes. See Table 2 for detailed scoring criteria. Included in the appendix are examples of students' work, which have been scored using the rubric in Table 2.

Results were obtained using this process of scoring for each of the three activities:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Score of One</th>
<th>Score of Two</th>
<th>Score of Three</th>
<th>Score of Four</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Grammar, Sentence Structure, Punctuation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native-like fluency in English grammar; correct use of relative clauses; correct use of preposition, form, and tense sequencing; minimal errors or run-on sentences.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Quality of Expression</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorrect vocabulary usage; register of sentences missing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No apparent effort to consider the topic or genre.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2: Scoring Criteria for Writing Proficiency**
1. Letter Exchange

2. Book Writing and Illustration

3. Medical Funds of Knowledge - Remedies.

Each of the fourteen student's writings were evaluated by three teachers who had scored ESL and mainstream students' work annually. All three scorers had scored for three years, using the same criteria, prior to scoring for this project.

1. Student Letter Exchange Results

ESL I subjects exchanged letters with ESL II students (who were not subjects) over nine weeks. Three letters and responses were pulled from participating students' letter exchange notebooks; February, first letter written, April, middle letter written, and June, the final letter written. It must be noted that all fourteen ESL I students participated in the letter writing exchange consistently. If a student was absent, the letter was written when the student returned. The letters were exchanged bi-weekly. Eighteen letters were exchanged. See Table 3.

Of the ESL I students, 78.6% progressed one level of writing proficiency, 14.3% of the students made no progress, and 7.1% of the students regressed.

A comparison was made with the results gained in ESL I to the results gained with a group of ESL II students who were exchanging letters with the ESL I students. It is
### TABLE 3

**HOLISTIC SCORES FOR ESL I SUBJECTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT</th>
<th>1st Letter</th>
<th>2nd Letter</th>
<th>3rd Letter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FEB</td>
<td>APRIL</td>
<td>JUNE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pablo</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armando</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miguel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yamelit</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauro</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lili</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noe</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stella</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aide</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jose</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabiola</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberto</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEAN AVERAGE SCORE</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.21</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.86</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.07</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
important to note that the ESL II students did not write books or participate in a "Funds of Knowledge" project during the period of time in which letters were exchanged. The only writing completed by ESL II students, aside from letters, were four teacher directed short essays. See Table 4.

Of the ESL II students, 14.3% progressed one level, 71.4% made no progress, and 14.3% regressed.

2. Book Writing Results

Book writing and remedies were scored using the same criteria as the letters. Essays written by the ESL II students who wrote to the ESL I students were used as a comparison. The essays were pulled from the ESL II students' portfolios. The same assignment was chosen for each of the letter exchange participants and compared to the students to whom they wrote. All three of these activities were completed within the same month.

The average writing proficiency level of ESL I students who participated in the Book Writing and Illustration activity averaged a writing proficiency level of 2.1.

The average writing proficiency level of the ESL I students who participated in the "Medical Funds of Knowledge" activity averaged a 2.4 writing proficiency level.

3. Medical Funds Of Knowledge Results

636XESL II students averaged a proficiency level of
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT</th>
<th>1st Letter</th>
<th>2nd Letter</th>
<th>3rd Letter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FEB</td>
<td>APRIL</td>
<td>JUNE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pablo’s Partner</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armando’s Partner</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan’s Partner</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miguel’s Partner</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yamelit’s Partner</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauro’s Partner</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma’s Partner</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lili’s Partner</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noe’s Partner</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stella’s Partner</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aide’s Partner</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jose’s Partner</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabiola’s Partner</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberto’s Partner</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEAN AVERAGE SCORE</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.29</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.4 on their essays. This writing proficiency level is the same as the ESL I students average of writing proficiency on the "Medical Funds of Knowledge" activity.

The results indicate that ESL I students scored highest on the "Medical Funds of Knowledge" activity at an average of 2.4 writing proficiency level. ESL I students who participated in a whole language book writing activity and "Funds of Knowledge" activity between the time period of their middle and last letter exchange assignment scored 2.07 averaged writing proficiency score, compared to an ESL II average letter writing score of 2.5. The difference between these groups was very small. The ESL II students were taught using traditional ESL techniques excluding whole language or student centered activities similar to "Funds of Knowledge". Essay writing was the comparison used. See Table 5.

ESL II essays, compared to "Funds of Knowledge" activity, showed only a .1 higher proficiency level score. ESL II essays, compared to book writing of ESL I students, only showed a .3 higher writing proficiency level.

With these results, it can be concluded that pedagogical choices, such as whole language and "Funds of Knowledge" activities, can produce higher rates of writing proficiency results with beginning second language writers.
## TABLE 5

BOOK WRITING, ILLUSTRATION, AND REMEDIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT</th>
<th>ESL I BOOK</th>
<th>ESL I REMEDIES</th>
<th>ESL II ESSAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pablo</td>
<td>1025X 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armando</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miguel</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yamelit</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauro</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lili</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noe</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stella</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aide</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jose</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabiola</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberto</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MEAN AVERAGE SCORE: 2.1, 2.4, 2.4
CONCLUSION

The results of this project indicate that holistic approaches that incorporate funds of knowledge improved writing of ESL students. The data supported the expected results which (a) examined methods of writing which motivated "at risk" students, (b) developed writing through a "whole context approach" rather than through "bits and pieces" methodologies, and (c) examined the use of "Funds of Knowledge" as a choice of pedagogy. Each activity is discussed separately in order to elaborate on the diversity of the writing activities which have been presented.

Student Writing Exchange

This activity proved to be successful in producing higher levels of writing proficiency in beginning second language acquirers. 78.6% of the fourteen subjects in ESL I progressed at least one level of writing proficiency over a nine week period.

Students' progress can be attributed to the fact that all students were motivated to write letters to peers that they would potentially meet. They realized this activity was student centered and the only requirement to participate was a commitment to continue writing bi-weekly to their unknown partner. ESL I students had little contact with ESL II students. ESL I students wanted to meet new friends. An authentic purpose for writing was established.
In Vygotsky's 1968 discussion of complexity of written speech, it is explained that the lack of immediacy of response, lack of an interlocutor, and the inability of the writers to know when or if they will be heard or understood, are some of the factors that make written speech more abstract and more difficult to master. With letter exchange partners, although an immediate response is not available, an interlocutor was waiting to respond, so students knew they had an audience. They were heard and received a response. The first question I was asked when students entered my classroom was, "Did we get our answers back?"

Students' excitement and interest in responding to their letter exchange partners lasted the entire nine weeks. Friendship and romances developed. Because all students involved in the letter exchange were in the same school, all of the students met one another at some point during the project. These meetings were self-initiated through letter communication.

Research also shows that the preferred audience of adolescents is more likely to be their peers. This provided an "adult-like" reason to write and fulfilled students' basic needs of communication, sharing, and confiding.

Students were delighted in the fact that they were able to understand ESL II students' writings. The fact that their partners were students in the school motivated better writing. They knew there was a possibility of meeting their
writing partners. They did not want to appear "stupid". Often, students helped each other. I was constantly questioned about word usage and sentence structure. They checked for understanding and often edited, although this process was not required. The letter exchange was chosen as a vehicle for risk taking, which other forms of writing do not often provide. It was interesting to observe students using the writing process naturally when they were not required to.

When students were polled, 71.4% of the fourteen students liked the letter exchange best of all writing assignments implemented throughout the year. 57.1% of the fourteen students felt they learned the most from letter writing.

It is important to note that ESL II students, who had not participated in the project, did not gain writing proficiency. This strongly suggests that second language acquirers who have higher levels of communication skills do not benefit from letter exchanges. In order to develop higher levels of writing proficiency, more critical thinking skills and more developed topics are necessary. Possibly the fact that ESL II writers were not challenged by the level of writing that they were responding to, may have caused no growth. Eighty-five percent of the ESL II students responded that they liked the letter exchange. Forty-two percent responded that they learned more from
letter writing than from essay writing. ESL II students reported difficulty in understanding letters in the beginning of the project, but they enjoyed writing to ESL I students, who were beginners, because they understood their writing problems. ESL II students were able to decipher the mistakes. They corrected mistakes by asking students to "explain that again," or "I did not understand all of what you said last week about the dance, but that is okay." These types of entries promoted clarity in writing for their less proficient partners.

If ESL I students had written to mainstream English proficient students, there is the possibility that mainstream students would not have had the same understanding of the problems of beginning language proficient students. The activity could have proved more intimidating and less effective.

**Medical Funds of Knowledge Remedies**

The purpose of this activity was to use students' prior knowledge; "Funds of Knowledge" (Moll, 1990) to develop a student centered activity using whole language principles in a medical unit constructed and researched by students.

Of all the activities used in this study with ESL I subjects, Medical Funds of Knowledge Remedies scored the highest with a writing proficiency mean of 2.4. This activity was student centered, only the topic of medicine was teacher directed. Students were provided with a list of
possible choices. Other ideas were welcomed. Within co-operative groups students arrived at "remedios" as a choice for this project. Little teacher direction was needed. Students decided to write a class book of home remedies. Each student provided as many remedies as possible. At least one per student was required. All students provided two remedies, five students provided more.

Students had difficulty acquiring remedies from family members. It is important to note that beginning Hispanic ESL students in the area in which this study was performed often come to the United States without their parents. They are new immigrants and have few relatives in the United States. The students were unable to tap their families' cultural "Funds of Knowledge" as described in Moll's (1992) studies. My students used their own resources, their own experiences, and memories. Parents and family played a small part in this activity.

Students reported distaste for the project initially. They felt it was unimportant and "stupid." One student commented, and many agreed, "We did not come to the United States to study English so we could talk about things that our grandmothers sit around telling us, we already know this." Although the project was student centered, it was required. Students agreed to finish the book because it was "easy." Groups agreed to extend the project into "relevant" areas of knowledge of which they had no "Funds of
Knowledge." Information about AIDS and contraception was needed. Remedies did not include this knowledge. All students agreed speakers were needed to obtain this information.

Thirty-five percent of the students liked this project the most. None of the students felt they learned the most from the writing of remedies. Ninety percent of the students felt the speakers provided significant information that was relevant.

Although students felt they learned little in reading, writing, or speaking through the "Funds of Knowledge" activity, writing proficiency scores show the students performed the highest in this activity.

These results were interesting. I have concluded that my students were working within their comfort zone. They were confident about the topic. Prior knowledge was evident and unchallenged. The activity was student centered. Students also used typewriters to produce their finished product. Students edited each other's work after it was typed; many remedies were retyped error free. I arrived at the realization, after reviewing the results, that my students were working in their "zone of proximal development" at that point in time. Scores were high because students were able to produce close to English proficient products. Due to the recipe style of genre used, few errors were evident. All remedies were comprehensible.
in this step by step sequential style of writing.

**Book Writing and Illustration**

Students' mean scores of this activity were 2.1. By comparing this literature-based activity to an activity based on student's prior cultural knowledge, one would conclude that more writing proficiency can be gained from either activity.

This conclusion is valid based on this study; however, my personal observation of the subjects' time on task and the quality of the end products led me to believe that my students were pushed to higher levels of writing potential, although their scores do not fully indicate this accomplishment. It must also be noted that the students were aware that their audience consisted of second grade second language acquirers. They were not writing to a peer or an adult audience.

Although I had implemented a creative whole language project, my students were evaluated using a matrix, which doesn't include creativity as a high level of priority. This is a noteworthy observation.

Students were challenged beyond their "zone of proximal" development. Finished projects were not error free. Sentence structure was not always appropriate or clear. Genre had been developed, great risks were taken, and creativity was evident.

Students were proud of their work and looked forward to
reading their books to young children. All of the students wanted their books as keepsakes. In my estimation this book project showed my students' growth and involvement in literacy. This activity was an indication of my students' success.

The importance of teachers' differences of opinion in evaluation indicates the necessity of varied examples of students writing in portfolios. Scores only indicate part of the overall picture of achievement.

Writing evaluations are difficult. Criteria to be used for evaluation varies. This project, with limitations, has resulted positively. Using whole language, letter exchange, and funds of knowledge as choices of pedagogical changes in secondary ESL classrooms are favorable compared to traditional ESL methodologies.

Implications

These findings have two important implications for teachers working with secondary language development students.

Primarily, the results of this project offer educators of secondary language development students alternative pedagogical choices which bring students to higher levels of proficiency. These alternatives develop the push of writing to communicate, which facilitates acquisition and promote the development of writing which necessitate student-centered environments that by nature, lower anxiety,
increase confidence, and provide contexts that are based on meaningful communication.

Secondly, it is only by looking at performance on a variety of writing tasks, under varying conditions, that we can begin to understand the true writing ability of ESL students.
APPENDIX A: HOLISTICALLY SCORED SAMPLES

SAMPLE 1
SCORE OF ONE

Dear Baby

I am fine. Thank you for the idea of the gift you are sweet. I want know what you think of me? I think that you are a people sweet and agreeable. Baby I will like to know you?

Thanks, I'll answering soon.

From Roberto

Dear Friend
How are you, what grade are you in and which class do you like best? What is your name? How old are you? Where do you live? What country are from?
POPOCATEPETL AND HISTAZIHUATL

This is a legend that existed many years ago in San Juan (Puerto Rico). There existed a kingdom in where their emperor commanded and did the best he thought for his people. That emperor had a daughter her name was Histazihuatl, she was young pretty and very intelligent. The kingdom in which they lived, was very well protected by their warriors. The head of the warriors was Popocatepetl a young warrior and the best of all.

One day the emperor called Popocatepetl to give him some orders, he went, and there he met the daughter of emperor. From that moment they began to care about each other. They enjoyed a great romantic love that existed between them.

But Histazihuatl, father’s intentions were to marry her off with a emperor many more years senior than she. The emperor could see that Popocatepetl and Histazihuatl they in love. The father decided to order Popocatepetl to war.

When he went to tell her goodbye Histazihuatl he said; I love you very much and I beg you to wait for me. Time doesn’t matter with our everlasting love. He also said that if in two months, he didn’t come back she would know he was dead. Popocatepetl went to that war, with two hundred men. The war lasted for eight months.

A long time passed (three years) and he did not come back, but Histazihuatl father decided to marry of his daughter. She didn’t want to do it. The day of the wedding she was alone in her room, and she began to remember all the time that she spent with Popocatepetl and she decided to drink poison. And that’s where she was when she decided to take her life. Popocatepetl came back triumphant from the war. The first thing that he wanted to do was to see. It was too late. He took her to the forest where they went with frequency. He swore before her, that he too would meet her in a deep sleep of love.
The car of my dreams is a chey Camaro. I want to have air conditioning, is very important in the desert. I want a red car because is my favorite color. I want to have a very good stereo with cassette, because I like the music so much and I think is very important the car have a stereo. I like to have carpet in perfect condition. I like to have electric mirrors. Is much better.

This is the car of my dreams

One of the remedies that are in the world. In my family something like this happened. When my father felt sick, he would start to shake, or he would start to lose his breath, and his tongue would start to turn black. They would take him to some temples where they would give him medicine and other things that he could drink, or he would rub stuff on himself, but nothing ever happened. My father did not believe that giving him a cleansing would cure him. A young man came to my house one day, as he walked in our house, he said that he was beginning to feel what was going on in the house. He began to explain to us what was happening. In my house they started to cleanse us, first, my dad, the one who was mostly affected. On the floor they put a star, and in it they put five candles but in the shape of a body, then he used some different herbs, soul, alcohol, lime and other things. He started to give us the cleaning with the herbs and we had to jump over fire, but we wouldn't burn ourselves, we just felt like we were in water. The young man started to look at the candles, and looked at each one; telling us how we all were, and how we were doing. He told my dad that someone was doing black witchcraft, and that it was done by a person he knew. This young man helped my dad a great deal and my dad began to heal.
REFERENCES


