8-1991

Spelling Development Through Creative Writing

Kim Marie Gagie

The College at Brockport

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/ehd_theses

Part of the Education Commons

To learn more about our programs visit: http://www.brockport.edu/ehd/

Repository Citation

http://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/ehd_theses/106

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Education and Human Development at Digital Commons @Brockport. It has been accepted for inclusion in Education and Human Development Master’s Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @Brockport. For more information, please contact kmyers@brockport.edu.
SPELLING DEVELOPMENT
THROUGH
CREATIVE WRITING

THESIS

Submitted to the Graduate Committee of the
Department of Education and Human Development
State University of New York
College at Brockport
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science in Education

by
Kim Marie Gagie
State University of New York
College at Brockport
Brockport, New York
August 1991
SUBMITTED BY:

Kevin Brooke

APPROVED BY:

Lauren J. Baggi
Project/Thesis Advisor 6/24/91

Arthur E. Smith
Second Faculty Reader 6/24/91

Harold Rimmerson
Chairman, Graduate Policies Committee 7-3-91
"No information derived from this thesis may be published without permission of the original author, with whom copyright lies."
# Table of Contents

## Chapter I

- Statement of the Problem ......................................... 1
- Purpose ........................................................................... 1
- Question to be Answered ................................................. 1
- Need for the Study ......................................................... 1
- Definition of Terms ....................................................... 4
- Limitations of the Study .................................................. 4
- Summary of the Chapter .................................................. 5

## Chapter II

- Review of the Literature ............................................... 6
- Purpose ........................................................................... 6
- Developmental Spelling .................................................. 6
- Spelling and Writing ...................................................... 11
- Spelling and Reading ..................................................... 14
- Spelling Strategies/Instruction ......................................... 18
- Summary of the Chapter .................................................. 23

## Chapter III

- The Research Design ...................................................... 25
- Methodology .................................................................... 25
Chapter I

Statement of the Problem

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the spelling development of students whose spelling lists originate from their creative writing.

Question to be Answered

What development in spelling is noted with students whose spelling lists originate from their creative writing?

Need for the Study

How do students learn to spell? What method is effective in helping students learn to spell? How can teachers and students monitor progress and development in spelling?

Correct spelling has obsessed Americans for quite some time (Macrorie, 1984). A lot of value is placed by society on written language as compared to spoken language. This is most likely because writing is visible and becomes a permanent record. In order to convey the intended meaning we need to spell correctly (Butler, Cambourne, and Turbill, 1990).
Even though there is an abundance of information about spelling and spelling instruction available, the information seems to have a limited impact on the way spelling is taught by teachers or presented in spelling programs. "Many teachers continue to teach spelling the way they were taught or the way textbooks prescribe" (Seda, 1989, p. 321). Teachers should help students become better users of the language and lay a foundation for confident writers as well (Seda, 1989).

Most researchers agree that spelling is a developmental process which starts with children at a preschool age. They also agree that correct spelling is something needed during the final stages of process writing (Forester, 1980; Gentry, 1978; Rule, 1982). An informal study with first and second graders conducted by Beers, Beers, and Grant (1977) provided them with new insights into how children learn to spell. "As children learn to spell they use their increased knowledge about words and letters while they spell" (p. 242).

These researchers also pointed out another very important aspect of the spelling process. They further stated:

Teachers must be aware of the strategies individual children use as they try new words. This awareness may bring an increased understanding of the logic behind their pupils' spelling. Awareness may also prevent the teacher and the pupil from becoming upset and frustrated when a child repeatedly makes the same kind of errors. The errors are
not necessarily due to "not trying" or "not listening", but may be due to the child's development and exposure to words. Recurring errors do not mean that the child cannot or will not spell correctly later (p. 242).

Several studies indicate that the proper and most logical place to be involved with spelling development is the writing process (Graves, 1983; Johnson, Langford, & Quorn, 1981). Donald Graves (1983) states that "spelling is for writing. Children may achieve high scores on phonic inventories, or weekly spelling tests, but the ultimate test is what is done under 'game' conditions, within the process of moving toward meaning" (p. 193). The "game" he describes is played by many students in school today. They study for their weekly spelling test, achieve a high score, and then leave those tests behind to "work with spelling in the midst of many other processes in which it belongs" (p. 183). Graves further concludes that children will use invented spelling while progressing through the writing process.

There are several studies and articles devoted to the topic of invented spelling, and the creative writing process (Bean & Bouffler, 1987; Clarke, 1988; Dyson, 1981; Read, 1971; Wood, 1982). Educators and parents are often puzzled over a child's misspellings. Is this because we need to further understand children's spelling development--look at what the writer is communicating--and not
emphasize how many words were right on their weekly spelling test?

**Definition of Terms**

**Spelling** - the writing system for any given language (Butler, Cambourne, & Turbill, 1990)

**Creative Writing** - independent writing process in which the writer assumes an active role in manipulating and discovering new words (Gentry & Henderson, 1978)

**Invented Spelling** - “young children’s attempts to write words using their best judgments about spelling” (Lehr, 1986, p. 452)

**Phonology** - “the sound system of our language, a system of regular processes that determine the pronunciation of English” (Read, 1971, p. 1)

**Standard Spelling** - correct spelling of language (Wood, 1982, p. 709)

**Limitations of the Study**

The subjects chosen for this study were from three fourth grade classrooms in the same elementary school. All three teachers encourage creative writing as part of their curriculum in their classrooms, and develop spelling lists from the student’s written expression. However, individual teaching styles and methods vary between teachers.
Writing samples from the beginning of the year originated from the students. The samples vary in length and vocabulary. Dictation of this written expression at the end of the year involves the use of an additional sense -- hearing (listening) -- while attempting to write.

Summary

This chapter looked at the need to examine a child's writing in order to determine if development in spelling is taking place. Thirty students were chosen and comparisons were made between September and April writing samples. Research indicates that spelling is developmental and is a process which should directly involve a student's creative writing.
Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine creative writing for development in spelling.

The literature reviewed in this chapter is organized as follows:
- Developmental Spelling
- Spelling and the Writing Process
- Spelling and Reading
- Spelling Strategies and Programs

Developmental Spelling

Butler, Cambourne, and Turbill (1990) defined spelling as the writing system for any given language. It involves the word building system (knowledge of the sound/symbol system), the syntactic system (the grammar) of the language, and the semantic system (our background knowledge). They also referred to spelling as the “visible vehicle which conveys meaning to the reader” (p. 5:5).

Hodges (1982) stated:

Learning to spell involves developing an understanding of the total framework of English orthography and the interrelationships among phonological, morphological, and other langu-
Many assumptions are made by adults (educators and parents) about how children can best learn to spell their language. Beers and Beers (1981) discussed three common assumptions:

1. Children first have to have a knowledge of phonics.
2. Spelling should be a rote memorization process.
3. If children can't spell, they can't write.

After extensive discussion of these three assumptions, they came to five conclusions about children and spelling:

1. Children's spelling tells us what that child already knows about spelling, and the stage of spelling development they are engaged in. Teachers should be aware of the stages so they can help students with spelling.

2. "Children need to be encouraged to write often using the spelling strategies they have developed" (p.578)

3. Copying words over and over doesn't produce a successful speller. It may inhibit writers because they may associate copying words with writing.

4. "Young writers should be encouraged to proofread and edit their own writing productions before final submissions" (p.578)
because "some misspellings occur during the writing process as a result of thinking of one word while writing another or thinking ahead" (p.578). It was thought that students could reduce errors by reading and editing their own work.

5. Children should look at similarities and differences in words—meaning elements, pronunciation of words—to expand on their spelling development.

Hodges (1982) stated that when teachers are interested in spelling development, they ought to consider that "the developmental nature of spelling ability clearly indicates that children's spelling attempts need to be considered from their frame of reference, not the frame of reference of adults" (p.288).

Invented spelling, according to Wood (1982) has gained increased attention and has been "drawn into the mainstream of language research" (p. 707). Wood further described invented spelling as "phonetic spellings of words as heard (and pronounced) by the child" (p. 708).

Bean and Bouffler (1987) stated that "invented spelling is not a stage but a strategy used by all writers" (p.16). They encouraged the use of various strategies in guiding children to standard spelling--
sound/symbol strategies, and meaning or visual strategies, and possibly combinations of these. Bean and Bouffler believe that children need to develop strategies in order to promote spelling development.

Kamii and Randazzo (1985) assert that invented spelling should promote more social interaction between students. It is their belief that student's spelling questions and problems can sometimes be solved by peer interaction. According to these researchers, this peer interaction can promote problem-solving and peer evaluation.

In his analysis of pre-school children Read (1971) concludes that "a child may come to school with a knowledge of some phonological categories" (p.32). According to Read, pre-school children make judgments about their language. He states that their ability to apply this knowledge to developing a standard spelling of words can depend a great deal on the reactions of their invented spellings receive from parents and teachers. The one common characteristic among all the parents of the young spellers in his study, was "a willingness to accept the child's own spelling efforts, to provide simple materials (first blocks and other alphabet toys, then paper and pencils) and to answer questions" (p.31).
Gentry (1981) defines a child's spelling development and writing as going through stages:

1. **Deviant stage** (babbling stage)-child's first attempt to write with the alphabet. There is often a random ordering of letters (For example: btBpa - monster).

2. **Pre-phonetic Stage** - child writes one, two, three letter spellings which often demonstrate letter-sound correspondence (For example: MSR - monster).

3. **Phonetic Stage** - usually occurs during first grade. Sound features in the word are represented phonetically (For example: MONSTR - monster).

4. **Transitional Stage** - writers become more aware of the standard spelling for their language.

5. **Correct Stage** - children at this stage are showing a readiness for formal instruction.

Invented spelling has been the cause of concern with many educators and parents. "Won't invented spelling confuse a child learning the standard spelling?" is a question often asked by adults (Wood, 1982).

Kamii and Randaazzo (1985) provide some insight into
answering those concerns. They state that adults involved in the education of children must not believe that children are a bad source of information:

Children learn their knowledge, not from each other, but with each other, by going from one level to another of being wrong. The traditional method of teaching spelling was to present it all from the outside, with repetition and reinforcement or corrective feedback (p. 132).

**Spelling and Writing**

Creative writing--what is it and does it have a place in the classroom? There are some critics who argue it does more harm that good (Lehr, 1982). Lehr reports that "creative writing can be good writing" (p.294), and also states the importance of the teacher in the process. According to Lehr "teachers will have to look at creative writing assignments as they look at other assignments--as opportunities for children to learn and develop" (p.294).

What can children learn from their own writing? What connection is there between spelling and writing? Writing and spelling are said to be connected according to many researchers (Bouffler, 1981; Dyson, 1982; Graves, 1975).
Graves (1975) examined the writing processes of seven year old children during a five month investigation. Graves used the case study approach in his research. This approach involved observing and interviewing larger groups of children during writing, then eventually working with eight students chosen for the case study investigation.

During the phases of his investigation, Graves not only observed actual writing but also the steps involved during the writing process--prewriting, composing, and postwriting. Spelling played a part in this process but was considered more important after the child knew what message was to be conveyed.

Bouffler (1981) believes it is important to turn children into writers and editors, and then spellers. "Make a mountain out of spelling and you make a mountain out of writing" (p. 1). Bouffler also discussed misconceptions about spelling and its relationship to writing. Misconceptions discussed were:

1. Spelling is illogical and it should be taught based on the phonetic sound of a word--the misconception being there are approximately 44 sounds and 26 symbols in our language. By adding extra symbols, the original symbol's sound could easily change.
2. Spelling is taught best by the memorization of spelling lists. Bouffler argues that “children need to experiment with their language, to make mistakes and to discover and correct them in a warm and supportive atmosphere” (p.2), and further states that spelling lists might be important for the beginning or “emerging” speller, but the spelling list needs to be the child’s spelling list. “The final assessment of the child’s achievement in this area must be the message as it is finally presented to the audience for which it is intended, not the weekly spelling test or dictation” (p.4).

Writing for meaning was investigated by Dyson (1981). Forty-nine kindergarteners were observed during their writing time every day for three months in two studies. As a result Dyson concluded that there was a variety of early writing processes which emerged from her observations. Children wrote names, lists of words, conversations, picture captions, and notes. Dyson concluded that talking about their writing played an important part in bringing meaning to their writing.

Dyson (1982) also investigated older children’s writings where messages of more than one word were attempted. She suggested that “through writing children establish the connection between reading, writing, and language (p.837). Dyson further asserts that
there must be a closer look given to early reading and writing relationships. "Since children write differently for different purposes, it may be they read differently in different situations as well" (p.837).

**Spelling/Reading**

"Whenever we are engaged in the process of reading we are also engaged in a process of spelling. It is in the published texts which we read that we see the demonstrations of the conventional forms of spellings for the thousands of words we need to learn" (Butler, Cambourne, & Turbill, 1990, p. 5:5).

What role does reading, and in particular phonics skills, play in a child learning to spell? Gentry (1987) states there is no easy answer to this question. He believes however, that phonics instruction does help spelling achievement. The early elementary grades use phonics to organize their word lists.

Any kind of formal word studies conducted in later grades, Gentry believes, should be implemented for frequency and meaning and states "the real foundation for spelling is writing" (p.33).

Research indicates that phonics or the phonetic stage of reading is not always necessary for reading. In his study Baron (1973) tested the phonemic-stage hypothesis, which states that "readers recognize words by their pronunciation when reading
quickly" (p.242). During two experiments subjects were presented with homophone phrases (PEACE OF PIE, PIECE OF PIE). Two questions were asked:

1. Does the phrase make sense?
2. Does the phrase sound like it makes sense?

Baron concluded that a visual analysis could bring meaning to the phrase. The use of a phonemic code was not necessary, however it could be used some of the time.

Chomsky (1970) states that "in order to progress to more complex stages of reading, a child must abandon the early hypothesis (phonics) and come eventually to interpret written symbols as corresponding to more abstract lexical spellings" (p.297).

Chomsky believes that children need to make the shift from phonetic reading to lexical reading. The student who struggles with reading has not made a successful transition from the phonetic to the lexical interpretation. Chomsky further asserts that the child normally goes through this transition as he/she "matures and gains experience both with the sound structure of language and with reading" (p.297).

The student who has not made this transition, it is believed, will also continue to spell phonetically. However, "as the maturing child
comes to control these forms in the spoken language he internalizes both their underlying representations and the phonological rules which relate the latter to pronunciations (Chomsky, 1970, p. 300).

Goodman (1971) believes that phonics isn’t necessary to the reading process, and asserts “that excessive concern for phonics induces short circuits in reading. Instead of teaching the processing of language to get to meaning, phonics instruction teaches the processing of language to get to sounds or to get to words” (p.1261). He feels that the “short circuits” lead to a lack of comprehension in older students, and produce students who score well on skill tests.

While there is research to support a distinct connection between reading and spelling, Barr (1985) offers a discrete difference. She asserts that fluent readers rarely look at the details of a word. They use clues from the context and background knowledge to gain meaning from the text. Reading involves a range of options to use in order to gain meaning. Spelling, she states, is a process which is the opposite:

It is not enough to produce a range of options, each of which sounds like the word in question. The task of spelling is to arrive at the only possible rendering for that one particular word (p.10).

Barr also points out that, while reading does help a child
become a good speller, and most good readers are good spellers and most poor readers are poor spellers, there are some children who are competent readers and who struggle when they try to spell.

Frith (1979) explored possible reasons for some children being good readers and poor spellers. During the experiments in her study, two groups of 12-year olds were compared: good spellers and poor spellers. Each group consisted of good readers. The experiments involved the conversion of print into sound, and print to meaning. Frith concluded that "poor spellers were proficient at going from print directly to meaning, but were impaired at converting print to sound. The good spellers showed mastery in converting print to meaning and converting print to sound" (p.43).

Bruck and Waters (1988) also analyzed the spelling errors of students who were proficient readers and poor spellers. They used a different method in selecting their subjects. Two sets of criteria were used - reading comprehension scores/spelling test scores, and word recognition scores/spelling test scores. As Frith (1979) had previously concluded, this study also found some evidence for a distinct smaller group of spellers--good readers and poor spellers. This smaller group was found to have visual memory for words, and
unlike other poor spellers, they showed a good use of sound-letter correspondences.

Another concept which bridges reading, writing, and spelling, and has been previously described is invented spelling. It is believed by Wood (1982) that as invented spellers engage more in reading and become more aware of print, “their concept of orthography is gradually modified, and this is reflected in their writing and in a developing sense of audience-awareness as well” (p.715). Wood states that as children read more, their purpose for writing changes. At the beginning stages of writing, the child attempts to create words by using speech sounds. An awareness of an audience then develops as the child reads more and their desire to spell correctly develops.

**Spelling Strategies/Instruction**

Gentry (1987) states that “too much that is known about how to teach spelling isn’t being put into practice” (p.7). He offered suggestions about the most effective method for teaching spelling. “Allow children the freedom to take risks in their own writing” (p.27). It’s also important, Gentry believes, that teachers should also keep in mind that what works best for one child may not work well for another. Gentry
offers the following teaching strategies:

1. Teach spelling as part of the whole curriculum. Spelling should be part of history, math, science, etc.

2. Children should be given the opportunity to write often. They need to practice writing notes, lists, stories, signs, etc.

3. Children should be encouraged to invent spellings for unfamiliar words. Gentry states that invented spelling "allows children to engage in thinking about words" (p.28).

4. There should be less of an emphasis on memorization, correctness, and the mechanics of writing. Expectations of children should match their ability and level of development.

5. The response to children's spelling should help them discover more about words, and build an interest in further knowledge.

Research has often encouraged a more individualized spelling curriculum. Marino (1981) and Kemp (1987) encourage examining children's spelling errors. They believe teachers should consider misspellings indicators of problems and should develop and provide instruction according to the child's need. Marino presents examples of spelling errors and offers possibilities for instruction of these errors.

Kemp (1987) emphasized teaching spelling for meaning and
offered the following suggestions for spelling instruction and assessment:

1. Dictation: "passages are generally compiled with particular letter combinations in mind" (p.216) and allow the teacher to measure spelling accuracy within a meaningful context.

2. Proofreading: students first read paragraphs for meaning and then proofread each line. They record any spelling errors beside the line where the errors occur.

Zutell (1978) emphasizes the need for an environment which promotes an understanding of the writing system. Children need opportunities to experiment with writing. They also need to be read to, and the opportunity to engage in reading. Classrooms should have a wide range of reading materials. The teacher, according to Zutell, should provide word study activities, where students "explore and manipulate the various structural, syntactic, and semantic relationships present in written language (p.848).

Bean and Bouffler (1987) suggest a conference technique as a spelling strategy which helps students with their spelling. They stress the importance for supporting the writing process, however they also recognize that conferencing individually is very difficult and offer the
By returning to the writing cycle you can see how we began to solve this problem. In it we have identified aspects of the writing process—focusing, composing, editing and proofreading. By developing teaching strategies which focus on one or other of these aspects, as needed, we can support writing development (p. 18).

Hudson and O'Toole (1983) believe spelling is a developmental process and offer spelling strategies based on that philosophy. They assert that spelling is part of the writing process and should be integrated into the total language program. These researchers also contend that "a positive and warm classroom environment is essential if children are to become competent spellers" (p. 24).

Forester (1980) also contends that spelling is developmental and asserts if children are given the opportunity to write, they will develop as competent spellers. According to Forester, children go through stages of spelling, and as they do, teachers need to model writing and spelling as much as possible. Teachers also need to listen and observe their students closely.

Rule (1982) observed and analyzed students' writing, and in conclusion, emphasized the importance for students to work out their problems with spelling with a teacher's guidance. She states that
children go through spelling stages where spelling is highly regarded in the final draft of spelling.

Are spelling lists effective when attempting to teach children to spell their language? There are researchers who seem to have a variety of views concerning this instructional method. Johnson, Langford, and Quorn (1981) maintain that children can learn from spelling lists, as long as the lists contain "words with which the learners are currently engaged and that are either providing spelling difficulties or are likely to do so" (p.582).

Fehring (1986) states the list method is "based on the idea that there is a group of words that all children need to know" (p.21). She points out that word lists don't always contain words that children want to use in their writing. Spelling textbooks often divide words into lists by grade level, age, or phonic generalizations. Fehring believes this is not an effective way to teach spelling and "does not deal with the meaning, the usage, or the pronunciation of a word" (p.23).

Fehring (1986) also describes various traditional methods sometimes used by teachers. The visual method assumes that "learning to spell involves that use of visual cognitive processes" (p.23). Words are usually grouped by their visual structure, and
learned by reproducing the spelling from memory. A direct instruction method involves the morphographic analysis of words. A disadvantage with this method is that students don’t learn the meaning of the spelling words. They are expected to “parrot off answers to questions on a given signal” (p.26). The rule-based method teaches students rules which can be applied to the spelling of words. The sound-symbol method is similar to a traditional phonics program. Fehring also describes integrating spelling into the language program and not teaching spelling as isolated subskills. Spelling becomes part of the writing process in the classroom with this method.

Summary

This chapter examined spelling as a developmental process and also examined possible approaches to spelling instruction in the classroom. Literature which considered the reading, writing, and spelling connection was compared and discussed.

The success a student has with spelling can be determined by many things. The role of the teacher, the classroom environment, and the spelling program which is implemented in the classroom, are a few of the factors which can play a role in whether students develop as a standard speller of their language.
The research reviewed in this chapter seems to indicate a need for students to gain more control over their own writing and spelling.
Chapter III

The Research Design

The purpose of this study was to examine student's creative writing for development in spelling. Two writing samples were collected. The first one was written by the subjects in this study and the second writing sample was a dictation to the student of the first sample.

Spelling instruction for the subjects consisted of weekly spelling lists. The spelling lists originated from students' creative writing.

Methodology

Subjects

The subjects for this study were thirty fourth grade students from three classrooms. They attend a suburban school in western New York.

Subjects are from heterogeneously grouped classrooms. They were chosen for this study based on scores obtained the Barnell-Loft Diagnostic Spelling Test. This test was administered at the beginning of the school year. Students who scored one grade level below (4.0 or lower) were chosen for this study.

Spelling instruction in these classrooms originates from students' creative writing.
Procedures

The study took place for one school year. In September, writing samples were collected from the students. The samples were written by the students with the ideas originating from them. All of the samples collected were different lengths and consisted of various topics.

Spelling instruction for the subjects consisted of weekly spelling lists. Word lists were individualized and originated from each student's creative writing. Approximately each week the students completed short assignments and activities with their spelling words. These assignments and activities included pre-tests, sentences, and others, depending on the word list.

In April the writing samples that were collected in September were dictated to the subjects on an individual basis. Prior to each dictation session, the students were read their written story. The next step was instructing them on the dictation. Subjects were told to do their best and told that words or sentences would be repeated if necessary. When each dictation session was completed, students were shown the two writing samples.

Comparisons between the two sets of data were made. A qualitative analysis was conducted and differences in spelling was the
only aspect of these writing samples that was examined.

**Summary**

Writing samples of thirty fourth grade students in a suburban school district were collected in September and April of one school year. Subjects were chosen based on diagnostic spelling scores.

The first writing sample was written by the student. The second writing sample was a dictation of the first conducted on an individual basis.

Comparisons were made between the two samples and examined for development in spelling.
Chapter IV

Analysis of the Data

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine students' creative writing for spelling development. This study was conducted over a nine month period. Creative writing samples were collected from thirty students in September.

In April these writing samples were dictated to each subject on an individual basis. Writing samples were then compared and examined for development in spelling. Spelling instruction originated from creative writing.

Analysis of the Data

Comparisons between the September writing sample and the dictated writing in April showed improvements in spelling with all of the subjects. On the average 13% of the words in the first writing sample were misspelled. In the second writing sample an average of 6% of the words were misspelled.

There were 8 students who improved their spelling more than 10%. Four of those students were learning disabled students. One learning disabled student made an improvement of 34%. The other four
students with 10% or more improvement receive reading and writing remediation support.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject No</th>
<th>Words in Sample</th>
<th>Words in Sept</th>
<th>Sept Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** | **3773** | **497** |
# Table II

**MISSPELLED WORDS - APRIL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject No</th>
<th>Words in Sample</th>
<th>Words in Apr</th>
<th>Apr Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 3773 202
### Table III

**MISSPELLED WORDS - COMPARISON**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject No</th>
<th>Sept Percent</th>
<th>Apr Percent</th>
<th>Inc or Dec</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>+4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>+9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>+7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>+14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>+8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>+9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>+3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>+10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>+16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>+5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>+4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>+11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>+10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>+7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>+9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>+6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>+8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>+8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>+6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>+6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>+8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>+8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>+5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>+10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>+1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>+5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>+34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>+14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>+6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>+7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Observations

The following observations were recorded in April during the dictation sessions of the original writing sample:

1. Each student was cooperative during the dictation. Ten students were apprehensive at first. Six students seemed relaxed about the session and eleven students inquired about the reason they were writing their story for a second time.

2. Many students, as they wrote their stories, said words didn't "look right" and made another attempt at it. These words which didn't look right were words they had misspelled in September.

3. Students' attitudes toward listening to their stories in April were very positive. Many seemed to enjoy the one-on-one session.

4. After the dictation was complete students were shown both writing samples. The first aspect generally noticed was their handwriting. Twenty-one students made comments about their handwriting being much better in April.

5. During the dictation session, the researcher observed and recorded spelling differences. Writing samples were compared for spelling improvement, with the student present. Twenty-five students showed signs of being surprised when they were presented with the
comparison. Two students responded by saying they wanted to show their parents their stories to show them how they had improved their spelling.

**Summary**

The results of this study indicate an improvement in spelling. Spelling improvement cannot be attributed to coincidence. The majority of students acknowledged the improvement in spelling. Subjects became aware of progress they made. The words the students in this study were asked to rewrite were their own words. These words were meaningful to them. Implications of this study will be discussed in the following chapter.
Chapter V
Conclusions and Implications

**Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to examine the spelling development of students whose spelling lists originate from their creative writing.

**Conclusions**

The following conclusions can be drawn from analysis of the data of subjects studied:

1. Spelling instruction which originates from creative writing is an effective method for spelling instruction.

2. Spelling lists which are developed and originate from creative writing provide meaningful learning for students.

3. Writing samples periodically collected from students provide tangible evidence for effective evaluation of writing and spelling.

4. Spelling improvement was impressive with learning disabled students.

5. When writing samples were examined and compared spelling improved with all students.
Implications for Education

Students should be exposed to more vocabulary on a regular basis, but not overwhelmed with lists and lists of words which are meaningless to them. Learning to spell a language can be a successful process, in part, by utilizing spelling lists. However, the lists that students learn should consist of words that students have used in their writing, and other more challenging words which would expand students' vocabulary.

Results show that there are aspects of spelling which are developmental. Students need to be given the opportunity to experiment with their language. There is also evidence as a result of this study to indicate that children's written expression should be used more as a tool for evaluation. Learning has to be a meaningful process to the learner and the results of this study suggest that learning was meaningful due, in part, to the use of their own work.

This study also provides an effective insight into the evaluation process in our schools. Portfolios of work should be kept from year to year on students and should show progress as well as pinpoint weaknesses. The written dictation used in this study should become part
of the portfolio. It should be considered a supplement to test records, as evidence of spelling development.

A meaningful form of communication can take place with parents and especially students if more effort is put into gathering evidence from the student while in the classroom and not at the end of the year on a standardized test.

This study also indicates a need for more information reaching the student. Students are often given tests and are seldom given results. This study showed that students were eager to see results and anxious to make comparisons.

**Implications for Research**

Further investigations into spelling development are suggested. A study involving the same subjects could be conducted, perhaps one year later, to measure further growth in spelling as well as the retention of original words.

A similar study could also be conducted which involves a different age group, perhaps even a combination of age groups.

The method used in this study of examining spelling development lends itself well to a comparison study between spelling programs which are implemented in the classroom. A comparison study could be
conducted which examines spelling development with two groups of students. One group would receive spelling instruction as part of a formal spelling program and another group would receive spelling instruction from their creative writing.

A study which involves student correction of misspelled words in creative writing is also a possibility for further research.

The following are possible changes for further study:

1. The diagnostic spelling test could be administered at the beginning of the school year as well as, at the end of the school year.

2. A larger sample size which includes representation of different grade levels could be used.

3. More than one writing sample could be collected in September with different genre being written. A variety of vocabulary could be examined.

**Suggestions for Classroom Practice**

1. Children should be encouraged to write daily without a lot of emphasis placed on correct spelling in the first draft.

2. Emphasis for correct spelling should be left for the publishing phase of the writing process.

3. Self-correction (self-editing) should be modeled and
encouraged in the classroom.

4. Writing folders should be kept by students, where ongoing writing projects can be maintained.

5. Peer evaluation and peer proofreading should be encouraged.

6. Students should also be given the opportunity to share any writing projects—with small or large groups—at various stages of the writing process.

7. Individualizing spelling programs should be implemented, as much as possible, to meet the needs of the student.

8. Spelling lists should consist of words which originate from students' creative writing.

9. In order to promote increased student accountability, students should have a spelling dictionary in their writing folders. Words from spelling lists should be entered in spelling dictionaries on a regular basis.

10. Students should become part of the evaluation process. Tangible proof of their growth and progress in writing (as well as other academic areas) should be provided to them.

11. Meaningful literature should be a part of the language arts program.
12. Children should be read to on a daily basis.

13. Students should be given a daily opportunity to read material of their choice.

**Summary**

The use of creative writing to measure spelling development promotes an awareness of correct spelling in the student. It does not inhibit spelling growth but rather it begins to instill a sense of accountability within students. It gives responsibility to them for their writing.

Using creative writing in the classroom also promotes better reading and writing. Ideas and creativity are often shared among classmates. Published creative writing is read by classmates and represents a model for correct spelling.

Educators and parents should begin to look more at the needs of the student and begin to make them more a part of their learning. Their learning should be a meaningful process for them.
References


solving the written language puzzle. *Language Arts, 59*, (8), 829-839.


