EXPOSURE TO LITERATURE
AND ITS EFFECTS ON WRITING

MASTER'S PROJECT

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Master of Science in Education

by

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Approved by:

Official Advisor
DEDICATION

I dedicate this master’s project to my family.

Chuck Bushnell
Ted Carroll
Gaby Carroll
Sean Carroll

Murphy, Dexter, Alexis, and Stanley
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Whole language is referred to frequently in the field of educations as an approach that teaches reading and writing as a holistic activity. Through this approach, reading and writing are treated as an integrated behavior that are never broken into separate skills. The emphasis is always on meaning, and materials are expected to be real and relevant (Goodman, 1989). "Children learn to read by reading and to write by writing, rather than by using materials and instruction which turn language into an abstraction and thus destroying it" (Burchby, 1988, p. 118).

Many teachers are moving to a whole language approach to literacy and placing less emphasis on basal texts (Westby, 1990). In whole language classrooms, students are surrounded with and exposed to literature. Children's literature is seen as an important source for instruction (Cullinan, 1987). "Any single wonderful text can teach children about dialogue, language, drama, detail, and everything else there is to learn from literature (Calkins, 1994, p. 278). Through daily choices of reading materials and writing topics, students play a significant role in shaping their own learning. The curriculum, therefore, is primarily learner centered and driven by a view of children as active language learners (Dahl, 1995).

Researchers (Hoffman, Rosen, & Farest, 1988; Morrow,
O’Conner, & Smith, 1990) have confirmed the importance of providing children with daily opportunities to experience literature in active and pleasurable ways. Some of these experiences are as follows: reading and telling stories to children; dealing with stories through literal, interpretive, and critical discussions; integrating literature into thematic units being studied; having children share books they have read; responding to literature through writing; and, participating in independent reading and writing periods.

With literature becoming an important aspect of whole language classrooms, this author would like to investigate how reading literature and writing are connected. Researchers (Boutwell, 1983; Calkins, 1983; Manning, 1992) have found that the reading and writing connection is a reciprocal one. Reading skills improve when students write and read, and writing skills improve as students write and read. Exploring how reading literature will impact students’ writing, will be the primary focus of this study.

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study is to determine if students’ writing performances can be positively affected by a reading and writing program that incorporates quality literature with analysis and writing activities. This study will seek to determine what impact a quality literature and writing program has on: (1) students’ ability to create original
written stories with well formed story structures; (b) students' ability to write in different genres; and (c) students' ability to use quality literature as a model for their writing.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Researchers (Meyer, L. A. & Wordrop, U. L., 1994) have proposed at least four benefits of reading literature to children. First, exposure to literature will help develop children's knowledge of word meanings and their ability to comprehend more complex grammatical forms. Second, children learn new word meanings from exposure to literature. Third, children will directly learn print-related skills through exposure to literature. Finally, sharing literature with children makes them more interested in reading.

These benefits, as explained, do not address the performance of students' writing who are exposed to quality literature with the performance of students who are not. Therefore, several questions emerged: (1) Do students become aware of the potential connections between what they are listening to (quality literature) and what they write?; (2) When students gain experience in the written forms of the English language through listening to literature, will they apply this to their writing?; (3) Will students use quality literature as models for their writing?; and (4) How will students' writings who are exposed to quality literature compare with students' writing who are not
exposed to quality literature? This author feels that a comparative group study would be beneficial in answering these questions.

HYPOTHESIS

Those students who receive writing instruction using a literature-based approach will demonstrate greater writing achievement than those who do not. Writing achievement will be evaluated holistically on a scale one through four. One being the lowest and four being the highest.

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions will be used:

HOLISTIC EVALUATION: "Holistic evaluation is concerned with an overall impression of how well a writer communicates ideas in response to a particular task" (Greenhalgh & Townshend, 1981, p. 811).

LITERATURE: The genre of fantasy which includes old and new fairy tales.

LITERATURE BASED INSTRUCTION: Students in the experimental group will listen to literature as part of the instruction for writing.

WRITING ACHIEVEMENT: The growth the subjects demonstrate between the pretest and posttest. Writing achievement will be evaluated holistically on a scale one through four. One being the lowest and four being the highest.
VARIABLES

Independent variable will be:

The type of writing instruction the subjects will participate in (literature based and non-literature based instruction).

Dependent variable will be:

The students' writing achievement based on holistic evaluation.

LIMITATIONS

For the purpose of this study, the following limitations should be considered:

(1) Forty subjects will be drawn from only one suburban elementary school making it a convenience sample.

(2) Prior exposure to quality literature is unknown.

(3) Researcher is implementing the treatment. This researcher will conduct writing lessons with experimental and control groups. Some researchers may feel this may cause a biased experiment.

(4) Time Frame – Some students "turn off" toward the end of the school year may not provide a representative sample of their writing achievement.

(5) Inter rater reliability – Two different raters will evaluate the pretests and posttests. The raters will not know what score each rater has given on any given writing sample.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many teachers and researchers recognize the natural connection between reading and writing, realizing the need for students to read like writers (Smith, 1983). "Reading and writing should function as an integral part of every day activities, rather than a separate instructional component (Strickland & Morrow, 1988). When students read and/or listen to a variety of stories, they learn how different authors have developed plots, characters, themes, points of view, and settings (Rogers & Ryan, 1980).

Calkins (1983) found in her study of children's writing that she could not ignore reading in the writing classroom. Children read and reread when they wrote. They read and reread when they shared their writing. They read when they enjoyed good literature and learned about how authors do good writing. Calkins (1983) found that the children used reading skills like selecting the main idea, organizing supporting details, discovering cause-effect relationships, and drawing conclusions when they were reading. In addition, listening to their teacher read aloud to the class from trade books helped children remember past experiences or ideas that they used for writing material. Listening helped to establish the background schema children needed to begin to write.

Students need insight from good models before they
begin to write. "One simple way many teachers have found successful is to expose students to literature that emulates good reading and writing techniques" (Ingham & Samuels, 1986, p. 7). "When students learn to listen through an author’s words to the story, they learn the way of listening that is essential to writing" (Calkins, 1994, p. 256).

"Becoming an author comes naturally from immersion in children’s literature and being given a strong sense of being a writer. As these two aspects of a whole language classroom grow, children will begin producing materials they want to publish or share" (Burchby, 1988, p. 121).

"Reading-writing connections begin when we help our children fall in love with a single poem, a book, an essay" (Calkins, 1994, p. 275).

"The key to successful writing is rich experience, and literature is incredibly rich. Just as it "feeds" the writing of adults in many different ways, so too can it feed children’s writing" (Martinez & Nash, 1995, p. 219). A number of different studies have been conducted that look at how sharing and reading literature are connected with writing.

Carini’s (1979) research and Camerson’s (1986) classroom observations have demonstrated that elementary school age children explore ideas about family, friendship, war, peace, prejudice, love, and existence as they read and write stories. "In all these cases, meaning is generated as
a result of enjoyment with stories" (Franklin, 1988, p. 184). "When children create their own stories and when they respond to published stories in personal ways, they are expressing who they are" (Franklin, 1988, p. 184).

Bearse (1992) conducted a genre study of fairy tales with a colleague’s third grade class at a suburban elementary school. Twenty-one third graders were drawn from heterogenous and economically diverse populations that included disadvantaged to upper middle class students whose reading levels ranged from second to sixth grade. After four weeks of studying fairy tales, Bearse (1992) asked the students to write one. After the students had written their fairy tales, Bearse (1992) gave them a questionnaire to discover if students were consciously incorporating specific fairy tale elements into their stories. The five following questions were asked: (1) Did you think of specific stories when you were writing your fairy tale?; (2) Give me an example. What was the name of the story you remembered?; (3) What details in your story were like other stories you remembered?; (4) Were your characters like other characters you had read about?; and (5) Did your story have a similar ending? From this questionnaire, Bearse (1992) concluded that sixty-one percent of the students made conscious connections to fairy tale stories they had read or heard.

In addition, Bearse (1992) examined each of the
children’s stories for fairy tale elements and language. One interesting finding was that four students were able to synthesize several fairy tales into their writing. All of the students had internalized the cadences, rhythms, and particular phrase characteristics of fairy tales that the students read and/or listened too. All of the third graders were expert language users; they had assimilated fairy tales and, both consciously and unconsciously had transferred their literacy knowledge into their own stories. Bearse (1992) found that students’ writing reflected the particular language of the genre they were reading. "As students read fairy tales, fiction, poetry, plays, or nonfiction, it is important that teachers highlight each genre’s particular writing style. Only then will students maximize their ability to transfer literary details into their own writing. Secondly, students need to be reading and hearing literature beyond their assigned reading program" (Bearse, 1992, 694).

"Students are consciously and unconsciously absorbing the literary details of the stories they hear and read, and they are using these stories as models when they write" (Bearse, 1992, p. 694).

Sipe (1993) also used fairy tales when he conducted his study with six-grade students. He went into Audrey Jane’s classroom in an elementary school. Like Bearse (1992), he observed how students made reading and writing connections after being immersed with fairy tale literature.
Sipe (1993) felt that the reading, modeling, and discussion were valuable in themselves, they also broadened the students' choices and sharpened their thoughts for their own writing. One student summarized it best: "All the things we did helped me to know how writers think about stories. I finally feel like a writer" (Sipe, 1992, p. 24).

Instead of focusing on fairy tales, Comstock (1992) conducted a case study of poetry writing in a fifth grade classroom. This study was conducted for six weeks and provided the students with daily opportunities to read and write poetry.

The qualitative findings indicated: first, the students' poetry changed to reflect the styles of other members of the poetry group, as well as the styles of the published poetry being read in and out of the group. One student stated, "I think it was fun listening to other peoples' poems and learning different writing styles. Learning how to write a different style poem that we hadn't experienced was fun" (Comstock, 1992, p. 267).

Another finding suggested that the students often incorporated other poets' techniques which were described by the teacher during group discussions. The Comstock (1992) study demonstrates the value of exposure to a wide range of poetry, of discussion of technique as it relates to students' interests, and of composition of poetry based on the need to write for one's own purposes. "These students
were able to find their own way to poetry in a supportive environment that was conducive to such activities and made expertise available to them on request" (Comstock, 1992, p. 26).

Taberski (1987) used her own classroom to help students understand the qualities of good fiction and incorporate them in their own writing. Through researching the qualities of good fiction and how to help students integrate these qualities into their own writing, Taberski (1987) arrived at the following strategies to help students make the reading and writing connection: (1) emphasizing the value of topic selection when writing fiction; (2) using literature to teach fiction writing; (3) emphasizing the value of having the main character change or solve a problem; (4) maintaining that stories should be reality based, or grounded in the writer's own experiences; and (5) encouraging the students to research their fiction pieces.

"Literature is an invaluable tool to help children write better fiction" (Taberski, 1987, p. 588). During the months Taberski (1987) conducted her research, she enveloped the students with quality literature by reading to them daily. The books most frequently shared were picture books. Students needed to know what good literature looks and sounds like. Literature became a model for their writing. When asked about how the literature helped them with their writing, students wrote: "It gives you ideas to write in
your fiction stories and sometimes when I read, I begin to think about writing something like it."; "I see styles of writing by reading. I get to pick out which ones I like best."; "I get ideas from books."; "It helps me see how other people write fiction."; "You can get a model from it and then write your own ideas" (Taberski, 1987, p. 595).

Avery (1993) also used literature as models to help her students' fiction writing flourish. Literature was used to address the qualities of good fiction writing. "Teachers need to help students develop the craft of fiction writing, and one of the most effective ways we can do this is by pointing out techniques that professional writers use" (Avery, 1993, p. 18).

To help foster the reading and writing connection, Avery (1993) suggests that teachers should provide models for good writing. Teachers should read aloud to students every day. "On the first reading, focus on the students' responses to the story and what they think it means. On rereading the story, discuss the characteristics of the author's crafts and use those points in a mini-lesson on writing fiction" (Avery, 1993, p. 18).

Instead of focusing on different genres of literature, Au (1992) looked at the features of teacher-guided discussions of literature that led elementary students toward constructing a theme for a story. A theme is the vision readers gain of the author's understanding of the
human condition (Sutherland & Arthbuthnot, 1990). A wide exposure to literature makes a substantial contribution to children’s understanding of themes (Lehr, 1988).

Au (1992) followed a teacher and a reading group of seven students through four days of lessons. The seven students were all of Hawaiian ancestry and were reading at grade level. Each lesson was about twenty to twenty-five minutes long and focused on story-related writing assignments. Each lesson was also videotaped.

After viewing all four video tapes, Au (1992) concluded that teachers of middle grade students will probably want to involve them in discussions of the themes they see in literature. "Such discussions appear to enhance the students’ ability to construct themes for stories" (Au, 1992, p. 110). Because the students had participated in discussions of story themes on a regular bases, they had learned how to express their own opinions about the students’ ideas, students learn to construct themes they find personally meaningful. Through constructing their own themes, students seem to understand and appreciate literature on their own terms, not just the teacher’s terms" (Au, 1992, p. 110).

Beuchat (1994), an author, discussed her visits to schools to talk to students, mainly seven, eight, and nine years old, emphasizing the importance of students learning about the authors whose works they read and enjoy. She
recommends telling students anecdotes about authors’ personal lives before introducing them to their books. "The narration of an author’s biography becomes a stimulating factor" (Beuchat, 1994, p. 314).

"A child’s first creative experience with language requires the support and approval of parents, teachers, or writers if it is to have a long lasting effect. In this manner, both in the classroom and at home, children will discover the pleasures of reading and the enjoyment of writing a text that, no matter how brief or simple, is one’s own work and achievement" (Beuchat, 1994, p. 314). When students’ writing is valued and the curriculum provides space for self-fulfillment through creative writing, they have a better chance of becoming adults who express themselves through writing (Beuchat, 1994).

Beuchat’s (1994) advice is to read to students; read to them extensively; and to help them expand their knowledge about literature. "If students are familiar with and able to comprehend literature, there is a chance they will relate it to what they write; if they are immersed in literature and allowed to comment, question and reflect on it, then there will be a good bases from which to begin to write" (Stewig, 1980, p.9).

Mills (1974) conducted a four year longitudinal study with fourth grade students. This study focused on using children’s literature to teach composition. Mills (1974)
reported that children who read and/or listened to and then discussed children’s literature as a springboard to writing scored significantly higher in their writing than the control group that did not use children’s literature as a springboard for writing activities. Writing was measured by a composition rating scale as well as by tests of capitalization, punctuation and total language usage from the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

The studies discussed so far have focused on students in the elementary grades. The following study, however, examines the writing of Justin, a four year old child. Danielson (1992) worked with Justin twice a month for ten months in Justin’s home so that he would be in a non-threatening, natural environment. At each meeting, Danielson (1992) read a children’s book to Justin, and Justin then wrote anything that he wanted about the book. The observations of Justin helped Danielson (1992) see three ways to view early writing: uses for writing, concepts and principles of early writing, and demonstrations of engagement with children’s books.

Knipping and Andre (1988) described ways in which young children show their engagement or personal involvement with literature: (1) noticing illustrations; (2) making connections between books; (3) connecting life experiences with literature; (4) noticing patterns in illustrations or language; (5) noticing print conventions; and (6) making
inferences. Danielson (1992) observed all of these engagements in Justin’s writing.

Justin’s writing exhibited qualities of establishing real uses for writing and demonstrating engagement with children’s literature. The concepts or principles most often found in early writing were also found in Justin’s writing. "His writing displayed his growing knowledge of language and his enthusiasm for books, words, and art" (Danielson, 1992, p. 279). Young children’s writing will flourish in literacy-rich environments. Surrounded by books, writing materials, and other readers and writers, children see the need for reading and writing (Danielson, 1992).

Calkins (1994) discusses how teachers need to bring powerful literature into the classrooms and to do everything possible to invite children to live and write inside literature. "It begins with believing that the books we read aloud will change everything in the classroom community. When our children pull close around text, when we read until our eyes shine with tears and we are silenced in the presence of the deepest parts of our lives, it shakes the ground that we and our students stand on as writers and as people” (Calkins, 1994, p. 252).

Routman (1988) also discusses the importance of incorporating literature with classroom activities. Routman (1988, p. 94) feels "that there is no question that the way
children use language in their daily writing is greatly influenced by the many stories and poems they hear and read daily. The language of literature, with its imagery and phrasing, serves as a wonderful model and springboard for children's writing. Literature shared helps writers internalize the story line and reuse it to suit their own purposes. "They try out speech marks when they need conversation; they experiment with periods and exclamation marks to make the meaning clearer; and most children begin to use capital letters and periods with some accuracy. They write chapter stories, include dedication and author pages, table of contents, and they incorporate illustrations in various media" (Routman, 1988, p. 94).

It is becoming more and more evident that reading and writing influence each other directly (Ingham, & Samuels, 1986). "Students grow as writers as they evaluate what they are doing by comparison with how things are done by more experienced writers" (Smith, 1983, p. 567). "Literature that is heard as well as literature read provides the exposure for comparison and for development of both reading and writing skills" (Ingham & Samuels, 1986, p. 9).

Whole language literacy learning fulfills and empowers students. "They develop ownership of words and ideas. They realize that what they read has meaning and is useful for learning. They learn that they have the power to write, to give permanence to their ideas. They learn to use the
written word to increase their knowledge, from their own opinions, and express themselves" (Burchby, 1988, p. 21).

**SUMMARY**

The studies cited have addressed the importance of reading literature in the writing classroom. Benefits from reading literature to students were discussed in qualitative findings. The researchers gave many suggestions to educators on how to incorporate literature with writing activities.

Some of the researchers focused their studies on different genres of literature, for example, picture books, fairy tales, fiction, and poetry. These studies revealed that students' writings reflect the particular genre that they were studying. Other researchers looked at how students construct a plot for a story after discussing the literature that was shared.

While the research discussed is valuable to educators, a comparative group study between performance of students' writing exposed to high quality literature and students who are not exposed to high quality literature before writing activities could be of assistance to educators. This information will help teachers plan meaningful writing activities for their students.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

PROCEDURES

The target population for this study is second grade students. The accessible population are students from a suburban elementary school in the Dayton, Ohio area. The economic status of the population is low.

At the beginning of the school year, students who were entering second grade at a suburban elementary school were randomly assigned to five different second grade classrooms. This researcher used two of the second grade classrooms to conduct this study. Each intact classroom contains twenty students. These forty students represent the sample for this study.

The intact classrooms were randomly selected. One classroom of second grade students serves as the control group and the other classroom of second grade students serves as the experimental group. All of the students in each of these identified classrooms participated in this study and became the subjects of the research with the permission of the principal (Appendix A).

DESIGN

The research design is a quasi experimental group comparison. The comparison groups were:

(a) Subjects who were given the opportunity to use literature as a model for writing activities (Experimental).
(b) Subjects who were not given the opportunity to use literature as a model for writing activities (Control).

At the beginning of this study, each group was given a pretest. For the pretest, the subjects were asked to write a fairy tale story. After the pretest was completed, both groups participated in four writing activities. The writing activities took four weeks to complete. The subjects worked on the writing activities for thirty minutes four days out of the week. The four writing activities are described as follows:

(1) All subjects discussed how fairy tale stories have different characters. The subjects described characters' names, characteristics, and what the characters did from different fairy tale stories with which the subjects were familiar. After the twenty minute discussion, only the experimental group listened to The True Story of The Three Little Pigs by Jon Scieszka. The experimental group discussed the characters in the story and how the author described and portrayed them.

(2) The subjects discussed how fairy tale stories have different settings. The subjects described settings and how places looked from different fairy tale stories with which the subjects were familiar. After the twenty minute discussion, only the experimental group listened to Goldilocks and The Three Bears by James Marshall. The experimental group discussed the setting in the story and
how the author described the setting.

(3) The subjects discussed how fairy tale stories have different plots. Both groups discussed the plots in *The Three Little Pigs* and *Goldilocks and The Three Bears*. These two stories were selected because it was assumed that all subjects were familiar with these two fairy tale stories. After the twenty minute discussion, only the experimental group listened to *Jack and The Beanstalk* by Steven Kellogg. The experimental group discussed the plot in the story. The main focus of conversation was on Jack and the Giant and what they did during the fairy tale story.

(4) The subjects discussed how stories have a beginning, middle, and end. Both groups discussed what took place in the beginning, middle, and end in *The Three Little Pigs*, and *Goldilocks and The Three Bears*. These two stories were selected because it was assumed that all subjects were familiar with these two fairy tale stories. After the twenty minute discussion, only the experimental group listened to *Cinderella* by Barbara Karlin. The experimental group discussed what happened in the beginning, middle, and end in *Cinderella*.

At the conclusion of these writing activities, the subjects completed a posttest. For the posttest, the subjects were asked to write a fairy tale story of their own. The pretest and the posttest was used to evaluate the students’ writing achievement.
INSTRUMENTATION

To evaluate and score the pretests and posttests, a holistic evaluation was used. Holistic evaluation is based on the idea that the whole composition is greater than its components, that no component may be judged apart from the whole, and that all components should be judged simultaneously. The term holistic derives from whole. Holistic scoring, therefore, involves reading and scoring a paper on the total effect of the first impression (Najimy, 1981).

The following rubric was developed by the English Composition Competency Committee for the local school district:

CRITERIA FOR WRITING SAMPLE EVALUATION - HOLISTIC

Papers will be ranked from one to four (One being the lowest and four being the highest).

CRITERIA FOR A ONE PAPER

I. Written Expression
   a. Does not completely address a topic.
   b. Not easily understood.

II. Mechanics

   Gross mechanical and spelling errors that interfere with reading. The writing is not competent.

CRITERIA FOR A TWO PAPER

I. Written Expression
   a. Generally addresses, but may not completely develop
a topic.
   b. Sentences are complete but simple.
   c. Has sequence.
   d. Is easily understood.

II. Mechanics
   Has mechanical and spelling errors which do not interfere with clarity. This writing meets minimum standards of competence.

CRITERIA FOR A THREE PAPER

I. Written Expression
   a. Develops topic.
   b. Logical sequence is strongly evident.
   c. Uses appropriate supporting details.
   d. Shows creativity and originality.
   e. Uses varied and appropriate vocabulary.

II. Mechanics
   Limited mechanical and spelling errors. This writing is competent.

CRITERIA FOR A FOUR PAPER

Meets all criteria for a three paper plus most of the following:
   a. Sustained excellence in development of topic.
   b. Richness of expression.
   c. High level vocabulary.
   d. Varied and complex sentences.
   e. Outstanding creativity and originality.

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This writing is exceptional.

TIME FACTORS

PHASE 1 - The pretest was given to each group. Each group was given one hour to complete the writing assignment.

PHASE 2 - Each group received a twenty minute lesson on an assigned writing assignment. There were four lessons.

PHASE 3 - After each lesson, each group completed an assigned writing activity. There were four writing activities.

PHASE 4 - A posttest was given to each group. Each group had two hours to complete the writing assignment.

Phase one, two, three, and four took five weeks to complete.

DATA ANALYSIS

This researcher used descriptive statistics to report its findings. Each subject’s writing sample was evaluated holistically on a scale one through four. One being the lowest and four being the highest. There were two trained raters to score the pretests and the posttests. The researcher described holistic evaluation and the rubric to the two raters.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

Quantitative and qualitative findings are discussed from this comparative group study.

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

After two raters holistically evaluated all writing samples, not knowing which writing samples were pretests and posttests and which writing samples belonged to the experimental and control groups, the data was collected and analyzed. The raters scored the writing samples on a scale one through four, one being the lowest score and four being the highest score.

On the pretest, rater one gave the experimental group a mean score of 1.85 and rater two gave a mean score of 1.9. On the pretest, rater one gave the control group a mean score of 1.9 and rater two gave a mean score of 1.7. These scores represent the average of all twenty subjects in the experimental group and all twenty subjects in the control group.

On the posttest, rater one gave the experimental group a mean score of 2.6 and rater two gave a mean score of 2.85. On the posttest, rater one gave the control group a mean score of 2.3 and rater two gave a mean score of 2.25. These scores represent the average of all twenty subjects in the experimental group and all twenty subjects in the control group.
Both the experimental and control groups demonstrated growth in their writing, but the experimental group achieved a slightly higher writing achievement growth than the control group based on the mean scores. Rater one’s scores show that the experimental group gained .75 points and rater two’s scores show that the experimental group gained .95 on the posttest. Rater one’s scores show that the control group gained .40 points and, rater two’s scores show that the control group gained .55 on the posttest. These scores are charted on table one and two on page 26 and 27. Rater one’s scores show that fifteen subjects in the experimental group gained one point higher on the holistic evaluation scale. The other five subjects received the same score on the posttest as they did on the pretest.

Rater two’s scores show that seventeen subjects in the experimental group gained one point higher on the holistic evaluation scale. The other five subjects received the same score on the posttest as they did on the pretest.

Rater one’s scores show that nine subjects in the control group gained one point higher on the holistic evaluation scale. The other eleven subjects received the same score on the posttest as they did on the pretest.

Rater two’s scores show that twelve subjects in the control group gained one point higher on the holistic evaluation scale. The other eight subjects received the same score on the posttest as they did on the pretest. The
subjects in both the experimental and control groups did not show any negative scores.
### TABLE ONE

**EXPERIMENTAL GROUP**

**Holistic Evaluation**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Subject</th>
<th>Pretest Rater 1 and Rater 2</th>
<th>Posttest Rater 1 and Rater 2</th>
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<td>Subject 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subject 27</td>
<td>3 3</td>
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| Total    | 37 38                       | 52 57                        |
| Mean     | 1.85 1.9                    | 2.6 2.85                     |
| Writing Achievement Growth | .75 .95 |
### TABLE TWO

**CONTROL GROUP**

**HOLISTIC EVALUATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
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<th>34</th>
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<tr>
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<td>1.7</td>
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<td>Writing Achievement Growth</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.55</td>
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29
QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

The subjects that participated in this study are early and fluent writers. The early writer understands that speech can be written down. This writer is beginning to realize that conventions control writing and that it can be reread. The fluent writer has gradually gained control over writing conventions and letter formations and is therefore writing with ease.

EXPERIMENTAL SUBJECTS

Subject 1-Pretest

The subject wrote a fairy tale about cats becoming pets for the royal family. The story has a beginning, middle, and end with many high frequency words spelled correctly. The subject is an early writer.

Subject 1-Posttest

The subject wrote a fairy tale with much more detail about the characters and setting than the pretest. The beginning, middle, and end is more developed with a plot. The subject is becoming a fluent writer.

Subject 2-Pretest

The subject wrote a fairy tale about a princess who liked gardening and dragons. The story has a very limited beginning, middle, and end. The subject is an early writer.

Subject 2-Posttest

The subject wrote a fairy tale about a queen who ran away and met a king. The subject describes the characters.
The beginning, middle, and end is more developed than the pretest.

Subject 3-Pretest

The subject did not write a fairy tale. The story is about two girls having a discussion. The subject included a title. The subject is an early writer.

Subject 3-Posttest

The subject wrote a fairy tale about a prince being turned into a frog by a witch. The frog turns back into a prince and marries the princess. The story has a beginning, middle, and end with a developed plot. The subject uses quotation marks and other punctuation correctly. The subject has moved into a fluent writer.

Subject 4-Pretest

The subject did not write a fairy tale. The subject only wrote a sentence about a dog and a cat.

Subject 4-Posttest

The subject wrote a fairy tale. The subject does not have a developed beginning, middle, and end. The story is difficult to understand. The subject is an early writer.

Subject 5-Pretest

The subject did not write a fairy tale. The story is about a girl and a boy. The boy tries to hurt her. The story does not have a beginning, middle, and end.

Subject 5-Posttest

The subject did not write a fairy tale. This story is
about a trip to a summer camp. The subject wrote a story with a beginning, middle, and end and included a title. The subject is an early writer.

Subject 6-Pretest

The subject did not write a fairy tale. The story is about a tooth fairy. The story is short with a beginning, middle, and end. The subject is an early writer.

Subject 6-Posttest

The subject wrote a fairy tale about a wolf and three little pigs. The story has a well developed beginning, middle, and end. The subject modeled his/her story after *The Three Little Pigs*. The subject is becoming a fluent writer.

Subject 7-Pretest

The subject did not write a fairy tale. The subject wrote a few sentences about a bear.

Subject 7-Posttest

The subject wrote a fairy tale modeled after *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. The story is about three dogs going on a walk and a cat coming into their home. The story has a beginning, middle, and end. The subject is an early writer.

CONTROL SUBJECTS

Subject 8-Pretest

The subject wrote a fairy tale about princes going on a walk and meeting a prince. They were married and lived happily ever after. The subject wrote a very short story
with very limited detail.

Subject 8-Posttest

The subject wrote a fairy tale very similar to the pretest. The story has more detail about the characters and setting. The subject is an early writer.

Subject 9-Pretest

The subject did not write a fairy tale. The story is about rabbit who met a friend. The subject is an early writer.

Subject 9-Posttest

The subject did not write a fairy tale. The subject wrote a story about a teenager using weapons to fight. The story does not have a developed beginning, middle, and end.

Subject 10-Pretest

The subject wrote a very short fairy tale modeled after The Three Little Pigs. The subject does not include a beginning, middle, and end.

Subject 10-Posttest

The subject wrote a fairy tale modeled after The Three Little Pigs. The story has a beginning, middle, and end. The subject includes a title. The subject is an early writer.

Subject 11-Pretest

The subject wrote a fairy tale about a princess who could not find a dress to marry the prince in. She found a dress and married the prince. The story is very short and
does not include very much detail.

Subject 11-Posttest

The subject wrote a fairy tale. The story has more detail than the pretest describing the characters adventures. The subject is an early writer.

Subject 12-Pretest

The subject wrote a fairy tale. The story is about girl who meets a man in the woods. They were married and lived happily ever after. The story has a very limited beginning, middle, and end.

Subject 12-Posttest

The subject wrote a fairy tale. The story is about a princess who can turn into a swan. She meets a prince and tells him that she will marry him. The story has a beginning, middle, and end. The subject is an early writer.

Subject 13-Pretest

The subject wrote a fairy tale about a frog that turned into a prince. The story has a developed beginning, middle, and end. The subject is a fluent writer.

Subject 13-Posttest

The subject wrote a fairy tale. The story is about five princesses who all got married together. The characters are described in more detail than the pretest. The story has a developed beginning, middle, and end.

Subject 14-Pretest

The subject does not write a fairy tale. The story is
about a scarecrow with very limited detail. The story does not have a beginning middle, and end.

Subject 14-Posttest

The subject does not write a fairy tale. The story is about two ninjas. The subject is an early writer.

The writing samples from subjects one through fourteen can be viewed in appendix B and C.
**EXPERIMENTAL GROUP**

**EARLY AND FLUENT WRITERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>POSTTEST</th>
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<tr>
<td>EARLY WRITERS</td>
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<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLUENT WRITERS</td>
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</table>

**CONTROL GROUP**

**EARLY AND FLUENT WRITERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PRETEST</th>
<th>POSTTEST</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EARLY WRITERS</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLUENT WRITERS</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>

These two charts show how all twenty subjects in the experimental group displayed characteristics of early writers on the pretest. Six of the subjects displayed characteristics of fluent writers on the posttest. None of the subjects in the control group moved from an early writer to a fluent writer.
These two charts show how many subjects in the experimental and control groups wrote fairy tales on the pretest and posttest. Twelve subjects wrote a fairy tale on the pretest and thirteen subjects wrote a fairy tale on the posttest in the experimental group. Sixteen subjects wrote a fairy tale on the pretest and fifteen subjects wrote a fairy tale on the posttest in the control group.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Many educators are incorporating literature with daily instructional activities. With writing being an important part of the curriculum, this researcher completed this study to determine if students' writing performances can be positively affected by a reading and writing program that incorporates quality literature with analysis and writing activities.

Forty students from two intact second grade classrooms participated in this study. One classroom of second grade students was the control group and the other classroom of second grade students was the experimental group. Both the control and experimental groups received four twenty minute lessons on characters, settings, plots, and how stories have a beginning, middle, and end. Only the experimental group was given the opportunity to listen to fairy tales prior to the writing lesson.

Two raters holistically evaluated all writing samples. The raters scored the writing samples on a scale one through four, one being the lowest score and four being the highest score. Both the experimental and control groups demonstrated growth in their writing, but the experimental group achieved a slightly higher writing achievement growth than the control group based on the mean scores given by raters one and two. Rater one's scores show that the
experimental group gained .75 points and rater two’s scores show that the experimental group gained .95 points on the posttest. Rater one’s scores show that the control group gained .40 points and rater two’s scores show that the control group gained .55 on the posttest.

The overall results seem to suggest that a combination of literature based instruction with traditional approaches to teaching writing is more powerful than traditional instruction alone. The discussions about characters, settings, plots, and how stories have a beginning, middle, and end were very beneficial in helping the subjects write their fairy tale stories. The subjects learned what to include in their stories and what they learned in the discussions served as a basis for their writing.

Sharing the fairy tale stories with the experimental group took the writing activity lessons one step further. It gave the subjects a better understanding of the elements in a story, and provided them with new insights for writing stories. It helped the subjects see how authors describe characters, settings, plots, and what takes place in the beginning, middle, and end in a story.

Sharing the fairy tale stories was a wonderful way to conclude the writing activity lessons. The subjects in the experimental group seemed to enjoy listening to the fairy tales and the discussions that followed. This researcher only wishes she could have shared the fairy tale stories
with the control group. It was difficult to teach the writing activity lessons with the control group because this researcher could not demonstrate with literature how authors discuss characters, settings, plots, and how stories have a beginning, middle, and end. One subject in the control group stated it best "I wish I could look at some books to help me with my story."

Sharing the fairy tale stories really did help the subjects in the experimental group with their writing. All of the subjects in the experimental group were early writers at the beginning of this study. At the conclusion, fourteen subjects were early writers. Six of the subjects demonstrated skills of fluent writers. None of the subjects in the control group moved from early to fluent writers. The two control subjects that were fluent writers demonstrated characteristics of fluent writers in both the pretest and posttest.

This study seems to suggest that it is important to incorporate literature with writing activities. The sample size and some methodological issues prevent drawing any specific conclusion. This researcher will continue to share literature with students and incorporate literature with writing and other instructional activities. Quality literature has much to offer for students. It opens them up to a new world full of discoveries.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study and its results showed the importance of sharing literature for a model for writing. Future studies that investigate incorporating literature with instructional activities could be beneficial to educators. The area of phonemic awareness could be investigated. Second, do children appreciate literature more when they are read to? Finally, this study could be extended to the upper grades to see if literature affects their writing.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

LETTER FROM PRINCIPAL
May 30, 1995

To Whom It May Concern,

This is to confirm that Michelle Bushnell had permission to conduct writing activities with her second grade Chapter I reading students during the 1994-95 academic year. The writing samples were used for projects and assignments required by her graduate program at the University of Dayton.

Sincerely,

Joan Ackerman Fine
Principal
APPENDIX B
EXPERIMENTAL GROUP
WRITING SAMPLES
Once there was a cat named Blaky Boo. He had a friend named Brissy. One day, Blaky said "Let's go into the forest!" and Brissy said "Okay, I'm scared!" Then they saw a castle and in the castle, they saw a princess and her prince sitting down talking. Blaky's mom and dad sitting.

In the story, the princesses saw Blaky and Brissy. The princesses had a good idea. Maybe if we get the cats to agree, they can go. And say that it is from their mom and dad and say that her or she loves you. That's good. I hope it works," said the princess. She said the princesses saw they...

Get the cats and the to there mom and dad are a few days they quit fighten.

The End
Once there was a princess who lived in central America. One day she was in the garden picking flowers. Then a prince tapped her. She turned around and the prince was behind her. She asked him if he could be her friend. He said yes so they played every day. Now when the king found out he was mad so they moved to the South America rain forest. So had no friends but she was lucky the animals like her. One day she was at the pound sing but when a cat just jumped out the prince asked if he was a magic cat and he said yes I am the next day the prince came to the house the princes opened the door. When she saw him she said come in and hide in my room so the prince said but he didn't no the king was frowning him when he got in the room the king sported the prince turned around and saw the king he tried to stop him but he could not. So he yelled the princes yell out magic cat twice and he came and turned the king into a mouse and ate him. The End.
Pretest
Experimental - Subject 2

Once upon a time there was a princess she was not like other princesses. When they were glad they were princesses, she wished she was a farmer. All she liked at the castle was the gardens. She spent most of her time with the horses and eat only corn. And this headdest things about her she loved dragons. The night before her birthday she ran away. She followed the path that lead to stone hill. When she reached stone hill she started for Dragon Castle.
Once upon a time there lived a king and a queen. Their names were Apollo and Juno. They had a daughter named Rose. They were not only yells but her. Because she loved dragons and pegasus and unicorns, she had nothing.

Wrong with liking all that stuff. But she was always reading about them. When she was young they had been able to grow her. They were imagery. She was tired of this treatment. So she ran away when she worked.

Upon one day, a dragon appeared. He said, "The dragon. My name is Serpent. What is your name?"

"Rose," she answered nervously. "That was quite a fall you had one day the kingsaw her and..."
Once there was a little girl who didn't know anything. She always said the wrong thing at the wrong time. One day her friend came over. The little girl said "I am not telling you to come over."
Then her friend said "I'll go." Then her friend left. The girl said "I'm glad I said that. Then the little girl went back underwater.
("Now you know why she doesn't know..."
One day the king sent out invitation to everyone in the kingdom. The witch which was his sister had made a mistake. The letter for the ball was written like this, dear poor people please come to a ball signed the king. The next day a prince came through the forest. Just then there someone said "stop". It was the witch. Then he said come a little closer.

The prince came closer. And then plot there was a boy then the noise of the witch. She said "what have you been up to?" Then he saw the dog. Though she said "where did you get it". The witch said "get what". The princess said "the dog". The witch said "oh the dog". The next day the witch turned him into a frog. The prince came back and said "what are you up to?"

Then she saw the frog. She said "where did you get that". The witch said "get what". The princess said "the frog". The witch said "oh the frog". That night the witch turned him back into a prince. That night they had the ball. There was ballroom dancing and regular dancing. The next day the prince and princess got married. And became king and queen.
Dear parents, I hope you take me more pictures this in the picture, while are purple fruits or even types are different colors. They are red and oak white.

Posttest
Experimental - Subject 4

A Price Named Jasmin
Lowe in the contray in green field on her house. Named small to a castle who was quantity. A boy named Joe the peasant name was Mrs. Bashmer. The answer was small of making for Joe. So she stop working for Joe.
Pretest
Experimental - Subject 5

This is a scary story.

Once there was a girl about 18-19 getting in her car. And this other guy to and when ever she turned he turned and when ever the guy turned his hi gears on she did the same thing. She was driving in the driveway the girl ran in the house and called 911 and the police arrested the guy but then he saysed look in the back of the car the guy was trying to kill her.
It all began one after school,
on the last day my mom and
dad were thinking about taking me
up for summer camp. I hate
summer camp. Roger said snakes,
spiders, and ants. Snakes, spiders, and ants. It is it is it
horrible disgusting. Go get packed,
said his mom. Do I have to go.

Out and they stood and I looked
out the window and policeman were
surrounding the bus. We all got off the
bus, and rode in camp in a police
van. It was getting better every second
when we got there the ugly counselor and
he took us to our bunks and we minded us
write are own bibles.
Once upon a time there lived a fairy who was really a tooth fairy. She liked the name fairy better. And one night she was flying around and she saw a tooth. It was a pure white tooth. And she said "Wow! So she flew down and grabbed the tooth and forgot to give Jimmy his money. A day later, she remembered she forgot to give Jimmy money. So she got up, looked at the clock, and flew to Jimmy's house and gave him $30 dollars. She flew home and never forgot to give anybody no money. The end.
Once upon a time, there was a wolf. His name was Jerry. He liked to eat little children like you! One fine morning, he was walking to the market and he saw the little pigs. He said, "And ran all the way to there houses well the wolf had a bad eye so he couldn't see them very well. When he got home he went to the house made out of straw, he knocked at the door and said let me in the little pig said not by the hair of my chin chinni.

He said then I will blow your house down. He marked his word so he huffed then he puffed and he blow the house down and the pigs ran to the next house. So the big bad wolf went there and said let me in Not by the hair of the chap.
so he said I will blow your house down so he huffed and he puffed and huffed and the house would not blow down so he looked at the chimney and climbed up the house and the little pigs herd him on the roof and put a big hot bowl of water right in it and went right in the chimney and climbed up the chimney and climbed up the chimney and climbed up the chimney and climbed up the chimney and climbed up the chimney and climbed up the chimney and climbed up the chimney and climbed up the chimney and climbed up the chimney.
There was own little bear. He liked to play with the other bears.
He likes to eat berries and grass and Huny.
And when he get the Huny.
The End
Kitten and the three Dogs

Once upon a time, there were three dogs and they lived in a small house. Their names were Papa Dog, Mama Dog, and Baby Dog. Mama Dog wanted something to eat. So Mama Dog went to make something to eat for all three of them.

Then a kitten came and she went in the house and when she got in she got out of Papa Dog's ball in that she ate then she got Mama Dog. It was too cold then Baby was just right. She got it all up she what to set down.

Papa Dog's was too thin, Mama Dog's and Baby Dog's was just right. One the Mama Dog wanted to take a walk so they went out for a walk. But they forgot to close the door.
APPENDIX C
CONTROL GROUP WRITING SAMPLES
Pretest
Control - Subject 8

Once upon a time there lived a princess. Her name was Bell. She lived in a beautiful castle. One day Bell was taking her morning walk. She saw a handsome prince on his horse near by. Bell thought she had always wanted to be married, the prince thought so too. He said will you marry me? I will.

Posttest
Control - Subject 8

Once upon a time a princess named Bell lived in a beautiful castle. With a river and flowers and a forest. Bell was taking her morning walk. When she ran into a wish, she was too late to catch. The wish cast a spell on Bell. Bell quickly fell asleep. One day a prince comes along and sees Bell in the window in her room and tries to wake her up. He kisses her and breaks the spell. And they lived happily ever after. The end.
Pretest
Control - Subject 9

Once upon a time, there was a rabbit who lived in a tree. His name is Sam. Sam is seven years old. One day he wanted to play with his friends. His name is Alex. He asked if he could play. Alex said he could play. They went to the park. Then they played a swing. And then they went to Alex's house. They played video games. In Sam's house, they played soon.

Then they climbed a tree. Then they went around the block and then they went to the movie.

Posttest
Control - Subject 9

Once upon a time, there was a finger who got shot. Someone took him to the doctor. Someone made a kid alive. That someone gave the kid a ninja shoe. The kid in the shoe. So that someone never the kid. Wipes the kid with the wipe. The kid, the wipe. The first wipe he used is a munchkin. Then he thred the other wipe.

And then he was ready to fight. Someone who had no name had a dummy for the kid. Then a robber came in the house. The boy kicked the robber in the ribs. Then the robber ran away. Then the kid went to a ninja training. He won every fight.
Once upon a time three little wolves lived in an old house and the big bad pig lived in a junky house. The three pigs had no dogs. Then the pig chased the wolves.

---

The other two pigs laughed. Curl'tail was the first. Swirly tail was second. Swirly tail was third. And then the big bad wolf came. Then he said I'll Huff and Puff and I'll blow your house down. And he blew three times and fell to the ground. End.
Once upon a time there lived a princess. Her name was Hitten Anne Cunningham. Her mother was rude to her. When she grew up and she lived in a castle. One day Hittenie went to a party. It was for who would marry the prince. She couldn't find a dress. But she did find a dress. She went there and she got to marry him. And they lived happily ever after.

Posttest
Control - Subject 11

Once upon a time there lived a princess and her name was Brett. They both owned a white cat named Whiskers and they lived happily ever after. She let their baby girl play out once the got toy and didn't tell thing to her Jesse had to go.
Pretest
Control - Subject 12

Once upon a time there lived a girl named Pocahontas. She lived in a nice little cottage on the edge of the woods. One day Pocahontas was walking in the woods when she saw a man. He was not Indian like her, he was American. She liked him. He liked her. She asks him to marry her. He asks her to marry him. They lived happily ever after.

Posttest
Control - Subject 12

Once upon a time there lived a princess. She lived in a beautiful castle. Her name was the swan princess. She would change every night into a swan. That's why she was called the swan princess. She was looking down from her tower when she saw a handsome prince on a horse. She ran down to meet him but she forgot it was night and she turned into a swan. She sadly cracked up the stairs. But the next day the prince came back. But her father would not let her see him. He was very mean. So was her mother. She saw him and he asked if she wants to marry him and she said yes.
Pretest
Control - Subject 13

There was a frog that was enchanted. Its name was Joe Hinkins. He had green hair. He was green with yellow spots. There was a princess that lived in a castle of pink marble. Her name was Courtney Robles. One day, Courtney was out.

On the way home, she met her other sisters, Karigun and Kathleen and Jessica playing volleyball in front of the castle. The princess went in the castle and gave Mrs. Robles and Mr. Robles a hug and kiss. At nine o'clock, Courtney went to bed with the frog. Courtney got mad at Joe and threw Joe at the wall.

She went on a walk. She met her sister Tricia who was sitting on the brick wall beside the castle. But she went on. Then, she met the frog. Joe said, "Take me to your home please." The princess said, "Why would I bring you home to my house when you are sleeping." Joe said, "Because I am cold and alone." The princess said, "Oh.

A week later, Joe turned into a prince. He had blond hair, brown eyes, and was very intelligent. The next day, Courtney and Joe got married and had four children. The End!
Once upon a time there lived a king and a queen. They had a daughter named Katherina. The king and queen were very rich. One day, Katherina was walking in the woods when she met a prince. Katherina fell in love at first sight. They danced on the ground and

Joe found them. He fell in love with them. He found their castle and knocked on the door. Their father came to the door. He said to him that he was not only took his daughter in his arms. Then gave them supper on they went to bed. Then the next morning, Katherina and Joseph went to the store down the road. When they got there

I met a very normal boy and

My really liked him. They taught when

My uncle came. They told

Her mother and dad if they could marry

The mom said no and the dad said

But when you get older you

can marry him. The mom and

But then the next day both boys

vote to the castle. It was the prince

Miss birthday they all were twenty

They all were getting married. They

got married and had four children, two girls and two boys each.

And

They

Lived

Happily
ever

after
Pretest
Control - Subject 14

Ones the scarecrow was a live in the garden of black demons. Then that night the scarecrow disappeared so noone would see him. Then he got to the house he went to find so he hoped the house for many years. Know no butey knows were he is.

Posttest
Control - Subject 14

A long time ago in a far away place lived a ninja lived in a manehin. A kid finds out about him. He asks if he could be a ninja but the ninja just stood there. Till he hid the boy. The ninja said yes. Now put this shut on and let's get down to business. Then the war began the next day. The two ninjas were rely to fight. The kid broke the guns. The ninja punch the bad gise. The war has ended now the boy is a true ninja.
REFERENCE LIST


CHILDREN'S LITERATURE


