The writing portfolio: an authentic assessment tool

Sondra L. Nelson

University of Northern Iowa

Let us know how access to this document benefits you

Copyright ©1998 Sondra L. Nelson

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.uni.edu/grp

Part of the Curriculum and Instruction Commons, and the Language and Literacy Education Commons

Recommended Citation
https://scholarworks.uni.edu/grp/1264

This Open Access Graduate Research Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Work at UNI ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Research Papers by an authorized administrator of UNI ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@uni.edu.
The writing portfolio: an authentic assessment tool

Abstract
Using writing portfolios as an ongoing assessment technique in the second grade classroom was a rewarding experience for my students and me. Our collaboration through conferences provided many connections between instruction and assessment. The students even though they represented a range of abilities were able to assess their own work and grow from their own reflections. Their writing abilities emerged and were captured in their portfolios. Authentic assessments were displayed with pride as each of the students shared their portfolios with their parents.
The Writing Portfolio: An Authentic Assessment Tool

A Graduate Project
Submitted to the
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Education
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by
Sondra L. Nelson
January 1998
This Research Project by: Sondra L. Nelson
Entitled: The Writing Portfolio: An Authentic Assessment Tool

has been approved as meeting the research project requirement for
the Degree of Master of Arts in Education.

Jeanne McLain Harms
Date Approved: 5/1/98
Director of Research Project

Jeanne McLain Harms
Date Approved: 5/1/98
Graduate Faculty Adviser

Rick C. Traw
Date Approved: 5/1/98
Graduate Faculty Reader

R. Muffoletto
Date Approved: 5/1/98
Head, Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Since the beginning of formal education, educators have wrestled with how to evaluate student learning. Over the years many perspectives and related techniques have been proposed. Horace Mann, the father of public education, advocated tests with large numbers of questions and standardized answers, as early as 1845. Standardized multiple-choice tests were mass-produced in the 1920s as school-wide testing emerged. From the 1920s to the 1950s, American schools took on the look of efficient learning factories. With this view of education, the multiple-choice format was an appropriate tool for evaluating student mastery of subskills and bits of content (Hart, 1994).

Beginning in the 1950s, accountability was another factor that spurred the growth of the testing industry. Even though more money was being spent on education, student achievement did not seem to improve with the investment. As achievement levels fell, more accountability was demanded of teachers and administrators. The amount of standardized testing of students quadrupled between 1955 and 1986 (Hart, 1994).

By the late 1980s, many educators began to challenge the use of standardized tests. They argued that teachers were teaching to the tests so scores would be higher. They also questioned what standardized tests measured: Did these tests indicate what a student could understand and apply? In the 1980s and 1990s, the concept of authentic assessment emerged (Mundell &
Delario, 1994). Such assessment focuses on the description of a student's involvement in a process. Many assessment techniques can be used in this qualitative approach (Tierney, Carter, & Desai, 1991).

Value of Portfolio Assessment

One of the qualitative techniques, portfolios, offers an ongoing record of student accomplishments and instructional needs. Portfolios can be multidimensional: They can take into account a child's motivation, experiences, interests, and learning styles. Besides allowing for the student's individuality, they can show evidence of many types of experiences which cannot be measured by standardized tests (Tierney et al., 1991).

Portfolios can provide a connection between a child's learning experiences and assessment. With the support of the teacher, a child periodically chooses exhibits that represent his/her learning experiences. These points of selection can provide collaborative opportunities for self-reflection and future goal-setting for learning experiences (Valencia, 1990).

Portfolio assessment is a joint effort between the teacher and the child. For example, a collection of writing samples provides an opportunity to view a child's progress over time during a writing conference. Graves (1994) states that the writing conference is meant to help the child instruct the
teacher about what he/she knows so the teacher can effectively help with interest in writing and instructional needs.

Active collaboration between the teacher and child encourages the child to reflect about his/her own learning (Valencia, 1990). Insights gained through reflections are more critical to a child's learning than quantitative evaluation techniques because productive conferences are mutually informative (Paris & Ayres, 1994). Through ongoing reflection, the teacher and child can develop into a productive team. Together they assess work, establish goals to address learning, and celebrate the child's strengths (Valencia, 1990).

Reflection is a learning process that must be taught. It is validating a point of view, or recapturing experiences, by thinking about them and assessing them. Inclusion of pieces in a portfolio collection provides the opportunity to practice self-reflection, or self-evaluation, in a meaningful way (Raines, 1996). As reflecting occurs, Fusco and Fountain (1992) suggest three questions that should be asked: What did I learn? How can I use it? and What questions do I still have? The teacher can model the use of these questions during conferences so the child can have reference points for discussing his/her writing. As a child thinks about his/her writings and compares them with other efforts, he/she can achieve a clearer sense of progress and instructional needs. Then, the child can see achievement over
time and can understand the uniqueness of each composition (Graves, 1983). The result of portfolio collection should be the empowerment of the child to assume responsibility for his/her own learning (Tierney et al., 1991).

Portfolio assessment can involve parents in experiencing their child's learning goals, achievement, and instructional needs. Reviewing their child's portfolio will provide an opportunity to see what is actually being achieved (Batzle, 1992). Then, parents will have a better understanding of the school curriculum and the classroom goals (Hart, 1994).

Implementation of Writing Portfolios

In collecting a child's writing exhibits, two types of portfolios, the working and the showcase, can be developed. The working portfolio is a collection of exhibits collaboratively developed by the child and the teacher during regularly scheduled conferences. Many different types of writing from across the curriculum can be included (Valencia, 1990). The most common exhibits are a student's writing samples with attached responses from the student and teacher observations (Tierney et al., 1991).

From the writing exhibits collected throughout the year, the child and the teacher collaboratively select pieces that represent the child's interests, progress, and instructional needs. This ongoing collection, the showcase portfolio, is added to each year and passed on to the next grade level. The teacher
can also include observation records and checklists (Batzle, 1992; Tierney et al., 1991).

Portfolios have no standardized size or shape but should allow for easy management by the child and storage in the limited space in a classroom. These containers can be cardboard boxes, accordion-type folders, hanging-file folders, or three-ring notebooks. Portfolios should be stored so they are readily accessible by the teacher, the child, and the parents (Valencia, 1990).

Introduction of Portfolios to Students in Grade Two

As a second grade teacher, I believed that standardized tests were not giving complete information about my students' growth in writing and their instructional needs. I wanted my students through reflecting on their writing pieces with me to connect instruction-assessment more closely. Thus, I implemented portfolio collection as a part of a qualitative assessment program.

After several weeks of discovering the components of the writing process through writing various pieces and working in writers workshop, a small assigned group of peers, the writing portfolio was introduced to the students. It was explained as a folder for each child's writing exhibits. These samples, much like an artist's portfolio, would demonstrate their writing activity. A piece of writing might be chosen because it was a
favorite or was interesting, the best work, a piece worked particularly hard on, or specific progress was shown. Stories, poems, reports, letters, and journal entries would be considered for the collection.

The teacher asked the students to keep their writing at different stages in a folder. From this folder, pieces would be selected for their portfolio. She informed the class that two portfolios were going to be kept. The working portfolio was a hanging file placed on a table in the writing corner of the classroom. They were easily accessible to the students and the teacher. This portfolio contained writings in progress as well as revised works. Twice a month the teacher conferenced with each student to select samples to be placed in the working portfolio. During the conference, the reason for the inclusion of the piece was placed on a label and attached to it. The information on this form included the reason for selecting the piece, what was learned in the process of writing it, and a future goal for writing. The teacher also used the conference as a time to note progress, to support goal-setting for future writing, and to provide instructional experiences or to plan for ones in the future. Listening and learning from the student was the teacher's primary responsibility during the conference.

Choosing exhibits for the writing portfolio was exciting for the students. This process was started during the first week.
in October. From their writing folders, the children had many pieces from which to choose for their first contributions to their portfolios. The teacher used her own portfolio as part of a mini-lesson to model how to select a piece of writing to include in their portfolios. The students also supplied additional reasons why a piece might be chosen, such as words were spelled correctly, the piece was fun to read, writing the piece taught us something, and the sentences were complete. A list of possible items that could be included was developed. A poster of suggestions was made and displayed in the classroom as a reference. As the selection process was engaged in throughout the year, the students became more adept in selecting pieces, recognizing their strengths and instructional needs, and then setting goals for future writing experiences. The discussions during the conferences and the remarks given on the labels of their selected pieces indicated developing reflection abilities.

In implementing portfolios in grade two, I chose three students to study closely from a classroom of twenty-four. This second grade classroom is in an urban school that is located in a neighborhood of predominantly well educated people.

The three students followed through the school year represented a range of abilities. I studied their involvement in the writing process, their gains in writing ability, and the development of their portfolios. A summary of these second
graders' experiences in portfolio collection is reported in the following pages.

Student A

Student A is a boy of average ability. He is friendly and outgoing yet began the year with a negative attitude toward learning. He has been enrolled in four different school districts since beginning kindergarten. His reading was delayed; he needed much encouragement to write. He often stated, "I can't write, it's too hard."

Over the first four weeks of school, Student A began to venture into writing experiences. During the first week of October, he made his first contribution to his portfolio. He chose a story about his family. He said his reason for choosing it was, "It is my longest." During the portfolio conference, he pointed out that he had talked about his dad and mom and almost filled up four lines on the paper. Student A and the teacher discussed how he was writing more each time he tried. He was not writing complete sentences or using capitals and only one period was properly placed which was at the end of the last sentence. He stated, "I learned to put a period at the end of my sentence." All of Student A's writing pieces are included in Appendix A. Student A set a goal to write a whole page story. The teacher encouraged him to use a webbing strategy that had been presented to organize his thoughts before beginning to write.
In January, Student A chose a story entitled "The Snowy Day" to add to his portfolio. The story was about sledding in the snow as the snow turned into a blizzard.

Student A had made tremendous progress by this conference time. He was writing two page stories with some complete sentences, details, and action. He chose this piece because "It's about winter and I love winter." He believed that he had learned, "how to put things down that's exciting." He stated, "The spellings pretty good except for a few words like blizzard." He had met his previous goal of writing a full-page story. He had completed many stories of varying quality and collaborated with friends to produce two stories.

Student A set this goal: "to try to tell more in my stories, like better action in the middle." The teacher pointed out the progress he had made and reminded him to use a concept map to accomplish his goal.

In March, Student A chose a fantasy story entitled "J. T. and the Silly Monster." Student A stated, "I chose this story because I think it's funny." His recorded reflection indicated, "I learned where to put the capitals and periods in my sentences. Just read my story and see." In the portfolio conference, Student A set this goal: "to put more stuff in my stories, like details." The teacher agreed that this was an appropriate goal. Although progress could be noted from his previous written
pieces, he needed to work in developing his ideas more thoroughly. The teacher did a mini-lesson on writing a more complete beginning, middle, and ending to his stories. This additional information provided Student A a guide for improving his stories.

During our last portfolio conference in May, Student A was excited about the upcoming student-parent-teacher conference. He stated, "My parents will be proud of all my work. My portfolio is jammed with my best writing and stuff." He continued by stating, "I chose my story called 'Animals' because it's long, lots of action, and I included some of my research stuff." The student shared that he now felt he was a writer, liked to write at home and school, and enjoyed using portfolios because he chose what to include and could see what he had learned.

Student A showed progress in many areas of writing during his second grade year. He learned that he could write and that he had good ideas and a vivid imagination. His writing improved as he recognized his strengths and weaknesses. He still needed to develop clarity in his writing and to write stories with a distinct beginning, middle, and ending, but progress was continually made. His self-assessments demonstrated his connection with the writing process and growth in understanding himself.
At the end of the year conference, Student A's parents were asked to complete a questionnaire to ascertain their reaction to their son's growth in writing and the use of portfolios as an assessment tool. His parents commented that their child now writes at home with little frustration, that he writes with more understandable content, and that he often expresses enthusiasm about his portfolio. His parents especially liked using the portfolio each quarter at conference time: "It gave us insight to his progress and what he still needed help with. The portfolio was a good idea." The parent questionnaire and rubric are in Appendix D.

Student B

Student B is a boy with an identified reading difficulty, and he attended a special reading program every day. He acknowledged his problems in reading but enthusiastically addressed himself as a writer. His vocabulary was limited, and he used few elements of form in his writing as the year began.

Student B chose for his first portfolio piece in October a description of his house. His reason for choosing this piece was "I like it." After discussing his piece with the teacher, he added his reflection which shows an expanded view of writing: "It sounds just like my house, anybody could tell that. If I write about something I know, it's easier." His reflection was
recorded. The teacher commended him on his insight. The pieces that Student B selected for his portfolio are in Appendix B.

During the portfolio conference, Student B focused on certain aspects of his writing that were positive. He decided the content of his writing was accurate, and he used a capital at the beginning of his first sentence and a period at the end of his paper. He believed these elements were his strengths.

After some discussion, Student B decided to establish the goal of adding more details in his sentences. The teacher and the student reviewed ways to add more details to improve the quality of his writing. He also believed it was necessary to work on elements of form in his writing, choosing to concentrate on capitalization at the beginning of each sentence and periods at the end. The teacher encouraged Student B to devote most of his effort on developing his story ideas by adding details and suggested that mechanics would come in time.

In January, Student B chose a story about a family trip entitled "Disney World." His recorded reflection of this piece revealed, "I wanted this story because it's true and it was fun to go there." Student B stated, "I can put some capitals and periods now. I learned I can write a lot."

The portfolio conference was enlightening as Student B told about his entire trip to Disney World. As the teacher and Student B reread his story, he concluded, "A lot more happened on
our trip than I told about." He reestablished the goal to add more details in his stories.

For the March selection, the student chose a story entitled "The Valentine Monster." He gave this reason for choosing it, "It has details, like I've been working on." He further stated, "I learned to read my story over with a friend to give me ideas when I'm stuck." He was encouraged to share his story in the author's chair so he could obtain more reactions from his peers. A time to read his story was scheduled.

The student demonstrated better story development and the use of capitalization. He did not like to revise his writings as he was still content with his first draft.

During the conference, Student B commented on the goal he was establishing to further his writing ability: "I have to write a beginning, middle, and end to my stories." The teacher discussed ways to help facilitate this goal, reminding him about webbing and mapping as strategies he has successfully used before. He was enthusiastic about using one of the strategies as he wrote his next story.

In May, Student B decided to include a fantasy story about aliens attacking earth entitled "Aliens on Earth." He was proud of this selection and stated, "It is three chapters long with lots of action, I even remembered to put a good ending on it." He
further related, "I learned how to do a good story that everyone will like."

During his portfolio conference, Student B was pleased with the teacher's comments on his progress in writing. His story was more developed with details and action, had a more complete plot—a beginning, middle, and ending—and showed much improvement in the use of form, specifically capitalization and punctuation.

Student B saw himself as a writer: He wrote complete sentences because of "ideas from his brain." He also stated, "Portfolios are great because you can look at stuff so you don't forget it." His portfolio helped him keep track of things rather than having them in his desk. Student B liked choosing what went in his portfolio and hopes his teacher will use portfolios next year.

In the final conference, Student B's parents gave this response to their child's progress: "tremendous growth in his ability to organize what he wanted to say and then he puts down on paper." Although they hoped for more growth in form, they acknowledged he was at least willing to try to apply correct form. They viewed portfolios as a positive way to display their son's accomplishments. They related that their son was proud of his work that was included in the portfolio. Through the portfolio collection, his progress could be easily understood.
Student B grew as a writer during this year: He became more insightful about his strengths and weaknesses and gradually chose more challenging goals to attain at each conference time. One major accomplishment was his discovery of the helpfulness of preplanning a story. The techniques used to organize stories began to be applied whenever he needed to write.

Student C

Student C is a girl with high academic ability, is enthusiastic about learning and enjoys a challenge. She is an avid reader and writer.

In early October, Student C contributed the first selection entitled "Getting Lost." It was a true story about her little brother getting lost in a department store. Student C chose this piece because, as she wrote on the label, "I spelled the words correctly, wrote all the real action, and it was a perfect example of what my brother does all the time." Student C began second grade with excellent spelling ability, was able to write basic sentence patterns, and used most capitals and periods correctly. The pieces that Student C selected for her portfolio are in Appendix C.

During the portfolio conference, she disclosed, "Writing really isn't something I like to do." The teacher encouraged her to write stories that she would want to read herself. She set this goal, "To write a long fantasy story using better printing
so someone else could read it if they wanted to." Student C was able to identify her writing strengths: spelling, basic punctuation and capitalization, and the development of good ideas.

The portfolio selection for January was a fantasy story entitled "Somebody Strange." In choosing this story, she said, "I was creative in the way I wrote it." The teacher probed to understand what she meant. She related that she had written a clever fantasy story. What she learned by writing this story was, "I can write lots of different kinds of stories, and fantasy is my favorite."

As the conference continued, Student C said she knew how to use quotation marks to denote the conversation of the characters in her stories. She asked how to use parentheses so she could include additional information while writing. She set a goal of writing longer stories. She decided writing her autobiography would be a challenge and planned to read published autobiographies to gain some background knowledge on how to proceed.

In March, Student C selected a story entitled "Cards." The central character of this story was a little monster named Cards who came to the rescue by delivering valentines on Valentine's Day. In selecting the piece, she wrote, "It included a variety of characters with a developed beginning, middle, and end." She
learned, "To use parentheses correctly by practicing in this story."

During the March portfolio conference, Student C stated, "Writing is really pretty fun once you get the hang of it." She commented that in her story that Cards, the main character, had been a friend to some of the other characters but not to all of them. Student C said she got the idea for this part of the story from her own life. The teacher pointed out what good thinking she had used to transfer a real life happening to her story. Also, the teacher noted spelling and story organization as other strengths. She set this goal: to write letters to friends and family and to try to write poems. The teacher encouraged her experimentation with other types of writing.

The final piece of writing for May was not the autobiography that Student C had been working on for a couple months; instead she chose a delightful story, "The Great Adventure." This piece was an excellent example of her growth during the second grade year. She wrote and stated, "I chose this because I put a lot of work into it and didn't rush to get it done. I revised it and I'm proud of the final draft." Student C said that she learned, "It is all right to work on a piece over time."

During the portfolio conference, her pride in the story was evident. She and her teacher identified the strengths of the
story: clarity of ideas, a well developed plot, and a clever and unexpected ending. Her goals for the future were to keep writing and finish her autobiography. She stated, "You know my life keeps happening so I might never be done with my autobiography."

Student C ended the school year feeling better about writing and enjoying the opportunities to share pieces in the portfolio. She enjoyed choosing what was to be included in the portfolio.

Student C’s parents realized their daughter’s capabilities in writing and were pleased with her success. They believed the portfolio was an excellent way to demonstrate her abilities. They commented that seeing work in progress was also enlightening.

Conclusion

Using writing portfolios as an ongoing assessment technique in the second grade classroom was a rewarding experience for my students and me. Our collaboration through conferences provided many connections between instruction and assessment. The students even though they represented a range of abilities were able to assess their own work and grow from their own reflections. Their writing abilities emerged and were captured in their portfolios. Authentic assessments were displayed with pride as each of the students shared their portfolios with their parents.
References


Appendix A

Student A's Portfolio Exhibits

October 2, 1996

My Family

Mom, tit, and dad

is bigger do TV joke

at me.

January 6, 1997

The Snowy Day

I went sledding on the

really snowy day. My

friend and me went to

the hill. Suddenly we saw

was snowing more an
more, it was abfizord
outside. We tried to get
home from the hill we
could hard walk. The
snow was coming and
coming. We saw my house
and made to the
garage. We went inside
to have hot chocolate.

March 12, 1997

J.T. and thesely
Monstar
Once a boy named J.T.
He is a good kid. One day he met a monster. His name is Big Head. Big Head is a silly monster. He tells jokes. Like Why did the chicken cross the road? Give up to eat its food. He is the sexiest monster in the world. I have fun with him. He is a sexy and nice monster. His favorite holiday is Valentine's Day.
He gets mad on
the other ball days.
But it is the 4 of
February. On the other
hall days he tries to
bite me. But it is the
4 of February. The prob-
lem is solved.

May 7, 1997

Animals

Once upon a time
there was a rabbit,
frog, horse, cheeta,
tiger and a lion. Their names are Pill, F. O., C. H. H., Q. and Q. 1. One day they wanted to go to the city so they walked and walked and walked and then they found the city. There were cars, boats, houses, apartments, hotels, dogs, cats, guinea pigs, horses, lizards, bees, ladybugs, flies, and butterflies.
and people. In the city
they found food and candy.
But best of all they found
fish. At $2.25 they bought
every single fish from the fish
shop.

Next day the people
that worked at the fish
shop weren't there. They
were out fishing for
more fish for their shop.
The animals went to find
them. The fish shop owners
The animals made the job of fishing for their shop.
The animals soon made enough money to rent a big apartment. They worked and played from that time on.
Appendix B

Student B's Portfolio Exhibits

October 3, 1996

--- My house

It is white with blue shutters.

--- black roof we only have one

--- garage plus and it is on

--- corner the red front door to

January 8, 1997

--- Disney world

--- When we went to Disney World

--- we saw a mountain on the way.

--- and driving took forever. It
was summer and it was hot. When we got there we went on rides that I went on where money the theater rocket and Dumbo. Stayed at a hotel and jumping on the bed. Stayed in the pool. I saw her works at night time train going around us.

March 10, 1997

One day there was a tentimes more he liked
Valentine's Day but he never
of any cards he was
no sad he fad in
ed for two days he
it sick kids tried to
Hlp him they went to
they home to think
of more cards to
make for him he
cotled and I we'll
be your friend he
hid the end
May 9, 1997

One day there was Aliens

they were trying to

take over the world!

they killed lots of ships

some blew up some ships

ast blue up some got

but it is not done.

Capto 2 fox 79,356

0146226663736783386

hey where getting out

off the earth some where

It down in the earth
boom! boom! boom! boom! boom!

big ship blew up. There
was a lawd sand booom.

then one ship shot its
1000 misses it blow half
of the erth the bad ships
there still on the erth at
the split open part that side
was headed for the sun.

people were getting hotter.

people turned on the fans
because there was a brown

uit. Only baddry fans worked
the Alien shot 250 people.
the Aliens went in a building
end this man put a bomb
the building. 09 87 65
3 2 1 0 bboommmmmmm
room, parst of the building
buddown like low a 60
people were ingerd. T was
ert. the Aliens grabbed the
inn and shot him 9 times in
He was dead. Boom from the other side of the other side of the earth moved quick from the sun. the other ship blew up all the ship the other side was sitting one more ship. Boom boom boom boom boom. We won. We won.

There were still aliens on the earth people did not know more ships.
ome about 30,000, the
toys where getting dark
he. Aliens saw something
dark come down from the
sky, it was bloeing things
it over the place. It was
a 
 transferred houses where
bown on to the ships,
pople tried to get to space
ey would go to saturn.
ship shot them so they
ever made it. Boom boom
oom boom boom boom boom
the earth gave they just tried to get the earth bake together. they joked 7 Rockets. they pulled it back. but when there is earth ckwaks. It would brak. It did brak. they put copper down on it. the end

Independence. July 4
Appendix C

Student C's Portfolio Exhibits

October 7, 1996

Getting Lost

One day Mrs. Strea, my mom, me, and Oliver were at the mall in the children's center. Then one time when I turned around Oliver was gone. When we headed out the door, we heard that Oliver was at the shoe department. Well, we headed fired the shoe department and when
we got there Oliver was by his favorite place, the fire place. When we found Oliver my mom went back to shopping. All through the day Oliver stayed right behind me or with my mom. And never got lost in the mall again. And mom didn't get mad either.

January 9, 1997

Somebody Strange

On sticky stuck Strange street, there lived a very weird person.
His car was in the shape of a triangle, with a house window. And his house was written is had light bulbs on the roof! And not your every day light bulbs, it had round light bulbs on one side and triangle light bulbs on the other side. But he was the strangest of all. He had an alive snapping turtle on his hat, he had material sewn to his neck. One day when some one...
asked him to shop for them. He didn't just shop; he got everything for them. He got baked beans, cucumbers, lettuce, tomatoes, cereal, bread, cake, muffins, popcorn, pretzels, rice, pancakes, corn, strawberries. He got everything! And when he gave those things to the person she was very mad. I told you to get some milk, fish, cheese, bread, and a cookie or two! she said. I thought you meant everything. the strange person
said sadly. Well then to bed
for you, the other person said.

Sorry, said the strange person, and left. Then when he got home he
went upstairs and got out his
suitcase and started packing.

Then he called a moving van.

Hello? he said. I need to have a moving
van come to my house tomorrow.

Then the next afternoon a
track came to his house. He put
all his furniture in the tracks and
drove off to move.
into a house with the track behind him and he moved into a nice big white house, in the country.

Then 300 years later, a little girl and her mom, dad, little brother and baby sister moved into the house and one rainy afternoon the little girl was bored. There was nothing to do! So she went up to the attic and found pictures of strange person. And she was the only person.
March 11, 1997

Once upon a time there was a little monster named Cards. And every Valentine's Day he gave hundreds of cards to every animal in the forest, like his neighbors. And he always knew how the strong person felt...
Stayed up late finishing his Valentine's Day cards. And early the next morning (even before dawn) he would go around the forest delivering Valentine's cards. And one day, when he was making Valentine's cards there was a knock at the door. "Why who could that be?" he thought. When he opened the door there stood the Rabbit Family, followed by the Chipmunks, the Squirrels...
The Foxes and the Deer. "What do you want?" He asked. "We want no more valentines!" But why?" he asked. "Because when we open our mailbox, we get to swim in letters; that's why," Mr. Rabbit said. "Oh," said Cards. Goodbye he said and closed the door. And he put the valentines away. And a few years later the same thing happened except this time there were only the Rabbits. "Hello," said the Valentine.
At the same time, "All the animals in the forest want valentines now.

O.K., well goody, and the valentine monster started doing valentines again.

The End.
Once upon a time there was a little girl. She was five years old. She lived on her mother and father's farm. She was very happy and even sometimes she got to sleep in the hay loft. Though she had to go to school and she had to gather...
chicken eggs and do a lot of other work, she was very happy she was glad to lived in the country. It was very peaceful. Only a few cars had gone by everyday. Though these three lake she swim in was mucky, she loved to swim in it. Her mother went to work every day and her father worked on the farm. And then one day when she was exploring the farm she found a secret passageway. There in one of the cellar walls was a map. She opened it.
The map. It was a treasure map?

That night, she had a dream.

A man came to her door and said, "Is this for you?" Quickly, she said, "Thank you," but it was too late. She woke up. The next day at school, she could not stop thinking about her dream. "Yeah," she heard (which that was her name). "Yes. Miss Honey," said Leah. "What is it to you?" asked Miss Honey.

"The capital of Cedar Rapids is Des Moines," said Leah. "Right," said Miss Honey. "And why do we need to..."
I know about Iowa and Des Moines.

"Yes, Emily," said Honey, "because there is a big war going on there, it's between Americans and Germans." shouted Emily.

"Right again," said Orwell, "saw that tech and went right on thinking.

She kept on her thinking up thinking and thinking until she thought until school was over. She got her backpack and lunch box and set off for
home. She thought about her dream. When she got home straight, she went straight to her room.

That night she had another dream. In her dream, all of a sudden, a big plane landed right in front of her and took off again. But, it left something behind. It was the treasure! She quickly opened the treasure and there were 2,000 gold coins! "Wow!" she thought, "this is worth millions!" She picked up a gold
sain, but it was too late she
woke up on Saturday.
The next day Leah decided to make
a map of where she was going
to go on the treasure hunt. She decided
to have in the summer because
it was only May. Soon it was
summer. She packed all the things
she would need: a water bottle
food, clothes, the map, a blanket
pillows, a compass, a flash light
and a piece of paper, sharpener, pencil
(in case she was still in her
town and wanted to write home.

And a short time to

Then she left. "Bye, good luck be
careful and don't take any chance
shouted her mother. "Bye mom,
I will be fine, don't worry!"

"Sheesh," she thought, "Mom
worries too much. Dad would not
worry. All he would say would be

By the time she was at least two
whole miles away from home

good luck Leah," thought Leah.
It was night time. It seemed spooky. She set her blanket on the ground and her pillow between a tree and a bush. Then she flicked on her flashlight and looked around. There was not a person in sight only a few squirrels and about five owls out for their dinner of mice. Finally she dozed off, sleeping soundly. When it was morning she gathered up her things and set off again. This time she traveled three miles before it was night...
again. It went on like that all week. On a Saturday when she woke up, she realized that she was near to a boat that was leaving to the same place she was going to Maui. So she quickly snuck aboard and went to same place that she knew was safe. It took about two weeks to get to the island. She soon figured out that she was one side of the island and
the money was on the other side. So she set off again. She went through a year before she found the treasure.

When another ship came to the island, she decided to go home. Right before it left, she snuck aboard with her treasure chest in a big sack. When she got home, she said, "Mom, Dad, I'm home!"

Both her parents came running downstairs, "How are you? Are you fine? Did you hurt yourself?" asked
her mother, "I'm fine," Leah said.

"Guess what? I found the treasure chest," she said. Leah showed them the treasure. "Now we'll be rich," she said.

' few weeks later they moved into a mansion. But they still owned the farm. Leah got fancy shoes, dresses, hair bows, and blankets.

She had to take fancy piano lessons, fancy talking lessons, and used lady pillows.

She still went to the same school. Even though
he was fancy on the outside, she was the same on the inside.
Appendix D

Parent Questionnaire and Rubric

May 1997

Dear Parent(s),

As your child's second grade year comes to an end, I would like you to share with me some insights about your child. Please take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire to help me know about the progress you feel your child has made this year. Be as specific as you can, citing examples whenever possible.

1. Does your child enjoy writing? How do you know?

2. Has your child's attitude toward writing changed as the year progressed?

3. Does your child choose to write at home? If so, what kind of activities?

4. What growth in writing has your child made? Think about the beginning of the year through today. (Refer to attached rubric for ideas.)
5. What writing instructional needs does your child still have? (Refer to the attached rubric.)

6. During this last quarter your child chose most of the examples in their progress folder. I asked him/her to reflect about each piece included. Please respond below about his/her attitude toward the work that was chosen.

7. Do you think his/her attitude toward discussing pieces in his/her progress folder this quarter, which were pieces he/she chose, was different from the first three quarters, when I chose what would be included? Please explain.

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire. I will be analyzing the results this summer. Please mail this in the stamped envelope at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,
Sondra Nelson
## Evaluating Writing Pieces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideas</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Word Choice</th>
<th>*Sentence Structure</th>
<th>*Mechanics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fresh, original</td>
<td>Ideas connected</td>
<td>Wide variety used</td>
<td>Clearly written</td>
<td>*Appropriate or acceptable:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focuses on topic</td>
<td>Strong beginning, middle, end</td>
<td>Consistent and appropriate usage</td>
<td>Complete sentences</td>
<td>- spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting details</td>
<td>Sequenced and logical</td>
<td>Words &quot;enhance&quot; ideas</td>
<td>Variety of sentence</td>
<td>- capitalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>length</td>
<td>- punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some original ideas</td>
<td>Most ideas connected</td>
<td>Some variety</td>
<td>Most sentences clearly written</td>
<td>Some errors in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General focus on topic</td>
<td>Good beginning, middle, end</td>
<td>Mostly consistent and appropriate</td>
<td>Simple sentences</td>
<td>- spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most supporting details included</td>
<td>Most ideas sequenced &amp; logical</td>
<td>Words generally support ideas</td>
<td>Some variety of length</td>
<td>- capitalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few original ideas</td>
<td>Some ideas connected</td>
<td>Common word choice</td>
<td>Some unclear sentences</td>
<td>Several errors in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moves away from focus</td>
<td>Attempts beginning, middle, end</td>
<td>Some appropriate word choices</td>
<td>Run-on, fragmented, sentences</td>
<td>- spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few supporting details</td>
<td>Not always sequenced &amp; logical</td>
<td>Little use of descriptive words</td>
<td>Little variety</td>
<td>- capitalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete ideas</td>
<td>Few ideas connected</td>
<td>Limited word choice</td>
<td>Sentences not clear</td>
<td>Many errors in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfocused</td>
<td>Lacks beginning, middle, end</td>
<td>Inappropriate word choices</td>
<td>Frequent fragmented sentences</td>
<td>- spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacks details</td>
<td>Little sequence &amp; logic</td>
<td>No attempt at descriptive words</td>
<td>No variety</td>
<td>- capitalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>No attempt</td>
<td>No attempt</td>
<td>No attempt</td>
<td>No attempt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*May vary depending upon which draft it is of the child's writing