CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

THE EFFECTS OF TWO TEACHING METHODS ON SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS’ ACHIEVEMENT IN WRITING AND READING COMPREHENSION:

6 + 1 TRAITS WRITING AND INTERACTIVE EDITING

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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Elementary Education

By

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ABSTRACT

THE EFFECTS OF TWO TEACHING METHODS ON SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS’ ACHIEVEMENT IN WRITING AND READING COMPREHENSION:

6 + 1 TRAITS WRITING AND INTERACTIVE EDITING

By
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This study presents a comparison of two instructional approaches, 6 + 1 Traits Writing and Interactive Editing in a seventh grade social science class over a two week period. The comparison was conducted in order to measure students’ achievement in reading comprehension and quality of writing. Participating students in this study were selected using a table of random numbers and assigned to either the 6+1 Traits Writing group or the Interactive Editing group. The study used a pretest to establish baseline achievement scores using a sample reading passage and comprehension questions from the district adopted curriculum. Students were also asked to write a summary and scored using the California Standardized Test (CST) released writing rubric. Instruction was given to group A), using the 6 + 1 Traits Writing approach while group B), received instruction using the Interactive Editing approach. A posttest was subsequently
administered at the end of each instructional treatment using the same reading passage, comprehension questions, and writing assignment. Two independent writing judges scored students’ writing using the CST rubric. Results indicated improvement in students’ reading comprehension and writing for both treatment groups. However, the Interactive Editing group showed greater achievement in reading comprehension and quality of writing compared to the 6+1 Traits Writing group.

*Keywords:* writing, interactive editing, 6+1 traits writing, student achievement, reading comprehension
Achievement in reading has become one of most important measures of success for the public schools. Policy initiatives like No Child Left Behind, Reading First, and Race to the Top have informed both public opinion, as well as public school practice regarding how we teach children to read, and what the expectations are for the levels of proficiency they need to attain. This is also true, to a lesser extent, regarding how children should be taught to write. Taken together, literacy learning and the expected levels of student achievement have become measures of school success as well as a means for singling out particular school sites as underperforming or failing.

Unlike oral language development, reading and writing do not occur naturally. They need to be taught. The development of oral language is progressive. As vocabulary grows, language structures become more complex and the knowledge base expands as students progress in their language acquisition. Likewise, in their reading and writing, students progress from beginning levels of vocabulary, sentence structure, spelling and phonology, to more complex levels. Therefore, it becomes necessary to examine the ways that both reading and writing are mutually developed in order for students to become proficient readers and writers.

**On Reading**

Reading is a cognitive process that involves decoding symbols that represent the words in oral language. These words are comprised of letters from a standardized set of written symbols called graphemes. These letters are used in various combinations to form the words of the language. In the English language, there are 26 letters used to
represent more than one million words. These letters singly, and in various combinations, make 44 sounds called phonemes. Phonemic awareness is the ability to recognize and manipulate these sounds.

Reading is the process of decoding words to understand a message from the writer. Decoding text is accomplished using two sources of information, phonics and comprehension. Phonics is the system of letters matching sounds in language. This variety of sounds for letters and letter combinations complicates the use of phonics in the English language. The other source of information is comprehension. Using comprehension as a source of information is the determination by the reader that the word they are using makes sense in the text passage and brings meaning to the message from the author.

**What Research Tells Us About Teaching to Read**

There is a considerable body of scientific research that identifies the skills that students need to acquire to become effective readers. According to the National Reading Panel for Teaching Children to Read (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2000), five areas of instruction have been identified that are critical elements to success in teaching reading.

*Phonemic Awareness* Phonemic awareness is the ability to notice, think about, and work with individual sounds that are in words. Readers understand that written words can be spoken and that they use phonemes or particular speech sounds when they read a word.

*Phonics* Phonics is the relationship between the sounds of the spoken language (phonemes) and the letters of the written language (graphemes). Phonics is a system for remembering how to read words. The letters of the alphabet and their corresponding sounds when placed in memory are used to decode words.

*Fluency* Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately and quickly. Fluent readers decode automatically and therefore are able to concentrate their attention on the meaning of the text. Fluent readers recognize and comprehend words at the same time.
**Vocabulary**  Vocabulary is the words we know and need to communicate. Oral vocabulary is the words we use when speaking and reading vocabulary is the words we can read in print. Reading text with meaning relies on the words used being part of the vocabulary of the reader. A reader needs to know most of the words that are read to comprehend the text. Understanding phonics and using these skills to decode text is not helpful if the word decoded by students is not a word in their vocabulary or the meaning of the word can't be determined by the context of the text.

**Text Comprehension**  The purpose of reading is to understand what is read. Comprehension is the ability to take meaning from text and remember and communicate the meaning from the text. Good readers are those who monitor their comprehension to make sure they understand the text (Swartz, Shook, & Klein, 2003).

**On Writing**

Reading and writing are reciprocal processes. When a student reads, he is decoding the message that the author has sent. When a student writes, he needs to organize his thinking to form the message that he intends to send to himself or to another reader. During writing, students need to use alphabetic principle, word analysis, spelling, and the conventions of print, required for the particular message that is being written. Hence, there are many important skills that are necessary to learn in the reading and writing process. Furthermore, different kinds and levels of understanding are needed for students to use these skills in reading and in writing effectively. The ability to read or decode a word does not guarantee that a student will be able to write or encode the same word (Tierney & Shanahan, 1991).

**The Writing Process**

Writing instruction is based upon students’ oral language development and knowledge of the world around them, very much like reading instruction at the acquisition phase. Learning that what one says can be recorded in written form and then read by another becomes a goal even for the very youngest student. In order to provide writing instruction, teachers need to know what knowledge students already possess.
The reciprocity of reading and writing is an essential connection that all students need to develop and draw upon. Writing is done at many different levels of understanding and thinking. The writer needs to understand the basic principles of letter-sound correspondence, letter formation, and using systematic patterns in words and word clusters to spell words. Central to the process is, of course, that the writer is sending a message to the reader and that the message carries a meaning (Swartz, Swartz, Pitchford, & Swartz, 2012).

A review of the research literature is contradictory at best. Various teaching methods based on widely divergent theoretical and philosophical orientations all claim to entail best practices. Within this large body of literature, two major positions emerge as competing approaches to literacy learning. The first is direct instruction in the prerequisite skills to become a reader and a writer. From this perspective it might be said that children should be taught all of the skills they need so that they have access to them when the necessity arises in reading and writing tasks. The second perspective is what is generally referred to as a balanced literacy approach. From this perspective, instruction of skills occurs as such skills are needed to perform in reading and writing tasks. This basically becomes a question of teaching certain skills before they are needed or as they are needed.

The current study considers two divergent writing programs, 6+1 Traits Writing and Interactive Editing. Both methods support the writing process at all grade levels and both claim to be evidence-based. Because of the known reciprocal relationship between reading and writing, the impact of these programs will be measured not only on levels of writing proficiency but on reading comprehension as well.
Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter I of this thesis presented an introduction to the educational issue in this study, the systematic comparison of two writing programs, 6+1 Traits Writing and Interactive Editing. The following chapter provides a review of the research literature related to the process of learning to read and write. Furthermore, the chapter also reviews the research literature related to 6+1 Traits Writing and Interactive Editing, in which the Interactive Writing process is embedded.

Throughout their academic experiences with reading and writing, students learn that the symbols used in reading and writing represent the words in their oral language. In reading, they learn to decode the message of the writer and in writing they learn to use these same symbols to encode their own message to the reader. Even very young learners are taught that the sound sequences that they hear are associated with objects and actions (Berk, 1996). Children begin to understand the alphabetic principle and that these letters represent various sounds that, in turn, represent words that have meaning. This process is not natural; rather it is directly affected by adult instruction (Anbar, 1986; Durkin, 1996).

Report of the National Association for the Education of Young Children on Learning to Reading and Write

According to the International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (1998), there is a wide diversity in childrens’ experiences with oral and written language up until they enter school (Hart & Risley, 1995). The support that children receive in home and in child care settings for early reading and writing also vary by type and degree (McGill-Frazen & Lanford, 1994). The implication of this diversity is that no one teaching method will be
appropriate for all children upon entering the formative years of schooling (Strickland, 1994). The review also indentified the importance of instruction in alphabetic principle (Adams, 1990) in order for letters to be learned by distinguishing one character from another by its spatial features (Gibson & Levin, 1975). It follows that writing letters is an essential development skill for understanding of alphabetic principle (Read, 1971).

However, this same review is not without controversy. The issue of whether invented spelling promotes poor spelling habits is rejected by research that indicates such experimental spelling actually contributes to early reading (Chomsky, 1979; Clarke, 1988). Several researchers believe that children who are given opportunities to focus on expressing themselves without the constraints of conventional spelling are more likely to become readers and writers (Dyson, 1988; Graves, 1983; Sulzby, 1985), while others take the position that invented spelling is appropriate only in independent writing. Still others feel that in a method like interactive writing, correct spelling from the beginning is a better support for early writing. Thus, representing minimal obstacles for early learning since text is presented with accurate spelling, and writing is reciprocal to reading, writing should mirror the process (Button, 1996; Swartz, Klein & Shook, 2001).

The change in instructional needs for children in kindergarten and the primary grades is also considered in this same report. Supporting children’s understanding of how spoken words can be transposed into writing helps children develop word awareness, spelling, and the conventions of written language (Bissex, 1980; Clay, 1979; NAEYC, 2005). Studies are also cited that demonstrate that the ability to read words is tied to the ability to write words and that the opportunity to write supports spelling and
letter-sound correspondence (Clay, 1975; Domico, 1993; Richgels, 1995).

Independent practice was also found to nurture interest in reading and writing (Morrow & Weinstein, 1986) and that this supportive relationship suggested the importance of integrating reading and writing instruction (Tierney & Shanahan, 1991). This is of particular importance to this study because the Interactive Editing method places a high premium on the reciprocity of reading and writing (Swartz, Klein, & Shook, 2001).

**Position Paper of the International Reading Association and the National Association for the Education of Young Children on Learning to Read and Write**

In the larger report, key principles for effective instruction in reading and writing were identified (NAEYC, 1998).

1. It is essential and urgent to teach children to read and write competently, enabling them to achieve today’s high standards of literacy.

2. With the increasing variation among young children in our programs and schools, teaching today has become more challenging.

3. Among many early childhood teachers, a maturationist view of young children’s development persists despite much evidence to the contrary.

4. Recognizing the early beginnings of literacy acquisition too often has resulted in use of inappropriate teaching practices suited to older children or adults perhaps, but ineffective with children in preschool, kindergarten, and the early grades.

5. Current policies and resources are inadequate in ensuring that preschool and primary teachers are qualified to support the literacy development of all children, a task requiring strong preservice preparation and on-going professional development.

These key principles inarguably reflect both generally accepted and conventional wisdom about the importance of being literate. They also recognize the high-stakes
accountability measures that are the current reality of public schools. The variation referred to within the principles alludes to the increasing presence of English learners in the public schools. Assuming that some general agreement exists on how to teach reading and writing, the same agreement has not been met on how to support learners whose first language is not English. The differences between what a maturationist perspective and a developmentally appropriate practice have not been resolved. The research literature for instruction beginning in kindergarten and continuing into the primary grades is robust, if not conclusive. This report also outlined a continuum of children’s development in early reading and writing considered to be important for the writing process, beginning in preschool and extending up to the third grade. The continuum entails specific phases of development in the writing process that children pass through naturally, as well as within supportive classroom environments that provide guided instruction.

In Phase 1, preschool children become aware and explore their literate environment to build a foundation for reading and writing. Children learn and understand that print carries a message and they can identify labels and signs in their environment. They engage in reading and writing, identify letters and letter-sound matches, and use those letters to represent written language. Teachers have discussions about letters, their names, the sounds they make, and encourage students to experiment with writing while establishing a literacy-rich environment.

During Phase 2, kindergarten children continue to experiment with reading and writing and develop the basic concepts of print. They match spoken words to written language and begin to write letters and some high frequency words. Teachers encourage
students to share their experiences and assist children in the segmentation of spoken words into individual sounds and then blending whole words. Children’s sight word vocabulary is increased through instruction and the teacher provides the opportunity for daily independent reading and writing.

In Phase 3 of the development of children’s early reading and writing, first grade children begin to read simple stories and can write about a topic that is of significance to them. They begin to attempt to use some punctuation and capitalization. They use reading and writing for a variety of purposes, they read aloud with fluency, and sound out and represent all essential sounds in spelling words. Teachers support vocabulary development through daily oral readings that expand children’s knowledge and language development, as well as transcribe their language. They model strategies for identifying unknown words and give children the opportunity for independent reading and writing practice. Teachers read, write, and discuss a variety of texts and model comprehension strategies. They also introduce new words and teach strategies to spell those words and build high frequency word lists to support their reading and writing.

In Phase 4, children become more fluent readers and write various types of text using simple and then more complex sentences. Children write on a range of topics for different purposes and audiences, use common letter patterns to spell words, punctuate simple sentences appropriately, and proofread their own work. Teachers make certain children read a wide range of texts for various purposes and instruct them to write in multiple forms. They teach strategies for spelling new and difficult words and teach the revising, editing, and proofreading skills necessary.
During Phase 5 of development, third grade children continue to broaden and refine their reading and writing for different purposes and audiences. They use a rich variety of vocabulary, write expressively, continue to edit and revise their own writing, and use correct spelling in final drafts. Teachers encourage children to use writing as a tool of thinking and learning, extend their knowledge of the correct use of writing conventions, and stress the importance of correct spelling in final written work.

In this study, two models for teaching writing—that make certain assumptions regarding student achievement of basic writing skills acquired during the developmental phases described—are compared. Furthermore, both of these instructional methods have developed a methodology that incorporate procedures specifically supported by the research on best practices for teaching writing. The two instructional models compared in this research are 6+1 Traits Writing (Culham, 2003; Spandel & Culham, 1997) and Interactive Editing (Swartz, Klein, & Shook, 2001), in which Interactive Writing (Button, Johnson & Furgerson, 1996; Swartz, Klein, & Shook, 2001) is embedded into the instructional strategy.

**6+1 Traits Writing**

Developed by the Northwest Regional Laboratory, the 6+1 Traits Writing model is an analytical model for assessing and teaching writing made up of seven key qualities that define strong writing. These are, ideas (the main message), organization (the internal structure of the piece), voice (the personal tone and flavor of the author’s message), word choice (the vocabulary a writer chooses to convey meaning), sentence fluency (the rhythm and flow of the language), conventions (the mechanical correctness), and presentation (how the writing actually looks on the page) (Education Northwest, 2010).
The model originators published the design in various formats but reported no primary research to support the model (Culham, 2003; Culham, 2005; Spandel, 2000; Spandel & Culham, 1997; Spandel & Stiggins, 1990). Spandel (2000) described six-trait assessment as a method that helps students take charge of their own writing process and understand the difference between strong and weak writing, use that knowledge to write stronger drafts, and revise and edit their own writing because they can ‘read’ it and know what to do to make it better.

Teachers report with considerable enthusiasm their use of 6+1 Traits Writing in reporting their experience with the model (Jacobsen, 2005). Likewise, individual schools and school districts have adopted the model and have developed various supports for its implementation (South Dakota Department of Education, 2010). Though this evidence is anecdotal, it does reflect data on the effectiveness of the model on various district or state measures.

An experimental study sponsored by the Northwest Regional Laboratory measured the impact of training in the model and its effect on teacher practices for teaching and assessing student writing and its impact on student achievement in writing (Kozlow & Bellamy, 2004). The experimental design employed one treatment and one control group with teachers randomly assigned into groups within four grades used as subjects and a pretreatment assessment, teacher training in the model, and post-treatment assessment. Results indicated a significant impact of the training on teacher practices in writing instruction. The results of the analysis of the student achievement data did not provide evidence that the two-day training workshop had significant impact on improving student achievement in writing in the treatment classes. The authors suggested that a partial
implementation of the model likely impacted the results.

Another study conducted by the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory (1992-93) tested the hypothesis of whether it would make a difference in analytic writing testing results to purposefully weave assessment strategies into the writing curriculum. Gains in the pretest/posttest design included gains of .84 for ideas, .55 for organization, .87 for voice, .53 for word choice, .27 for sentence fluency, and .19 for conventions. This study was conducted before the addition of the presentations trait. The authors concluded a strong effect for linking assessment and instruction.

Bellamy (2000) summarized five small-scale studies conducted by local school districts. Writing skills increased from a range of 8.6% to a high of 90% in three schools studied. An increase of 7% and 12% respectively was reported in two schools on the increase of students meeting their district writing standard. One school reported an increase on pre-trait and post-trait improvement from 1.79 to 2.09 on a 5-point scale.

One of these schools from the Bellamy report was the focus of more extensive research. Six fifth-grade classrooms were selected to study the effect of teaching the six analytic traits to students. The classrooms represented diverse student populations (rural/urban, native/non-native English speakers, and a range of ethnicities). Three of the classrooms received traditional instruction while the other three were taught the 6 Traits method. The results from pretests and posttests showed large differences in writing performance between the two groups (Jarmer, Kozol, Nelson & Salsberry, 2000). The organization trait was the exception where traditional classrooms showed an increase of 30%, and the traits classrooms showed a gain of only 13%. No comment was made regarding this disparity.
Integrating the 6+1 Traits Writing model with cross-age tutoring was studied on a group of fourth-grade students (Parquette, 2009). Teachers used the model in varying degrees in their classrooms. Tutors were chosen from these classes and were trained in the model. The results indicated that the treatment was of more benefit to the tutors than the tutees in terms of increasing academic writing performance. This effect might be attributed to the extra training received by the tutors.

Three of the traits were the focus of a study of six classrooms of sixth graders where students were trained to use the same writing assessment used by the teachers (Arter, Spandel, Culham & Pollard, 1994). The hypothesis was that if this training benefited the teachers it might have a similar effect on the students. Results indicated that students showed the most improvement in the first trait introduced, ideas, and less on the two subsequent traits, organization and voice. The authors concluded that if 6 Traits represent good writing, then training on the traits will result in improved writing.

**Interactive Editing and Interactive Writing**

These two teaching methods of Interactive Editing and Interactive Writing are combined for the purposes of this research. This application was developed for use in professional development and in a school reform project (Swartz, 1994).

**Interactive Editing**

Interactive editing is a writing method that focuses on procedures to read and comprehend nonfiction text. Interactive editing is a teaching method in which children and the teacher work together to identify key content words in a reading passage and then write about that passage. The reciprocity of reading and writing is a key feature of interactive editing (Swartz, Klein, & Shook, 2001). Interactive editing provides an
opportunity to discuss grammar and all of the conventions of writing in the context of an authentic writing activity. The reading style and form become the model for the writing, particularly with expository materials (Swartz, Swartz, Pitchford, & Swartz, 2012). The only available research on interactive editing was its use as part of a balanced literacy framework (Swartz, 2003).

A study conducted in 2001 compared Academic Performance Index (API) target increase for schools using the balanced literacy framework compared to the target for all California schools. The target in this school was exceeded by 35%. In a parallel study the number of schools throughout the state that exceeded the target was 51%, with the comparison schools (N=47) using the balanced literacy framework exceeding the API target by 74% (Swartz, 2003).

Writing achievement was measured in a study of Kentucky Title I schools using balanced literacy framework with non-Title I schools not participating in the project. Title I schools showed an increase of 42% and non-Title I schools showed a negative 8% score. A similar 2001-02 study in a Nevada district compared schools on the state accountability measure in writing proficiency. The balanced literacy school showed 10% growth in year one, and 17% in year two, compared to 3% and -5% for comparison schools (Swartz, 2003).

Both teaching methods examined in this study, 6+1 Traits Writing and Interactive Editing, have support in the research literature. Methods and procedures developed for using 6+1 Traits Writing helps students take charge of their writing and be able to identify the differences between strong and weak writing (Spandel, 2000), and they are also to use the knowledge they have acquired to revise, edit, and improve their writing.
Studies have shown that increased enthusiasm among students is associated with changes in teacher practices in writing instruction that have been incorporated into this method. Bellamy (2000) showed improvement in students’ writing against a 6+1 Traits Writing rubric and identified elements of the rubric that were based in research on student writing. Parquette (2009) involved cross-age tutors who were trained in the 6+1 Traits Writing model and found that the training benefitted the tutors more than the intervention of the tutees. This speaks more to the research that supports cross-age tutoring than any specific components of the 6+1 Traits Writing model.

Interactive Editing and Interactive Writing are methods that allow the participation, engagement, and construction of text that is incorporated into a balanced literacy approach. Wall (2008) reports that these methods of teaching affect overall language arts and the reading achievement of students. Craig (2006) found that using an Interactive Writing approach showed greater student achievement in the areas of word identification, comprehension, and word reading development as compared to a phonics approach taught in isolation.

Neither 6+1 Traits Writing nor Interactive Editing and Interactive Writing have a specific research base. Rather, they rely on developing a teaching method that uses individual elements that do have research support. It is not uncommon for teaching methods to claim a research base by combining parts of other research. This study will examine whether these combinations, when applied in a controlled study, impact student achievement in reading and writing consistent with the claims of the developers.

**Interactive Writing**

Interactive writing was developed as a key component of a balanced literacy
framework (Button, Johnson & Furgurson, 1996; McCarrier, Pinnell, & Fountas, 2000) and is a key element in the Interactive Editing process. The method was an adaptation of research on shared writing that modified that method to include the shared pen approach (McKenzie, 1985). Interactive writing is a teaching method in which children and teacher negotiate what they are going to write and then share the pen to construct the message (Swartz, Klein & Shook, 2001). The negotiation of text is a process that develops thinking, planning, refining, and consolidating while at the same time developing appropriate language structures and increasing vocabulary. The teacher and students can work at many levels of competence, from letter recognition and formation to learning various types of writing (Swartz, Swartz, Pitchford & Swartz, 2012). Anecdotal reports from teachers are uniformly positive with frequent comment on how this method of reading also affects overall language arts and reading achievement (Graves, 2000; Patterson, Schaller & Clemens, 2008; Wall, 2008). For the most part, procedural fidelity and high engagement levels from students are reported.

Craig (2006) compared interactive writing with a structured program of phonological awareness and alphabetic training using Phonemic Awareness in Young Children: A Classroom Curriculum (Adams et al., 1998). She described the interactive writing teaching method as contextualized compared to the Adams program that was described as explicit, systematic instruction with clearly planned phonological awareness and alphabetic skill and strategy instruction. She went on to say that advocates of contextualized approaches maintain the content of this instruction cannot be scripted or delivered in predetermined programs but must be based on the development and progress of each student. The Craig study is of particular interest to those who support the
balanced literacy teaching approach generally, and the use of interactive writing as part of this approach, specifically. The study modified the usual interactive writing procedure by allowing invented spelling, accepting the research that this encourages creativity without harming the eventual emergence of conventional spelling patterns. The phonemic awareness curriculum was not modified. The impact these two methods had on the comparison groups was measured using multiple assessments for phonological awareness, spelling, initial literacy level, real word and pseudoword reading, comprehension, and word reading development. Results were comparable for both methods on measures of phonological awareness, spelling, and pseudoword reading. The interactive writing group showed greater progress on real word identification, passage comprehension, and word reading development. The study concluded that children participating in a contextualized approach matched or exceeded the achievement of children participating in a skill-sequence program using metalinguistic games.
Chapter III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Chapter II of this thesis presented a review of the literature that provided research in the processes of learning to read and write, as well as research to support the two instructional approaches used in this study, 6+1 Traits Writing and Interactive Editing. This chapter provides a description of the methodological approach that was used to conduct this study. The chapter gives a description of the participants, instruments used to measure student achievement, procedures, research design, and how the data were collected and analyzed.

Participants

The school site used for this study was a middle school in the Burbank Unified School District, in which 1,343 students were currently enrolled in grades sixth through eighth. Fifty-eight percent of the student population was identified as white, 37.5% Armenian, and 4.5% were either Hispanic, Asian, African-American, or other. The school site had a significant percentage of the student body that came from affluent households and was also in its second year as a Title I school. Of the 1,343 students enrolled, 38% qualified for free or reduced lunch and 127 students received special needs services. Two hundred and forty students were identified as gifted and participated in the Gifted and Talented Education Program.

Federal accountability requires schools to report Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and Program Improvement (PI) results annually. California accountability includes these measures in addition to an Academic Performance Index (API). The test results used in calculating a school’s API have different relative emphases. The amount of emphasis
each content area has in the API for a particular school is determined by statewide test weights and by the number of students taking each type of test. The weights for grades 7-8 include:

- English/Language Arts 51.4%
- Mathematics 34.3%
- Science 7.1%
- History-Social Science 7.1%

The state has set 800 as the API target for all schools to meet. Schools that fall short of 800 are required to meet annual growth targets until that goal is achieved (California Department of Education, 2012). The school used for this study had a current Academic Performance Index (API) score of 865, which placed it above the state target of 800.

The participants in this study were seventh-grade students in one period of a Medieval Social Studies class. The class met each day for 55 minutes on a rotating schedule. The class consisted of 33 students, of which 13 students were boys and 20 students were girls. Students ranged from eleven to thirteen years of age and consisted of 52% Armenian, 18% Hispanic, 15% white, 6% Korean, and one each who were Arabic, Indian, and Lebanese. Four students were classified as English Language Learners (ELL) (two boys and two girls) whose primary language was Armenian and had language levels ranging from Advanced Intermediate to Transitional based on the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). No students who participated in this study were identified as special needs or had an Individual Education Plan (IEP). In addition, no students in this study were identified as gifted or had any health concerns.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7th grade Medieval Social Studies Class (33 students)</th>
<th>6 +1 Traits Writing treatment group</th>
<th>Interactive Editing treatment group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of students</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Males</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Females</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Armenian</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Hispanic</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. White</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Korean</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Arabic</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Indian</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Lebanese</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. English Language Learner</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participating teacher holds the appropriate California teaching credential for this subject area. The teacher was proficient in both the 6 + 1 Traits Writing and Interactive Editing methods to ensure each treatment was implemented equally and consistently.
Measures

Two instruments were used to measure student achievement during the course of this study. The first measure was a reading passage (APPENDIX, A) and eight multiple-choice comprehension questions selected from the district adopted seventh grade Holt Social Studies curriculum (Burstein & Shek, 2006) (APPENDIX, B). The second instrument used to evaluate student achievement was a writing rubric. The rubric used for this study was taken from the 2008 Grade Seven California Standardized Test (CST) writing standards assessment for summary writing (California Department of Education, 2008) (APPENDIX, C).

To ensure reliability, two independent judges were also selected to score students writing samples. Both judges were credentialed teachers, were proficient in writing instruction, and had over ten years of teaching experience. Judges were trained by the participating teacher to evaluate student’s independent writing against the rubric. To ensure interrater reliability, anchor papers were used to train the raters and provide scoring practice. Two anchor papers and scoring outcomes were presented to each rater. After a discussion of the anchor papers, the raters were given two practice papers to rate using the rubric. Raters had 95% agreement with the researcher on practice paper scores.

Sampling Procedure

Students were randomly selected and placed in the two treatment groups using a table of random numbers. Of the 33 students who participated in the study, 16 were assigned to the 6 + 1 Traits Writing treatment group (6 boys and 10 girls). The Interactive Editing treatment group consisted of 17 students (7 boys and 10 girls). Student’s identity was kept anonymous and was identified by code rather than by name.
Procedure

The researcher was granted permission by the district Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction to conduct this study (APPENDEX, D). Student data were collected by administering a comprehension pretest to inform the participating teacher and establish baseline achievement scores using one section of the district adopted seventh grade Holt Social Studies curriculum. A passage was selected from the text and multiple-choice comprehension questions were administered that accompanied the reading passage the students were given. Questions came from the adopted curriculum and student responses were recorded. A posttest, using the same reading passage and comprehension questions, was administered at the end of each treatment, 6 + 1 Traits Writing and Interactive Editing.

Additionally, students were given a pretest writing assignment at the beginning of each treatment (Table 2), and repeated as a posttest at the end of instruction. After students had read the passage and completed the reading comprehension questions, students were asked to write a summary of what they had read. Student data were recorded, analyzed, and compared to evaluate student achievement.
Table 2
Directions for Writing Task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of Reading Passage Writing Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Directions:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Read the following informational reading passage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• As you read, you may mark the passage or make notes. Marks and notes will not be scored.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• After reading the passage, write a summary of what you have read. You have 55 minutes to read, plan, write, and proofread your writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• You may reread or go back to the passage at any time during the test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scoring:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your writing will be scored on how well you:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• state the main ideas of the reading passage;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• identify the most important details that support the main ideas;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• use your own words in writing the summary; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Design**

Instruction was administered to both treatment groups over a two-week period.

Each treatment group received one week of instruction in which the pretest was administered on Monday and the post-test was administered on Friday. The length of the intervention was determined by the actual timeline for this unit of study. While one treatment group was receiving instruction, the other treatment group was placed in a different 7th grade Medieval social studies class receiving instruction using the district adopted curriculum.

Once instruction had been administered in each of the treatment groups, students were giving the same piece of text to read and answer the same comprehension questions. Scores were recorded. Students were given the same writing prompt and asked to write a
summary of what they have read. The same two independent judges, using the CST released writing prompt rubric, scored the quality of writing. Data were analyzed to see which treatment group had the greatest improvement in reading comprehension and in writing achievement.

This research did not identify any student by name or release any of their personal information. All identifiable information that was collected was removed and replaced with a code. A list linking the code and identifiable information was kept separate from the research data. All research data were stored electronically and on a password-protected computer.

6 + 1 Traits Writing

In the 6 +1 Traits Writing treatment group, the teacher began by teaching the students the language of each of the traits necessary to speak and think like writers. Each Trait was taught in sequence and introduced one at a time (Ideas, Organization, Voice, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, Conventions, and Presentation). Sample papers were introduced to the students as a whole, and each trait was further discussed in detail in whole and small group settings. Students were also given time to discuss with peers regarding sample papers and the traits that were used. The teacher provided instruction on identifying, using, and applying the 6+1 Traits Writing to their own writing. Students participated in individual, peer, and group writing and revision sessions that focused on specific traits. This gave the students the opportunity to evaluate and effectively use and understand what a good trait looks like and does not look like. The teacher conducted frequent whole-group discussions using student sample papers as well as meeting with individuals to provide feedback. All papers were kept anonymous.
The students were introduced to the CST summary writing rubric to help monitor their own progress. The teacher read aloud a variety of texts to illustrate the strengths and weaknesses of writing as it pertained to the 6+1 Traits as well as the rubric. During the reading of the texts, the teacher stopped to have students focus on a specific trait or a descriptive phrase or paragraph.

The teacher used a range of lessons that were designed to focus on specific traits and used purposeful prompts that include the role of the writer, audience, format, and topic. The teacher, as well as students, took a risk and shared their “works in progress” with other students while asking for feedback. Lesson planning was developed to integrate the traits into the Social Studies content area to support student learning. Students’ work was kept in portfolios to track their performance.

**Interactive Editing**

In the Interactive Editing treatment group, the same passage of text was used from the Social Studies curriculum. The passage was written on chart paper and the text was large enough for the students to all see and read. Interactive Editing uses a variety of teaching methods that use both reading and writing strategies: Read Aloud, Shared Reading, Interactive Editing, Modeled Writing, Interactive Writing, and Independent Writing. To begin instruction, the teacher read aloud the selected piece of text and then modeled the selection of key content words. The teacher thought out loud and discussed why some words are more important than others to the meaning of the text. The teacher than used modeled writing to summarize and create a sentence using the highlighted content words. All conventions of print were observed and the teacher thought out loud for the students so that they could hear the teachers thinking during the writing process.
Instruction continued by having the students use Shared Reading and the teacher and students used the Interactive Editing procedures to jointly select the key content words from the passage. The teacher led the discussion and students shared their ideas about various words. When the class agreed upon the selected content words, the whole class participated in Interactive Writing to jointly construct a summary of the text. Students negotiated what was going to be written and all students were able to participate and contribute to the writing. Conventions of print were observed. Once completed, students reread the Interactive Writing text to check for clarity to ensure that the original meaning was not lost during the process.

Students were then asked to read a different paragraph from the selected passage on their own and independently select the key content words and use Independent Writing to construct a brief summary. Students were introduced to the CST summary writing rubric to help monitor their progress. The teacher observed the students during the independent process and used student work as artifacts to determine whether students needed further instruction or individual support.

**Data Analysis**

Data were collected on student scores for both reading comprehension and writing quality for summary writing. Both individual scores and treatment group averages were collected and analyzed. An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was also run for each data set.

Reading comprehension was evaluated using the chapter tests from the districted adopted textbook for the reading passage evaluated. This multiple-choice test was
comprised of eight questions. Student scores were recorded on a scale of 0, for no correct responses, to 8, for all questions answered correctly.

The writing summary assignment was evaluated by two independent judges using the 7th Grade CST Writing Rubric provided by the California Department of Education (2008). This 4-point scale was subdivided into eight levels based on qualitative analysis and consensus between judges.
Chapter IV

RESULTS

Chapter III provided a description of the methods and procedures used in conducting this study and identified the participants, instruments used to measure student achievement, research design, and how the data were collected and analyzed. This chapter provides an analysis of the data collected in students’ achievement in reading comprehension and writing quality within the two methods of instruction, 6+1 Traits Writing and Interactive Editing.

Data from participants in this study were collected and analyzed on two measures, reading comprehension and writing quality. Both treatments in this study were designed to improve writing with the secondary claim to improve reading comprehension. Reading comprehension scores were analyzed first to establish a baseline and to measure student achievement. Reading and writing are reciprocal processes and writing is used as a vehicle for improving students reading comprehension by having students write about what they read. Students can demonstrate their level of comprehension and ability to read a piece with understanding through writing.

**Reading Comprehension Scores**

The reading comprehension test consisted of eight multiple-choice questions that assessed student understanding of the text passage that was read. The test was available as a chapter review test included in the district adopted textbook. The pretest was administered before instruction to establish a baseline. There were eight questions on the test. The posttest was administered after the five-day period of instructional intervention. The score distribution for each group is recorded in Table 3.
### Table 3
Score Distribution on Multiple-choice Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pretest Score</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6+1 Traits Writing Group</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8</td>
<td>1 2 5 4 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive Editing Group</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8</td>
<td>1 2 2 2 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**6+1 Traits Writing Treatment Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pretest Score</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6+1 Traits Writing Group</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8</td>
<td>1 2 5 4 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive Editing Group</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8</td>
<td>1 2 2 2 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interactive Editing Treatment Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pretest Score</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6+1 Traits Writing Group</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8</td>
<td>1 2 5 4 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive Editing Group</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8</td>
<td>1 2 2 2 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 provides the score distribution for both methods of instruction in reading comprehension. The table analyzes student’s pretest and posttest scores on a scale of 1 to 8. The frequency of each student’s score for both treatments is compared.
Figure 1 indicates students score distribution for both treatments of instruction on the pretest multiple-choice questions. The figure indicates that the 6+1 Traits Writing group had higher average pretest scores than the Interactive Editing group.
Figure 2 indicates students score distribution for both treatments of instruction on the posttest multiple-choice questions. The figure indicates that the Interactive Editing group had higher average posttest scores than the 6+1 Traits Writing group.

The distribution of pretest scores showed two students in the Interactive Editing group in the low range of 1-3 and no students from the 6+1 Writing Traits groups in this same range. At the higher range of 7-8, eight students from the 6+1 Traits Writing were in this group on the pretest and nine on the posttest. In the Interactive Editing group these numbers were six on the pretest and 16 on the posttest.
Table 4
Average Scores on the Multiple-choice Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment Group</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Posttest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6+1 Writing</td>
<td>6.500</td>
<td>7.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive</td>
<td>5.823</td>
<td>7.529</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 records average test scores for each group on the multiple-choice questions used to measure reading comprehension. Both pretest and posttest scores were recorded. \( N = \) the number of students in each group.

Figure 3
Figure 3 compares both treatment groups reading comprehension pretest and posttest scores and shows students level of achievement for each group. The 6+1 Traits Writing treatment group’s reading comprehension average on the pretest was 6.5 and 7.0 on the posttest, a mean gain of 0.5. The Interactive Editing group had a pretest mean of 5.823 on the pretest and 7.529 on the posttest, a mean gain of 1.706. An ANOVA was used to analyze these data and no significance was found at the .05 level of confidence. Both treatment groups showed improvement, but the Interactive Editing group showed greater growth than the 6+1 Traits Writing group.

**Writing Scores**

Students in both treatment groups were asked to write a summary of the text passage. They were instructed to use the strategies that had been included in the five days of instruction, 6+1 Traits Writing or Interactive Editing. These passages were scored using the CST Writing Rubric developed by the California Department of Education to evaluate 7th grade writing. Writing samples were scored both on the standard 4-point scale and using a modified 8-point scale in which rater scores were combined. The general criteria for summary writing expectation are that the piece be summarized with the main ideas and most significant details, in the student’s own words, and clearly reflect underlying meaning (California Department of Education, 2008).
Table 5
Score Distribution on Writing Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6+1 Writing Traits Treatment Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interactive Editing Treatment Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 provides the score distribution for both treatments of instruction in writing. The table analyzes student’s pretest and posttest scores on a scale of 1 to 8. The frequency of each student’s score for both treatments is compared.

Table 5 and Figures 4 and 5 summarize the scores for both treatment groups on the writing rubric. Posttest scores for the 6+1 Traits Writing group were clustered in the 3-7 range. Posttest scores for the Interactive Editing group were clustered in the 6-8 range. This score distribution indicated that the Interactive Editing group had greater achievement in writing than the 6+1 Traits Writing group and demonstrates that the Interactive Editing method of instruction showed greater achievement from pretest to posttest score. These data suggest Interactive Editing is a superior method of instruction.
Figure 4 indicates students score distribution for both treatments of instruction on the pretest writing rubric. The figure indicates that the 6+1 Traits Writing group had higher average pretest scores than the Interactive Editing group.
Figure 5 indicates students score distribution for both treatments of instruction on the posttest writing rubric. The figure indicates that the Interactive Editing group had higher average posttest scores than the 6+1 Traits Writing group.
Table 6
Average Writing Test Scores for Both The 6+1 Traits Writing and Interactive Editing Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average Scores on Writing Rubric</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6+1 Writing Traits N=16</td>
<td>Interactive Editing N=17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>Posttest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>5.375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 indicates the average pretest and posttest scores on writing for both the 6+1 Traits Writing group and the Interactive Editing group. The pretest average score for the 6+1 group was 3.31 and the posttest average was 5.375, a mean gain of 2.065. The pretest average score for the Interactive Editing group was 3.235 and the posttest score was 6.35, an average gain of 3.115. This indicates that the Interactive Editing group not only had higher posttest scores but greater average gains over the course of the study.
Figure 6 indicates the average writing scores on the pretest and posttest writing assessment for the 6+1 Traits Writing group and the Interactive Editing group. This figure shows that at the beginning of the study, the 6+1 Traits Writing group had higher average pretest scores (3.31) than the Interactive Editing group (3.235), but by the end of the study, the Interactive Editing group had higher posttest scores (6.35) than the 6+1 Traits Writing group (5.375). These data indicate that both treatments of instruction showed growth, but the Interactive Editing group showed greater student achievement in writing than the 6+1 Traits writing group. Interactive Editing had a mean gain of 3.115 compared to 6+1 Traits Writing mean gain of 2.065.
Chapter IV discussed and analyzed the data that were collected over the course of the study in reading comprehension and writing. The chapter provided tables and figures that indicated students’ scores and achievement in both areas. This chapter provides a discussion of both 6+1 Traits Writing and Interactive Editing and their purpose to improve student writing, as well as recommendations for further research.

Discussion

The stated purpose of both interventions is to improve student writing. The approaches are significantly different in that 6+1 Traits Writing focuses on the necessary parts of writing and how to construct good paragraphs, and Interactive Editing focuses on identifying the key content of a passage and then summary writing that preserves the author’s intent. In addition, both interventions suggest that the procedures utilized would yield higher levels of comprehension on text passages used to generate student writing. Writing is a vehicle for supporting and improving students reading comprehension and allows them to demonstrate their level of understanding of a piece of text while at the same time comprehend texts written by others. The comparison of these two instructional approaches not only drives the level of instruction needed for student support, but also indicates which method of instructional demonstrated greater achievement.

Typical instructional activities in the middle school include asking students to write a fictional or autobiographical narrative, a response to literature, a persuasive essay, or a summary. Researchers have found that readers respond to literature in a variety of
ways: by retelling, summarizing, analyzing, and generalizing (Applebee, 1978). The assignment in this study was for students to write a summary. The writing results speak directly to how well students were able to complete that assignment. Reading comprehension is seen as a by-product of the two treatments and how students learned to analyze text and retain the content of the passages.

Instructions to the students were specific to the expectation that they write a summary. This included: state the main idea, identify the important details that support the main ideas, use your own words, and use correct conventions of writing. Both 6+1 Traits Writing and Interactive Editing focused on the use of correct conventions of writing, but the Interactive Editing model focused more on incorporating the main ideas into the writing and using your own words in supporting those main ideas. 6+1 Traits Writing focused more on ideas, sentence fluency, word choice, and voice.

The results for both reading comprehension and quality of writing were higher for Interactive Editing than for 6+1 Traits Writing. Though sample size was insufficient to establish statistical significance, the data obtained showed a clear trend of higher achievement for the Interactive Editing teaching method.

The improvement of reading comprehension scores is a direct reflection of how a teaching method supports student understanding of what is read. The improved score of the Interactive Editing method when compared to 6+1 Traits Writing demonstrated that Interactive Editing is a more powerful way to support students in text analysis and obtaining meaning from what is read. One factor that might be considered in this analysis is that student independence seems to occur sooner in Interactive Editing. The process is simpler and supports a more rapid release of responsibility from teacher to
student. The students become more actively involved in the Interactive Writing process and physically participate in the selection of key content words. Students actively discuss with the teacher, as well as with their peers, what words are going to be chosen and why. Students participate in a whole group setting and soon after take the strategy to independence with teacher support as needed.

The writing scores for these interventions also showed more growth with Interactive Editing. One of the key variables in this comparison was the extent to which students were able to follow the assignment to write a summary. It appears that the gradual release of responsibility from teacher to student was more effective. 6+1 Traits Writing has a procedure that requires students to include various writing elements. Not all of these elements are necessary when writing a summary. For this reason, 6+1 Traits Writing samples received lower scores in reading comprehension and writing. It was also clear that Interactive Editing resulted in more original writing by students compared to substantial copying of text by students in the 6+1 Traits Writing group.

**Remarks by the Judges**

The independent judges who evaluated the students’ writing made some important observations. Their remarks are anecdotal, but are important observations that describe the students writing and what was observed during the scoring process. They indicated that the 6+1 Traits Writing samples were on average as much as one-third longer, used more complex sentence construction, and contained significantly more detail. The judges expressed the opinion that it appeared that the students “could not decide what was important, so they tried to include everything.” What this appears to indicate is that students who participated in 6+1 Traits Writing seemed uncertain about the necessary
information for writing a summary of a text without losing its meaning. Another concern expressed by the judges was the amount of text that was used verbatim. They suggested that in many cases it reached the level that would be considered plagiarism. This issue is serious in that it may indicate that students at all levels of writing instruction are often not provided with clear cut instructional strategies for summarizing text content without impinging upon the written work of others. They observed that Interactive Editing on the other hand, was shorter and used simpler construction. They felt that the writing was more clearly original work by the students and met the summary standard used in the assignment and outlined on the Writing Rubric.

**Significance of the Study**

Writing is one of the most difficult language skills for any learner to master. The teaching of writing can be even more difficult. During reading, the reader uses the author’s words in deciphering the message that is being sent. In writing, the writer has to use the words he or she knows in constructing a message for the reader and content can be restricted depending upon the student’s vocabulary. In teaching writing, we are looking for methods that not only improve writing but ones that also motivate students to write.

This study measured students’ achievement in reading comprehension and summary writing using two different methods of instruction, 6+1 Traits Writing and Interactive Editing. This study found greater student achievement in reading comprehension and summary writing with students who participated in the Interactive Editing group. It was found that students who participated in this treatment took a shorter time to transfer their skills to independence. The Interactive Editing method of
instruction also encouraged more original thinking during the writing process. My perception of students’ responses while participating in the Interactive Editing treatment group was that of higher interest levels and more excitement in the writing process than in 6+1 Traits Writing. The goal of student achievement was still obtained in both treatment groups, but with greater achievement in the Interactive Editing group and with greater enthusiasm for writing.

6+1 Traits Writing uses various assumptions that raise concerns about how students approach the writing task. This was reflected in the difficulty that students experienced in developing a summary. A major assumption is that good writing always contains specific elements. This is doubtful on its face and perhaps overly simplistic. This, to a great extent, relies on the premise that if you have all of the parts, you will successfully create the whole. This might result in an inability to see the forest for the trees phenomenon. Students are so busy attending to the parts that overall writing suffers accordingly.

6+1 Traits Writing is also an example of what might be called formula teaching that has gained prominence along with various other scripted teaching approaches. This is the formula that needs to be taught and learning will follow. Interactive Editing on the other hand requires students to do more thinking and analyzing of text. The result was more focused and original writing. The differences in levels of student independence were readily apparent in this study. It was also clear that students demonstrated more ownership of their writing and enthusiasm for the writing process. Maintaining student interest is always a challenge in teaching so this enthusiasm level is very helpful in maintaining effective instruction.
This study is significant to the extent that it identifies an effective method to support reading and student writing. It also supports the idea that teaching methods with high level teacher decision-making are more effective than those using a formula or a script. This is important to teachers who are looking for more authentic teaching methods that also produce higher student enthusiasm. This also means that school districts should consider professional development for teachers, rather than adopting commercial or canned writing programs.

**Recommendations**

The present study had various limitations that are addressed with the following recommendations for conducting further related research in writing. First, the sample size for this study was too small to establish significant statistical correlations because of the fact that this study was conducted within a single classroom. Utilizing students from multiple classrooms and applying these writing models would easily resolve this issue. Consideration might be given to using all of the classes in a specific subject area or department.

Second, this study was restricted to students in 7th grade. It would be instructive to consider students in various grades from the elementary to high school levels in order to increase sample size across grade levels in future similar research studies. The level of expectation for the California 4th and 7th grade writing rubrics is progressive. It would be useful to measure change over time with multiple grade levels.

Third, since the study only focused on summary writing in history, it is recommended that different forms of writing be considered in future research. For instance, varying subject matter and writing genres might be utilized in a future study to
comprehensively look at some of the ways that these writing models impact students overall writing abilities. Because the current study focused on nonfiction, it is recommended that additional research be conducted using fiction.

Fourth, the study conducted was over the course of two-weeks, each group receiving one week of instruction. It is recommended that future research increase the duration of time in which students received instruction using each treatment. It would be ideal to look at the development of student writing across an entire academic school year in attempt to measure student achievement in writing and to inform instructional practices. This can also be said for students’ achievement in reading comprehension. A study of longer duration could also consider the expected different levels of interest on various topics.

Lastly, it is recommended that informal surveys, student interviews, or questionnaires be conducted to provide additional qualitative data on students’ perception of each of the writing strategies.
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Northwest Regional Education Laboratory. (1992-3). *Study findings on the integration of writing assessment & instruction*. Portland, OR: NWREL.


Inca Life and Society

If YOU were there...
You are an Inca noble. One day, you travel with the king and the army to take over new lands for the empire. There is a bloody battle, and you win a major victory. You want to make sure that later generations know about this important event, but your language has no written form.

How will you pass on your knowledge of history?

Building Background Certain people in the Inca Empire were responsible for making sure Inca history, legends, and customs got passed down to the next generation. To do this, they sang songs and wrote poems telling about everything from great battles to daily life.

Society and Daily Life
Inca society had two main social classes—an upper class and a lower class. The Incas from Cuzco made up the upper class. As they conquered new lands, the conquered people became Inca subjects and joined the lower class.

Daily Life for the Upper Class
The king, priests, and government officials made up the Inca upper class. While most noble men worked for the government, women from noble families had household duties such as cooking and making clothes. They also took care of children.

Sons of upper-class families went to school in Cuzco. They studied Quechua, religion, history, and law to prepare for lives as government or religious officials.

Upper-class families had many privileges. They lived in stone houses in Cuzco and wore the best clothes. They didn’t have to pay the labor tax, and they often had servants. Still, as part of the Inca government, they had a duty to make sure that people in the empire had what they needed.
**Daily Life for the Lower Class**

Most Incas were farmers, artisans, or servants. There were no slaves in Inca society. Lower-class men and women farmed on government lands, served in the army, worked in mines, and built roads.

Parents taught their children how to work, so most children didn’t go to school. But some carefully chosen young girls did go to school to learn weaving, cooking, and religion. Then they were sent to serve the king or work in the temple in Cuzco.

Lower-class Incas lived outside Cuzco in small houses. By law they had to wear plain clothes. Also, they couldn’t own more goods than they needed.
Religion
The Inca Empire had an official religion. When the Incas conquered new territories, they taught this religion to the conquered peoples. But the people could still worship their own gods, too. As a result, the many groups of people who made up the empire worshipped many different gods.

The sun god was important to Inca religion. As the sun set earlier each day in the winter, at Machu Picchu priests performed a ceremony to tie down the sun and keep it from disappearing completely. The Incas believed their kings were related to the sun god. As a result, the Incas thought their kings never really died.
Inca Arts

Inca arts included beautiful textiles and gold and silver objects. While many gold and silver objects have been lost, some Inca textiles have survived for hundreds of years.

In fact, priests brought mummies of former kings to many ceremonies. People gave these royal mummies food and gifts. Some Inca rulers even asked them for advice.

Inca ceremonies often included sacrifice. But unlike the Maya and the Aztecs, the Incas rarely sacrificed humans. They usually sacrificed llamas, cloth, or food.

Incas outside Cuzco worshipped their gods at local sacred places. The Incas believed certain mountaintops, rocks, and springs had magical powers. Incas performed sacrifices at these places as well as at the temple in Cuzco.

Reading Check Contrasting How was daily life different for upper- and lower-class Incas?

Building, Art, and Oral Literature

The Incas had strong traditions of building, art, and storytelling. Many of their creations still exist today.

Building

The Incas are famous for their massive buildings and forts made of huge, stone blocks. Workers cut the blocks so precisely that they didn’t have to use cement to hold them together. Inca masonry, or stonework, was of such high quality that even today it is nearly impossible to fit a knife blade between the stones. In fact, many Inca buildings in Cuzco are still being used.

The Incas also built a system of very good roads in their empire. Two major highways that ran the length of the empire formed the basis of the system. Roads paved with stone crossed mountains and deserts. With these roads and rope bridges spanning rivers and canyons, the Incas connected all parts of the empire.

Art

The Incas produced works of art as well. Artisans made gold and silver jewelry and offerings to the gods. They even created a
life-sized field of corn out of gold and silver in a temple courtyard. Each cob, leaf, and stalk was individually crafted.

Incas also made some of the best textiles in the Americas. Archaeologists have found brightly colored Inca textiles that are still in excellent condition.

Oral Literature
While archaeologists have found many Inca artifacts, there are no written records about the empire produced before the Spanish conquest. Instead, Incas passed down stories and songs orally. Incas sang about daily life and military victories. Official “memorizers” learned long poems about Inca legends and history.

After the conquistadors came, some Incas learned how to speak and write in Spanish. They wrote about Inca legends and history. We know about the Incas from these records and from the stories that survive in the songs, dances, and religious practices of people in the region today.

Summary and Preview
The Aztec and Inca empires had some similarities in their rise and fall and in their culture. In the next chapter you will learn about the European explorations that caused the end of these two empires in the Americas.

Section 4 Assessment

1. a. Identify What were members of the Inca upper class? b. Explain How were Inca government and religion related? c. Elaborate Why do you think Inca law outlined what clothes people of various classes could wear?
2. a. Describe What was impressive about Inca masonry? b. Draw Conclusions Were Inca oral traditions successful in preserving information? Why or why not? c. Predict Why do you think the Incas wanted to connect all parts of their empire with roads?

Critical Thinking
3. Categorizing Draw a chart like the one below. Use it to categorize different aspects of daily life among upper-class and lower-class Incas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Upper class</th>
<th>Lower class</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clothing and shelter</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
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4. Describing Inca Society From what social class is the Inca child in your dialogue? Make some notes about his or her daily life.
Appendix B: Comprehension Questions

**Inca Life and Society Assessment:**

1. What happened to people conquered by the Incas?
   
   a. They were allowed to return home.
   b. They became subjects and the lower class.
   c. The Incas never conquered anyone.
   d. They were considered equal to the Incas.

2. In Inca society, in what social class were kings, priests, and government officials?
   
   a. lower class
   b. no class
   c. middle class
   d. upper class

3. What were the Incas most known for?
   
   a. their buildings, works of art, and stories
   b. their writing system
   c. their system of government
   d. the clothes they wore

4. How did the Incas pass down stories?
   
   a. through their religion
   b. oral history
   c. through upper classes only
   d. written works
5. What was the purpose of Machu Picchu?

   a. place to confine enemies of the empire  
   b. a hub for trade in the empire  
   c. a retreat for the king and his chosen companions  
   d. the seat of government

6. Which of the following does not describe Inca buildings?

   a. Inca buildings are so tight that it is nearly impossible to fit a knife blade between stones.  
   b. The stone cutting was so precise that no cement was needed.  
   c. Inca builders learned their craft from the Spanish conquistadors.  
   d. Many Inca buildings are still being used.

7. Why was the Inca road system important?

   a. The roads connected all parts of the empire.  
   b. The roads all led to Machu Picchu.  
   c. The roads were used as part of religious ceremonies.  
   d. The roads formed a ring around Cuzco.

8. Why were the mummies of former kings treated with such respect?

   a. Incas believed that the kings would one day come back to life.  
   b. Incas thought the mummies helped their crops grow.  
   c. Incas believed that their rulers never really died.  
   d. The mummies were thought to prevent natural disasters and defeats in battle.

Key

California Standards Tests

Grade Seven Scoring Rubric in Rearranged Format

In the following charts, the grade seven scoring rubric is presented in a rearranged format to indicate how all the scoring criteria in the rubric—those derived from California’s content standards for Writing Strategies and Written Conventions as well as those derived from the content standards for Writing Applications—are applied to student responses in each genre tested.

The column under “Genre” contains the scoring criteria derived from the grade seven content standards for Writing Applications. The column under “Organization and Focus” contains scoring criteria derived from the subset of Organization and Focus standards within the grade seven content standards for Writing Strategies. The column under “Sentence Structure” contains the scoring criterion derived from the Sentence Structure standard within the grade six content standards for Written and Oral English Language Conventions. The column under “Conventions” contains the scoring criteria derived from the subsets of Grammar, Punctuation, Capitalization, and Spelling standards within the grade seven content standards for Written and Oral English Language Conventions. Although some columns contain more bullets than others, this is not meant to imply that columns with more bullets are more important in the scoring than the other columns. References to the writing content standards from which each scoring criterion is derived are presented in coded form following each criterion for score point 4.
## CALIFORNIA STANDARDS TEST
### 2008 Grade Seven Scoring Rubric: Summary Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th>Genre (Summary Writing)</th>
<th>Organization and Focus</th>
<th>Sentence Structure</th>
<th>Conventions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Summarizes text with clear identification of the main idea(s) and most significant details, in the student’s own words, and clearly reflects underlying meaning. (Gr. 7 WA 2.5 a, b, c)</td>
<td>-Clearly addresses the writing task.*</td>
<td>-Includes sentence variety. (Gr. 6 WC 1.1)</td>
<td>-Contains some errors in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors do not interfere with the reader’s understanding of the writing. (Gr. 7 WC 1.1; 1.2; 1.4–1.7)</td>
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<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>Genre (Summary Writing)</th>
<th>Organization and Focus</th>
<th>Sentence Structure</th>
<th>Conventions</th>
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<td></td>
<td>-Summarizes text with the main idea(s) and important details, mostly in the student’s own words, and generally reflects underlying meaning.</td>
<td>-Addresses most of the writing task.</td>
<td>-Includes some sentence variety.</td>
<td>-Contains errors in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors do not interfere with the reader’s understanding of the writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Genre (Summary Writing)</td>
<td>Organization and Focus</td>
<td>Sentence Structure</td>
<td>Conventions</td>
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<td>- Summarizes text with some of the main idea(s) and details, which may be superficial, minimal use of the student’s own words, and minimal reflection of underlying meaning.</td>
<td>- Addresses some of the writing task.</td>
<td>- Includes little sentence variety.</td>
<td>- Contains many errors in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors may interfere with the reader’s understanding of the writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Summarizes text with few, if any, of the main ideas and/or details, little or no use of the student’s own words, little or no reflection of underlying meaning.</td>
<td>- Addresses only one part, if any, of the writing task.</td>
<td>- Includes no sentence variety.</td>
<td>- Contains serious errors in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors interfere with the reader’s understanding of the writing.</td>
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* Because this criterion addresses requirements of the writing test rather than a content standard, it does not include a standards reference.
† This criterion is based on content standards for previous grade levels that students must learn in order to write more complex responses required in grade seven.

WA: Writing Applications standards  WS: Writing Strategies standards  WC: Written Conventions standards

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Teacher Guide for the 2008 California Writing Standards Test in Grade Seven
February 7, 2012

Daniel Swartz
John Muir Middle School

RE: Human Research Project

Dear Daniel,

Thank you for providing all the necessary information about your Human Research Project. Researching what instructional strategy lends itself to help middle school students improve their writing skills that aide in reading comprehension is a high interest topic. I am certain that many of your colleagues at Muir and the other two middle schools would be very interested in the outcome of your research.

On behalf of the Burbank Unified School District, I approve your research project as outlined in the paperwork you submitted. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can help in any other way.

Good luck in completing your research.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Jan Britz, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent, Instructional Services

c: John Paramo, Principal