

**A STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF WRITING-ACROSS-THE-CURRICULUM  
AND WRITING IMPROVEMENTS PLUS ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS  
ABOUT WRITING**

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We have read this field study  
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A STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF WRITING-ACROSS-THE-CURRICULUM  
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A Field Study Proposal  
Presented for the  
Education Specialist  
Degree  
Austin Peay State University

Bettye J. Broadbent

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of the Writing-Across-The-Curriculum (WAC) program on the cognitive writing growth and attitudes of second grade students. Utilizing an ANOVA  $\alpha = .05$  level, findings indicated after six months there was no significant difference in the WAC writing scores and the adopted school writing curriculum. Students' attitudes on the pre-and post-writing attitude questionnaires did not indicate a change in students' attitudes using the WAC and the adopted school curriculum. Students continued to have positive attitudes about writing throughout the study.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Writing is a method to communicate thoughts and ideas into written language. Writing skills are important in all stages of life from early education and throughout life. One of the goals of education is teaching students to communicate through writing. Students need daily writing practice and instruction. Instruction can provide opportunities to write for different audiences and across the curriculum. High stakes and state-mandated assessments have impacted the way many teachers incorporate writing into instruction. In many classrooms increased attempts have been made to integrate more writing.

A teacher's goal is to prepare students for the real world, as productive members of society. In order to achieve this goal, students need opportunities for "real writing." This includes writing letters, notes, stories; essentially writing that is purposeful and meaningful. "Giving unreal writing activities to our students is about as useful as giving occupational therapy for stroke victims to people who are in perfect health" (Whitney, Mathieu & Klatt, 1996).

If it is acknowledged that students need more writing and communication skills, then the problems in students' writing must be identified. Many programs are available and in use to help teachers integrate writing into the curriculum. A program, which is currently being utilized, is Writing-Across-The-Curriculum (WAC). The motto of WAC is "writing to learn." In the program, students "writing to learn", interact with the subject matter making it their own. Instruction is individualized and each students' response to a writing assignment will be as different as their individual experiences. Classrooms utilizing WAC are interactive with a focus on increasing fluency. According to Mathieu there is some evidence that writing increases students' abilities in higher order thinking. The goal in these classrooms is that teachers and students connect. "All students who differ in gender, race, class and ethnic background have a voice in the WAC classroom" (Maimon, 1991, p.8).

### Statement of the Problem

Language proficiency equals economic and social opportunities. In 1991, a national poll of American educators found widespread concern about students' preparation for further education and employment

(Louis Harris & Associates, 1991). A major concern was students' inability to write well. A research report by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) of the U.S. Department of Education (1992) recommended that schools provide students with many writing assignments focusing on a variety of genres. The assignments were to include: stories, reports, letters and journal writings to help improve students' writing skills. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress data, the average student spends approximately 30 minutes per week writing. Many methods are available to improve student writing and are being used successfully, though on a limited basis (Hampton, 1992). Despite research findings the importance of regular writing, "still gets the short shrift" in the classroom (Schmoker, 1996).

#### Relationship of Study to this Problem

Writing has always been an essential part of education. Despite educational reform efforts and increased attention to improve and integrate more writing in the classroom, writing is still often done in isolation. Writing-Across-The-Curriculum is a



useful educational reform movement used to broaden students' writing. Carson (1992) states "it is one of the most successful educational reform movements in the United States and incorporates writing into all academic content areas" (Sensenbaugh, 1993, p.2).

### Purpose of the Study

The first purpose of this study was to investigate the attitudes of second grade students about writing. The second purpose was to determine the growth in writing as evidenced by samples from the different content areas of Social Studies, Reading and Science, as well as changes when compared to an adopted school writing prompt given three times per year.

### Significance of the Study

It is desired that the information in this study will help educators develop and implement strategies to help young students improve and maintain their writing skills. Educators can help students to view writing as a way of communicating their thoughts and ideas to others through written language. The goal is that students' attitudes about writing will be positive and continue to be as they progress through school and life. The findings from this

study will serve as a source of information about the WAC writing program, which is being used throughout the country. The data gathered and the results evaluated from this study can be used to better educate children, while improving writing attitudes.

### Research Questions

Specific questions addressed by the research included:

1. What effects does Writing-Across-The-Curriculum have on the cognitive growth of students' writing skills?
2. What are students' feelings about writing?
3. Do students' attitudes about writing change from the beginning of the school year to the end of the school year when WAC is utilized in the classroom?

### Statement of the Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in students' writing growth in writing across the curriculum as compared to students' writing growth experienced on the adopted school writing prompt as measured by the adopted writing rubric.

Null Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in students' attitudes towards writing before utilization of WAC and student's attitudes towards writing after the

utilization of WAC as measured by an attitude questionnaire.

### Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study were as follows:

1. Limited to those students in a second grade classroom at an elementary school located in Southern Kentucky.
2. The size of the sample was relatively small, using a beginning group of 19 students but further limitations due to mobility, 12 students were participants throughout the study. For this reason the analyses of results was weakened in the ability to make strong recommendations.
3. The length of the treatment limited the ability to assess the effectiveness of the study.
4. The mobility of students due to the school being located in a transit area limited the study.

### Definition of Terms

1. Writing-Across-The-Curriculum: (WAC) is a methodology to reinforce writing in classes outside of English composition. This teaching method engages students directly in the subject matter of the course through a variety of activities that focuses on writing as a



means of learning.

2. Holistic scoring: A method by which trained individuals evaluate a piece of writing for its overall quality.
3. Rubric: The written criteria or guide by which a student's performance is judged.
4. Journal writing: In education, expressive, personal writing in the first person about ideas the writer perceives to be important.
5. Portfolio: a collection of representative samples of a student's work, over time, as a basis for assessment.
6. School-wide Rubric: A scoring tool used by the school to assess the content and presentation of the student's written work.
7. School-wide Prompt: A writing prompt designed by the school for grades K-5. School-wide writing prompts are given three times during the school year and scored by teachers using the school rubric.
8. Writer's Workshop: An approach to provide daily uninterrupted blocks of time and offer the students an opportunity to write freely about personally meaningful topics at their own developmental level.

### Basic Assumptions

The following statements were assumed during this research:

1. All writings were administered and scored in an appropriate and consistent manner.
2. Responses to questionnaires reflected sincere attitudes and honest answers.
3. The data were gathered in an appropriate fashion, with consideration given to internal consistency and reliability of sources.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of the literature addresses the problems of writing. Written communication is a skill that needs to be mastered in order to effectively convey ideas and is a lifelong process. An important aspect of recent educational reform is the increased attention to writing skills (Risinger, 2001).

Years ago traditional writing lessons included drill and practice in grammar, punctuation, spelling and daily repetitive practice of the basic skills necessary for writing. However, none of these provided for personal ownership of the writing or communication of individual student ideas. In examining these writing methods, it was found that they do not address the problem of "equality and variety in student writing nor enhance student ability to take ownership of their writing" (Davidson, Fogel, Lestos & Power, 1996, p. 51). Writing needs to be taught as a communication skill and within all the disciplines across the curriculum.

A targeted population including elementary and special education high school students selected a Writer's Workshop Model for writing instruction to improve the

quality and variety in students' writing. Problems were documented through the collection of writing samples, teacher observations, student self-evaluations, and attitudinal surveys. Included in the model were writing skills, peer conferencing, free writing opportunities, and publishing of students' written work. Assessment tools included surveys, journals, portfolios and writing prompts to establish baseline and ending performance. Rubrics were developed and used to evaluate writing performance. Data collection indicated an increase in the variety and quality of students' writing (Davidson et al, 1996).

Integration of writing skills across the curriculum will help to make the writing process relevant and meaningful for the students. Melser, (1999) states that teachers are struggling with teaching all the required content. Melser suggested a way to simultaneously resolve the dilemma by connecting Language Arts to the other content areas. A reform implemented in 1991 in Kentucky using portfolios to improve the quality of student writing across the curriculum resulted in some perceived improvement in student writing. Interviews with 24 of the 26 participating teachers revealed their belief that the students' writings had improved. Teachers assigned more meaningful writing and shared terminology and experiences

about writing across the curriculum. Students' portfolio scores improved and exhibited a greater awareness of writing as being important in every discipline, not just English (Berryman and Russell, 2001).

Yorks and Follo (Ritter, 1999) suggest that students learn better from thematic, interdisciplinary instruction than a traditional, single-subject curriculum. Authors drew their conclusion from the testing of 25 students in a mixed-age classroom of third and fourth graders learning Social Studies, Reading, and Mathematics. Observation forms, students' self-perceptions, and teacher assessments were instruments used to assess students. It was found that during the thematic instruction higher engagement rates were shown than in single-subject lessons (Ritter, 1999).

A similar result from a qualitative study conducted by Schubert & Melnick investigated the effects of students on integrating in the different content areas. Multiple site studies evaluated the integrated learning of 11 rural, suburban, and urban elementary, middle, and high schools. Students exhibited connections among the different subject areas and incorporated curricular content in various intelligence areas offering new learning opportunities for students having difficulty in verbal or mathematical



areas. The authors concluded the integrated curriculum increased students' positive attitudes toward school and their self-concepts (Ritter, 1999).

Recognizing the need for improved reading comprehension, more efficient writing, and increased content knowledge, Romance, Vitale and Bristor (1994) conducted a five-year project. The project studied the effects of an integrated curriculum strategy on the achievement, attitudes and self-confidence of fourth and fifth grade students. The longitudinal study integrated Language Arts through Science as well as other content areas, and emphasized writing as a component of literacy learning. The experimental group received regular basal reading and science programs. The qualitative results were very positive, showing students were writing and reading more. As a result of the study teachers in this project during the fifth year conducted more writing activities than before.

A middle class community located in a suburb of Chicago determined a need for a writing readiness skills program for kindergarten students. The targeted population consisted of 37 kindergarten students. Needs were documented through: observation checklists, anecdotal records, writing portfolios and diagnostic tests. Three

major interventions were utilized: a journal writing program, a home writing and parent education program and the implementation of independent literacy activities. Post intervention data indicated improvements in: student writing readiness abilities, student interest levels, and independent writing during play and more parent involvement. Students showed a decrease in apprehension towards taking risks during their writing. The researchers suggest educators should be advised to include writing readiness as an integral and major part of any Kindergarten curriculum (Richardson & Ruane, 1996).

A targeted group of 38 second-grade students and 43 fifth-grade students were asked to complete a writing interest survey and writing assignment. The survey and writing samples were used to construct baseline data. Skills were documented using a teacher checklist, student surveys and writing rubrics. The findings on the interest survey indicated a high interest and enjoyment of writing in the second grade targeted group. In the fifth grade student writing surveys, students were generally apathetic toward the writing process. Underdeveloped writing skills and lack of interest in writing was contributed to inadequate teacher training and ineffective past teaching practices.

Second grade students were asked to write in response to a teacher-directed writing prompt by writing five sentences. Results for the second grade writing skills were organized into three categories: mechanics, organization, and focus. Fifth grade students were given a narrative prompt writing about an exciting personal experience. The prompt was scored on a possible four-point scale, with a score of one indicating a lack of competence. Teacher observations indicated students needed further improvement in the areas of writing and there was a need for writing skills across the curriculum. Teachers implemented a writer's workshop to assist the targeted students in grades two and five. The objective was to improve student writing skills as measured by teacher reviews of student portfolios.

Post intervention data indicated that second grade students made significant gains using the writer's workshop approach in the areas of writing mechanics, organization, and focus. Data indicated that fifth graders made significant gains in the areas of using conventions correctly and using details to support main ideas (Adams, 1996).

When content area teachers incorporate writing in all areas of the curriculum, students benefit in three ways:

they have a resource for better understanding content, they practice a technique which aids retention, and they begin to write better (Sorenson, 1991). Most proponents agree that when teachers incorporate writing in their content areas, the need to review and re-teach after testing is reduced. The National Assessment of Educational Progress ((NAEP) report gives us reason to reconstruct the way in which writing is taught in schools in the United States. The NAEP reports that writing is valued by only half of the students in grades four, eight, and eleven and their attitudes about writing do not change dramatically as they progress through school. Students in the upper grades are less likely to write on their own when they are not in school. Teacher feedback to students about their writing increases as they progress to higher grade levels, and there is some increase in the amount of writing done by students (Hampton, 1992).

In 1999, Bayer evaluated a first-grade class to find out whether or not students actually became more confident, proficient writers after participating in a writer's workshop. Children participated in the workshop two or three times a week, and each session began with a mini-lesson that focused on a specific writing skill such as sentence structure, correct capitalization,



punctuation, or grammar.

Students were asked whether they preferred to select their own topics, and how they described themselves as writers. The same questions were posed during the final week of the workshop. The results showed that writing workshops improved the feelings and attitudes the first graders had about writing, as well as how they felt about themselves. The percentage of children who looked forward to writing time almost doubled, and the number of those who said they liked to write increased from 25% to 71% (Smith, 2000).

Sudol and Sudol (1991) however, discussed some of the questions that arose during the adoption of the process approach and during a writer's workshop in a fifth-grade classroom taught by P. Sudol. Although some recommended an hour of writing each day, it is often difficult to devote this much time to writing. Also, "curriculum requirements may make it difficult for students to choose their own topics because teachers are required to teach specific kinds of writing" (Sudol & Sudol, 1991, p.294). Another concern was the pacing and deadlines. All students do not work at the same pace, and some students have difficulty ever completing any project. Sudol stated that her students wrote more than her previous students did, and



the quality of their writing was better (1991, p.299). The most productive part for Sudol was the mini-lessons, in which students could address problems.

Routeman (2000) points out that journal writing is a good way to begin implementing a writing workshop. Journals can promote fluency in reading and writing, encourage risk taking and promote development of written language conventions and provide opportunities for reflection of written work. However, the advantages of journals can be lost if teachers fail to monitor the students' work and let them know the writing expectations (Smith, 2000).

According to researcher Donald Murray, the most productive writers establish a routine and write at the same time every day. If students are to become writers, they must be active participants in the writing process, conversing with each other, raising questions, making decisions, and evaluating themselves. In classrooms where a community of writers develop, "everyone is a teacher and learner" (Bunce-Crim 1991, p.38). According to Barr and Mallory some of the benefits are the camaraderie among teachers, the team spirit shared by teachers and students and the ownership in the curriculum that they share (Powell, 1999). The WAC program is focused on improving

students' communication and analytical skills. Educators must be committed to and willing to make the WAC program successful. In order for writing to improve students need to write more often and given opportunities to write for different genres (Gibisch, Lumpkins, Sewell & Vagena, 1995).

## CHAPTER III

## METHODOLOGY

A letter requesting permission from the principal and superintendent to conduct the research project was issued and a letter of support and informed consent was obtained from parents (Appendix A and B).

The Null Hypotheses were addressed utilizing descriptive statistics and inferential statistics in the form of an ANOVA  $\alpha = .05$  level.

The review of literature revealed an approach to teach writing, which integrates writing within all subjects. Based on this information it was decided to conduct a study to investigate the effects of a WAC program on the cognitive growth of writing skills.

## Participants

The site for this study was a second-grade classroom at an elementary school comprised of grades pre-k through five. The school is located in Southern Kentucky. The school's population reflects a transient nature because of its location. Ethnic diversity for the school includes: Caucasian, African American, Hispanic, Asian and Native American. All students are dependents of active duty

military.

The second-grade was comprised of 72 students. Students were taught all academic subjects in a self-contained classroom by the classroom teacher with the exceptions of students with special learning needs. A total of 19 students, from one second grade class initially participated in this study. As a result of attrition, due to military mobility, only 12 students remained to participate for the total study. The subjects participated for a six-month session from late November, 2001 until May, 2002.

The mobility during the 2001-2002 school year was greater than normal due to the National and International situations which were beyond the control of the researcher.

#### Instruments

A 14-point school-wide holistic rubric (Appendix C) was used to evaluate proficiency in the writing process.

#### School Rubric Scoring Levels

Score	Level
0-8	Novice
9-10	Apprentice
11-12	Proficient
13-14	Distinguished

The writings were scored independently by trained second grade teachers using the holistic method to evaluate the writing for its overall quality. Second grade teachers that were readers and scorers in the study have Kentucky certification. The group of three teachers represented a total of forty-six years experience teaching second grade and working with primary students' writings. All teachers had received training on utilizing the writing rubric and had applied the rubric for two years. The papers were evaluated to determine the developmental stage the writing represented.

At the beginning and conclusion of this study a writing attitude (Appendix D) closed form questionnaire was administered as a comparative tool to measure the post-intervention writing attitudes of the students. The writing attitude questionnaire was critiqued by other second grade teachers to determine if questions needed to be changed or revised. These teachers were encouraged to make comments and suggestions concerning directions, recording procedures, and specific items; suggestions were given and changes were made accordingly.

Information on the students' writing achievement in the regular classroom was accessed through nine-week student progress reports and anecdotal records kept by the



classroom teacher. Three adopted school-writing prompts (Appendix E) and three writings in the areas of Social Studies, Reading, and Science (Appendix F, G, and H) were included in the assessment process. Writing progress was determined by the student's progression on the rubric scoring scale. Students' attitudes were measured by the teacher according to the pre- and post-writing attitude questionnaires, which focused on students' attitudes towards writing.

### Procedure

In order to assess the students' writings, a total of six writings were assigned. Writing prompts were administered to students to establish baseline and ending performance. In addition, writing attitude questionnaires, school-adopted prompts and writing prompts in Social Studies, Reading, and Science, were included in the assessment process. A school wide rubric to evaluate writing performance was used to score the writings.

During the first week of school in August, 2001 students were given a school adopted writing prompt. The prompts were scored the following week by the second grade teachers using the school writing rubric. Rubric level ranges were: (0-8) novice, (9-10) apprentice, (11-12)

proficient and (13-14) distinguished. Scores were assigned to the writings according to students' overall quality of content and presentation. The writing scores were recorded by the field study investigator.

At the end of November, students were given a writing prompt in the content area of Social Studies. Each student received the writing prompt with an area designated for illustrating and writing their responses. The prompt and directions were read to the students. Students were given 30 minutes to complete their drawings and writings.

The following week writings were evaluated and scored by other second grade teachers using the school rubric. In addition to the writing, students were given a pre-writing questionnaire pertaining to their attitudes about writing. The data was recorded by the field study investigator.

The three adopted school-writing prompts were administered in August, December, and May. Students were assigned additional writing prompts in the content areas of: Social Studies in November, Reading in February, and Science in April. These writings were scored by other second grade teachers using the school rubric. The post-writing attitude questionnaire was given in May at the conclusion of the last writing assignment.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

Chapter IV is a review of the research findings pertaining to the evaluation of students' writings in the different content areas and the school wide prompt and student pre-and post-attitude questionnaire findings. Included in this chapter is an overview of statistical tests utilized, evaluation of data and the results and its impact on writing growth and changes and participant's attitudinal changes about writing.

The purposes of this study were guided by two questions:

1. What effects does Writing-Across-The-Curriculum (WAC) have on the cognitive growth of students' writing skills?
2. What are students' feelings about writing?

Data from this study evaluated the scores of WAC instruction versus the school writing prompt on the growth of students' writing scores for the six-month period. Each student completed a total of three writings, one each in the different content areas of Social Studies, Reading, and Science and three school writing prompts. Pre-and post-writing questionnaires were examined to determine

students' attitudes toward writing.

The data consisted of scores for each student in the three content areas and the three school writing prompts and the pre-and post-writing questionnaires. Writing scores for the content areas and school prompts were the means of holistic scores that assessed the students' proficiency in the writing process. The writing questionnaire consisted of twelve closed form questions that permitted only certain responses.

Utilizing StatView statistical software the following descriptive data was determined and inferential statistics in the form of an ANOVA at the  $\alpha = .05$  level was calculated.

#### HYPOTHESES

Null Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in students' writing growth in writing across the curriculum as compared to students' writing growth experienced on the adopted school writing prompt as measured by the adopted writing rubric.

Descriptive statistics were calculated to provide an overview of the writing growth experienced by students when evaluating writing across the curriculum growth and the adopted school prompt. Students experienced no growth



in the writing gains experienced based on the writing prompts utilized.

Participants were assigned three writings for the adopted school writing prompt. The prompt for each writing was: Tell about a time when you helped a friend. Participants were to illustrate and write to the assigned prompt. The school writing prompts were given in August, December and May. All three prompts were scored by second grade teachers who were readers and scorers using the school adopted rubric. Participants' scores were recorded by the investigator.

Participants were assigned three writing prompts in the content areas of Social Studies, Reading, and Science. The Social Studies writing prompt was assigned in late November. After a study about Native Americans and the Pilgrims, participants were assigned the writing prompt: Illustrate a picture and describe how the Native Americans and Pilgrims helped each other. The writings were read and scored by second grade teachers who were readers and scorers using the school rubric. Participants' scores were recorded by the investigator.

Participants were assigned the writing prompt in Reading in February. After reading the story *The Sword in the Stone*, participants were assigned the writing prompt:



Illustrate and write about a time you were able to help an older person. The writings were read and scored by second grade teachers who were readers and scorers using the school rubric. Participants' scores were recorded by the investigator.

Participants were assigned the writing prompt in Science in April. After completing a study on recycling and protecting the environment participants were assigned the writing prompt: Write and illustrate what you can do to help our environment. The writings were read and scored by second grade teachers who were readers and scorers using the school rubric. Participants' scores were recorded by the investigator.

Table 1

Analysis of the Variance for Differences in Expected Writing Growth

Variable	F	P	Results
Curriculum			
Writing Gains			
	.435	.8299	Retain
Adopted School			
Writing Gains			

Inferential statistics in the form of an ANOVA at the  $\alpha = .05$  level was calculated to evaluate if there was a difference in the writing gain experiences based on the writing prompts and the WAC program utilized. Results supported retaining Null Hypothesis One. There was no difference in the level of the writing growth experienced by students utilizing the WAC curriculum as compared to students participating in the adopted school writing curriculum.

Descriptive statistics were calculated to provide an overview of the writing experienced by students. When evaluating the school adopted writing prompt, 100% students experienced growth in writing scores from the initial baseline writing sample to the concluding sample.

Table 2

Writing Growth Experienced

Variable	Growth	No Growth Experienced	Results
WAC	83.3%	16.6%	Retain
Adopted			
School Prompt	100%	0%	

Inferential statistics in the form of an ANOVA at the  $\alpha = .05$  level was calculated to address Null Hypothesis One. Results supported retain the Null Hypothesis. There is no significant difference in the level of growth experienced by students utilizing the WAC curriculum as compared to students participating in the adopted school curriculum.

Table 3

School Writing Prompts

Rubric Levels	Months		
	August	December	May
Novice	91.6%	58.3%	33.3%
Apprentice	8.3%	16.6%	49.9%
Proficient	0%	24.9%	16.6%
Distinguished	0%	0%	0%

The data indicated students continued to make gains in their writings throughout the study using the school writing prompt. Student gains were most recognized from the novice level to the apprentice level. As a result of

attrition, due to military mobility, the 12 students that remained to participate for the total study continued to make gains in their writings using the school writing prompt.

Table 4

Writing-Across-the Curriculum Writing Prompts

Rubric Levels	Months		
	November	February	April
Novice	74.9%	41.6%	16.6%
Apprentice	24.9%	33.3%	58.3%
Proficient	0%	8.3%	24.9%
Distinguished	0%	16.6%	0%

The data indicated students continued to make gains in their writings throughout the study using the WAC writing program. Student gains were most recognized from the novice level to the apprentice level. As a result of attrition, due to military mobility, the 12 students that remained to participate for the total study continued to make gains in their writings using the WAC program.

## Null Hypothesis Two

Null Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in students' attitudes towards writing before utilization of WAC and students' attitudes towards writing after the utilization of WAC as measured by a "writing attitude questionnaire."

Descriptive statistics were calculated to provide a brief overview of students' attitudes towards writing as revealed by the answers provided on the "writing attitude questionnaire."

Table 5

*Students' Attitudes Towards Writing*


---

Variable	Positive	Negative
Pre-Survey	83.3%	16.6%
November		
Post-Survey	91.6%	8.3%
May		

---

Inferential statistics in the form of an ANOVA at the  $\alpha = .05$  level was calculated to address Null Hypothesis



Two. Results supported retain the Null Hypothesis. There was no difference in students' attitudes utilizing the WAC curriculum as compared to students' participating in the adopted school curriculum.

Question 1 asked participants their attitudes about writing. Participants were asked if they enjoy writing in school.

Table 6

*Writing Questionnaire: Enjoy Writing*

Variable	Beginning	Ending	Percent of Change
Agree	83.3%	91.6%	8.3%
Disagree	16.6%	8.3%	8.3%

Participants responded using a Lickert scale agree to disagree. Participants responded to the variables agree and disagree. The responses were, ten participants selected agree and two participants selected disagree.

Six months later participants were administered the same questionnaire. The responses were, eleven participants selected agree and one participant selected disagree. The percentage of change for the agree response

was 8.3% and the percentage of change for the disagree response was 8.3%. The data indicated that participants' attitudes about enjoying writing showed an increase.

Table 6 is a summary of data on question 1 (Do I enjoy writing?)

Question 2 asked participants if they think it is important to be a good writer.

Table 7

*Writing Questionnaire: To Be a Good Writer*

Variable	Beginning	Ending	Percent of Change
Agree	74.9%	100%	25.1%
Disagree	24.9%	0%	24.9%

Participants responded using a Lickert scale agree to disagree. Participants selected from the variables agree and disagree. The selections were, nine participants selected agree and three selected disagree.

Six months later participants were administered the same questionnaire. All 12 students selected agree.

The data indicated an increase for the selection of agree of 25.1%. The data indicated a decrease for the selection of disagree of 24.9%. The data indicated that students agree it is important to be a good writer.

Table 7 is summary of data on question 2 (It is important to be a good writer.)

Question 3 asked participants if they think they are a good writer.

Table 8

Writing Questionnaire: A Good Writer

Variable	Beginning	Ending	Percent of Change
Agree	58.3%	100%	41.7%
Disagree	41.6%	0%	41.6%

Participants responded using a Lickert scale agree to disagree. Participants selected from the variables agree and disagree. The selections were, seven participants selected agree and five participants selected disagree.

Six months later participants were administered the same questionnaire. The selections were, 12 participants

selected agree and 0% students selected disagree. The data showed an increase of 41.7% for the selection of agree and a decrease of 41.6% on disagree. The data indicated that students' attitudes increased.

Table 8 is a summary of data on question 3 (I am a good writer.)

Question 4 asked participants if they write at home for fun.

Table 9

*Writing Questionnaire: Write at Home*

Variable	Beginning	Ending	Percent of Change
Agree	49.9%	66.6%	16.7%
Disagree	49.9%	33.3%	16.6%

Participants responded using a Lickert scale agree to disagree. Participants selected from the variables agree and disagree. The selections were, six participants selected agree and six participants selected disagree.

Six months later participants were administered the same questionnaire. The selections were, eight

participants selected agree and four participants selected disagree. The data indicated an increase of 16.7% in the selection of agree. The data indicated a decrease of 16.6% in the selection of disagree. The data indicated that participants were more positive about writing at home.

Table 9 is summary of data on question 4 (I write at home for fun.)

Question 5 asked participants what they think the hardest thing about writing is.

Table 10

*Writing Questionnaire: Hardest Thing About Writing*

Variable	Beginning	Ending	Percent of Change
Neatness	41.6%	16.6%	25%
Spelling	16.6%	16.6%	0%
Time	0%	24.9%	24.9%
Teacher Writing Prompts	16.6%	0%	16.6%
Nothing	24.9%	41.6%	16.7%



Participants responded using a Lickert scale selecting from five variables. The variables were: neatness, spelling, time, teacher writing prompts and nothing. Participants were asked on the variable neatness, if they felt it was hard for them to be neat in their writing. Participants were asked on the variable spelling, if it was difficult for them to spell correctly in their writings. Participants were asked on the variable time, if they felt they had enough time to write when they were given a writing assignment. Participants were asked on the variable teacher writing prompts, if they liked to write on the prompts that the teacher selected. Participants were told on the variable nothing, if they did not have any difficulty with any of the selections, this could be their selection. The selections were, five participants selected neatness, two participants selected spelling, none selected time, two participants selected teacher prompts and three participants selected nothing.

Six months later participants were administered the same questionnaire. The selections were, two participants selected neatness, two participants selected spelling, three participants selected time, none selected teacher prompts and five participants selected nothing. The data indicated that the number of students selecting neatness

decreased 25%. Participants selecting spelling exhibited 0% change. Participants selecting time increased from 0% to 24.9%. Participants selecting teacher prompts exhibited a decrease of 16.6% and the selection of nothing showed an increase of 16.7%. The data indicated that at the end of the study students did not view neatness as important. Attitudes about spelling remained the same. Attitudes about the amount of time allotted for writing assignments increased. Attitudes that there were no concerns increased.

Table 10 is a summary of data on question 5 (The hardest thing about writing is...)

Question 6 asked participants why they write in school.

Table 11

*Writing Questionnaire: Writing Is...*

Variable	Beginning	Ending	Percent of Change
For Fun	16.6%	8.3%	8.3%
To Learn New Things	41.6%	24.9%	16.7%

For Getting Good Grades	33.3%	33.3%	0%
To Tell My Feelings	8.3%	33.3%	25%

Participants responded using a Lickert scale selecting from four variables. Participants responded to the variables of: for fun, to learn new things, for getting good grades and to tell my feelings. The selections were, two participants selecting for fun were two, five participants selected to learn new things, four participants selected to get good grades and one participant selected to tell my feelings.

Six months later participants were administered the same questionnaire. The selections were, one participant selected for fun, three participants selected to learn new things, four participants selected to get good grades, and four participants selected to tell my feelings. The data indicated a decrease of 8.3% in participants' attitudes about writing for fun. Attitudes about learning new things showed a decrease of 16.7%. Attitudes about getting good grades remained the same. Attitudes about telling my

feelings showed an increase of 25%. The data indicated that participants' attitudes about writing for fun and writing to learn new things decreased. Attitudes about writing for good grades exhibited no change and attitudes about telling my feelings showed an increase.

Table 11 is a summary of data on question 6 (I think writing is...)

Question 7 asked participants what is their favorite format of writing.

Table 12

*Writing Questionnaire: Favorite Thing to Write*

Variable	Beginning	Ending	Percent of Change
Stories	41.6%	33.3%	8.3%
Letters	0%	8.3%	8.3%
Journals	41.6%	33.3%	8.3%
Other	16.6%	24.9%	8.3%

Participants responded using a Lickert scale selecting from four variables. The variables were stories, letters, journals and other. The selections were, five participants

selected stories, none selected letters, five participants selected journals and two participants selected other.

Six months later participants were administered the same questionnaire. The selections were, four participants selected stories, one participant selected letters, four participants selected journals and three participants selected other. This data showed a decrease of 8.3% participants' attitudes about writing stories. Attitudes about writing letters showed an increase of 8.3%. Attitudes about writing journals showed a decrease of 8.3% and participants' attitudes about writing about other things showed an increase of 8.3%. The data indicated that participants' attitudes about writing stories and letters increased. Attitudes about writing journals decreased and attitudes about writing other things increased.

Table 12 is a summary of data on question 7 (My favorite thing to write is...)

Question 8 asked participants if they enjoy writing with someone.

Table 13

*Writing Questionnaire: Writing with Someone*



Table 13 continued

Variable	Beginning	Ending	Percent of Change
Agree	74.9%	74.9%	0%
Disagree	25%	25%	0%

Participants responded using a Lickert scale agree to disagree. Participants selected from the variables agree and disagree. The selections were, nine participants selected agree and three participants selected disagree.

Six months later participants were administered the same questionnaire. The selections were, nine participants selected agree and three participants selected disagree. The data showed 74.9% selected agree in the first questionnaire and in the second questionnaire 74.9% selected agree. In the first questionnaire 24.9% selected disagree and in the second questionnaire 24.9% selected disagree. The data indicated that participants' attitudes about enjoying writing with someone did not change.

Table 13 is a summary of data on question 8 (I enjoy writing with someone.)

Question 9 asked participants if they like to share their writing with others.

Table 14

*Writing Questionnaire: Share my Writing*

Variable	Beginning	Ending	Percent of Change
Agree	66.6%	91.6%	25%
Disagree	33.3%	8.3%	25%

Participants responded using a Lickert scale agree to disagree. Participants selected from the variables agree to disagree. The selections were, eight participants selected agree and four participants selected disagree.

Six months later participants were administered the same questionnaire. The selections were, eleven participants selected agree and one participant selected disagree. The data indicated an increase of 25% in the selection of agree. The data indicated a decrease of 25% in the selection of disagree. The data indicated an increase in participants' attitudes about sharing their writing with others.

Table 14 is summary of data on question 9 (I like to share my writing with others.)

Question 10 asked participants if they like to listen to others share their writing.

Table 15

*Writing Questionnaire: Listen to Others*

Variable	Beginning	Ending	Percent of Change
Agree	100%	100%	0%
Disagree	0%	0%	0%

Participants responded using a Lickert scale agree to disagree. Participants selected from the variables agree and disagree. The selections were, twelve participants selected agree and no participants selected disagree.

Six months later participants were administered the same questionnaire. The selections were, twelve participants selected agree and no participants selected disagree. The data showed no change in participants' attitudes about liking to listen to others share their writing. The data indicated participants have a positive attitude about listening to others share their writings.

Table 15 is a summary of data on question 10 (I like to listen to others when they share their writing.)

Question 11 asked participants if they like to write about themselves.

Table 16

*Writing Questionnaire: Write About Myself*

Variable	Beginning	Ending	Percent of Change
Agree	49.9%	83.3%	33.4%
Disagree	49.9%	16.6%	33.3%

Participants responded using a Lickert scale agree to disagree. Participants selected from the variables agree and disagree. The selections were, six participants selected agree and six participants selected disagree.

Six months later participants were administered the same questionnaire. The selections were, ten participants selected agree and two participants selected disagree. The data indicated an increase of 33.4% of participants selected agree. The data indicated a decrease of 33.3% participants selecting disagree. The data indicated participants' attitudes were more positive about liking to write about themselves.

Table 16 is a summary of data on question 11 (I like to write about myself.)

Question 12 asked participants if they like to illustrate their writing.

Table 17

*Writing Questionnaire: Illustrate my Writing*

Variable	Beginning	Ending	Percent of Change
Agree	74.9%	83.3%	8.4%
Disagree	24.9%	16.6%	8.3%

Participants responded using a Lickert scale agree to disagree. Participants selected from the variables agree and disagree. The selections were, nine participants selected agree and three participants selected disagree.

Six months later participants were administered the same questionnaire. The selections were, ten participants selected agree and two participants selected disagree. The data indicated an increase of 8.4% on participants selecting agree. The data indicated a decrease of 8.3% on disagree. The data indicated participants' attitudes were more positive about liking to illustrate their writing.

Table 17 is a summary of data on question 12 (I like to illustrate my writing.)



Inferential statistics in the form of an ANOVA at the  $\alpha = .05$  level was calculated to address Null Hypothesis Two. Results supported retain the Null Hypothesis. There is no difference of the students' attitudes experienced by students utilizing the WAC curriculum as compared to students participating in the standard writing curriculum.

Table 18

Analysis of the Variance for Differences in Students' Attitudes Towards Writing

Initial	F	P	Results
Administration			
	3.337	.0694	Retain
Concluding			
Administration			

Table 18 displays inferential statistics addressing Null Hypothesis Two.

## CHAPTER V

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Summary

A selection of current literature was reviewed to investigate the WAC program across the country. It indicated there are many WAC programs in use throughout the United States. School systems are seeking for better ways to help students learn to write. The WAC program increases teachers' awareness of the need to teach writing in all content areas. This program assists students' cognitive growth in writing skills.

The purpose of this study was to determine if differences in writing growth exist when utilizing the WAC program. Descriptive and inferential statistics were calculated. Results supported retaining Null Hypothesis One and Null Hypothesis Two.

Although the results of this study supported the research hypotheses, there was no significant difference in the growth of writing skills of the second-grade students who participated in a Writing-Across-The-Curriculum and a school adopted writing curriculum. The results of the study showed no significant differences in students' attitudes about writing. These results may imply

that students already practicing writing across the curriculum have increased writing opportunities causing an increase in writing confidence.

Since this study was limited to a small number of students, and the length of the study was limited to six months, results cannot be generalized to all classrooms and students. The more opportunities students have to write, the more comfortable and positive their attitude towards writing will be.

The initial study started in November, 2001 with 19 participants completing the first two writing prompts in August and November. After November due to military mobility seven participants moved and only 12 participants from the original 19 participants remained throughout the study. Only the 12 remaining participants could be used in the study. It was not possible to get significant differences due to only a sample of 12 participants throughout the entire school year. The data did note the trends and positive upward movement in the students' writing growth levels from the first writing sample to the last writing sample. The trends and significant differences are seen by reading the results of the study.

The school writing prompts had only a sample of 12 participants throughout the entire school year. The first

school writing prompt administered in August indicated students at the novice level were 91.6%, apprentice level 8.3% and 0% at the proficient and distinguished levels. The same school writing prompt administered in May showed writing changes from the novice level in August of 91.6% to 33.3% in May. Student writings in the apprentice level progressed from 8.3% apprentice level in August to 49.9% and from 0% proficient level in August to 16.6% proficient level in May. Students' writings remained 0% at the distinguished level from August to 0% in May. The growth exhibits that students did make upward movements in their writing levels from the first initial writing prompts to the concluding writing prompts.

The writing across the curriculum writing prompts had only a sample of 12 participants throughout the entire school year. The first writing prompt in Social Studies was administered in November with 74.9% at the novice level, 24.9% at the apprentice level and 0% at the proficient and distinguished levels. The last writing prompt in Science was administered in April with changes from 74.9% at the novice level in November to 16.6% at the novice level in April. Student writings progressed from the apprentice level of 24.9% in November to 58.3% apprentice level in May and from 0% proficient level in

November to 24.9% proficient level in April. Student writing levels for the distinguished level in November were 0% and remained 0% at the distinguished level in May. The growth exhibits that students did make upward movements in their writing levels from the first initial writing prompt to the concluding writing prompt.

### Conclusions

Students in Kentucky are already accustomed to writing across the curriculum because the state of Kentucky adopted the writing curriculum. Students in a classroom where writing is a daily practice are already instructed in the other content areas in writing. There was no difference in students' attitudes about writing at the beginning and the end of the study because all students enjoyed writing. In the early elementary classroom it is the nature of the students to attempt to select the answer they believe will please the teacher, or the answer that their peers will select.



## Recommendations

The following recommendations are made as a result of this study.

1. That more studies are needed in a variety of classroom settings.
2. That studies not be limited to one classroom and one teacher.
3. That more studies be conducted for a longer period of time.
4. That the size of the sample be larger.
5. That further studies be conducted before endorsing one writing program over another.

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## APPENDICES

Appendix A  
Letters of Request

Bettye J. Broadbent  
1009 Millrun Court  
Hopkinsville, Ky. 42240

October 15, 2001

Mr. James Walker, Principal  
Marshall Elementary School  
75 Texas Avenue  
Ft. Campbell, Ky. 42223

Dear Mr. Walker:

I would like to request permission to conduct a research project at Marshall Elementary School in partial fulfillment of the Education Specialist Degree at Austin Peay State University. My field study proposal includes writing prompts from the different content areas. A total of six writing samples across the curriculum will be collected from each student along with the mandated school writing prompt given three times during the school year. These will be scored using the school rubric. Students will be given a pre and post questionnaire to analyze their attitudes toward writing before beginning the project and at the end of the project.

The results of this study will enable our teachers to examine the effects of Writing-Across-The Curriculum to improve students' writing skills.

The study will take place from early November to May 10, 2002. The treatment is a teaching strategy to improve writing skills. An informed consent form will be given to the parents. Confidentiality of all students' names and records will be observed.

If you have any questions, about the research, please contact me.

Sincerely,



Bettye J. Broadbent

Bettye J. Broadbent  
1009 Millrun Court  
Hopkinsville, Ky. 42240

October 15, 2001

Dr. Ray McMullen, Superintendent  
Ft. Campbell Dependent Schools  
77 Texas Avenue  
Ft. Campbell, Ky. 42223

Dear Dr. McMullen:

I would like to request permission to conduct a research project at Marshall Elementary School in partial fulfillment of the Education Specialist Degree at Austin Peay State University. My field study proposal includes writing prompts from the different content areas. A total of six writing samples across the curriculum will be collected from each student along with the mandated school writing prompt given three times during the school year. These will be scored using the school rubric. Students will be given a pre and post questionnaire to analyze their attitudes toward writing before beginning the project and at the end of the project.

The results of this study will enable our teachers to examine the effects of Writing-Across-The Curriculum to improve students' writing skills.

The study will take place from early November to May 10, 2002. The treatment is a teaching strategy to improve writing skills. An informed consent form will be given to the parents. Confidentiality of all students' names and records will be observed.

If you have any questions, about the research, please contact me at (270) 439-7766.

Sincerely,



Bettye J. Broadbent



## Appendix B

## Letters of Support and Consent



# Marshall

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

5 Texas Avenue FT. Campbell, KY 42223-1535 (502) 439-7766 FAX: (502) 439-4382

October 17, 2001

Austin Peay State University  
College of Education  
P.O. Box 4545  
Clarksville, TN 37044

Dear Sir or Madam:

I, James Walker, give permission for Bettye Broadbent to conduct her research project, as partial fulfillment of her Education Specialist Degree. I understand this survey will begin in November and will be completed by May 10, 2002.

If there are any concerns or questions, regarding this matter feel free to contact me at Marshall Elementary School.

Sincerely,

Mr. James Walker, Ed.S  
Principal

SCHOOL  
OF  
Excellence



Office of the Superintendent  
Phone: 270-439-1927

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**  
FORT CAMPBELL SCHOOLS CENTRAL OFFICE  
77 TEXAS AVENUE  
FORT CAMPBELL, KENTUCKY 42223-5127

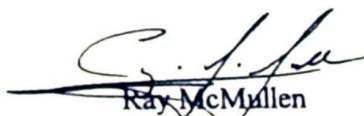
November 6, 2001

Bettye Broadbent  
1009 Millrun Court  
Hopkinsville, KY 42240

Dear Bettye,

I commend you for continuing your studies and working toward an Education Specialist Degree at Austin Peay State University. I have reviewed the parameters of your research project. It is my understanding that you will be researching 19 students in your second grade classroom, no student names will be used, and confidentiality of records will be observed. You have also stated that you received preliminary approval from your Principal at Marshall Elementary School.

Since you have met all the restrictions and criteria, your research project is officially approved and you may begin at your discretion. Good luck to you.

  
Ray McMullen  
Superintendent  
Fort Campbell Schools

Appendix C  
Scoring Rubric

## Indicators

Indicators				Content	
Drawing and Title matches "story."					
At least one idea is clearly stated.					
Two or more ideas are given. They may be a listing, such as "I saw a dog. I saw a bunny. I saw a bird."					
At least two ideas are presented in a way that is clearly more than a listing. They may be on the same topic.					
Two or more sentences or several descriptive phrases or details are used to develop the idea(s).					
Some evidence of sequencing is present, i.e., "I ate lunch. Then I played."					
Story has a clear beginning, middle, and end that includes setting, character, & plot.					
					<u>Print</u>
Forms letters with control over size, shape, & orientation.					
Child prints words (includes random or copied letters) or prompt.					
Sentences are present (includes random, copied (other than prompt), or nonsense words).					
Child shows appropriate use of capitals & punctuation.					
Most words will have correct beginning, ending, & vowel pattern sound matches story as read (not just on sight or copied words).					
Invented spelling is used randomly in the story - one can read with ease.					
Story consists of correct spelling.					
				Content	Print
Total					
Combined Total					
Novice	Apprentice	Proficient	Distinguished		
0-8	9-10	11-12	13-14		

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_





## Writing Attitude Questionnaire

Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. I enjoy writing in school.

☐

agree

☐

disagree

2. It is important to be a good writer.

☐

agree

☐

disagree

3. I am a good writer.

☐

agree

☐

disagree

4. I write at home for fun.

☐

agree

☐

disagree

5. The hardest thing about writing is ...

☐

neatness

☐

spelling

☐

time

☐

teacher writing prompts

☐

nothing

6. I think writing is...

☐

for fun

☐

to learn new things

☐

for getting good grades

☐

to tell my feelings

7. My favorite thing to write is...

☐

stories

☐

letters

☐

journals

☐

other \_\_\_\_\_

8. I enjoy writing with someone.

☐

agree

☐

disagree

9. I like to share my writing with others.

☐

agree

☐

disagree

10. I like to listen to others when they share their writing.

☐

agree

☐

disagree

11. I like to write about myself.

☐

agree

☐

disagree

12. I like to illustrate my writing.

☐

agree

☐

disagree

Appendix E

School Writing Prompt



## School Writing Prompt

Write and illustrate about a time when you helped a friend.

## Appendix F

### Social Studies Writing Prompt

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Native Americans

## Directions

Think about our study about the Native Americans and the Pilgrims. In the box below illustrate a picture of the Native Americans and the Pilgrims helping each other. On the lines below your picture write about your picture and describe how the Native Americans and Pilgrims helped each other.

---

---

---

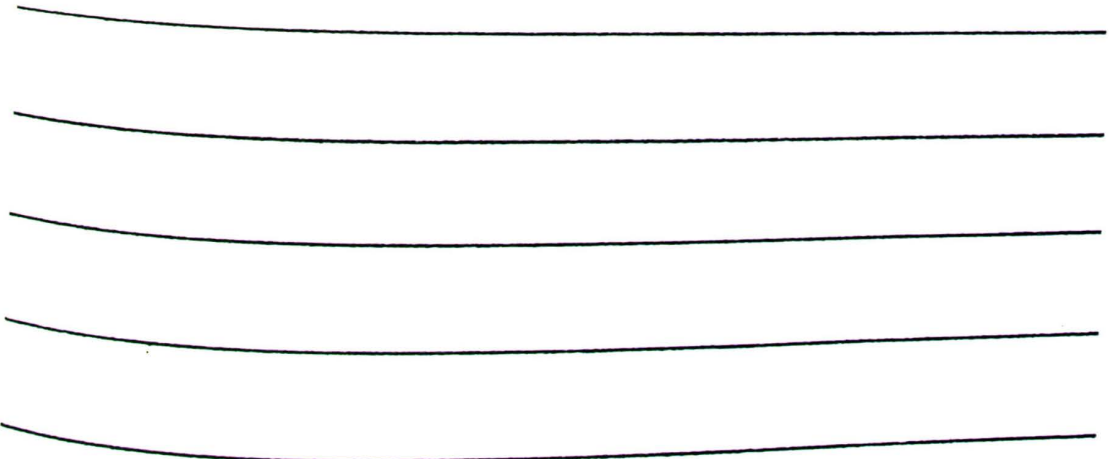
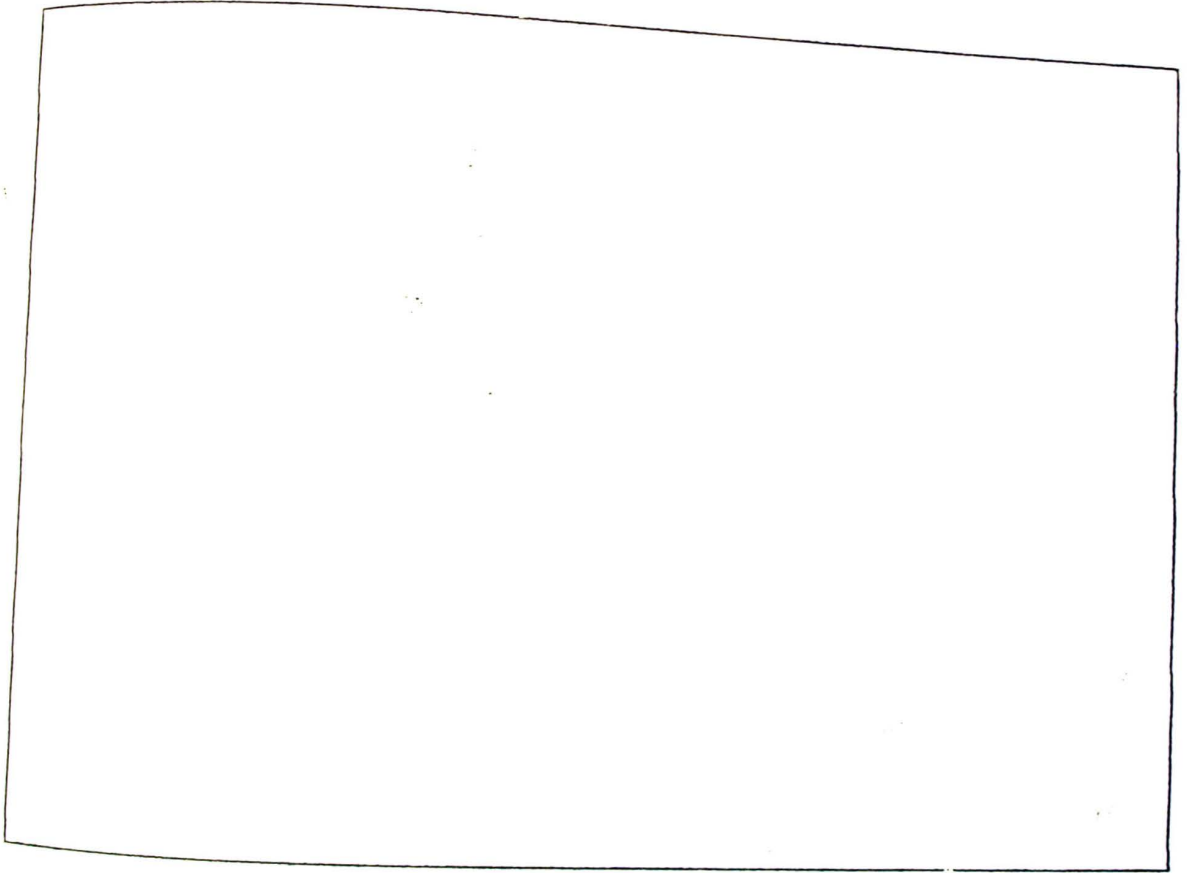
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## Appendix G

## Reading Writing Prompt

Date \_\_\_\_\_

In *The Sword in the Stone*, and in *Red Riding Hood* a young boy and a young girl are able to help older people. Illustrate and write about a time that you were able to help an older person.





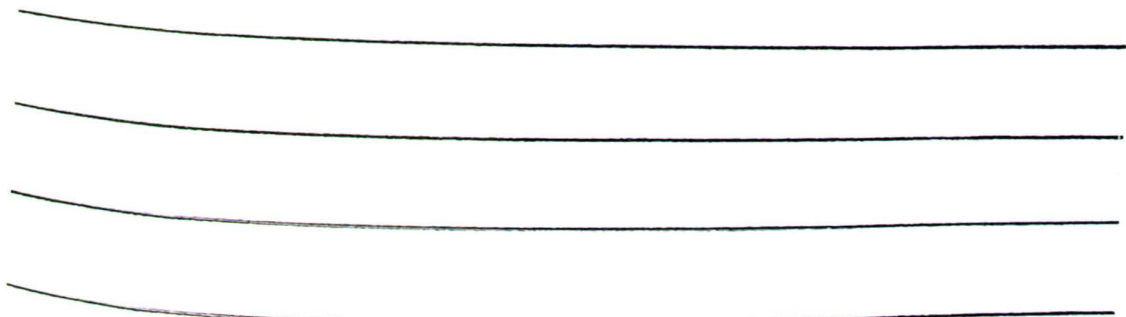
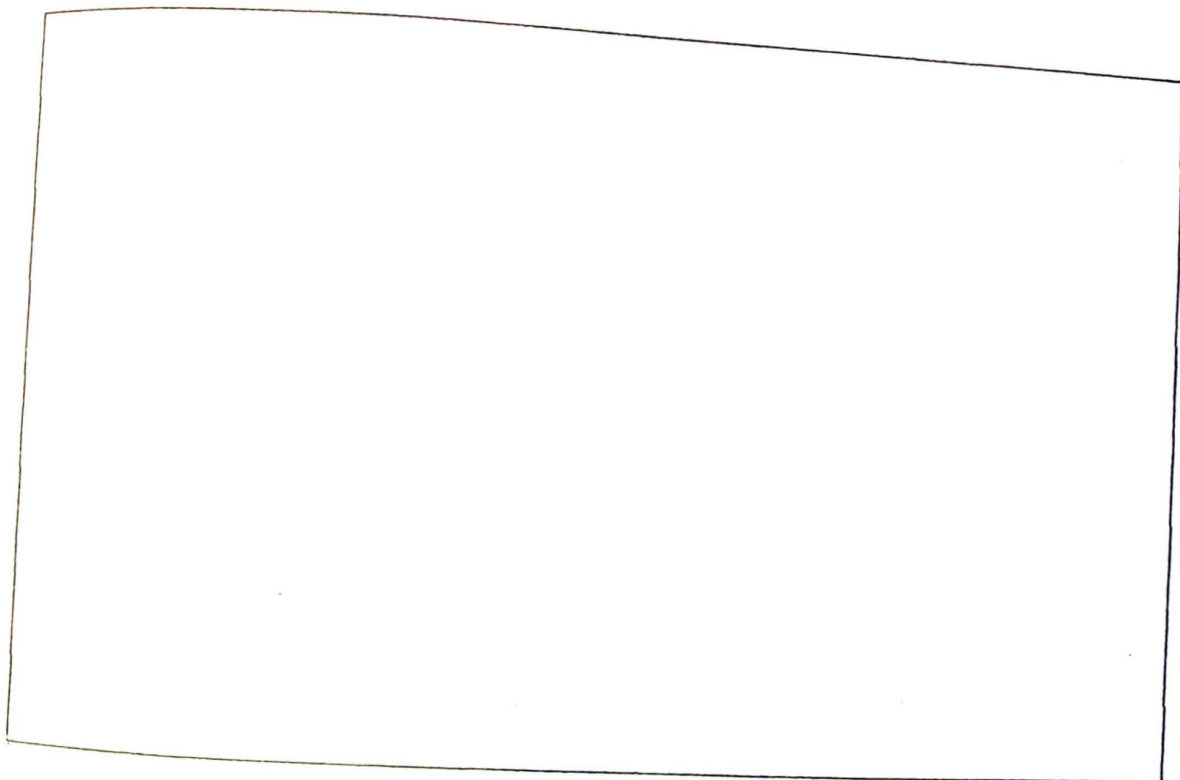
## Appendix H

### Science Writing Prompt

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Helping Our Environment

Think about what you have learned about how to save and protect our environment. Write and illustrate what you can do to help our environment.



## VITA

Bettye J. Broadbent was born in Cadiz, Kentucky. She attended elementary schools in Hopkinsville, Kentucky. In May, 1971 she graduated from Christian County High School in Hopkinsville, Kentucky. In December, 1991 she received her Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from Austin Peay State University. In January, 1993 she reentered graduate school at Austin Peay State University. In December, 1995 she received her Master's in Elementary Education from Austin Peay.

She is presently employed as a second grade teacher for the Fort Campbell School System.