PATTERNS OF WRITING DEVELOPMENT IN FRENCH
BY STUDENTS IN FRENCH IMMERSION

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Patterns of Writing Developments in French

by Students in French Immersion

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Abstract/Résumé

The purpose of this study is to examine the characteristics of the development of writing in French by early French immersion students from kindergarten to grade twelve who attend school in British Columbia. Qualitative measures were used in the pursuit of this research.

The data were gathered in two ways: first, in the interests of authentic communication, letters were exchanged with a number of students of all ages attending schools in two British Columbia school districts with well established immersion programs; and secondly, student correspondents were asked to submit other samples of their writing that they are proud of, particularly writing done as part of their school work. Of the 118 samples of writing used in the study, most were personal letters. In the analysis phase, the reference sets for assessing development in writing in English developed by the British Columbia Ministry of Education were used as a starting point.

The potential usefulness of the study is fourfold. It could demonstrate if there is a predictable developmental pattern in immersion students' writing. Secondly, it could show to what extent the pattern parallels characteristic development in writing by students writing in English, as indicated in the writing reference sets produced by the Ministry of Education. The study would then provide a basis for considering the potential value of developing reference sets for assessing immersion students' writing. Lastly, the emerging patterns of development might suggest teaching and assessing practice which could serve to enhance student writing.

The results of the study suggest that there is a pattern of writing development in French immersion. There are, in fact, many similarities in the development of writing in both languages. These are in the areas of responsiveness to the reader (a sense of audience), communicating the meaning intended, and the development of style and form. The important differences are found in the areas of English interference in relation to surface features. There is some evidence to suggest that English interference patterns may be a reflection of maturing second language development rather than a failing of the student or the system.
Le but de cette recherche descriptive était d'examiner les caractéristiques du développement de l'écrit en français chez les élèves de la Colombie-Britannique en immersion française (M - 12), de percevoir un modèle de développement, de vérifier si ce modèle ressemble à celui des élèves anglophones écrivant en anglais (comme l'indique l'ensemble de référence pour l'écriture en anglais élaboré par le ministère de l'Éducation) et d'examiner le potentiel d'un ensemble de référence pour l'évaluation des élèves en immersion. Des mesures qualitatives ont été utilisées à cette fin. Le résultat des analyses révèle qu'il existe des ressemblances dans le développement de l'écrit des deux groupes d'élèves, et que les plus grandes différences se trouvent au niveau des traits d'interaction avec l'anglais et des erreurs de forme. Il semble que l'interaction de l'anglais soit attribuable au développement de la langue plutôt qu'à une faiblesse de l'élève ou du système.
À tous les élèves en immersion française sans qui ce projet aurait été impossible.
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# Table of Contents

*Acknowledgements* .......................................................... ii  
*Abstract / Résumé* .......................................................... iii  
*Dedication* ........................................................................ v  
*Acknowledgements* ............................................................ vi  
*List of Figures* .................................................................... ix  
*List of Illustrations* ........................................................... x

**Chapter 1**  
*Introduction to the Study* .................................................. 1

**Chapter 2**  
*A Literature Review* .......................................................... 17  
LANGUAGE AND THOUGHT .................................................. 17  
LANGUAGE AND CULTURE .................................................. 20  
LITERACY ........................................................................... 23  
WRITING AND SPEAKING .................................................... 29  
WRITING, LANGUAGE, THOUGHT, AND LEARNING .............. 30  
LEARNING TO WRITE AND TEACHING TO WRITE .............. 34  
LITERACY AND BILINGUALISM ........................................... 41  
LEARNING TO WRITE AND TEACHING  
WRITING IN A SECOND LANGUAGE ........................................ 45  
ASSESSMENT OF WRITING .................................................. 55  
ASSESSMENT OF WRITING IN A SECOND LANGUAGE ............ 63  
REFERENCE SETS AS A TOOL .............................................. 65  
REFERENCE SETS PROTOTYPES .......................................... 67
Chapter 3
Methodology ................................................. 70
A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY .................................. 70
RESEARCH DESIGN ........................................... 72
USING THE REFERENCE SET ................................... 77
THE DIMENSION OF WRITING PURPOSE .................... 77
THE DIMENSION OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL CONTINUUM .... 81
THE DIMENSION OF DESCRIPTIONS .......................... 82
ON CURIOSITY, BIAS AND HOPE ............................. 84
THE SETTING .................................................. 87
THE SUBJECTS ............................................... 90
FRENCH IN FRENCH IMMERSION ............................ 91
DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES AND TIMEFRAME .... 93
DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES ............................... 94

Chapter 4
Research Findings ............................................. 97
THE RESEARCH FINDINGS, AN OVERVIEW .................. 99
THE WRITING PURPOSES REVISITED ......................... 100
PRE-LEVEL ONE WRITING ..................................... 102
LEVEL ONE WRITING ......................................... 105
LEVEL TWO WRITING .......................................... 108
LEVEL THREE WRITING ....................................... 112
LEVEL FOUR WRITING ....................................... 115
LEVEL FIVE WRITING ......................................... 123
LEVEL SIX WRITING .......................................... 136
LEVEL SEVEN WRITING ....................................... 149
ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS ....................................... 163
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS ...................................... 187
Chapter 5
Conclusions .......................................................... 188
SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION ........................................ 188
LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY ........................................ 195
SIGNIFICANCE FOR CLASSROOM PRACTICE .................... 196
References ............................................................. 200

Appendices
APPENDIX 1 - THE CODING FORM ................................. 209
APPENDIX 2 - THE DESCRIPTIONS ................................. 210

List of Figures
FIGURE 1 - Samples of writing received by grade, gender, ESL participants and type .... 75
FIGURE 2 - Dimensions of the Writing Reference Set as applied to French immersion
students writing in French ........................................... 77
FIGURE 3 - Dimensions of the Writing Reference Set as applied to French immersion
students writing in French, revised ............................... 80
FIGURE 4 - Two-dimensional evaluation grid (by level) ........................................ 102
FIGURE 5 - Word Count by Grade .................................. 163
FIGURE 6 - Word Count by Level ................................... 164
FIGURE 7 - Reader, distribution of performance by grade and level ......................... 165
FIGURE 8 - Meaning, distribution of performance by grade and level ...................... 166
FIGURE 9 - Style, distribution of performance by grade and level ........................... 167
FIGURE 10 - Form, distribution of performance by grade and level .......................... 168
FIGURE 11 - Surface Features, distribution of performance by grade and level ........... 169
FIGURE 12 - Surface Features - Kindergarten ............................................. 170
FIGURE 13 - Surface Features - Grade 1 ............................................. 170
FIGURE 14 - Surface Features - Grade 2 ............................................. 171
FIGURE 15 - Surface Features - Grade 4 ............................................. 171
FIGURE 16 - Surface Features - Grade 5 ............................................. 171
FIGURE 17 - Surface Features - Grade 6 ............................................. 172
FIGURE 18 - Surface Features - Grade 7 ............................................. 172
List of Illustrations

ILLUSTRATION 1 - Introductory Letter .............................................. 102
ILLUSTRATION 2 - Pre-Level One Writing ........................................... 103
ILLUSTRATION 3 - Response to Letter Received ................................... 104
ILLUSTRATION 4 - Pre-Level One Writing, Second Letter ....................... 105
ILLUSTRATION 5 - Level 1 Writing ...................................................... 106
ILLUSTRATION 6 - Level 2 Writing ...................................................... 109
ILLUSTRATION 7 - Level 3 Writing - Grade One Sample ....................... 112
ILLUSTRATION 8 - Level 3 Writing - Grade Five Sample ....................... 115
ILLUSTRATION 9 - Level 4 Writing - to Learn ..................................... 116
ILLUSTRATION 10 - Level 4 Writing - as Friendly Communication, Grade 2 Sample ................................................ 120
ILLUSTRATION 11 - Level 4 Writing - as Friendly Communication, Grade 5 Sample ................................................ 123
ILLUSTRATION 12 - Level 5 Writing - to Learn .............................................. 126
ILLUSTRATION 13 - Level 5 Writing - for Self-Realization ............................... 129
ILLUSTRATION 14 - Level 5 Writing - as Culture ........................................... 130
ILLUSTRATION 15 - Level 5 Writing - as Friendly Communication ..................... 134
ILLUSTRATION 16 - Level 6 Writing - to Learn ................................................ 137
ILLUSTRATION 17 - Level 6 Writing - for Self-Realization ............................... 141
ILLUSTRATION 18 - Level 6 Writing - as Culture ............................................ 143
ILLUSTRATION 19 - Level 6 Writing - as Friendly Communication ..................... 147
ILLUSTRATION 20 - Level 7 Writing - to Learn ................................................ 150
ILLUSTRATION 21 - Level 7 Writing - for Self-Realization ............................... 153
ILLUSTRATION 22 - Level 7 Writing - as Culture ............................................ 156
ILLUSTRATION 23 - Level 7 Writing - as Friendly Communication ..................... 161
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The Winds of Change: The Context for the Study

During recent years, researchers and educators have acquired new understandings of how children learn to write in their first language. Based on this and related work, researchers in second language instruction are questioning their traditional beliefs and methods (Halsall & Wall, 1992). At the same time, the advantages of humanistic and child-centered learning are being examined and appreciated by many educators as the most effective way to meet the needs of "all learners" (B. C. Ministry of Education, 1990).

Learning to read has been generally and traditionally understood to precede learning to write (Hall, 1987). Writing teachers would typically present discrete amounts of language in a planned sequence based on words that the children were presumed to be able to read, and language concepts that they would probably be able to grasp. All the children in the same grade or group would listen to the explanation, and then the teaching points would be reinforced through a variety of reductionist workbook activities or other exercises (Zamel, 1987). Writing assignments would be selected to be appropriate to the level of reading mastery and age of the students -- which were assumed to be known and common. The activities might involve writing answers to objective questions. They might be writing a short paragraph or story. Letters might be written to an imaginary friend. Syntactical, spelling and punctuation errors would be indicated in the teacher's correction of work. Problems in word
choice might be noted. A mark would probably be assigned. Students might be asked to correct workbook and spelling errors, but much less often they would be asked to revise compositions (Graves, 1983; Matsuhashi & Gordon, 1985). Where teachers would comment on the student writers' style, very often those comments would draw the students' attention away from their own purposes in writing a particular text to focus that attention on the teachers' purpose in commenting (Sommers, 1984). 'Good' work would be displayed. In elementary school, other activities such as weekly spelling lists, and printing or handwriting practice would be required to further the children's skills. Motivation to write would be stimulated in a variety of ways -- attractive illustrations, pre-writing discussion, and so forth (Petrosky, 1977). My own experience in secondary schools would suggest that the desire for high marks -- and this does not seem to change -- serves as the prime motivator.

Writing instruction is beginning to change, particularly in the classes of younger children. The visitor to a primary British Columbia classroom is quite likely to see children working individually or with partners, and using a variety of materials, as they represent their thoughts through illustrations, models, journals, stories, letters, plays, reports, poems, 'newspapers', summaries, and so forth. The composing they are doing may or may not be related to a common stimulus. The amount of writing produced is generally greater than in the past. Children may compare their work with others for response and revision suggestions. Work is likely kept in portfolios or displayed in a variety of ways including possibly in 'published' form in the school library. It may or may not be characterized by standard spelling, punctuation, or syntax. It may appear not to have been marked. This philosophy of learning to write (and listen, speak and read), "an overriding theory and point of view about language, literacy and
content learning" (Altwerger, Edelsky & Flores, 1987), is known as Whole Language. The research basis for whole language will be explored in the following chapter.

There is no question that this apparent lack of structure is of concern to many parents and the wider community. Critics of whole language express fear about loss of standards and call for a return to the "basics". Whole language is often portrayed in the media as freedom not to learn, as intellectual laziness on the part of teacher and children. The apparent lack of a disciplined approach is seen as possibly leading to intellectual and social chaos. Related sentiments are also expressed by some teachers of older children as well as post-secondary instructors. There is also anxiety that without competitiveness children and young people simply will not 'rise to the occasion' (B. C. Ministry of Education Annual Report, 1991-1992).

Accountability has become the watchword of certain parent and employer groups, and readily adopted by the provincial and district educational leaders who have to show that educational change is not arbitrary but based on solid research. Parents (and some teachers) doubt the ability of educators to assess whether their students are making adequate or desired progress unless they resort to comparison and on-going testing. They fear that by not comparing the children in relation to each other in a particular grade or class, children requiring extra help or stimulation will not be identified and extra help or stimuli will not be forthcoming (B. C. Ministry of Education Annual Report, 1991-1992).

Approaches to assist parents and teachers in assessing student progress are being explored, particularly those that avoid invidious comparisons. The British
Columbia Ministry of Education is currently considering one such technique, referred to as *reference sets*. Reference sets are used to show the patterns, range and depth of children's growth in particular skills. These tools have been developed by researchers and educators to illustrate what children "can do" at various stages. They are broadly age referenced, and may serve as the standard against which any particular child's development may be measured. This form of measurement is somewhat analogous to the approach of Gessell (1940 and 1946) in his descriptions of child development from birth to ten years old.

Reference sets research in British Columbia has begun in the fields of developmental writing (B.C. Ministry of Education, 1992) and reading (B.C. Ministry of Education, 1994), with response drafts now in the field for feedback; other areas of skill development are being studied with the plan to create further reference sets. Two related assessment resources, *Home Economics Assessment Strategies: Intermediate* and *Exemplars in Visual Arts: Intermediate* have also been published (B.C. Ministry of Education, 1993). The research basis for reference sets will be explained in the next chapter.

The whole language philosophy of language teaching is also beginning to appear in classes where children are being instructed in a language other than that of the home. The following chapter examines current research in the teaching of writing to children in bilingual education. In British Columbia this is most often in English as a Second Language and in French Immersion classrooms (Information Services, B.C. Ministry of Education, 1993). It follows that parallel assessment tools will be sought by second language educational leaders. And that is indeed the case.
The Context of the Study: French Immersion

Early French Immersion was introduced in British Columbia in 1968. Twenty-six years later the provincial enrollment in French Immersion (September, 1994) is over 30,000 children, most in early immersion (Forms 1601 and 1701, Information Services, B.C., Ministry of Education, 1994). In early immersion, French is the language of instruction during the children's primary years. After a kindergarten year which is mostly oral, speaking, listening (understanding), writing and reading are taught concurrently, and in French. Generally English language arts instruction is introduced when the children are eight or nine years of age. By this time almost all are able to read in English without ever having had formal school instruction in this skill. Research indicates that writing skills in English catch up rapidly, usually within months, with those of their unilingual peers (Alberta Education, 1992; Rehorick, 1994).

Unlike most earlier methods of instruction of a second language, French immersion provides a context for language learning. It is through study in the content areas of social studies, music, physical education, art, mathematics, science, and others, as much as in French language arts, that children acquire facility in their new language. Unlike earlier techniques, the teaching of language is not primarily by decontextualized drills (although these still occur in a number of language arts classes, especially at the secondary level - see Dubé, 1991). Expressions which meet immediate needs are rapidly learned. Social interaction and school activities provide and respond to these needs (Genesee, 1987).

In French immersion in British Columbia, whole language is being embraced by many teachers of primary, and cautiously being experimented with
by teachers of the intermediate years (grades 4 to 10). Graduation level teachers (grades 11 and 12) are yet to be convinced. At the same time, a communicative/experiential syllabus for the teaching of Core French, "designed to promote communicative competence by offering experiences using the second language for authentic communicative purposes...[using] motivating non-arbitrary themes and activities that will be personally and educationally relevant to students, increasing their communication skills and, at the same time, enriching their experience in a variety of domains" (Harley, d'Anglejan & Shapson, 1990, p. 76), shares many similarities with whole language, and is now being embraced by curriculum writers in many parts of Canada.

Traditional second language pedagogy in Canada has had relatively little success in achieving proficiency in French (Calvé, 1991) -- though there is now new hope with l'approche communicative influencing current trends in second language teaching. This hope is based in part on the success of immersion, grounded as it is in the learning of French in context, the context of content courses and classroom life through which the second language is acquired. This emphasis on real, rich and meaningful context is basic to l'approche communicative. (For further information, see the six books sponsored by the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers under the general heading, National Core French Study/Étude nationale sur les programmes de français de base, 1990).

French immersion is a program unlike others. It was developed in the sixties in the Montreal area to respond to the wishes of parents to have their children become 'functionally' bilingual through their schooling (Lambert & Tucker, 1972). It was parental lobbying combined with the support of a few
educators that provided the opportunity to become proficient in French without suffering loss in other areas of learning, or 'French without tears'. Romney, Romney & Brawn (1988, p. 530) stress that "the goal is to have the new language acquired through its continuous use while learning something else and not by means of formal language instruction. It is supposed to be a 'natural' way of learning a language within the school environment."

French immersion has been widely studied from its inception. Lambert & Tucker (1972), Lapkin (1984), Genesee (1987), Lapkin, Hart & Swain (1991) and others have examined the effectiveness of the methodology and have measured immersion students in a quantitative fashion at all stages of their schooling. They have studied their abilities in French and in English in listening/comprehending, speaking, reading and writing. They have measured their attitudes toward French language and culture and toward francophones. In addition, they have measured the performance of these students in other subject areas. Although distinguishable from francophones, students have shown themselves able to do what the immersion designers hoped -- to continue on in post-secondary studies in either official language, and/or work in either official language at the end of their secondary years (Rebuffot, 1988 and 1994, provides helpful summaries of immersion studies to date). Despite any shortcomings in the teaching of French language arts in immersion (my own observations indicate that many immersion teachers are uninformed about whole language and the writing process -- whose foundation is elaborated in the next chapter), there is no question that, as one writer has put it, "with all its attendant advantages for Canadians and the fact that it has more or less achieved what it set out to do, immersion has been one and possibly the only educational experiment which has stood the test of time" (Genesee, 1987).
Bilingualism has a chequered history in North America. Teachers who have had to cope with immigrant children working in a new language have seen these children struggle in school. This led to a common belief by teachers and some researchers (Bibeau, 1991, is a Canadian example) that two languages confuse a child and interfere with learning. Typically these children have had poorer marks than their unilingual peers. By contrast, French immersion students in Canada have shown themselves to do as well as or better than their peers. Some researchers propose that there are cognitive advantages to bilingualism (see Cummins & Swain (1986) study of related research). Lambert (1977) developed a hypothesis of positive and negative bilingualism; it proposes that children who are secure in their first language stand to gain with the acquisition of subsequent languages -- positive bilingualism. Children who are still developing their first language, particularly where it is not supported by either the community or personal literacy, tend to lack language skills in both the first and second languages -- negative bilingualism. While Lapkin, Swain & Shapson (1990, p. 643) suggest that this is an area for further research, they note that immersion students who have developed a relatively high level of proficiency in French appear to be more proficient in English. Children in a bilingual French/English program in Toronto whose first language is neither French nor English, but who are literate in their first language appear to develop stronger skills in French than do their classmates who are anglophone (Lapkin, Hart & Swain, 1991).

Relatively little qualitative analysis of French immersion programs and processes has been done to date. New research methodology and a shift in the research paradigm to recognize the local context while providing a rich description is changing this (see, for example, Rebuffot, 1994, pp. 197-200).
Despite its successes and drawing power, French immersion is not without problems. Dubé (1991), Lewis (1986) and others, not to mention students, parents and administrators, have identified a number of problems, particularly at the secondary level. Secondary drop-outs from the immersion program have identified the need for subject specialists (as opposed to the teachers who are given assignments for which they have no professional training), for learning assistance, and for opportunities to use their French in meaningful ways -- as opposed to polycopied grammar drills à propos of nothing pertinent to their lives. We can rejoice that some teacher training institutions are beginning to address these problems. Dubé (1991) proposes two solutions: better teacher preparation, and the integration of language and content courses at the university level, as is being done at the University of Ottawa.

Areas of Preliminary Inquiry: Writing Development

Learning to write, as learning to speak, is a complex and integrated process. Thought forms language as language forms thought. Meaning and knowledge are constructed through language and thought. [The work of Vygotsky (as interpreted by Wertsch, 1985), Graves (1983), Chomsky (1968), Heath (1983) and others is considered in the following chapter.] Whether writing or speaking, the process itself provides skill development. Without someone to talk to, a child does not learn to speak. As children need to convey messages, they learn to construct the sound patterns which will allow them to do so. Speech, like meaning, is socially constructed. For it is only in a social context that speech occurs.
An "authentic audience" for writing serves the same function as audience does for speaking. The research which supports this statement is elaborated in the following chapter.

Research and experience in bilingual education suggest that the needs and processes of learning to speak/understand and to write/read are very similar for all children whether working in their first or second languages (for example, Edelsky, 1986). That is to say, the social context provides both the need and the means to communicate.

Assessment of Writing

Teachers and parents often wonder, "How are my children doing?" This question may be posed in relation to other children or in relation to a child's own potential. This is equally true for French immersion, and the ability to answer this question in a reasoned and reasonable way is often difficult. My experience suggests that teachers often depend in large measure on their own general observations of the class performance to establish how any individual is learning.

Based on the premise that language skills are developmental in nature, educators (Arnold, 1991; Cooper, 1989; Nicholls et al, 1989) have postulated that the stages of this development can be charted. The reference sets recently developed under the auspices of the British Columbia Ministry of Education include a set of samples of writing in English which, together with accompanying explanatory notes and coding system, is meant to serve first, as a set of milestone indicators, and secondly as signposts towards future growth.
They look at writing from many perspectives among which spelling, punctuation and correct usage are together only one. The reference sets span the years from pre-writing to a level of sophistication which would not be attained by every school student. They are based on the evolution of writing skills in English as mother tongue. It is never stated, but no reference is made to students for whom English is a second language. They were not forgotten, but it was assumed that they should fit into the paradigm as a realistic reflection of British Columbia’s ethnicity (discussion and decision by the B. C. Ministry of Education Short Term Reference Set Editorial Board meeting that I attended on behalf of the Languages and Multicultural Programs Branch in Richmond, on June 17, 1992).

The writing reference sets are based on a number of principles:

- The reference set materials support learning and facilitate communication.
- Teachers are the primary audience.
- The writing reference set accommodates a wide range of writing.
- The writing reference set can be used in all curriculum areas.
- A writer’s development cannot be validly described in terms of one piece of writing.
- The development of a writer is complex.
- Each piece of writing is affected by the context in which it is written.
- The essential purpose of all writing is communication.
- Writers belong to a variety of writing communities.
- The procedures used to assess writing support all students.
- A student’s knowledge and ideas may not be reflected by their writing.

(B. C. Ministry of Education, 1992, pp. 1-3)

At the time of writing, no similar instrument exists for assessing immersion writing. Consideration is being given to developing reference sets for French immersion.
The Question

Finding a rule by which to assess the development of a child's writing in French immersion would provide a sense of position along a continuum, or at least within a field on a matrix. Reference sets are purported to be able to do this for English language arts.

Are the patterns of development in immersion student writing in French similar to those of their peers in English?

This and related questions might appropriately be asked in relation to all French immersion programs, and there are a few. By far the most common in British Columbia is early immersion with entry point normally in kindergarten or grade 1; late immersion, with entry point in grade six, has relatively far fewer students. For the purposes of this study research is limited to the Early French Immersion Program.

Definition of Terms

Bilingualism: This term "has not been used in a consistent way among researchers and theoreticians. Macnamara, (1967) for example, defines bilinguals as those who possess at least one of the language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) even to a minimal degree in their second language. At the other end of the scale, bilinguals have been defined as those who demonstrate complete mastery of two different languages without interference between the two linguistic processes (Oestreich 1974) or who have native-like control of two or more languages (Bloomfield 1993). The tendency has been to focus on speaking and listening skills (e.g. Haugen 1953; Pohl 1965; Weinreich 1953)"
(citation from p. 7 of Cummins & Swain, 1986). Evidently it is a controversial word. It is almost always modified by such words as simultaneous or sequential, compound or coordinate, artificial or natural, early or late, functional, complete or partial.

*Reference Sets* are defined by the Ministry of Education as "resources designed by teachers for teachers to use to help them support students' learning", and "include descriptions, with samples of students' work at different levels, suggested strategies to promote further learning, and a provincial picture of what students in British Columbia can do" (B.C. Ministry of Education, 1992b, p. i).

**Significance of the Study**

As alluded to earlier, a number of tensions have emerged in relation to the British Columbia Ministry of Education's *Year 2000* programs. These program initiatives stemmed from recommendations of the report of the Sullivan Royal Commission (1988) which supported major reforms to the system of public education in the province. As these reforms were elaborated, it became evident that societal and family expectations of the educational system were to some degree at odds with the student-centered philosophy of the *Year 2000* (B. C. Ministry of Education, 1990). These tensions are expressed in terms of the necessity to make students competitive in the job market, supported by the argument that they only get competitive by practicing competitiveness. This leads to the correlative concern that parents will not 'know how their children are doing' without comparing them to others in their classes. This, in turn, creates calls for accountability. There is a presumption by some that using 'whole language' is experimenting with children, a senseless activity since
children have been learning to read and write in regular classrooms using conventional methods since the origins of public schooling.

Parents have as much right as anyone and, indeed, the obligation to know about and secure their children's appropriate development. They also have an obligation to provide their children with life's necessities, one of which is the means to become independent and self-sustaining. Providing parents with information about their children's development, both successes and problems, in a way that respects the children's need to learn in an encouraging and enabling environment can be very difficult, particularly if the parents have very precise goals for their children.

Educators often find themselves torn between the external pressure to provide comparative information and the internal pressure to protect the optimistic but immature child, especially if providing such information might cause the parents to apply harmful pressure. This tension has led to the adoption of anecdotal report cards for primary children, and in many schools, for intermediate students as well. Anecdotal reporting often serves as an extreme irritant to parents who wonder what 'doing well' or 'making satisfactory progress' means. (For political correctness, these reports are now referred to as structured written report cards.)

Their designers hope that reference sets will resolve this tension, at least in part. They also hope that they will provide the links for teachers, parents, and the students themselves in making appropriate connections between assessment and instruction.
Generally the strength of writing assessment tools, whether for English or a second language, has been in their ability to describe through explanatory detail and comparison (see Neville, 1988; De Koninck, 1994; 1989 and Lapkin, Swain and Shapson, 1990). Their weakness has been their inability to provide advice to the teacher as to what to do next.

The purpose of this study then is to establish patterns of growth and development in writing in French on the part of learners in French immersion. A secondary purpose will be to assess the value of reference sets as a tool for evaluating student writing. The fulfilment of these purposes may in turn permit insights into the extent to which writing in French is qualitatively and quantitatively different from that of peer writing in English and possibly suggest ways in which teaching of writing in French immersion might be improved. Finally, it may inform any future development of an appropriate assessment tool for immersion writing.

Outline of the Chapters

This study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter describes the rationale and background from which the research questions are derived. The second chapter considers the research literature pertaining to this and related fields: learning to write in a first and second language; language as a developer of language, thought, learning and writing itself; approaches to assessment of student writing in first and second languages; and the theory of reference sets. The third chapter describes the methodology used as the basis for the research: how writing samples were gathered to assess the developmental patterns of the writing of French immersion students across the years from kindergarten to
grade 12. Chapter four provides a summary of the research findings: the patterns of development which the student writing suggests, the differences between these and the patterns of development in English, and the usefulness -- if any -- of reference sets similar to those for English language arts as an assessment tool for second language analysis. Chapter five examines the significance and utility of the findings and proposes fruitful areas for future research.
CHAPTER TWO

A LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the current status of fields of inquiry which form the theoretical base to this study of the development of writing in a second language, specifically in French immersion. These include an examination of the psychosocial underpinnings of literacy and how it relates to schooling, composing (writing) as an aspect of literacy, learning to write and the assessment of student writing in either first or second language.

Language and Thought

For Vygotsky (Wertsch, 1985), it was the capacity to use language and reflect on its use that distinguishes human thought. His observations led him to the conclusion that the psychologist's habit of reductionism that was practiced by his contemporaries was essentially flawed -- precisely because it ignored the interconnectedness of higher mental functions such as memory, attention, thinking and perception (p. 190). In his psychological hierarchy, Vygotsky gave primacy to consciousness, consisting of intellect and affect which he saw as inseparable (p. 189).

To this integrated view, Vygotsky (Wertsch, 1985) added another important dimension. Consciousness is dynamic and not static, and change is an essential condition of consciousness (p. 190). Vygotsky's research into and reflection about the nature of higher consciousness in turn led him to the word
as a potential fundamental unit of analysis. This raised the question of what *word meaning* represents - speech or thinking. According to Vygotsky, "it is speech and thinking at one and the same time because it is a unity of verbal thought" (p. 195). Higher mental functions, thus, have social origins. Based on these concepts, Vygotsky sought a general genetic law of cultural development of which *internalization* and the *zone of proximal development* are given particular attention today (p. 61).

Both Piaget and Vygosky (Wertsch, 1985) understood the concept of internalization in a similar way -- that which had been experienced externally could later be repeated internally. Vygotsky also insisted that external activity must be explained in terms of "semiotically mediated social processes" that explain "the emergence of internal functioning" (p. 62). Thus, communicative significance of a particular behaviour on the child's part only comes to exist in child-adult interaction -- on the interpsychological plane. Early manifestations such as a baby's pointing (derived from reaching) acquire meaning for the baby when the adult reacts in a specific way:

All higher mental functions are internalized social relationships.... Even when we turn to mental [internal] processes, their nature remains quasi-social. In their own private sphere human beings retain the functions of social interaction" (p. 66).

The zone of proximal development was a concept developed to provide a link between assessment of children's intellectual abilities and the evaluation of instructional practices. Vygotsky (Wertsch, 1985) defined it as the distance between a child's "actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving" and the higher level of "potential development as determined
through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (pp. 67-8).

During the last years of his life, Vygotsky (Wertsch, 1985) came more and more to think of language and other symbolic systems as psychological tools. Language he described as the most important of all the tools, saying that "the primary function of speech, both for the adult and for the child, is the function of communication, social contact, influencing surrounding individuals" (p. 81).

Metalinguistic awareness, in a Vygotskian sense, is not static but evolves as the child develops. Vygotsky asserted that "the initial command of grammar is an unconscious skill. The child is not aware of what he/she is doing because the child lacks skills in abstract, deliberate thinking activity. As the child progresses in concept development, word meanings change because the dimensions and content associated with that word change.... The reverse is also true. The child will not develop new concepts unless and until word meanings do change!" (Skinner, 1985, p. 102).

Piaget's view was not unrelated though his reasoning was somewhat different. He postulated that children progress through four identifiable stages of development which are common to all people, do not vary, and that each stage served as a preparation for the next. His view is one of constructing and reconstructing one's knowledge from the experiences gained through interaction with the world, a notion of checking out ideas, and then rebuilding them on that basis (Skinner, 1985, pp. 99-100).
For Noam Chomsky (Lyons, 1970), language development is innate to the human species, and thus, children are born with a predisposition for language. Language, therefore, develops early and effectively -- and this without any constructed learning.

Skinner (1985) understands that while "the Piagetian school claims that learning and language are constructed from successive experiences with the environment -- from what the environment may bring to the learner.... the Chomsky school says that interactions with the environment activate what the learner brings to the interaction" (p. 101).

What appears to unite the three theorists is the principle that learning and language are constructed from successive experiences with the environment by the learner. Learning and language are ultimately inseparable, and the trigger is social interaction.

Language and Culture

It might seem to be a truism that language shapes culture and that the culture of a community is also shaped by its language. Yet most of us behave in our day-to-day lives as though words have the same significance and social value for every listener and speaker. Are there then limitations to an adequate level of comprehension by native language (L1) teachers of their second language (L2) students? Are they able to tolerate imperfect language? And, in the same vein, do the cultures of L2 students inhibit their understanding of L1 speakers (in these instances anglophone immersion students and francophone teachers)?
Heath's (1983) study of the cultural impact on children's acquisition of language and learning showed that the social and linguistic environments in which groups of children grow up profoundly shape their responses to schooling. Heath found, for example, that teachers, who are most often of middle-class background, have trouble with children who come from other backgrounds (i.e., cultures). In her study, politeness, both how to define it and ways of showing it, caused problems in preschool classrooms. Working-class black children did not have 'normal' manners, while white working-class children promptly seemed to lose theirs once they were in school. Like others of the middle class, the teachers thought of their own ways of thinking and behaving as natural, and expected others to share them.

The question of the power of language cannot be ignored in discussions of language and culture. The groups which Heath (1983) studied lived in the same community and all spoke English. Yet, for all that, they used language in very different ways, some of which were considerably more empowering than others.

Clark, Fairclough et al (1991) believe that teachers need to become sensitive to cultural/linguistic differences. This in turn should be tied to purposeful discourse in order to assist learners to discover their potential. Related concerns in French immersion include the difficulties students encounter in using an appropriate register (recognizing, for example, when to address a person as tu or vous, or when formal discourse is more culturally appropriate).

Corson (1991) addressed the way that our education and discourse practices "routinely repress, dominate and disempower language users whose practices
differ from the norms" which the education system has established (p. 231). Do L2 immigrant students experience rejection in school? Bourdieu (cited in Corson, 1991) believes that schools do not equally value the language and culture of children of many backgrounds. Inequalities may be passed from generation to generation with the quiet complicity of both parents and pupils. Or as Corson puts it:

> While schools do not explicitly give students what they demand from them, they still uniformly demand that all their students should have what the schools themselves do not give: namely a relation to language and culture exclusively produced by a particular mode of inculcation. In other words, the school passes on training and information which can only be fully received by those who have had the culturally appropriate training that it does not give. (p. 243)

This is likely not true for French immersion students who usually are part of the cultural mainstream. Where they may run into cultural bias is in the evaluation of their performance against L1 norms, sometimes the L2 teacher's reference point.

Heath (1983) tried to reconcile this dilemma. In her work with teachers, she used ethnographies of communication which "became instrumental for teachers and students bridging language and culture differences and discovering how to recognize and use language as power...." (p. 262). As they assessed their old patterns, these teachers became interested in the role of teacher-researcher:

> For many, seemingly simple insights into their past classroom behaviors and attitudes opened the way for curricular reforms and modified teaching practices.... (p. 272).

Sensitivity to the differences in the uses of children's language proved troublesome. One example was the use by teachers of children's names as they appeared on their birth certificates, names with which the children were
unfamiliar and to which they did not respond. (This is analogous to the occasional practice of calling immersion students by the translation of their names.) Another was in the area of what constitutes mainstream mannerliness. (In French, the choice of *tu/vous* and the use of the conditional to express politeness is a possible source of misunderstanding.)

**Literacy**

Literacy has been defined in a number of ways over time. A century ago, the level of functional literacy was established by the ability to sign one's name. Literacy at the intermediate level meant the capability of reading the Bible. A high level of literacy was virtually inaccessible to all but the privileged classes (Pierre, 1991).

Rates of literacy have been on a steady increase throughout the twentieth century. At the same time, the descriptions of the various levels of literacy have become more stringent. This is reflective of the very significant social and technological changes of this period. Literacy has become essential to most aspects of daily life -- and this truism applies virtually worldwide.

Schooling and literacy have nonetheless come to be the force upon which we rely to provide a stable society and to bring about needed social change. Problems and failures are therefore attributed to the failure of schools. Literacy indicates a healthy society and illiteracy takes on considerable symbolic significance. Cook-Gumperz (1986) suggests that even today a literate person is seen to be a person capable of exercising good or reasonable judgement because literacy provides access to a written tradition -- the source of collective
experience. The obverse of that coin is that illiterate people must lack proper
d judgement in proportion to their lack of education.

Definitions of literacy are being transformed by recent research. Wells
(1990) suggests that "to be fully literate ... is to have the disposition to engage
appropriately with texts of different types in order to empower action, feeling and
thinking in the context of purposeful social activity" (p. 14). This is a long way
from a notion of literacy as skills for decoding or encoding. The concept of
literacy now includes recognition of the wide variety of purposes that texts serve
in our lives. These purposes, as Wells points out, "vary from one culture to
another, as do the values that we place on them" (p. 13). Within our Western
culture, texts are action-related (forms, advertising, reminders), designed to
transmit what purports to be the truth (reference books, manuals), and
interpretive (scientific theory, history, biography, novels, poems, plays).

Current views of literacy recognize its strong connection with thinking.
Texts possess the capacity to transmit "critical and constructive thought and
reflection,... extending ... understanding of the material world ... and the inner
world of values, feelings, and intentions. It also provides a means for gaining a
greater understanding and control of the mental processes themselves" (Wells,
1990, p. 14; see also Olson, 1985; Cook-Gumperz, 1986).

Wells (1990) expresses the opinion that our understanding of literacy has
been transformed through "the recognition of the essential similarity between
writing and other modes of symbolic representation, employing media such as
computer software and television as well as ink and paper" (p. 14).
The social and collaborative nature of learning has also altered our understanding of literacy. The context in which reading and writing occur is always social -- even though the act of reading or writing may be solitary (Wertsch, 1985; Wells, 1990; Cook-Gumperz, 1986).

A somewhat related question which educators are asking is whether difficulties in literacy acquisition in the classroom are primarily attributable to the home environment or school learning experiences. Summarizing current views, Cook-Gumperz (1986) notes that some research indicates that lower class children come with a more limited range of experiences but that it is intervention in the school, not the home, which should be the equalizer.

Since "learning is not just a matter of cognitive processing in which individuals receive, store, and use certain kinds of instructional messages which are organised into a curriculum, [and since] literacy learning takes place in a social environment through interactional exchanges in which what is to be learnt is to some extent a joint construction of teacher and student, [then] it is the purpose of educational settings to make possible this mutual construction" (Cook-Gumperz, 1986, p. 9).

In pursuing the debate about the appropriate environment to enhance emergent literacy, Teale & Sulzby (1986) characterized the early decades of this century as a period of benign neglect. At first, at least on the face of it, all children were treated alike and allowed to pass or fail. The twenties and thirties marked a change -- with a new set of beliefs referred to as reading readiness, supported by schools and publishers around the world: a) certain skills must be mastered in order to learn to read efficiently; b) reading instruction precedes
composing; c) sequential skill learning leads to mastery; d) if sufficient teaching and practice are provided, the pre-school experience is largely irrelevant; and 
e) children all pass through a scope and sequence of readiness and reading skills - necessitating periodic large-scale testing. (pp. viii - xiii)

The new challenge is to move beyond the readiness paradigm. But to what? The influence of Vygotsky, Piaget, Chomsky, and others on the theoretical bases of literacy have inspired teachers and other researchers to examine the writing and reading of very young children. This has led, in turn, to work on invented spelling, linguistic or metalinguistic awareness, and print awareness. Teale & Sulzby (1986) propose a new theoretical base for the end of the twentieth century:

1. Literacy development begins long before children start formal instruction. Children have legitimate reading and writing behaviors in the informal settings of home and community....
2. Literacy development is the appropriate way to describe what is called reading readiness: The child develops as a writer/reader. The notion of reading preceding writing, or vice versa, is a misconception. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities (as aspects of language -- both oral and written -- develop concurrently and interrelatedly, rather than sequentially.
3. Literacy develops in real-life settings for real-life activities in order to "get things done." Therefore, the functions of literacy are as integral a part of learning about writing and reading during early childhood as are the forms of literacy.
4. Children are doing critical cognitive work in literacy development during the years from birth to six.
5. Children learn written language through active engagement with their world. They interact socially with adults in writing and reading situations; they explore print on their own, and they profit from modeling of literacy by significant adults, particularly their parents.
6. Although children's learning about literacy can be described in terms of generalized stages, children can pass through these stages in a variety of ways and at different ages. Any attempts to "scope and sequence" instruction should take this developmental variation into account. (p. xviii)
Writing and Speaking

In the introduction to Freedman & Sperling (1985), Freedman suggests that children use the speech of others as a model, and through their responses, learn about the appropriateness of their utterances. In this way they form hypotheses about the language they are learning. She further suggests that this holds equally true in learning to write. However, for this to happen effectively, children need models of writing and responsive readers of their writing. In other words, the listener-speaker relationship which is necessary for the acquisition of speech should be duplicated in a writer-reader relationship for learning to write. Thus response or feedback plays a central role in helping children to distinguish whether their communication, spoken or written, is effective. Through this they gain metacognitive skills and, in the case of writing, through them learn how and what to revise (p. x).

Heath & Branscombe (1985) note that Vygotsky "maintained that internal speech and reflective thought of the young child arise from the social interaction between the child and others. Subsequently, language becomes internalized to organize thought and increasingly difficult mental functions" (p. 25). In the process children learn to distinguish between themselves as the audience of their thoughts and others as audience. As they begin to discover their "writing voice" they learn to be writer and reader at the same time using their equal role of listener to avoid confusion and misunderstanding. Communication in writing as in speech is negotiated, with a virtually inevitable "please explain what you mean" forming part of the learning process (p. 26).

The generally accepted rules that linguists have determined children need to learn "in order to be able to handle the notion of discourse topic in oral
discourse" run parallel to "those which novice writers must learn to produce coherent prose":

Step 1: The speaker [writer] must secure the attention of the listener [reader]. The listener [reader] must attend to the speaker's [writer's] utterance [written message].


Step 3: The speaker [writer] must provide sufficient information for the listener [reader] to identify objects, individuals, ideas, events, etc. included in the discourse topic. The listener [reader] must identify those objects, individuals, ideas, events, etc., that play a role in the discourse topic.

Step 4: The speaker [writer] must provide sufficient information for the listener [reader] to reconstruct the semantic relations obtaining between referents in the discourse topic. The listener [reader] must identify the semantic relations obtaining between referents in the discourse topic. (Keenan & Schieffelin, cited in Heath & Branscombe, 1985, pp. 26-27)

The central task then would appear to be one of making students aware of their readers' needs and expectations (Wells, 1990). The actual acts of reading and writing are necessarily individual but the context in which such acts occur is always social because texts are virtually always written to be read and interpreted, and to further some interpersonal purpose. Neither the creation nor the interpretation of texts occurs in a social vacuum.

Conscious control of cognitive processes is required in writing in a way that it is not in speech. Another significant difference between speaking and writing, for example, is the power of the latter to support thinking and do it in an extended way: "Texts [may be used] as external representations of the meanings achieved through critical and constructive thought and reflection,... a powerful tool for the extending of understanding about the material world of objects and
events and about the inner world of values, feelings and intentions. They also provide a means for gaining a greater understanding and control of the mental processes themselves" (Wells, 1990, p. 14).

In Olson et al (1985), Olson extends the reasoning that writing goes beyond speech: "Rocco Fondacaro and E. Tory Higgins... argue that when a speaker or writer biases his account to suit the requirements of the listener or reader, that speaker or writer tends to recall not the original facts but the slant given them in the telling." Further, these authors argue and provide preliminary evidence that given the deliberateness, permanence and authority of the written word this effect is more pronounced in writing than in speaking. This suggests that writing has a distinctive effect, not only on others' beliefs, a communicative function, but also on one's own beliefs, a cognitive function. Finally it suggests that the effects of literacy should not be considered simply as the difference between being literate and not being literate, but as the difference between choosing to write and choosing to speak (p. 7).

An additional difference between speech and writing is the fact that the writer tends to remember better not only the significance but also the words. "Writing [according to Angela Hildyard and Suzanne Hidi] ... leads to an emphasis upon the surface structure of language, whereas speech tends to leave that surface structure transparent to the underlying meaning" (Olson et al, 1985,p. 10).

Wells (see Olson et al, 1985) has investigated the relationship between children's oral and written competency and their parents' literacy levels. While out-of-school oral activities seem unaffected, a noticeable difference is found in both oral and written ability in students' in-school activities. Wells believes that
"the parental activity mediating the relation was the more highly literate parents' practice of reading stories to their children and discussing the stories with them...." The major obstacle to becoming literate, he suggests, consists not so much of matters of word and letter recognition but of the construction of meanings on the basis of decontextualized texts. This is the form of mental activity that story reading calls upon (pp. 9-10).

Writing, Language, Thought, and Learning

All the language processes are means by which learners construct meaning (Jaggar and Smith-Burke, 1985). Since language, thinking and learning are interdependent, students are ipso facto active participants in their own learning. Research demonstrates that the learner constructs knowledge within. Because all learning, particularly the learning of language, involves activity and discovery, children will acquire new knowledge only when they can relate it to existing ideas or language. However, "if the conditions are right, children can learn to read and write as easily and naturally as they learn to listen and talk. For them to make progress, literacy instruction must build on children's previously acquired knowledge" (p. 3). This means that no research, theory, or curriculum guide can prescribe what is appropriate for individual students (Eisner, in Jagger & Smith-Burke, 1985, p. 4).

This position, which highlights the individual differences among all learners, is not inconsistent with Vygotsky's theory of a "zone of proximal development". Adult-child interactions are fundamental to both the expansion of language and the development of learning in children, and are individual in nature (Wertsch, 1985).
Schneuwly (1988) explains that learning to write means moving to a second level of symbol use since oral language already uses symbols generated by sound. A further characteristic of written language is that it involves an imaginary partner (listener), at least during the production stage. This is problematic for the learning writer because it reduces the motivation to write (p. 108). Vygotsky (see Schneuwly, 1988) suggests that logical implications for teaching include: a) learning to write should happen as soon as possible, if possible before going to school; b) learning should happen in contexts which make sense to the child and which create for him or her the need to write; and, c) the learning of writing should be allowed to happen naturally -- not learning letters but language, written language (p. 101).

Thus, the role of the school must be "to broaden the range of children's experiences and to help them to develop the sustained and deliberate attention to a topic or activity that makes more systematic learning possible "(Wells, 1986). "Above all," he writes, "they need to be helped to become more reflectively aware of what they already know and still need to know, so that they can gradually take over more and more responsibility for their own learning" (p. 67).

In British Columbia, the philosophical context preferred for acquiring literacy is whole language (B. C. Ministry of Education, 1990). Whole language is a set of beliefs, and should not be confused with practice. These beliefs are grounded in research and based on the interdependence of language, thought and learning, and can be summed up as: (1) language is for making meanings, for accomplishing purposes; (2) what is true for language in general is true for written language; (3) the cueing systems of language are always simultaneously
present and interacting in language in use; (4) language use always occurs in a situation; and (5) situations are critical to meaning-making (Alwerger, Edelsky & Flores, 1987).

Children acquire language because they "want to tell someone their needs, interact with someone, express themselves, [or] ask for or give information", and this seems to be so "whether in the development of oral language or in the development of reading and writing competencies" (Loughlin & Martin, 1987, pp. 2-3). Literacy acquisition starts much sooner than most people have realized -- and long before starting school. "Some preschool children recognize many print forms from animated Sesame Street alphabets to formal primers, and hundreds of commercial trademarks are in the print repertoires of many children" (p. 4). The amount of experience children bring with them to school varies very much depending on their particular homes or communities. Children's understanding of the use of literacy is as varied as their experience, and is based on their observation of the uses of literacy by their families. The school's "literacy environment" should therefore be designed to support "the child's move from oral language and home literacy to school literacy by reflecting the purposes for which print is used at home and by associating print with content about the home, whether or not literacy is an important part of the home and community.... [In this way] the environment builds connections, offering a personal context for each child" (p. 5). Nowhere in this environment is there a suggestion that all the children should be 'moving' through the same book or exercise at the same rate and time, or that they should be assigned compositions about the same thing -- using the left-hand page for the first draft and the right-hand page for the 'good' copy.
In their analysis of what a whole language curriculum should contain, Goodman, Smith, Meredith, & Goodman (1987) noted the shift in attitude towards language and thinking in schools, particularly as it is occurring in education documents from New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and Britain. From their own study of whole language, these researchers note that:

Oral language is learned holistically in the context of speech acts [while] written language is learned holistically in the context of literacy events. [Thus while] whole-part relationships must be eventually learned in any area of knowledge,...the learning is not facilitated by freezing dynamic processes, chopping the whole up, and dissecting it. The whole is a lot more than the sum of its parts (p. 398).

In summary, within a whole language program, language learning is seen as both personal and social. The "learner is changed through assimilation and accommodation, through alternatives of disequilibrium and equilibration as new experiences are encountered" -- personal learning in the Piagetian sense. To the extent that "social learning never simply happens in the head of one person, .... language makes it possible for people to link their minds into a social mind capable of much greater learning than any single mind.... Language learning in this way is sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic, "concerned with language as a means of social communication, [and] as the medium of personal thought.... [In the] view of Michael Halliday...there are three kinds of language learning that must happen together if any one of the three are to occur: learning language, learning about language, and learning through language. All three occur simultaneously; none are dependent on any of the others, but rather each is dependent on the whole speech act or literacy event" (p. 399).

In an integrated or 'whole language' approach, children are surrounded by authentic reading materials, including a wealth of literature, for a breadth of ages
for reading and for being read to, for discussing and to stimulate writing. In the same spirit, writing occurs in context and is directed to one, two or many particular readers (Goodman, 1989).

**Learning to Write and Teaching to Write**

Until quite recently, writing was believed to be the last stage in literacy development, following the skills of understanding, speaking, and reading. Writing was approached as a set of skills to be mastered: sound-symbol relationships, spelling, grammar, handwriting, and so forth. These were taught discretely, most often through workbook exercises, spelling lists, and handwriting practice. Hall (1987) summarizes the apparently fundamental assumptions that have underscored the teaching of literacy skills in the English-speaking world for most of this century. These assumptions are that:

- reading and writing are primarily visual-perceptual processes involving printed unit/sound relationships;
- children are not ready to read or write until they are five or six years old;
- children have to be taught to be literate;
- the teaching of literacy must be systematic and sequential in operation;
- proficiency in the 'basic' skills has to be acquired before one can act in a literate way;
- teaching the 'basic' skills of literacy is a neutral, value-free activity.

(p. 36)

On the other hand, in his synthesis of research on the teaching of writing, Hillocks (1987) points out that writing is an enormously complex task. He has derived a hierarchical way of looking at the plans and processes in composing. First the writer must understand her purpose (content limiting) in writing and the constraints (for whom she is writing). These may change during the writing of course, since writing is recursive. Next, and closely linked, are content
knowledge and processes (memory search, brainstorming, 'mapping', data
collection and transformation) and discourse knowledge and processes
(knowledge of form - short story, letter, argument, and so forth). Next are 'gist
units' which come about in the process of thinking about purposes, constraints,
content, and form. They are units of content that as yet have no detail but
include notions of form and purpose. The next two stages also occur before
pencil has been put to paper, and form the basis for written sentences. The first is
a general notion of what is to be written (referred to here as 'semantic units'),
and the second (specific lexical or verbatim units) are the sequence of words that
the writer can generate verbally, if asked. Writing down these units produces
graphemic units which are finally subjected to editing, the last phase (pp. 72-73).

Studies to analyze what good writers do show that the process is neither
smooth nor easy. In her summary of these studies, Daiute (1985) notes that
writers "plan, compose, revise, throw drafts away, rewrite, and sometimes seem
to do nothing at all" (p. 133). They also frequently and critically revisit their
writing to improve it. It is this ability to place themselves in the role of critical
reader that is enabling to skilled writers. In this way they generate feedback about
their text. Far from being completely spontaneous, skilled and creative writing is
conscious -- crafting the development of the germ of an idea.

Researchers (Wells, 1990; Cooper & Holzman, 1989; Heap, 1990; and
others) describe writing as primarily a social act, social in three senses. Firstly,
the writer is writing to one or many readers, and is thus engaged in an act of
communication. The second sense in which writing is social is that it is based on
conventions which are socially derived, in other words, the commonly
understood rules governing form and content. The third sense in which writing
is a social act is that it is influenced by those around one -- the teacher, classmates, one's publisher, one's thesis director, and so forth.

Arnold (1991) and Hall (1987) believe that students have a powerful need to symbolize themselves and their world through writing, drawing or other forms of expression. Teachers with a sound theory and philosophy of writing development are in the best position to help students achieve their purposes. This theory is translated into practice when teachers become attentive, empathic, significant others.

According to Graves (1983), about ninety percent of children entering first grade believe they can write, while only fifteen percent believe they can read. This is because "children are well socialized to anticipate problems in reading, not in writing (p. 18). As an advocate of what is now referred to as the writing process, Graves sees writing as a craft which is accessible to all children. He believes this to be true when the writing respects the child's own voice and meets her communicative needs. On this theme, Arnold (1991) writes that "we have to be able to determine what [their communicative needs]... are. That means we have to be sensitive listeners and sensitive readers of their own writing. The range of students' intentions can be expanded by the variety of reading and writing they engage in, but pressure to conform to particular forms or genres can never successfully pre-empt the writers' intentions" (p. 113).

Heath (1983; see also Heath & Branscombe, 1985) discovered how much literacy was already a part of children's preschool experience, and came to realize the importance of 'audiences' for children's writing. An authentic audience leads children to greater autonomy in their concern for quality and accuracy,
with the attendant importance of revision. The effect was to give teachers the optimism that all children can learn, and to move their personal focus from what the children did not know to what they already knew. Teachers became aware of the importance and usefulness of writing in content areas -- and how this could give meaning (context) to the children's writing. Heath noted the beginnings of children's ability to talk about ways of knowing at a 'meta' level.

On the other hand, as Moffett (cited in Dunn, Florio-Ruane & Clark, 1985) points out:

Although younger children often want to write for a 'significant' adult, on whom they are willing to be frankly dependent, adolescents almost always find the teacher entirely too significant. He is at once parental substitute, civic authority, and the wielder of marks. Any one of these roles would be potent enough to distort the writer-audience relationship; all together, they cause the student to misuse the feedback in ways that severely limit his learning to write (p. 46).

This is a conundrum. Freedman & Sperling (1985) suggest the one-to-one teacher-student conference to build up a positive relationship for feedback with college level students about their writing. Dunn, Florio-Ruance & Clark (1985) explain that while this would be ideal, the task would be unwieldy and difficult with the large numbers of students in secondary schools. They observed a teacher known for his excellent results with secondary students to learn about his success. His classroom they described as a "visual buffet". He negotiated his role with his students in order to distance himself as far as he could from the "putative role of evaluator" and chose to spend much of his time modeling for them his own artistic activities. His role then became that of responder, motivator and coach. He arranged contests and arranged for the students' writing to have an audience of more than one.
Loughlin & Martin (1987) suggest that "literacy is stimulated in surroundings where symbols and print are an important part of daily life. [Therefore] the classroom environment also plays a part in the development of literacy, and a key role of the functioning literacy environment is surrounding children with symbols and print, making the literacy environment as constant and pervasive as the oral-language environment" (pp. 9-10). They recommend that activities should be organized around children's literacy activities which include: using symbols for their own purposes, encountering models of written communication, using print to negotiate the day, practicing literacy through use, finding reason to gain literacy competence, communicating through print, taking risks with print, focusing on meaning, using literacy for social interaction, and finding print associated with important events and people (p. 10). For them a functioning literacy environment includes interesting things to read and write about, recording tools and materials in every area where children work, varied places to settle down to read and write, books everywhere, references where they are needed, display spaces and tools to support communication, and finally, time and opportunity to respond to the stimulus for literacy. Time may be found by scheduling self-selection time, extending transitions, organizing flexible time blocks, offering options within activities, and using the environment for direct interaction (pp. 11-12).

A current issue is whether children can be helped to improve their thinking skills by being taught to think about their own cognitive processes. Preliminary findings suggest that this may be the case and that this process may involve an internal dialogue. Revising has been a useful and revealing measure of inner dialogue (Daiute, 1985, pp. 155-156).
Secondary students often work in a language arts classroom environment which is characterized by large amounts of grammar study. Petrosky (1977) hastens to point out that at the end of a number of exhaustive studies it can be said with assurance that the study of grammar does not assist students in developing their writing abilities. In fact, the net effect is negative since the study consumes time that could be spent reading and writing (pp. 86-88). Hillocks (1987) has outlined the relative effectiveness of six common approaches to the teaching of writing. Teaching of grammar (parts of speech, parsing, etc.) "has no effect on raising the quality of student writing". He also notes that "a heavy emphasis on mechanics and usage results in significant losses in overall quality". Providing of models is somewhat more useful, but not if it is the only approach. Practice in sentence combining is effective -- twice the effectiveness of free writing -- which is marginally better than grammar. Scales that "students apply to their own or others' writing have a powerful effect on enhancing quality". Systematic use appears to cause students to internalize them. Inquiry, a set of strategies for converting raw data to finished writing, has been found to be very effective indeed (pp. 74-78). According to the study, the order of effectiveness is: inquiry, scales, sentence combining, models, and free writing, with grammar/mechanics showing a negative effect. Hillocks summarizes: "Clearly, young writers must learn that effective writing involves a complex process that includes prewriting, drafting, feedback from audiences, and revising. At the same time,... free writing and the attendant process orientation are inadequate strategies" (p. 78).

If, then, free writing and the attendant process orientation are inadequate on their own, the role of revision may be a missing link. Graves (1983 and 1992)
certainly believes it to be so. Looking back at conventional practice, he writes that copying over is "the popular understanding of revision. Put a good manicure on the corpse. Change the spelling, make the penmanship more presentable, take out any heinous punctuation mistakes. But don't change the information" (1983, p. 4).

Matsuhashi & Gordon (1985) experimented with asking students to add to rather than revise their writing. The effect was that students were enabled to adopt "a high level mental representation of the text, seeing it more as a whole in order to add to it" -- in this way being "freed from the overwhelming knowing that and allowed to move towards a knowing how" (p. 237).

Graves (1983) has found that addition (elaboration) is the easiest way for children to begin revision. Excluding material comes later. The teacher's role is very important in helping the child to evaluate his writing -- starting with addition. "Revision, or reseeing, is not necessarily a natural act. It draws on a different source of energy, the energy of anticipation," he writes (p. 160). Revision, he points out, distinguishes writing from speech (p. 161).

Like Graves, Witte (1985) recognizes the amazing complexity of revision, but suggests that revision research and theory fail to acknowledge the importance of pretextual revising.

What is left to be discovered about revision? Just about everything, Fitzgerald (1987) seems to suggest, including an implied knowledge of what a "good" text is like, the mind's process before writing and in the act(s) of revision,
the effect of genre and length on the piece of writing, and the extent to which
"revision may be a powerful tool for mental development" (pp. 497-498).

Levin et al (1985) found that young children can learn to use computer
word processing systems effectively and that they like to do so. When asked
whether they preferred the computer or pencil and paper, 26 out of 30 opted for
the computer. However, when they were asked to explain why, their reasons
seemed most related to the issue of fine motor control. Grade six students were
found to appreciate the greater ease of text input and editing. They also enjoyed
being allowed to engage in authentic communication through networking,
giving weight to the importance of the social context for communication.

Literacy and Bilingualism

The importance of the social context for communication is basic to the
understanding of the bilingual (or plurilingual) person and his or her literacy.

While the usual notion of bilingual implies the capability to use two
languages -- often with equal facility, based on studies of bilingual students
(including students in the process of becoming bilingual), Cummins and Swain
(1986) have found that it is most helpful to group bilingual students according to
whether their first language (L1) is that of the majority or of a minority. This is
because children from majority language groups do well in their L1, their general
learning and their second language (L2) when it is the primary language of
instruction. The positive effect of French immersion is "associated with
situations where both the L1 and L2 have perceived social and economic value"
(p. 17). This is referred to as 'additive' bilingualism. On the other hand, studies
showing negative effects involve students from minority language groups whose L1 is gradually being replaced by a more prestigious L2 (see Skutnabb-Kangas & Toukomaa, 1976). The resulting form of bilingualism is sometimes referred to as 'subtractive' because "the bilingual's competence in his two languages at any point in time is likely to reflect some stage in the 'subtraction' of L1 and its replacement by L2" (Cummins and Swain, 1986, p. 18). Similar findings have been described by Godbout (1989). "Positive results tend to be associated with immersion programmes while negative results tend to be associated with submersion programmes" (where students are accommodated willy-nilly in a regular class and left to sink or swim), the situation in which many immigrant children have historically found themselves (p. 17).

The implications for the education of the minority language child are that she would do best to begin initial instruction in her first language, switching at a later stage to instruction in the school language. This has significant socio-political implications for such unilingual countries as the United States and Great Britain. Hudelson (1987) and Fishman (1976) speak eloquently for the right of children to express themselves for a time in their first language, but suspect that even though this would ultimately allow them to apply to English what they learned in their L1, the difficulties of using children's native languages in classrooms may be too great to be realized.

"On the other hand, where the home language is a majority language valued by community, and where literacy is encouraged in the home, then the most efficient means of promoting an additive form of bilingualism is to provide initial instruction in the second language" (Cummins & Swain, 1986, pp. 18-19).
A number of researchers have moved still further in identifying the advantages of a positive bilingualism:

Les études récentes s'accordent à dire que le bilinguisme peut avoir une influence positive sur le développement cognitif de l'individu. La compétence linguistique dans deux langues pouvant augmenter l'aptitude à percevoir, analyser et comparer. [sic] Elle mettrait à la disposition de l'individu tout un réseau complémentaire de concepts, qui favoriseraient la souplesse de pensée, l'imagination, la diversification des réponses et une initiative plus importante. (Bowen, 1977, cited in Carey 1989, pp. 62-63)

Godbout (1989) expands beyond the linguistic/cognitive to the advantages of bilingualism in cultural awareness:

La personne qui parle deux langues et qui a un accès important à une autre culture peut être modifiée dans sa personnalité, en vertu du 'second-apprentissage'... qui lui permet l'interaction, en elle, d'une langue/culture avec l'autre. Aussi, cette dualité de perspective qui met en évidence la différence entre un 'univers linguistique' et un autre, permet à cette personne de constater de façon vitale les richesses propres à l'une et à l'autre de ces formes d'expression, et d'en profiter pour approfondir sa compréhension d'elle-même et du monde en général (pp. 114-115).

Cummins and Swain (1986) add to the linguistic/cognitive and cultural advantages which accrue to the immersion student when they suggest that the effect over time is often to strengthen the student's first language ability in comparison to that of his or her unilingual peers.

At what point can we say that a child is bilingual? Williams & Snipper (1990) distinguish between bilingual (the ability to understand and respond to a message in two languages) and biliteral (the additional ability to read and understand a written message, and to write in two languages). The relationship
is highly significant since, "the more adept people are at processing the four skills in each of the languages, the greater their level of bilingualism" (p. 34).

These scholars signal the importance for teachers to distinguish among levels of literacy. The lowest level is functional literacy, and generally is understood to include the ability to read and write well enough "to understand signs, read newspaper headlines, fill out job applications, make shopping lists, and write checks" (p. 4). They refer to other, and controversial, levels as cultural literacy (based on a concept of shared meaning), academic literacy (not necessarily reflective of the culture of the majority of students or their families), and critical literacy which tries to respond to the criticisms of cultural literacy but which appears dependent upon it for sociopolitical reasons. The significance of the discussion is that teachers' understanding of literacy influences what they do, and that teachers of French immersion should not be satisfied with the goal of functional literacy - at least as defined by Williams & Snipper (1990).

Leboulanger-Salerno (1989) suggests that when a person is able to play with language and to grasp play on words, he or she is able to participate at the cultural level and is thus able to sense the implicit and hear the unsaid.

According to Hornberger (1989), "communicative competence designates the knowledge and ability of individuals for appropriate language use in the communicative events in which they find themselves in any particular speech community" (p. 280). She proposes that biliteracy is not linear but must be measured on at least three continua: reception-production, oral language-written language, and L1-L2 transfer, and that "the development of biliteracy in
individuals occurs along the continua in direct response to the contextual demands placed on these individuals" (p. 281).

On the other hand, Dubin (1989) is concerned that the expression has acquired many connotations, and may not be very useful. Be that as it may, while originally applied to L1 study, communicative competency has evolved into the communicative approach, a methodology which is gaining favour in L2 teaching.

Hudelson's research (1987) into developing English literacy among children for whom English is a second language has satisfied her that these children do not need to have a lot of English to begin writing; they should certainly begin to write before they have complete control over the oral and written systems. Older children may, in fact, be more confident writing than speaking when first introduced to English. Reading comprehension for such children depends to a large extent on their background knowledge and cultural framework. As children become more familiar with English they become increasingly able to revise their written work. Her finding that the four components of biliteracy are interrelated and interdependent has profound implications for teachers. This is surely significant for teachers of Early French Immersion whose students' formal literacy begins in their second language.

Learning to Write and Teaching Writing in a Second Language

The best practice in acquiring literacy in a second language appears to be similar to best practice for monolinguals. This, at least, is the opinion of many researchers (Edelsky, 1986; Hudelson, 1987; Leboulanger-Salerno, 1989; Urzua,
Based on the advances made in the late 1970s in the monolingual English system, Edelsky (1986) and her colleagues began to give greater importance to oral language acquisition. They moved to peer project work to enhance oral language using collaborative written work to support it (planning together and so forth). This evolved into a discovery of the importance of writing in the language acquisition process, and then to an examination of the kind of writing which produced desired results. Together they worked to decrease a reliance on made-for-school materials, to make greater use of local, real-world resources and activities that instruct, to integrate the teaching of reading and writing with whatever else was going on, and to infuse the curriculum with thought-provoking content -- giving children topics about which to talk, read and write. The 'whole language' orientation was being felt in the second language classroom.

This research with working-class Hispanics living in the United States, traditionally poor achievers, brought happy results: fewer behaviour problems, better attendance, greater parent support, and apparent greater capability by comparison to earlier groups. When asked to write their own ideas these bilingual children used "varied and unusual rather than meager vocabulary, both complex and simple syntax, multiple means of accounting for the needs of the reader, cohesive devices and chronological patterns of organization, explicit inferences -- hardly signs of deficiency in the written mode" (Edelsky, 1986, p. 9).

Edelsky countered samples of myth with the evidence shown below:
Myth

- Children's errors are random or show deficiencies.
- Young writers are insensitive to the needs of their audiences.
- Young writers are insensitive to demands of texts and contexts.
- Literacy (and language proficiency) is constant across contexts, or when you've got it, you've got it.
- Exposure to Spanish ('French') print in a child's own and peers' writing and in a few textbooks provides sufficient information about the nature and function of Spanish print.
- In order to read and write in a language, one must be orally fluent in it; the learning and instructional sequence is listen, speak, read, write.
- Sense of audience is a discrete skill which should be taught at a particular grade level.
- Writing is sufficient for the development of writing.
- Growth in writing is a linear accretion of discrete skills.
- There is one pattern of writing development and all children go through it.
- Writing is a solitary activity.
- Becoming literate means learning skills to mastery.
- Beginning writing is speech written down.
- In considering direction of control (or who controls what), it is the writer who controls the text.

*The author of the thesis can attest to this.

Counter-evidence

- "Errors" were often sensible.
- The writers in this study often showed keen audience sensitivity.
- The writers showed evidence of sensitivity to these demands.
- Textual variation occurred with contextual variation.
- Extensive interaction with conventionally written, functional print is needed for input and feedback when becoming literate in a language.
- The different language arts were not wholly used in any predetermined sequence.
- Sense of audience was a perspective our subjects developed through interactions.
- What happened to a piece during and after it was written was part of the developmental picture.
- Growth seemed tentatively but more aptly characterized as successive reorganizations.
- Within very general patterns, children's hypotheses and shifts of emphasis were often individually idiosyncratic.
- Observation and the written pieces themselves showed that the process was highly social.
- The child's job was to construct, revise, and abandon hypotheses.
- These children's writing differed from their speech in several ways.
- Sometimes the text seemed to take over and control the writer.*
Edelsky suggests an integrated approach to language instruction for all students with emphasis on the functional nature of school discourse and on collaborative learning strategies which encourage group work.

In a related vein, Bélanger (1991) notes that research into the impact of reading on writing in second language L2 learning demonstrates that:

1. la lecture silencieuse, pour le plaisir et en quantité, semble aider à l'acquisition de la langue et, par le fait même, au savoir écrire;
2. la lecture partagée semble aider à l'acquisition de la langue et, par le fait même, au savoir écrire;
3. plus les enfants ont d'occasions d'être engagés dans des activités de lecture centrées sur la recherche de sens, plus les effets de la lecture se font sentir sur leurs productions écrites; et
4. l'input approprié à l'acquisition du savoir écrire se doit d'être intéressant et de qualité mais les effets s'avéreraient sérieusement compromis s'il n'était pas au niveau linguistique des enfants en langue seconde, c'est-à-dire à un niveau qu'ils peuvent comprendre.

Williams & Snipper (1990) recommend for L2 learners oral discourse strategies to reinforce student composition and reading activities to focus on student produced texts. This seems highly relevant in French immersion classes. McKay (1984) also supports oral discourse strategies believing that "composition in either a first or second language presupposes that an individual has sufficient competency in the language to give form to his or her ideas" (p. 80).

Watson-Reekie (1984) prefers a blend of product within process. She believes that models for analysis should be available (as in the past), but as a resource for student writers. These models should not be in evidence until students are well embarked in the composition process. Students are then invited to read the models.
The question should be asked: are the needs of older students of a second language the same as those of the younger ones? Academic literacy requires skills and strategies that may not occur frequently in speech. Silva's summary (1993) of the findings of the body of research into writing in English by L2 writers at the secondary to postgraduate levels demonstrates that their writing is perceived as simpler and less effective than L1 writing, that is more constrained and more difficult, showing less planning and exhibiting distinct patterns of exposition, argumentation and narration. As far as lower level linguistic issues are concerned, the summary indicates that L2 texts are stylistically distinct and simpler in structure. (p. 668) Based on his summary, Silva challenges "the prevalent assumption that L1 and L2 writing are, for all intents and purposes, the same ... [causing] L2 specialists to rely for direction almost exclusively on L1 composition theories, theories which are, incidentally, largely monolingual, monocultural, ethnocentric, and fixated on the writing of [North American anglophone speakers]" (p. 669). It will be interesting to compare Silva's findings with those of this study. Will the samples of French immersion writing support Silva's summary?

The significance of Silva's conclusions for secondary teacher practice is to suggest that it is not reasonable to hold L1 expectations for L2 writers, and that different evaluation criteria need to be established. This conclusion has considerable relevancy for this French immersion study and relates directly to both the proposed methodology and the findings. The question, according to Silva, is "What is good enough?" Teachers, he suggests, need to learn to deal effectively with the sociocultural, rhetorical and linguistic differences of their students. Teachers should devote more time to planning in writing, to the generation of ideas, structure, and language to make the actual writing more
manageable. Students should work through their drafts in stages, separating revising and editing. Silva also points out the need for teachers to familiarize students with L1 audience expectations and to provide them with strategies for dealing with the unfamiliar patterns and task types they may have to produce. At the same time they will have to continue to enhance their students' grammatical and lexical resources.

Raimes (1984) examined the question of appropriate writing assignments for older L2 students. Her opinion is that expressing ideas and conveying meaning come first. Composing means thinking and the two should therefore be operationally inseparable. Recognizing the recursive nature of writing in first language writing, she tells her L2 students not to start with outlines and introductions. Instead, they begin with word lists and ideas. Ideas can be generated from classroom experience, a photo, a painting.... Raimes does not avoid assignments where the student writer composes for 'simulated' readers. All the students understand that the teacher is the true reader. And for her, that's fine.

Unskilled L1 writers take less time to plan than their more skilled counterparts, and to the extent that they look at their work again it is to correct surface errors. (Raimes 1985) They are overly concerned with accuracy but seldom rework their drafts and do not consider the reader. A process approach seems indicated for these weaker writers. Similar characteristics are to be found in unskilled L2 writers.

Raimes (1985) cautions, however, that "there is at present no consensus on valid criteria for measuring skill in writing and thus no clear agreement on the
meaning of unskilled" (p. 232). Depending upon the criteria used, holistic or linguistic-specific, a particular L2 writer might be judged as skilled or unskilled. Furthermore, with the new shift in composition theory, there has been a change in teaching strategies. Students now write journals, do written brainstorming and free writing and work in a collaborative workshop setting. At the same time they put off attending to error. This causes Raimes some anxiety.

Studies of older students show that good writers read more than poor writers. Williams and Snipper (1990) recommend free reading periods to develop a positive response to reading, particularly when there is a wide range of reading materials available to students. This provides them with the opportunity to internalize what characterizes good writing.

Leki (1991) presents an interesting argument in favour of helping students develop reader sensitivity when writing in their L2 by providing them with the opportunity to explore rhetorical contrasts across cultures (how different cultures approach writing). A simple example for an immersion student would be to compare the writing of a business letter.

In a similar vein, Kaplan (1984) argues that cultural variation needs to be considered in L2 teaching -- going beyond grammar, vocabulary and sentence structure to logic and rhetoric. Logic, he writes, "... which is the basis of rhetoric, is evolved out of culture; it is not universal. Rhetoric ... is not universal either, but varies from culture to culture and even from time to time within a given culture. It is affected by norms of taste within a given culture at a given time" (p.44). French when compared to English, he says, allows considerably greater freedom to digress or to introduce extraneous material (p. 50).
The sociocultural context of literacy cannot be separated from the products of that literacy, according to Leboulanger-Salerno (1989) and Vetter (1991). This awareness is essential if a teacher is to help an L2 student produce writing which is acceptable to L1 readers:

Il existe moins de controverses autour de la qualité de l'anglais enseigné qu'autour de la qualité du français. L'erreur par rapport à la norme semble moins grave pour un anglophone que pour un francophone. Au niveau universitaire, il nous est arrivé de rencontrer des étudiants anglophones ignorant que l'on devait dire "if I were you" au lieu de "if I was you". Si un francophone dit 'si je serais vous' il est catalogué, classé, dévalorisé." (Leboulanger-Salerno, 1989, pp. 131-132)

To this end, Leboulanger-Salerno suggests that language teaching must be given back its social and cultural dimension. Among other ideas, he suggests assessing francophone activities in the region for fieldtrip potential or writing a critical review of a French film to share with classmates (p. 150).

One area of general agreement by most researchers into the development of L2 writing is the importance of revision -- revision first and then work on surface features. Raising questions about the applicability of Graves' (1983) work on revision, Edelsky (1986) speculated about the role of revision in the bilingual classroom:

It would be revealing, then, to look again in a more Gravesian way (daily on-site participant-observant) at writing in a bilingual program where teaching practice was examined as carefully as the writing in classrooms where practices varied fundamentally.... to look closely at the writing of children in bilingual programs where the teachers have other characteristics (e.g., preparation in the teaching of writing, informed theories on the writing process, knowledge of children's literature in both languages, proven interest in writing themselves), and where the print environments have other characteristics (e.g., where the Spanish print environment rivals the English one in quantity, quality, and use.... We now know that the children's writing would be unlike what we saw. The question is: how? Would it be possible to make any direct connections between specific features of writing and any of these contextual factors? Even more interesting
would be to look for the processes and mechanisms whereby any of these contextual factors interact with children's hypotheses about written language. (p. 165)

The problem with using a program of instruction which works to provide a firm foundation for writing by working on spelling, vocabulary and grammar is that this "bottom-up approach...neglects the communicative purposes of writing and the higher-level composing procedures essential to effective communication" (Ammon, 1985, p. 83). While concerned that individual differences may not be addressed by any one approach, Ammon speculates that perhaps, as Cummins (1979) and Edelsky (1982) suggest, the writing process will not only advance the students' writing development but also their second language acquisition. In fact, a case can be made that a whole language/writing process philosophy is by definition eclectic.

From a slightly different angle, Kroll & Schafer (1984) appreciate that the process approach is a coherent philosophy, and that error analysis to produce a psycholinguistic explanation of why learners make errors will assist teachers in supporting their L2 students both in approximating the target language and in their active learning strategies - while recognizing "that not all errors will disappear" (p. 136).

Looking at the insight which process research has provided, Zamel (1987) is also concerned that teachers are not using this knowledge in their L2 writing classes. She iterates the need for teachers to act as researchers in their own classes and to abandon their traditional role of keepers of knowledge and holders of power. She recommends a pedagogy based on co-inquiry:
"By participating with our students in their own exploration, we are more likely to discover why our students write the way they do and what behaviors and strategies are employed, behaviors and strategies that remain hidden in a written text.... By observing our students as their work progresses, we are much more likely to respond to their drafts as work in progress and raise questions that ask them to reconsider, elaborate, or extend. (p. 701)

Bisaillon (1992), too, would like to see revision skills taught to L2 students. She attributes the fact that this rarely happens to the lack of knowledge on the part of teachers, to the fact that to do so would mean a complete shift in teaching methodology (it is much easier to teach rules), and lastly to the sense of powerlessness of many teachers facing the prospect of trying this alone. Nonetheless, she believes that "il est grand temps que la révision ait sa place dans la didactique de l'écrit, en langue maternelle et en langue seconde" (p. 288).

Staff development to enable teachers to adapt their curricula and practice to give them a language focus can be most effective. (Bryant 1989). Teachers in a secondary school working with First Nations students for whom English is a second language participated in workshops and then collaborated to give writing a school-wide focus. Process writing, writing to learn in science and social studies, providing ways to get kids' work published and holistic assessments were all part of this project. The results? Much higher standards achieved by students and expected by teachers than ever before and a sense of improved capability and professionalism on the part of the staff.

In addition to the need for teacher development and the need to examine context, "efforts must be made to prevent writing from becoming packaged.... School boards and administrators must be convinced that there is no need to
invest money in packaged writing programs in order for children and teachers to reap benefits.... Teachers must be persuaded that they do not need such 'help'" (Edelsky, 1986, p. 161).

Assessment of Writing

Writing is now generally understood to be developmental. Providing the support for growth and assessing students to determine future learning goals are major teacher responsibilities. In the Foreword to *Observing the Language Learner*, Dorothy Strickland writes that "research points out the importance of a process approach to the evaluation of language growth.... [and that] evaluation is viewed as an integral part of language instruction" (Jaggar & Smith, 1985, p. v). 'Kidwatching' is the term used to describe assessment and evaluation in the primary school. Included in the underlying notions are that continuous education for teachers is very important, that language and concepts grow in rich and varied settings and interactions, and that knowledgeable teachers assume responsibility for observation and evaluation in order to "enrich the child's development of language and concepts" (p. 11).

Proponents of 'whole language' are against standardized tests on the basis that they fail to test what they are presumed to test (Altwerger, Edelsky & Flores, 1987). They prefer a variety of other assessment techniques applied to the students' authentic writing.

Teaching and assessment of writing, for many teachers, are two sides of the same coin. For Freedman & Sperling (1985), the one-to-one teacher and student writing conference has been seen to be a prime opportunity for a teacher
to respond to a student's writing. It should also allow the teacher to assess the student's work -- and therefore her needs, and in a personal way, offer new knowledge. Their research suggests that teachers must be cautious about having quantitatively and qualitatively different discussions with their students depending upon teacher preconceptions of what the students are capable of doing. Teachers need to "practice exerting conscious control over those aspects of the teaching-learning process that are likely to influence what a student learns, and... [to] focus on those aspects that are likely to lead to success" (pp. 128-129).

In his description of emergent writing, Hall (1987) lists the principles outlined by Clay1 which may be observed in the writing behaviour of young children, but not in any particular order:

1. The sign concept - A sign carries a message but the sign is complete in itself and not related to a way of representing alphabetically the name signified by the sign.
2. The message concept - The child understands that messages can be written down but there is no correspondence between what is written and what the message is claimed to be.
3. The copying principle - Children imitate or copy letters or words to establish the first units of printed behaviour.
4. The recurring principle - Repeating an action helps in establishing quick, habitual response patterns and helps a child to realise that the same element can recur in variable patterns.
5. Directional principles - These relate to the understandings related to 'writing' left to right and moving down the page. Clay claims that 'until some control has been gained over the directional principles the flexibility principle will be evident in the variety of approaches to print that children can devise.
6. Reversing the directional pattern - The child produces mirror writing.
7. The flexibility principle - Children experiment in creating new symbols by repositioning or decorating the standard forms.
8. The inventory principle - Children appear to take stock of their own learning by listing or ordering aspects of their literacy knowledge.

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9. The generating principle - The child extends performance by knowing some elements and some rules for combining them to produce new statements in an inventive way.
10. The contrastive principle - Children create contrasts between shapes, meanings, sounds and word patterns.
11. The child uses a space, or presumably some other symbol, to segment writing.
12. Page and book arrangement - The child, in addition to understanding the directional principle, can operate with larger areas of text.
13. The abbreviation principle - A child intentionally uses an abbreviation.

Clay's (1975) work, along with that of others, "suggests very strongly that most children are, by the age of five, demonstrating through their writing that they have observed and understood a wide range of features of print production" (p. 50). Observation of these behaviours on the part of young children provides a basis for identification of emergent writing.

Loughlin & Martin (1987) believe that the teacher must use the learning environment itself to find evidence of literacy growth. They conclude that there are two direct pieces of evidence to be examined: the products of children's activities and the children's literacy practices throughout the day. (p. 169) To that end they have provided checklists which can be used in analyzing both the quality of the environment and the children's growth within it (see Loughlin & Martin, 1987, Appendices).

Observation of students' punctuation errors may teach us that they may be viewed as 'sensible'. (Danielewicz & Chafe, 1985) This is because their use of punctuation "often reproduces patterns found in spoken language, a fact which suggests that these writers are at least adept at using commas and periods to capture the intonation and pauses of speech" (p. 224) This erroneous
punctuation may in fact lead to greater readability. The implications for teachers are that they concentrate on pointing out the differences between the requirements of writing and speaking.

Arnold (1991) points out that some kind of 'holistic-criteria' marking is likely to be more successful in providing evidence of long-term development than simple holistic or impression marking. She believes that criteria outlines can be applied to a range of writing modes and across a fairly wide age/stage range, with modifications made where appropriate. She notes, "Given the relatively short time available for writing in schools, it would be helpful if descriptive summaries and cumulative records were kept of students' writing development over primary and secondary years, and across all subjects. Students own perception of their development could be part of such records" (p. 116).

Balester (1991) points out that hyperfluency may be a stage which students pass through in their wish to be sophisticated and part of the world of their would-be peers. Although it is looked upon with disfavour and may be ridiculed, hyperfluency can signal the growth of some students' linguistic resources. As such, the language teacher should "honour the students' desire to enter the academic discourse community.... and bring such students to a deeper awareness of language difference to equip them for the many transitions they will make in life.

"Teachers' comments can take students' attention away from their own purposes in writing a particular text and focus that attention on the teachers' purpose in commenting" (Sommers, 1984, p. 161), thus denying the students'
own voice. In so doing, students may well make changes to please the teacher rather giving attention to those the student believes necessary. Sommers' research suggests that teachers' commenting is generally not as good as it should be because teachers were rarely trained to do this in a way that motivates revision and, because teachers are taught to read and interpret only, they read students' writing with biases about what should have been written and in the expectation that errors must and will be found. With the emphasis on errors, the students' meaning can be lost to the teacher.

Assessment of Writing in a Second Language

In an article on assessment, Wesche (1992) highlights a number of matters which evaluators of second language learning need to consider: no one piece of work or test illustrates what a student can do; evaluation should be done from a variety of perspectives; evaluation should reflect the curriculum; evaluation should reflect knowledge of the language; and, the fidelity of the assessment measurement must be assured.

Looking at the same question from the other side of the mirror, Damico (1991) is concerned that many contemporary L2 writing assessment methods fail. They lack linguistic realism since they are often based on psychological rather than linguistic characteristics. They lack authenticity and therefore measure language and communication abilities poorly. They frequently have poor psychometric strength and have inherent and unavoidable cultural bias.

Another supporter of authentic communication, Leboulanger-Salerno (1989) also insists that writing assignments to be evaluated should not be false
communication "qui conduit les apprenants à se retrancher derrière un mutisme éloquent, révélateur de leur ennui, à ne pas vouloir entrer dans le 'jeu' parce que ce jeu n'est pas gratuit mais s'effectue le plus souvent à des fins de contrôle et d'évaluation" (p. 152).

Marcos (1989) warns would-be evaluators of L2 writing: "La production ... qu'elle soit sous forme de dissertations, d'explications de textes ou d'exposés, est souvent marginale, en ce sens qu'elle sert à l'évaluation de l'étudiant plutôt qu'à son apprentissage" (p. 161).

General impression (or holistic) mark schemes for rating pieces of writing are among the most widely commonly used forms of assessment of L2 writing. The problem with these schemes is that they do not take into account the differences in writing quality depending upon different types of writing or the variation among different tasks within a form. They ignore context and reader. They provide no detail about student strengths and weaknesses. Any system of assessment should be criterion-referenced, formative, moderated and allow for progression. All these criteria ought to be addressed (Beveridge & Johnson, 1992).

It is at this point that differences in emphasis and analysis begin to appear. The Staged Assessments in Literacy (SAIL) scheme used in England specifies procedures for combining a general impression mark with a set of criteria by which the whole text is assessed, and uses different criteria according to the writing purpose and audience. Beveridge & Johnson (ibid.) believe that there are no comprehensive theoretical frameworks which address the different requirements of the various genres. Moreover, there is no general agreement as
to the number and types of genres in writing. The SAIL scheme is used to evaluate post-secondary writing in English L2 by students in Zimbabwe, and because of the use of criteria is proving useful in moving beyond merely assessing writing to identifying difficulties in the students' composing process and thus suggesting ways of improving their writing.

Error analysis is one method used by teachers to identify the cognitive strategies used by students in producing writing in a second language. (Kroll and Schafer, 1984; see also Barritt and Kroll, 1978) They suggest that moving from a product to a process approach should have the desired effect of assisting the students in producing better writing. From this perspective an error is "good" and is the source of its own correction: "Errors are a natural part of learning a language; they arise from learners' active strategies: overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete rule application, [and] hypothesizing false concepts" (p. 136).

It is clear that any assessment of L2 students will show 'errors' of many kinds. In response to his own question, when is an error an error, Calvé (1992) suggests that standard definitions are inappropriate in L2 teaching. Students are judged against at least three norms: against that of the educated native speaker - in which case the student is essentially a guaranteed loser; against what has been taught in class and therefore 'ought to be known' -- which, while more realistic than the first, nonetheless cannot be achieved within moments or days of a first presentation; and finally against the language which the student has internalized. Calvé explains that this is not the language of the imperfect native speaker but is an interim language with its own laws. Viewed in this way, the notion of error is relative. The role of the teacher is to make decisions about
what she can realistically expect of her students in relation to each of the three norms, moving from correction as reaction to proactive correction.

The research findings of this study appear to support Calvé's notion of relative error. The students concerned appear to pass through developmental stages in which the level of L2 interference varies (see Chapters 4 and 5).

Calvé (1992) believes that all L2 errors may be viewed as either false generalizations or spontaneous creations. Within the category of false generalizations are those which were derived from the L1; these are referred to as interference, negative transfer or interlingual errors. Transfer from L1 to L2 is often positive and needs to be encouraged. This is referred to (self-evidently) as positive transfer.

One way that Calvé suggests to understand why a child makes a particular class of errors is to look for the underlying 'rule'. The child may be able to explain it himself. Calvé cautions that the traditional rules still have their place -- though perhaps more for the teacher than for the child. Classifying the error types is useful for the teacher. Audio- or video-taping the class can be helpful in performing this task.

The next major concern is the what, when and how of correction. The what depends in part on the child's language development. Replying to an incorrectly formed question with an answer which models the appropriate form provides appropriate input. The next stage is to watch for repeated errors which might be fossilized and develop some automatic signal which will help the child self-correct. When to correct? The answer, according to Calvé (1992), is
immediately — if the error is one which the teacher has put on the 'hit list'. Sometimes the teacher may need to prepare a lesson around a particularly stubborn error. Still, self-correction is preferable and errors are better than silence or a blank page. As for the how, Calvé warns that humiliation is lethal. Tact is required. Covering a page with red ink is frustrating and ineffective. He suggests perhaps taping some clues and relating their location to pre-numbered lines on the page. Calvé's conclusion is that error correction is complicated and must be based on appropriate observation, appropriate selection of what to correct and what to ignore and, above all, on teacher's self-knowledge.

Edelsky (1982) studied the relationship of L1 and L2 texts in writing in a bilingual program. From this, she concluded that what a child knows about writing in the first language forms the basis of new hypotheses rather than interferes with writing in another language. (See also Cumming, 1989) Application of the explicit or tacit knowledge which the child brings can appear as either surface similarities or differences. From this it can be inferred that certain underlying L1 writing processes have been used in L2 writing (p. 227).

**Assessment of Writing in French Immersion**

French immersion is described by Safty (1989) and others as the most studied of all Canadian educational innovations. Such studies are generally grouped around five questions:

a) How does the French of immersion students compare to that of native speakers?
b) How has the immersion experience affected their English literacy?
c) What is the effect of learning in French on students' achievement in other subjects?
d) What are the psychological and social effects of immersion?
e) Is immersion for everyone, with the emphasis on children with learning difficulties? (Rebuffot, 1994)

In answer to the first question -- relevant to this study, Lapkin (1984), in her summary of the results of tests of the speaking and writing ability of grade 9 immersion students in comparison with francophones of the same age, states that they do it "well enough for effective communication but not well enough to be indistinguishable from their native French-speaking counterparts" (p. 584). The differences which appeared were that immersion students made errors in gender and prepositions which native speakers of the same age did not. Immersion students use more anglicisms and transfer from the English when they get stuck. Similarly, they are less likely to use idiomatic expressions. Verbs are better handled by francophone students who don't 'invent' forms and who are better able to stick to the appropriate tense. The native speakers almost never make an error in word order. (Rebuffot, 1994, provides an excellent summary of the research studies which have been undertaken to answer this and the other questions.)

Lapkin, Hart & Swain (1991) made a comparative analysis of the French language ability of grade 8 early and middle immersion students and francophone students in Montreal and Quebec. Their research into the writing ability of these groups indicated that early immersion students demonstrate a greater mastery of spelling and grammar in an open writing task compared to middle immersion students, but both do less well than the control francophone groups. Both groups do well in expressing their opinion in writing, with the early immersion students being as strong as francophone students. All groups
produce writing of about the same length. The researchers caution that no final judgements should be made about these students until they have had the benefit of the years that remain in secondary school (p. 36).

Based on their research into student weaknesses in written and oral French, Lapkin, Swain & Shapson (1990) believe that teaching strategies must change. They suggest that immersion teachers must learn to integrate content and language teaching. The methodology employed should not be the same as used with francophone students. Since grammar teaching and drills have not eradicated the weaknesses, other strategies need to be found that embed language in language lessons. Process writing, group work and cooperative learning need to be experimented with to encourage use of language by students. Teachers need to find ways to incorporate the full function range of the language because, at this time, certain verb and pronoun forms are rarely used in the context of the classroom.

Reference Sets as a Tool

In order to assess where individual students or groups of students 'fit in the scheme of things' in their writing development, most jurisdictions use a single test or batteries of tests (Neville, 1988; Lapkin, Swain and Shapson, 1990; various provincial learning assessment instruments, and others). These tests may contain a variety of tasks based on traditional skills or may strive to be as natural as possible using motivating stimuli. There may be a component to ascertain student attitude. The evaluation may be highly analytical (see Neville, 1988; De Koninck, 1994, for examples), or may be based on general impression (see Beveridge and Johnson, 1991). The strength of these instruments is that they
provide detail and comparisons. The weakness of these instruments is that they rarely provide information for the teacher about what to do next.

The writers of the British Columbia Ministry of Education *Document de recherche: L’art du langage en immersion française* (1993) highlight the importance of the purposes and principles of evaluation: to determine the student strengths and weaknesses in order to help the teacher provide an appropriate program and feedback for each student; to develop student self-esteem and potential in order to encourage longterm learning; and to provide a basis for developing feedback to parents and school personnel (p. 44).

The concept of reference sets is not totally new. Nicholls et al (1989) describe a 4-level pattern of writing development used to assess English 5- to 9-year olds. This work was done with the desire to improve practice. They believed that children's views of what writing is, and good writing in particular, are often based on notions which are wide of the mark. Writing tasks frequently lack purpose or audience. Exercises do not seem to enhance children's writing and many children make little progress in writing because they lack informed teacher assistance. The researchers developed this 'reference set' to provide helpful practical suggestions to help teachers understand more clearly what children do as they learn to become writers. Through observation, the researchers developed a system of levels illustrating the stages through which the children pass. They came to realize that long before children are able to produce recognizable text, they are absorbing information about the writing system. By the time they enter school at five, most children recognize a distinction between drawing and writing.
Based on her research, as on that in the monolingual community, Edelsky (1986) concluded that "change over time in writing should be seen as changes in purposes and their means of accomplishment, as changes in the repertoires of internally generated, externally influenced hypotheses" (p. 157). The importance of this conclusion has not been wasted on the authors of the English reference sets who evidently agree with Edelsky that "evaluators and researchers must understand that any one piece of writing cannot show what a child can do", and that "teachers and administrators must examine the contexts they are providing for children, knowing that children's repertoires of hypotheses about written language ... will be constrained or liberated by external factors" (p. 158).

Concluding Thoughts

Several concepts of research findings in this chapter are of particular significance to this research study. First among these is the concept of the oneness of language and thought (see Wertsch, 1985, and others). Secondly, is the recognition of the social and personal nature of language (again, see Wertsch, 1985, Wells, 1990, Cook-Gumperz, 1986; and others), the influences of culture on language and the empowerment or disempowerment which particular language registers bring (for example, Heath, 1983). Bearing these in mind, the importance of a practice based on a philosophy of 'whole language' is emphasized (Alwerger, Edelsky & Flores, 1987), as well as the writing process (Graves, 1983) to develop both the desire and ability to write effectively for an authentic readership. That said, no single research, theory or curriculum guide can prescribe what is appropriate for individual students since literacy instruction must build on the knowledge which children have previously acquired (Jaggar and Smith-Burke, 1985).
For evaluating writing, Loughlin & Martin (1987) believe that teachers must attend to both product and process. Arnold (1991) favours using criteria outlines and keeping good cumulative records of student development. Sommers (1984) wants teachers to respect students' purposes in writing so that they develop their own voice.

Moving to the examination of L2 research, the work of Cummins and Swain (1986) demonstrates why French immersion is "additive bilingualism" with its inherent advantages. Levels of bilingualism (Williams & Snipper, 1990) and the significance of the "communicative approach" (Hornberger, 1989) have been explored. Hudelson (1987) finds that students can begin to write before they have complete control over the oral system, and that the components of biliteracy are interrelated and interdependent. Edelsky (1986) and others believe that best practice for acquiring L2 literacy appears to be similar to best practice for L1—whole language, the writing process and writing across the curricula. This includes an integrated approach with emphasis on the functional nature of school discourse and on collaborative learning strategies which encourage group work. Silva (1993) suggests that different assessment tools from those used for L1 are needed for writing in L2 since older L2 students' writing is perceived as simpler and less effective than with L1 students. Clay (1975) encourages using children's anterior knowledge when they are beginning to write, while Kaplan (1984) argues that cultural variation needs to be considered in L2 teaching.

Wesche (1992) emphasizes the importance of more than one sample of writing in order to assess a student fairly, this conditional upon using a multiplicity of evaluation techniques. LeBoulanger-Salerno (1989) and Damico (1991) insist on the importance of authenticity (linguistic realism). Calvé (1992)
suggests that a study of student errors (i.e., L2 characteristics) will provide the ammunition for teaching to their errors. Lapkin, Swain & Shapson (1990) emphasize two points: the importance of integrating language and content in French immersion, and that immersion students should not be taught as if they were francophones.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

A Qualitative Case Study

As indicated in the first chapter, the prime purpose of this research is to outline the developmental patterns of French immersion student writing in French. Alwerger, Edelsky & Flores (1987), Vygotsky (Wertsch, 1985), and others have demonstrated the social nature of writing (real communication) and the importance of context in writing. In order to establish a social relationship which could provide a satisfying context for writing, I decided to exchange letters with a cross section of students. I also decided to invite student participants to provide me "with other samples of writing in French which ... [they had] done in the school or at home during that time, and which ... [they] feel proud of ...." These two kinds of sampling would provide raw data for the study of their writing development.

My analysis of immersion students' writing would include a comparison with the British Columbia Ministry of Education's analysis of patterns of development in writing in English by anglophones. The Writing Reference Set developed by the Examinations Branch (1992) would serve as the point de départ, and this for at least two reasons. First, and most importantly, it would facilitate comparisons across the two languages by using an instrument for which English norms are already established. Secondly, should the results demonstrate similar or related patterns to the English language analysis, a means of assisting teachers in assessing writing in French immersion could be a consequence.
I have found no precedent for such an approach, but I believe it has potential and is worth a try. The analysis of the components of the Writing Reference Set, described later in this chapter will clarify the usefulness of this decision. Should the research results suggest that this method of assessing is wide of the mark, some possible alternative methods might be considered or further research indicated.

Because the subject of this case study does not logically invite hypothesis building, I chose to conduct a qualitative case study with characteristics similar to those described by Merriam (1988).

She designates case studies as particularistic, descriptive, heuristic, and inductive (p. 11). This case study is particularistic to the extent that it studies a program, and is "important for what it reveals about the phenomenon" -- in this case, the development of skills in writing in French by French immersion students (p. 11). It is descriptive because every effort has been made to provide "a complete, literal description of the...entity being investigated" including "as many variables as possible" and "portray[ing] their interaction" (p. 11). Because this case study is searching for new meaning "to extend the reader's experience or confirm what is known", this case study can also said to be heuristic (p. 13). The purpose is precisely to seek a deeper understanding of the immersion student writer's growth, -- probably confirming what a number of teachers suspect -- and seeking linkages between writing development in both first and second languages. The analysis of this study relies on inductive reasoning, seeking "generalizations, concepts, or hypotheses [which] emerge from an examination of data -- data grounded in the context itself" (p. 13).
The outcomes of this study will not be universally applicable since exceptions to general patterns are bound to appear. This is not an exact science—if, indeed, such a science exists. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) argue that the value of this type of research "is perhaps most obvious in relation to the development of theory" (p. 23). It also allows for considerable flexibility. As data are gathered, gaps are identified, the direction shifts, the intensity varies, "ideas can be quickly tried out and, if promising, followed up" (p. 24). This study and similar studies in other contexts will hopefully contribute to theory building over time as descriptions accumulate and to theory building generally. A further advantage identified by Hammersley and Atkinson is that research of this kind permits the testing of working theories because of the multiple data sources (p. 24).

**Research Design**

While design decisions were based on theoretical and methodological criteria, they were also based on issues of practicality (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). The genesis of this study is found in the theories espoused by the researchers and teachers who developed the Writing Reference Set. They express the belief that writing is developmental, that students learn to write at different rates, that while evaluation tools are linear and sequential within categories, children's writing is not necessarily so, and finally, that "writing changes in different ways when writing for different purposes or under changing circumstances" (B. C. Ministry of Education, 1992b, p. 7). Clearly, the research gap in relation to immersion was wide and inviting. Personal experience enhanced the challenge.
Methodology was inseparable from practicality in this study. I felt that it was essential to design a study that would be manageable and engaging for the participants. My plan was to establish a working relationship with teachers in two school districts chosen to represent two contrasting communities of learners -- large, urban versus smaller, rural -- and then to ask the teachers to identify children with whom to exchange letters. The next step was to secure parental consent in the case of elementary children and informed consent from secondary students. In order to provide reliability, I chose to ask teachers to select, in the manner they judged best, six students per grade, to represent a range of ability levels and both genders. I hoped to exchange up to five letters with each student over a period of a few months. The target of five letters was chosen because the number seemed manageable and would allow time to develop a relationship with the students. I thought about asking that only children whose first language is English be considered. On reflection, this seemed inconsistent with the policy of inclusiveness followed by the English writing reference set developers. Moreover, my experience with immersion students for whom English is a second language suggested that they are sometimes among the strongest students, particularly if they have been in Canada long enough to have some degree of bilingualism (English and a 'heritage' language). I decided that I would use the letter writing process to determine whether English was or was not the mother tongue, to make appropriate notes accordingly, and then try to identify differences, if any. In summary, two districts would each provide six correspondents per grade, both boys and girls, and representing a range of ability.
The actual level of distribution across grades proved disappointing. District staff members were very helpful and provided me with names of teachers who had indicated willingness to cooperate in this project. However, teachers are very busy people and, for several, this research project was evidently a low priority. Forms were often not distributed to students. Many letters were not answered or calls returned. In addition, where the initial paperwork was distributed there was often no apparent effort made to encourage or help students to become involved. The period of time originally planned for data collection had to be extended and new teachers sought. On the other hand, one teacher took full advantage of the pedagogical potential by having all children in her class participate. From a researcher's point of view it meant a lot of work with advantages that were purely personal; a number of the 'extra' parents never did manage to return the authorization slips with the result that these letters were not evaluated for this study. As a teacher, I thoroughly enjoyed the relationship I developed with the class and felt good about providing an opportunity for authentic writing.

After 16 months, there were samples of writing from all grade levels except grade 3, but the total number of samples at some grade levels is small. The data base includes the following (see Figure 1 on the following page):
As mentioned earlier, during the planning phase I reflected on a potential problem with the project design. Students might dash off letters with gay abandon and little attention to best form and surface features. This, in turn, could raise doubts about the validity of the findings as representative of what students "can do", showing instead what they "did do". It was in anticipation of this potential problem that I decided I would include an invitation to each of the students to include with their letters any samples of their work that they were proud of and would be willing to share with me. I decided to introduce this idea
to the children after at least one exchange of letters -- once a basis of friendship
was established. In practice, few elementary students and the majority of
secondary students did not send samples of work, evidently preferring to focus on
the correspondence. Therefore, there can be no assumptions that the samples
represent the students' best possible work at the time of writing.

To facilitate the exchanges of letters, a stamped self-addressed envelope
was included with each letter. Sometimes drawings, little word games or puzzles
were added to my letters to intrigue or amuse my correspondents. Occasionally
photos were exchanged. Elementary children included drawings with their
letters from time to time.

As the letters and other examples of writing were received, they were:
• answered;
• coded: -- first, by date of receipt, and secondly, according to the set of
descriptions provided in Evaluating Writing Across Curriculum: Using the
Writing Reference Set to Support Learning (B. C. Ministry of Education, 1992b,
pp. 9-17);
• analyzed according to L2 characteristics; and
• placed in a binder which kept together each student's writing and coding,
with copies of my replies, as well as the signed permission document, all of this
in order to facilitate on-going correspondence and keep track of coding. A
sample of the coding form is Appendix 1, p. 209.
Using the Reference Set

The sample writing analysis tool provided by the B.C. Ministry of Education includes a 'snapshot' comment, a reader response, and comments on meaning, style, form and surface features (referred to in Figure 2 as "descriptions") on a seven-point continuum. The matrix acquires a third dimension as writing for different purposes is added to the mix. Because the children in this case study were writing in their second language (and, in the case of a few, their third language), an additional "description" related to second language development was added.

Figure 2. Dimensions of the Writing Reference Set as applied to French immersion students writing in French

• The Dimension of Writing Purpose

The English language Writing Reference Set classifies student writing according to three possible purposes: writing to learn, writing for self-realization and writing as culture. Most of the samples of writing received
were 'friendly' personal letters. Whether these letters belong clearly and appropriately to one of the three categories designated in Evaluating Writing across Curriculum: Student Samples for the Writing Reference Set (B. C. Ministry of Education, 1992a) is a moot point.

"In Writing to Learn, students use writing to clarify their thinking, to share their thinking with others, and to demonstrate their understanding" (ibid., p. 6). Students are involved "in changing the words or ideas of others in some way" (ibid.). Samples of writing that are generally classed this way might include: lists, mathematical proofs, mind-maps, summaries, charts, paragraph answers, essay answers and lab reports. In 'Writing to Learn', the relationship between literacy and thinking is respected (see Wells, 1990; Olson, 1985; and Cook-Gumperz, 1986).

Does thinking include expressing feelings and opinions? In personal correspondence, demonstrating understanding is haphazard, but sharing of feelings and opinions with another person may often occur, particularly when a relationship of trust is established.

"In Writing for Self-realization, students use writing to personalize their learning, to express opinions, and to reflect on their learning" (B. C. Ministry of Education, 1992a, p. 30). Typical of such writing are personal journals. This writing "emphasizes the relationship between the writer and the topic" (p. 30). It is rarely revised or edited and is essentially personal, "emphasizing the importance of personal voice in writing" (p. 31).
The literature basis for this purpose seems somewhat arbitrary to the extent that, if one accepts the teachings of Vygotsky (Wertsch, 1985; Schneuwly, 1988), all expansion of language is also an expansion of learning. The beauty of 'Writing for Self-realization' is the freedom it may provide to the writer to experiment, to make mistakes, to tell lies, to write in the margins or upside down, to be as messy as one likes, to share secrets with one's alter ego, and to 'tell someone off' and burn the message. This freedom must be somewhat contained when 'Writing for Self-realization' must be shared.

Personal correspondence appears most like writing for self-realization, particularly in its initial phases - while the issue of audience remains ambiguous.

However, "in Writing as Culture, students use writing to express ideas imaginatively, to write in literary forms, and to use the power of language to influence others" (B. C. Ministry of Education, 1992a, p. 54). While this third writing purpose might seem to be less descriptive of student letter writing than writing for self-realization, the broader definition provided on page 54 suggests that "students engage in cultural writing in a variety of situations including when they... focus on audiences other than themselves..." (my emphasis).

The question needs to be asked: why bother with this dimension? According to the reference set writers, the answer is to be found in the emphasis teachers give to assessing the samples of writing. These authors suggest that in the case of 'Writing to Learn', the requirements of the form or genre used, the purpose of the writing, the meaning communicated and the complexity of the task are the prime foci (B. C. Ministry of Education, 1992a,
In 'Writing for Self-realization', the focus is on meaning and elements of personal style while form and surface features are of secondary importance (p. 31). In assessing 'Writing as Culture', the overall impact on the intended audience is paramount, with meaning, style, form and surface features considered as they contribute to that impact. Also significant is the imaginative use of language. Teachers look for evidence of revision (Graves, 1982) as well as a final correction of surface errors (B. C. Ministry of Education, 1992a, p. 56).

The fit did not seem appropriate for personal letters. A further adjustment to the analysis instrument was made with the addition of a fourth writing purpose, writing as friendly communication (see Figure 3). In my opinion, correspondence of this sort places prime emphasis on reader and form. The importance of surface features and style depend very much on the relationship between reader and writer.

Figure 3. Dimensions of the Writing Reference Set as applied to French immersion students writing in French.
While paying close attention to the dimension of writing purpose as
designed in the writing reference set might not prove particularly fruitful for
the analysis of samples of personal correspondence with their hybrid qualities,
the other samples of writing submitted fall relatively easily into each of the
three established writing purpose categories. Nonetheless, the question
remains – particularly since the descriptions provided do not vary within the
writing purpose dimension.

*The Dimension of the Developmental Continuum*

This dimension of writing analysis is clearly arbitrary in the sense that
seven levels were selected in the English language reference sets. The reference
set authors are silent on the reason for selecting this particular number. It may
have been the way the original samples seemed to group naturally, but it may
also be reasonable to assume that this number cannot be associated with a
particular number of school years, thus respecting an underlying principle that
learning to write is developmental and complex:

The descriptions are not tied tightly to age. Some student writing that was
examined in the project clearly matched description 7, although the
student was in grade seven. Other students may never produce writing
that could be classified as description 7. And neither should they be
expected to. (B. C. Ministry of Education, 1992b, p. 7)

The reference set authors caution that "although the appearance of the
descriptions suggests that writing is linear and sequential with students
progressing evenly in all aspects of their writing, this is a limitation imposed by
format rather than a reflection of belief" (B. C. Ministry of Education, 1992b,
p. 7). They also reinforce the principle that "students learn to write at various
rates, and their writing changes in different ways when writing for different purposes or under changing circumstances" (p. 7).

- **The Dimension of 'Descriptions'**

  The authors of *Evaluating Writing across Curriculum: Using the Writing Reference Set to Support Learning* identify six description categories. A copy of the chart which outlines the six descriptions categories by level is included as Appendix 2.

  The purpose of the 'snapshot' is to "... [provide] a quick overview; an advance organizer to help the reader understand the rest of the description... [and] should not be used to categorize a student writing sample" (B. C. Ministry of Education, 1992b, p. 6). The utility of this organizer appears limited for the purposes of this research as is really meant for a preliminary sorting only.

  The 'role of the reader' "explains the stance taken by the reader." Voice and engagement are to some extent subsumed within the 'role of the reader' since the teachers who developed the reference sets were unable to come to agreement about these significant elements. "Voice and engagement should be a constant reminder of the important role the reader plays in making sense of writing," caution the authors. (B. C. Ministry of Education, 1992b, pp. 6 and 8).

  'Meaning' refers to "the meaning the writer is attempting to convey and the writer's understanding of that meaning .... whether the meaning is about the writer's grasp of a particular concept, personal feelings, ability to synthesize
information, or the power to tell an engaging story" (B. C. Ministry of Education, 1992b, p. 6).

In 'style', the emphasis is on "the words, the figures of speech, and the variety of sentences a writer uses" (B. C. Ministry of Education, 1992b, p. 6).

'Form' is concerned with "applying organizational rules about writing". These could be rules for science reports, standard five-paragraph essays, a social studies report or a learning log (B. C. Ministry of Education, 1992b, p. 6).

The last description provided in the B. C. Ministry of Education writing reference set is that of 'surface features', and refers to the application of spelling, punctuation and grammatical rules (B. C. Ministry of Education, 1992b, p. 7; see also Sommers, 1984; McKay, 1984). This characteristic has often drawn most parent and teacher attention because it is the easiest to recognize and to assess.

As mentioned earlier, a seventh description was added to recognize the second-language nature of the student writing. Care was taken to leave this open-ended and no levels related to the developmental continuum were guessed at or presumed.

A major decision had to be made at the outset of the evaluation about distinguishing between surface features and L2 features. Thinking about how this might be done, I decided that 'errors' that could be 'heard' (that is, if said aloud would clearly not be 'French') would be classed as L2 characteristics. On
the other hand, errors which might be made by a francophone would be classed as surface errors. L2 characteristics are found in those sentences which contain characteristics of English grammar yet use a French vocabulary.

Examples of L2 characteristics in writing might include errors in gender (le maison, mon mère), in idiom (je suis dix ans; ), in pronoun order and/or choice (il prend moi une heure...; je veux dire à toi; ...photos de ils) in choice of preposition (en Vancouver; sur le 11 mars; nous allons sur l'avion); caused by substitution of an English word or structure (je vais recevoir ma pay check; tu juste dois vivre avec); and in verb (j'ai allé; il veut que je viens). This list is in no sense exhaustive. What distinguishes these errors is that they would not be made by a native speaker. They all have elements of English L1 interference.

Surface features, on the other hand, include homophones (vie/vit; allais/allait; marcher/marché); omission of accents - or too many; errors in punctuation and capitalization; spelling errors (beacoup; animeaux); and those other errors which might equally appear in a French student's writing.

On Curiosity, Bias, and Hope

As any researcher, I come to this task with a number of experiences, values and beliefs.

For 23 years I taught in schools in British Columbia. I began my service as an elementary school teacher with a variety of grade assignments. During my first six months in the classroom I followed traditionally accepted practice. Once I had acquired the confidence and the sense of how I might go about it, I decided
to be consistent with my beliefs and create an 'open' classroom with individualized instruction in the 'basics', an emphasis on reading for pleasure, a fair element of choice in student work, and 'stations' for science. Together with an emphasis on the fine arts, this became the basis for my practice for five years.

About that time federal funding for development of French programs became available to British Columbia school districts. I proposed the establishment of an Elementary French as a Second Language program in my elementary school, the largest in the district. I was given the freedom to do this, and for seven years I taught daily Core French to elementary children from kindergarten to grade seven. I began by following the teaching methods of the En Avant program, a Nuffield Institute project from England. As I began to work with the youngest children I realized the limitations of a strictly controlled vocabulary and a notional syllabus (one based on assumptions about a correct order of learning based on grammar/structures arranged from simple to complex). Although this program tried valiantly to use child-centered themes and games, it was often flat without the injection of other activities.

Introduction to the idea of a functional syllabus (one which is based on communicative need) and the value of using language as a means rather than as a message changed my approach dramatically. This use of French to explore and play with ideas, and to enter to some extent the world of another culture changed in fundamental ways my notions of what ideal language learning might be. With my own growing understanding, the underlying principles of French immersion made great sense to me.
An opportunity developed to introduce a Late French Immersion program in our district. In 1980, I pioneered late immersion with 27 children in grades six and seven. I felt obligated to use the few texts I had, if only out of deference to their writers and because I had yet to build up my confidence and repertoire. Over the years I gradually moved 'up' the system, teaching a variety of subjects to all grades of immersion students at the secondary level. Some subjects went much better than others. At the beginning, mathematics and French cuisine were the easiest; French language arts and social studies were the hardest. In retrospect, these subjects were the hardest because though they were potentially the most language rich, yet the language arts teaching materials were structured, sequenced, notional, and not founded in real communication. By the time I left this work to go to other endeavours I had once again rejected a notional approach to language learning. During the most productive writing sessions, the least used books on the shelves were the grammar texts; the most used were a variety of dictionaries and verb books. Students were encouraged to find a variety of ways of representing their thoughts and interests including making audio tapes for other classes in the community and video tapes to share with correspondents in Quebec. One class produced a comprehensive French language tourist guide to the community for distribution to the Tourist Bureau and local libraries.

Thus, my experience has taught me to value using language to learn, and to use learning to acquire language. I believe that if they have not lost the taste or have not been damaged, students are curious and wish to learn and to do it well. I also believe that an integrated language approach provides the greatest and richest chance for students to learn.
The tests in my language arts teaching served primarily to substantiate what I generally knew. In writing classes, I came to use a student's individual errors as the basis for further instruction. Editing of each other's work was a practice I encouraged in my last two or three years of classroom teaching. For those many students who wanted to know how, and for the few who wanted to know why, I made myself available to help them answer their questions.

A frustration for a pioneer in education is the sense of where one is in relation to where one ought to or might be. The sample of British Columbia students in late immersion now, as then, is small indeed, 1708 students in 1994-95 (Information Services, Ministry of Education). Most late immersion students are highly motivated and successful urban students. Mine were rural and of every ability range. Knowing how they were doing was a matter of guessing and hoping. Fear and stubbornness were my regular companions in my first years of French immersion teaching. Curiosity and hope were the ameliorating sentiments.

My biases then are those of a person firmly committed to bilingualism, and where possible to multilingualism. I also embrace a learner-based pedagogy to nurture what I believe are a child's natural curiosity and innate desire to learn. I am not immune to competition but value it primarily as self-improvement.

The Setting

The Bountiful School District (invented name) is located in the Lower Mainland area of the Province of British Columbia. It is characterized by a long-
standing French immersion program, and a clear district commitment to that program. The Early Immersion Program is available in nine dual-track elementary schools (which offer both a regular English language stream and an immersion stream in the same building). In addition to Early Immersion, there is also a Late Immersion option in two schools. This provides students with a second opportunity for immersion, in this case -- as in most B.C. districts offering Late Immersion -- in grade six. Bountiful has chosen not to have single-track immersion schools. There are three junior secondary and two senior secondary schools which provide the program from grades eight to twelve. In addition to immersion programs, the Programme cadre de français is available for families who qualify for francophone education under Section 23 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Bountiful is primarily suburban, the depredations of developers in the newer parts no longer as apparent in the sections of the city which were developed twenty or thirty years ago. While the evergreens in the older sections are not yet of a stature to summon up memories of the magnificent forests which were there a century ago, they are nonetheless attractive, providing refreshing shade in the summer and a dark somberness in the frequent fogs and windy wetness of winter. It is a community which is a riot of colour in the spring with dogwood, rhododendrons, azaleas, and bulbs of every variety in its mostly well-tended front yards.

There is little industry in this city which serves as a bedroom community for the industrial and business centers of neighbouring jurisdictions. Shopping centers abound along the major thoroughfares, while well-kept parks and sports facilities provide recreation in most sections of the city. There is little apparent
abject poverty; neither is there evidence of great wealth. This is the sort of community which, at least on the surface, values children and families.

Ocean View (also an invented name) is a much smaller school district. It is a small coastal city with a surrounding rural area. The district has historic importance in primary resource extraction and tourism. As its name suggests, it is located where the mountains provide a backdrop to an area which has pastoral and maritime vistas. Clear-cut logging has scarred some of the region's mountainsides; on the other hand, some areas have been protected as parks and are well appreciated by lovers of the outdoors.

This community is generally home to people involved directly in forestry, tourism, fishing, farming and less significantly now, in mining. Added to these are people providing professional, personal and commercial services to others in the community. The city is far from a university, but has a community college.

Ocean View has had an Early French Immersion Program for at least 15 years, and offers an unusual second chance for students who missed out when they were younger with a "late late" French immersion option beginning in grade 8. Three elementary schools (kindergarten to grade 6), a junior high (grades 7 to 9) and a senior high (grades 10 to 12) offer French immersion. The school district has been very supportive of the program. Immersion students regularly participate in cultural activities, exchanges and other forms of enrichment. Despite financial belt tightening, the district continues to designate a French coordinator to assure teacher support and in-service.
The Subjects

In order to protect their privacy, pseudonyms have been assigned to the children who participated in this research. Clearly, I used their true names in my correspondence with them, and they know mine. For simplicity (and because the prospect of assigning names to a family of so many children amused me), the names for the kindergarten children begin with A, the names of the grade one children begin with a B, and so forth. The grade twelve student contributors are thus referred to as Mary, Marilyn, Mike and Mark.

From their letters, we can make certain generalizations about the students. They are mainly from middle class families that are predominantly but not exclusively of European extraction. A few families appear to be quite well off (Pour ma fête de 16 année,... j'ai reçu une voiture de mon mère et père.... A ma maison, nous avons une piscine pour je peut pratiqué.). Children write of lessons of all sorts: dance, skating, harp, piano, sports. Many children live with only one of the original parents, and they refer to their dad's wife and their mother's husband. Some live with only one parent. Most have siblings and pets.

Secondary students write about their part-time work. Their levels of ambition are highly varied, but most seem to take their schoolwork seriously. Some have clear ideas about their future endeavours; others have no idea. Many have travelled to or participated in exchanges in Quebec or France, or both.

Almost all the subject students began French immersion in kindergarten. (In the course of the exchanges of letters, it turned out that two students from Bountiful School District began in grade six. However, the differences are not
sufficiently apparent that I would have spotted them without the students' sharing of the information.)

French in French Immersion

The practice in B. C.'s immersion schools has been to devote the kindergarten year to activities which enhance oral language acquisition, and to do this in as many ways as possible. Children represent their thoughts most often in the form of drawings, paintings, modeling, and so forth. They usually know or learn how to print their names, and some students are encouraged or choose to 'write' captions for their drawings. This may be copy writing, very basic sound/symbol experimentation, a random choice of letters, or it may be 'scribble'.

As mentioned earlier, 90% of children entering first grade believe that they can write, although most do not believe that they are able to read (Graves, 1983). For a researcher of writing development, therefore, the youngest 'writers' present a particular challenge; imagination and tolerance of ambiguity are necessary characteristics of the adult who reads this early writing.

In recent years, primary teachers in British Columbia have been moving steadily away from basal readers and workbooks. The whole language approach is now preferred, and is recommended in both English and French versions of the Primary Program. As they always have, good teachers help children understand sound/symbol relationships (phonics) and encourage them to represent their increasing knowledge in many ways, in order to develop their skills in communication. Freeing children to write and enabling them to do so
on every possible occasion are now accepted if not universal practice. As mentioned earlier, the ability to read is no longer seen as an essential first step to emergent writing - though clearly each helps the other. How many children in the sample have had the benefit of a whole language approach can only be guessed. It is probably safe to say that the younger the student, the more likely this is.

A number of elementary and most secondary students probably began their literacy in French using primers, basal readers and workbooks. Teachers of l'art du langage - immersion française are working through a transition from a formal grammar/literature/composition approach to one which is more holistic. It is 'the luck of the draw' whether students are taught by the older or newer methodologies. For this reason, while it may be possible to generalize as I have just done, it is nothing more than a generalization for the purposes of this discussion and cannot be used to explain or justify any research findings.

One characteristic common to early immersion students in B.C. is the reduction of the amount of time spent using French as the language of instruction and classroom communication over the course of the years. At the time of this study, a typical district offered 100% of instruction in French in the primary years, though some introduce English language arts in grade 3. By grade 4 and up to grade 7, students receive typically 50 to 80% of their instruction in French; from grades 8 to 10, this proportion drops to 3 to 5 courses out of 8 taught in French; and finally - in grades 11 and 12, most students take a total of only 3 or 4 courses in which French is the language of instruction (Forms 1601 and 1701, Ministry of Education).
The effects of this reduction in the amount of time spent in French have been studied in a variety of contexts within and without the province, both formally and informally. Some feel that students make relatively little progress once the amount of time is cut back to less than three-eighths. In New Brunswick, one recommendation following the recent in-depth study of the province's immersion program is that nothing less than 50% be considered immersion (Rehorick, 1994).

The counter argument, and one to which many B.C. students subscribe is that university or college entrance requirements do not give them the luxury of taking more than a bare minimum of courses in French. The numbers and expertise of immersion teachers, together with the small class sizes at the senior secondary level have not allowed schools to offer many choices in French and those have typically been restricted to the humanities.

**Data Collection Procedures and Time Frame**

The data collection for this research depended on a structured sequence of activities, followed by a period of further analysis and writing. The data gathering timeline included:

- seeking two districts willing to participate in the research: one, large and urban, with a strong and well-developed immersion program, the other, located in a smaller and more rural community, and with a much smaller program (this choice reflecting a wish for samples which would represent a fair cross-section);

- seeking the cooperation of teachers within these districts willing to:
  - identify children interested in participating in the research project and provide them with permission forms to be returned,
- in the case of the youngest, read the letters aloud to the child,
- provide the time for the children to answer the letters in class, should
  the children and teacher so wish,
- for the youngest, indicate the context in which the letters were written,
- encourage the students to answer their letters, and
- in the case of the youngest, see that the letters were mailed;

• sending out permission forms to the teachers;
• mailing the first letters to the children;
• receiving replies to the first letter, answering them individually, and beginning
  coding of the letters received;
• continuing to correspond until up to five letters were exchanged, receiving;
  and
• mailing a thank you to the participants and a summary of research findings to
  participating teachers and coordinators.

The first contacts with school districts were made in the fall of 1993, and
the first exchanges of letters began later that fall. The period for gathering of data
continued right up to and including early March 1995. The analysis of data was
conducted concurrently with the collection, and the conclusions were drawn
gradually as the evidence mounted. The major analysis was begun in early
January and completed in mid-March 1995.

Data Analysis Procedures

Each letter or other writing sample was read at least three or four times.
Effort was made to establish a context for writing: whether written
independently; whether done at home or at school; a first draft or not (i.e., edited
or unedited); whether in response to an initial letter or to a personal follow-up letter; whether a required assignment and, if so, the parameters.

The second step was to ascribe a purpose, using the three categories provided by the reference set model and the additional ‘friendly communication’ category.

The third step was to consider the first five description categories: snapshot, reader, meaning, style, and form. The writing sample was matched as closely as possible to one (or two or three) of the seven descriptions provided for each category. In each case, a description was written using as far as appropriate the suggested language from the category. The description was matched to the number or numbers assigned to the descriptive language, and then the number or numbers noted.

The fourth step was to examine surface features and L2 characteristics, determine which were which and then to record them in the appropriate category. Surface features were then matched to the English reference set description by level of development, and appropriate language and numerical placement registered. In this initial analysis, the L2 characteristics were registered and categorized, but no further analysis was done on the L2 characteristics -- though clearly this seemed an area rich in potential for study.

A last step in the initial analysis was to suggest an approximate placement on the developmental continuum. This assignment was simply done to conform with English reference set assessment practice, possibly relatively insignificant for this study since it ignores the L2 component.
The second level of analysis was to look carefully at the L2 characteristics and search for a pattern or somewhat consistent sequence.

The next step in the analysis was to show my work, and particularly the analysis of the writing samples, to colleagues for other opinions and verification. The feedback that I received supported my observations and analysis.

The final phase of the analysis was to look at the broad picture, draw conclusions and interpret a development pattern of children for whom French is a second language and who are learning to write in French within the context of French immersion.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The first letter arrived in early winter 1993. The postmark told me that it
was from Ocean View, the first district to respond to my request for help. The
wish to open the envelope and see what it contained was overwhelming. Inside I
found a computer prepared letter signed in ink. The letter was placed far to the
left on the page with about 5 cm of blank paper above the writing and double that
below his signature. "Well, here I go," I thought. And this is what 'Greg' wrote:

BONJOUR IRENE,
COMME TU SAIS, JE RECOIT MON EDUCATION A L'ECOLE MON BEAU REPOS EN OCEAN
VIEW.JE VIT AVEC MA MERE,MON PERE,ET MES DEUX SOEURS.MES DEUX SOEURS
ONT DES CHEVEAUX.UN S'APPELLE SCOTCH WHISKY ET L'AUTRE EST ESCORT.MA
SOEUR NAN (17 ANS) PARTICIPE BEAUCOUP DANS LES COMPETITIONS
D'EQUITATION.C'EST APPELER UN CIRCUIT DE A.Q.H.A. (AMERICAN QUARTER HORSE
ASSOCIATION).MON AUTRE SOEUR PATRICIA(15 ANS) A ESCORT SEULMENT POUR LE
PLAISIR. J'AIM
LES JEUX DE TOUS LES FACONS.MON FAVORIT EST TRIVIAL PERSUITJ'AIME AUSSI
FAIRE DU SKI,JOUER AU SOCCER,FAIRE DU BOWLING.NAGER, PATINER,ET FAIRE DU
"ROLLER BLADEING".J'AI UN CHAT QUI S'APPELLE MARS ELLE DONNE MOI BEACOUP
DE PLAISIR.PARFOIS ELLE DORT AVEC MES PERENTS NED ET TESS MAIS MON PERE
N'AIME PAS CETTE IDEE DE TOUT!
JE VA A QUEBEC AVEC MA CLASSE DURANT LA CARNAVAL POUR AMELIORE
NOTRE FRANCAIS.POUR L'HALLOWEEN, J'ETER UN PRETRE.J'AI ALLE VOIR
UN GRAND PRESENTATION DE FEU D'ARTIFICE AVEC MON AMI PETER AUSSI
J'AI BEACOUP D'AMI.MAIS J'AI SEULMENT DEUX BONS AMIS,PETER ET
JASON.J'AIME BEACOUP LA MUSIQUE DE TECHNO ET LA MUSIQUE DE DANCE
MODERENE COMME MA CASSETTE "DANCE MIX'93".REPONDRE MOI SIL VOUS
PLAIT.J'AI HATE DE RECEVOI PLUS D'INFORMATION CONCERNANT TOI.
TON AMI.

Greg's name was here, underlined
with a flourish.
Within a day or so a second letter awaited my return from work, the first of many from Kate, a faithful and charming correspondent. Then began the work of responding to each in turn, and then the filing and coding of the letters and other samples of writing.

The letters usually provided considerable scope for developing a conversation which was satisfying to both of us. Occasionally I was mightily challenged, as in the case of a very neatly penned letter from Frank (grade 5):

Chère Irene,


A la prochaine

Frank S. (cursive writing)

Frank Smith (printed)

How to answer? Part of my letter read:

Je suis contente que tu aies autant de bons amis. J'ai l'impression que tu évites pour l'instant les microbes transmis par les filles (girl germs). Est-ce vrai?

Je vais dîner avec mes amis du bureau ce soir. Nous allons à un restaurant près de Elk Lake entre Swartz Bay et Victoria. Mes amis s'appellent Raymond, June, Thora, Gilbert, Michel, Yushy, Judith, Helen, et Dennis.....

The entire process of correspondence and coding took a little over a year. My first inkling of what I might discover can be seen in the evolution over the elementary grades of the expression au revoir, used by some children as complementary closing:
The Research Findings, an Overview

While the number of samples of writing analyzed cannot in any sense be considered exhaustive, there is certainly enough evidence to be able to make comparisons and to posit certain tentative interpretations.

The student writing samples will be considered according to the three dimensions described in Chapter 3: writing purpose, descriptions and developmental continuum. Each dimension will be examined for its usefulness and validity as a measuring device for evaluating writing in French by immersion students. Patterns of the development of student writing will be identified, and comparisons will be made between these and the patterns found by the authors of the English language writing reference set.

One significant difference between the manner of gathering samples for the development of the English Writing Reference Set and the samples under discussion needs to be noted. The samples submitted for the provincial project were collected from actual classroom experiences and included reports, stories, poems, summaries, letters, essays and journals (B. C. Ministry of Education, 1992b, p. 1). In the interests of authentic communication, I chose letter writing for this French immersion study. For this reason, the writing was not necessarily done in class. This was particularly the case with older students. That said, little
qualitative distinction -- as far as correspondence is concerned -- has been noticed
that can be ascribed to where the writing was done.

It may be that lack of a dictionary or a verb book may have hampered some
students and their written output was qualitatively less than it might have been.
On the other hand, the ability to correspond in a 'real' context may well have
compensated by adding to the interest and motivation of the participants,
motivation to write -- certainly, to write for maximum correctness - probably not.

The Writing Purposes Revisited

This has proven the weakest dimension of this analysis since the writing
purpose in correspondence seems to cross to some extent all three suggested
categories, primarily writing for self-realization, with some aspects of writing to
learn, and possibly traces of writing as culture. As stated in the previous chapter,
writing to learn requires students to share their thinking with others; in writing
for self-realization, students express opinions; and in writing as culture, students
write in literary forms, often to express ideas imaginatively:

Bonnie (grade 1) shared her thinking in these words:
je sé bocu de le brontosor il mange le plote il gron ce un maison.

[Je sais beaucoup de le (sic) brontosaure. Il mange les plantes. Il est grand
comme une maison.]

Expressing her opinions in a letter about the advantages of learning more
than one language, Kate (grade 10) wrote:
Savais-tu que si tu peux parler le français, l'anglais, l'espagnol, le portugais, le japonais, le chinois et l'arabique tu peux parler un des langues officielles de presque tous les pays du monde? Tu manquerai seulement un demi de l'Europe. Certainement ce n'est pas avec tous les gens que tu pourrais converser, mais les grands villes seraient faciles. Je veux tous les apprendre, et plus!

Ernie (grade 4) both shared his thinking and expressed his opinions when he told me that he loves space:

J'aime beaucoup l'espace est-ce que tu? Mon favorite planète et Mercure et tont [toi]? Est-ce que tu as c'est [sais] que on vas a [avoir] 2 nouveaux lunes et perdre l'un on a, Jupiter vas perdre un grand chunk de lui et le system solère vas récevoir 1 autre planet.

[His accompanying diagram shows Earth's new moons (les nouveaux lunes) and the old one (lune aujourd'hui). The loss of Jupiter's missing bit was represented by a shape on the face of the planet with a congruent shape between it and Neptune. This missing bit was labelled "chunk du Jupitère". Crossing the solar system was a large arc bearing the name "le sainture d'asteroid". Well beyond Uranus was a dot labelled "Nouveau planète".]

Rather than try to group these square letters into round purposes in what seems a random and unhelpful division, as mentioned in Chapter 3, I decided that a fourth writing purpose, writing as friendly communication (with an interested older person) needed to be added. (See Figure 4.) The representation of the dimensions of the Writing Reference Set as applied to French immersion students writing in French (Figure 2) had to be redrawn.

That said, several samples of written school assignments provided by secondary students fell within the three original purposes outlined. Of the written class work, 10 samples can be grouped as writing to learn, 7 as writing as
self-realization and 4 as writing as culture. The balance, 97 samples, are personal letters -- writing as friendly communication.

Each level, from least to most developed has been analyzed as a vertical slice of the three-dimensional matrix illustrated in Chapter 3 (Figure 3). Each slice can thus be represented in two dimensions. The following grid (Figure 4) shows how samples of each level were considered. In the case of kindergarten to grade six, only the fourth column was used. Thereafter, it depended upon the samples obtained.

Figure 4: Two-dimensional evaluation grid (by level)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To learn</th>
<th>For self-realization</th>
<th>As culture</th>
<th>As friendly communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Snapshot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The reader</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Style</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface features</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 characteristics*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pre-Level One Writing

I sent my first letter to the kindergarten children in early January, 1994, in Palatino 18 for easier reading. This is the body of the letter(without drawings):


Écris-moi, s'il te plaît. Comment es-tu? Qui sont tes amis? Qu'est ce que tu aimes faire? Si tu le veux, tu peux dessiner quelque chose - ton portrait ton chat ou chien, ou quelque chose que tu aimes faire.

Je t'envoie une enveloppe pour ta réponse. Et merci beaucoup.

Ton ami,

Andrew's first letter to me was 'written' in February. Over this delightful drawing of himself and two dogs, he carefully printed his first name in upper case letters and his teacher made sure that I recognized his dogs by printing a caption.

Illustration 1

Illustration 2 (reduced in size)
This was my reply to Andrew (also reduced in size):

le 15 mars 1994

Bonjour Andrew,

Je suis très contente de recevoir ta lettre. Tu dessines très bien.

Est-ce que les deux chiens sont à toi ou imaginaires?


Voici les 6 chiens:

Queenie Brownie Chuck Moppet Tinkerbell Gregor

Est-ce que tu as un chat? As-tu des frères ou des soeurs?


Ton amie, Irene

Illustration 3

Early in June I received his second letter together with the others from the primary children in his school. Andrew's letter was written in May, and showed a clear attempt to reply to my questions. His letter is an example of copywriting -- his name was still in upper case letters; the other words had been carefully copied
from his dictated answers to my questions. The drawing and printing demonstrate a very considerable effort. He appeared to be moving towards level 1:

Bonjour

Je n'ai pas de chat. J'ai un frère. Nathaniel, une sœur, Sarah andrew

Illustration 4

Level One Writing

Ariadne's first reply to my introductory letter seems to have many if not all of the characteristics of Level 1 writing. Ariadne was also in kindergarten when she wrote this letter (illustration 5). With her name, the letter shows seven words.
This letter, like all the primary letters, has been classed as *writing as friendly communication*.

The 'snapshot' description for level one is the following:

Clear attempts to write, with some recognizable letters and perhaps a few familiar words. Focuses on exploring written forms and in recording personal experiences.

*The complete chart of descriptions by levels has been reproduced as Appendix 2 (p. 209).*
Ariadne made **clear attempts to write**. There are **recognizable letters** and a **decipherable message**: Il y [a un] poisson [et un] chat.

The 'reader' description for level one is as follows:

| The reader relies on similar patterns in the writing rather than on conventional decoding and frequently needs to consult the writer in order to understand the writing. The reader may recognize an occasional word. |

In Ariadne's letter, the reader can **recognize an occasional word**. The message is decipherable because it is illustrated and the spelling is phonetic. The writing goes across the page.

The description for 'meaning' for level one states:

| Students write about immediate experiences -- students' names, letters, and words they see in books or other print. Sometimes they intend to convey a specific meaning; other times they are just exploring. They often believe that their writing conveys their intended meaning. |

Ariadne's writing seems to reflect **immediate experiences**. She used her name and copied *Bonjour Irene*. Clearly she intends to convey a **specific meaning**.

'Style' for level one is described as follows:

| Students choose words that represent people, places, and things that are important to them. |

The words which Ariadne chose appear to **represent things** important to her; they explain her drawings.
In level one, 'form' is outlined as:

The work "looks" like writing -- for example, writing goes across the page. Students may imitate the forms they see around them, for example, labels, lists, paragraphs. They often use letters to write labels for a picture.

Ariadne's message looks like writing, and it clearly goes across the page.

The 'surface features' description for level one states that:

Students may write some familiar words, such as their names, in a way that others can understand. One letter -- often an initial consonant -- may represent a whole word.

There are some familiar words, written in a way that others can understand. All of Ariadne's writing is in upper case. Some hint that she is moving toward level two is her evident use of phonics, particularly vowels. Her use of upper case letters for names and to begin sentences, as well as her use of periods, is further evidence that she is moving along.

There are no 'L2 characteristics' identifiable in Ariadne's writing.

Level Two Writing

Barbara was in grade one when she wrote this first letter (see illustration 6). It has many of the characteristics of level 2. Her printing shows fine control for her age. Her letter, discounting numerals, contains 35 words. In standard spelling her message reads:
le 9 février

Bonjour Irene


Au revoir
'Barbara'.

Illustration 6
"Snapshot" description: level two

String of recognizable words with some basic sentences. Focuses on immediate personal experiences and interests. Writing may include imagined content and descriptive words.

Barbara's letter contains strings of recognizable words in basic sentences. The focus is on personal experiences and interests. She has responded appropriately to direct questions.

"Reader" description: level two

The reader can understand some words without help from the writer, but has to pause to figure out many of the words and fill in the gaps.

In Barbara's letter, the reader has to pause to figure out a few words. There are no gaps in text -- only in the reader's quick comprehension.

"Meaning": level two

Students write about their personal experiences and interests, and may include imagined content. They are able to read their own writing aloud for at least a short time after writing, but later may not remember what they intended.

Barbara writes about her family and her personal interests. Clearly she can read her own writing.

"Style": level two

They may include descriptive words, and often repeat a favorite word or description.
Barbara’s writing is already beyond level two in style. The level three description is closer. She uses short simple sentences of roughly the same length, and her writing is in the first person.

**'Form': level two**

Strings of words look like sentences. Students may imitate the same features of writing they see and hear. For example, they may number items in a list, begin a story with "once upon a time," or finish with "the end."

Barbara’s writing bridges levels two and three. As at level three the writing has form and sequence and real sentences, but unlike level three does not yet have transition words.

**'Surface features': level two**

Students include a number of words with standard spelling. They use vowels regularly, and rarely replace a whole word with one consonant. Students use spaces to separate words, and begin to include punctuation marks although they may not follow standard rules (for example, they may insert a period at the end of each line rather than at the end of a sentence.

There are a number of words with standard spelling. Barbara uses vowels regularly and replaced only one whole word with one letter, not a consonant, a phonetically defensible spelling: O for au. Clearly she separates words with spaces where she hears the separation (note the exception: mèsami). She uses the period appropriately.

**'L2 characteristics'** identifiable in Barbara’s writing: le télévision (error of gender)
Level Three Writing

Bob was in grade one when he wrote this first letter (see illustration 7). His writing is predominantly at the third level. His printing shows less fine motor control than Barbara's but is clear and legible. His letter contains 44 words, but he rarely uses upper case letters. The body of his letter in standard spelling reads:


le 9 février 1994
Bonjour irene
comment va tu.
j'ai un frère et
il est dans ma classe.
Simple sentences may be arranged in a variety of recognizable formats according to the writer's context and purpose. Focuses on personal experiences and interests, and typically writes in the first person.

Bob has written in simple sentences. The format, the friendly letter, is used for his context and purpose. Bob focuses on personal experiences and interests. He typically writes in the first person.

The reader can recognize most of the words and develop a sense of the overall meaning, but may have to read slowly because of frequent unconventional spelling and/or punctuation.

In Bob's letter, the reader can recognize most of the words, but has to read slowly because of frequent unconventional spelling. The overall meaning is clear.

Students write about their experiences and interests, and include events and information they remember or imagine. Writing tends to be direct and concrete, but may include some generalizations, speculations, or imaginings.

Bob writes about his experiences and interests. The writing is direct and concrete.

Students rely on short simple sentences that are roughly the same length. They usually write in the first person, and use pronouns frequently.

Bob's writing is based on short simple sentences of roughly the same length. The first person dominates and he uses other pronouns as well: tu, nous, il.
'Form': level three

The writing has form and sequence, although these may not be consistently sustained. Student use some transition words or links between ideas, but the transition may be abrupt. They may use a variety of simple forms - personal topics, labels, stories, notes, poems, lists, reports -- and use specialized vocabulary when they are given the words as part of the task. Stories have a beginning, middle and end.

Bob's writing has form and sequence, but the transitions are abrupt.

'Surface features': level three

Students use conventional spelling for most words, but the number of errors may interfere with meaning. They can check their work by reading it aloud, and they show willingness to make some changes. When they don't know how to spell a word, they often sound it out.

Bob uses conventional spelling, otherwise he "sounds them out" (uses phonetic spelling). Errors may interfere with meaning: *jaimé tu fér a l'école*.

'L2 characteristics' identifiable in Bob's writing: not noticeable.

Felicity, in grade five, also writes at the third level (see illustration 8). She prepared her letter (61 words) using the family computer. The reader (if anglophone) can recognize most of the words, and develop a sense of overall meaning. Within the context of meaning, her writing is direct and concrete, and deals with her personal interests. The style of her writing is based on short simple sentences; first person writing and use of pronouns is typical. This letter has form and sequence, though not consistently maintained. Her transitions are quite abrupt. An examination of surface features shows that Felicity does not yet distinguish between common homophones and near homophones (son/sont; est/et). Errors might interfere with meaning. L2 characteristics include: elle et 13 (elle a 13 ans);
les owner; j'ai aller (je suis allée); beaucoup de ami (= beaucoup d'amis: Is this surface or L2?); un et Stacey (l'une est Stacey); jour la ringuette (joue à la ringuette); en l'été (en été); en Desolation Sound (à Desolation Sound).

Illustration 8

| J'ai une sœur qui s'appelle (nom). Elle et 13. Mon père et sont frère sont les owner de (nom) yact.sales. |

_Felicity_ (in large cursive writing)

Level Four Writing

Samples of writing for most of the four purposes (to learn, for self-realization, as culture and as friendly communication) spanning levels four to seven was found in the submissions of students in grades 7 to 12. For this reason, beginning at level four, the spectrum is more complete.

Level Four Writing - to Learn

Hannah wrote this job application letter as a class assignment (see illustration 9). It has characteristics of writing at the fourth level. Her letter was done at the computer, was originally double spaced, and has 145 words. Hannah was in grade 7 when she did this assignment.

Snapshot' description: level four

The writing has a clear form and a logical sequence. Simple sentences dominate, with occasional instances of complexity (e.g., subordination). Ideas are developed or elaborated to make meaning clear. Content may come from a variety of sources. Variety of words used increases.
Hannah's writing has a clear form and a logical sequence. Simple sentences dominate with instances of complexity: Je pense que je serais bonne pour le travail parce que je suis gentille avec les personnes qui viennent au magasin. Hannah includes some elaboration but the purpose for doing so is not consistently clear.

'Reader' description: level four

The reader can read most of the words easily, but may have difficulty following the sequence and understanding the relationships among the ideas or events. Readers often notice variations in their feelings about the piece (or ease of reading) and find it difficult to summarize an overall impression.

The reader can read most of the words easily, but may have difficulty following the sequence and understanding the relationships among the ideas. It is difficult to summarize an overall impression.

Illustration 9

Mercredi le 5 oct. 1994

Mme [nom]
adresse

Chère Mme [nom],


Je pense que je serais bonne pour le travail parce que je suis gentille avec les personnes qui viennent au magasin. Je suis bonne en math. J'aime travailler avec des numeros et des personnes.

Sincèrement Hannah [nom]

[adresse]
'Meaning': level four

Students use a variety of sources (e.g., books, friends, experiences, imagination) and may combine pieces of information to develop the content. Writing shows some consideration of the reader, and of the need to develop or elaborate ideas to make meaning clear. While writing is basically simple and straightforward, some evidence of abstract thought and generalizations (or over-generalizations) may appear.

Hannah uses ideas from a variety of sources: her likes, interests, family and her perception of what the job might entail. Her writing is basically simple and straightforward and she shows the need to elaborate ideas to make meaning clear.

'Style': level four

Students shows increasing precision in choosing words. Most sentences repeat two or three patterns, but include different lengths. Simple ideas are sometimes elaborated through detail, example, reasons, dialogue or setting, although this elaboration may be irrelevant or unfocused. The writing suggests emerging awareness of an audience or community, and may take on an objective tone.

Hannah's sentences repeat a few patterns, but include different lengths. There is some elaboration through detail, but it is frequently irrelevant and unfocused.

'Form': level four

The writing has form and sequence. Students apply the basic rules or conventions they have been given for the forms of writing used in various subject areas, and use specialized language when given some support. Transitions between ideas seem generally smooth and natural. In extended writing, students group related ideas together and use paragraphs. The beginning, middle and endings of longer pieces are reasonably clear.

Hannah's letter has form and sequence. She applies the basic rules and conventions of the business letter, and groups related ideas in paragraphs.
'Surface features': level four

Students follow standard rules and conventions in spelling most common words and construction of basic sentences. Surface errors are not particularly noticeable, although some inconsistencies in spelling may appear, along with sentence errors that are largely due to misuse of punctuation marks (e.g., using a comma in place of a period).

Hannah follows standard rules and conventions in spelling most common words and the construction of basic sentences. She makes homophonic errors such as mes parents s'appelle (=s'appellent) and joué (for jouer); ne (for née).

'L2 characteristics' identifiable in Hannah's writing: use of the word personnes; confusion regarding whether to use the definite or indefinite article.

Level Four Writing - as Friendly Communication

Charles wrote this letter in grade two (see illustration 10). It was his first letter to me, and has characteristics of writing at the fourth level with some movement towards level five. He has erased his work here and there as he made revisions (e.g., printing film where he had video. and changing d to ã). His printing is quite legible despite the soft pencil and his erasures. The letter contains 147 words with an additional 12 words as caption for his drawing of un chamaiteau, an invented word.

For Charles, French is a third language.
The writing has a clear form and a logical sequence. Simple sentences dominate, with occasional instances of complexity (e.g., subordination). Ideas are developed or elaborated to make meaning clear. Content may come from a variety of sources. Variety of words used increases.

Charles' writing has a clear form and a logical sequence. Simple sentences dominate with instances of subordination: A Vancouver il y a une place qui s'appelle le P.N.E.; Peux tu me dire quel film tu aime le plus; Je pense que'en été ma maman, mon papa et moi nous irons à Victoria. Ideas are elaborated: he says he likes the game Mousetrap and then explains the game. Charles has drawn on a variety of sources of inspiration and, like level 5 writing, provides detail for clarity.


Bonjour Irene

Merci pour ta lettre.

Mes grands-parents vont revoir à Vancouver. C'est très tranquille juste mon papa et ma maman.

J'aime toutes les lettres que tu donnes. Je veux aller au Disneyland à Vancouver il ya une place qui s'appelle le P.N.E. J'aime le film Hocus Pocus. Est-ce que tu as vu le film Hocus Pocus? Je pense que'en été ma maman, mon papa et moi nous irons à Victoria. Je ne connais pas le jeu "lier dico"? J'aime le jeu mousetrap. Connais tu ce jeu? Tu as deux joueurs. Tu ne dois pas être attirée par le chat. Je pense que tu connais Cody. Il est mon ami.

Peux tu me dire quel film tu aime le plus? J'ai trois film favoris: Peter, Pan Hocus et Aladin. L'histoire de Peter est-ce que tu donne au enfants.
'Reader' description: level four

The reader can read most of the words easily, but may have difficulty following the sequence and understanding the relationships among the ideas or events. Readers often notice variations in their feelings about the piece (or ease of reading) and find it difficult to summarize an overall impression.

For this description, Charles seems to be beyond level four. The letter is easily read and there is no difficulty following the relationships among ideas and events. The overall impression for the reader is one of pleasure at reading an interesting and well constructed letter. The characteristics of level five which apply include the ability to understand the writer's purpose and to respond to the ideas offered.
'Meaning': level four

Students use a variety of sources (e.g., books, friends, experiences, imagination) and may combine pieces of information to develop the content. Writing shows some consideration of the reader, and of the need to develop or elaborate ideas to make meaning clear. While writing is basically simple and straightforward, some evidence of abstract thought and generalizations (or over-generalizations) may appear.

Charles uses ideas from multiple sources: his friends, interests and observations. He clearly considers the reader and the need to develop or elaborate ideas to make meaning clear.

'Style': level four

Students shows increasing precision in choosing words. Most sentences repeat two or three patterns, but include different lengths. Simple ideas are sometimes elaborated through detail, example, reasons, dialogue or setting, although this elaboration may be irrelevant or unfocused. The writing suggests emerging awareness of an audience or community, and may take on an objective tone.

Charles' writing shows elaboration through detail. He is clearly aware of his audience.

'Form': level four

The writing has form and sequence. Students apply the basic rules or conventions they have been given for the forms of writing used in various subject areas, and use specialized language when given some support. Transitions between ideas seem generally smooth and natural. In extended writing, students group related ideas together and use paragraphs. The beginning, middle and endings of longer pieces are reasonably clear.

Charles' writing has both form and sequence. He applies the basic conventions of the letter. He uses paragraphs, however the grouping seems somewhat arbitrary.
'Surface features': level four

Students follow standard rules and conventions in spelling most common words, and conventions in spelling most common words and construction of basic sentences. Surface errors are not particularly noticeable, although some inconsistencies in spelling may appear, along with sentence errors that are largely due to misuse of punctuation marks (e.g., using a comma in place of a period).

Surface feature errors are not particularly noticeable. Charles' use of question marks, apostrophes and hyphens is a little unsure.

'L2 characteristics' identifiable in Charles' writing: use of the preposition au with Vancouver, an error typical of immersion students generally.

Charles' writing is obviously well advanced for a boy of seven.

Frances, a grade five student, is at the fourth level in some respects but with a number of aspects of level three still apparent in her writing (see illustration 11 below). The original was printed in ink with bold letters and a flamboyant signature.

As in level four, the reader can read most words easily, but it is difficult to summarize an overall impression of the writing. More like level three, the meaning of her writing is direct and concrete, the writing basically simple and straightforward, expressing personal experiences and interests or lack of them. Her style is one of short simple sentences - mostly in the first person, typical of level three. Frances' writing has form and sequence, and her transitions are quite abrupt, again typical of level three. Like level four, she applies the basic conventions of the friendly letter form. Her command of surface features is more
or less characteristic of a child working at level three, i.e., conventional spelling for most common words, and when unsure her words are sounded out. She confuses certain homophones or near homophones: est/et; silent plurals; a/à; -él/er. Frances' writing has several L2 characteristics found in a number of French immersion students: joue ringette (joue à la ringuette); le fete de elle et Feb, 12, 82 (sa fête est le 12 février 1982); mon professeur et Mmd. [nom] et Mr. [nom] (mes professeurs sont .....).

Chère Irene,


A la prochain

[signature]

[name typed]

Illustration 11

Level Five Writing - to Learn

Lloyd wrote this as a class assignment for grade 11 French language arts. The objective was to write an essay to respond to one of several questions. The question he chose required him to describe the similarities and differences among the men in Emma Bovary's life. Lloyd submitted his final draft for this research. This essay (637 words) was prepared using a word processor (a retyped copy of
A nagging question remains: how much of the novel did he read, and how much did he guess at? In his correspondence he suggests that "c'est un livre qu'on n'a pas vraiment lu".

**Snapshot' description: level five**

Sense of growing control with instances of complexity or specialized use of language or structure. Includes details, examples, and explanations to help make meaning clear. Often uneven: the writer may focus to perfect one aspect of the piece but pay less attention to others.

Lloyd's writing includes details, explanations and examples for clarity. His writing is often uneven. He strove to perfect one aspect (the narrative), but paid less attention to the question asked and the language used.

**'Reader' description: level five**

The reader can usually understand the writer's purpose, and respond to the ideas offered and/or to the language and form used.

The reader can usually understand Lloyd's purpose, and respond to the ideas offered. Sometimes the fact that Lloyd had read 'at' rather than read the novel makes it difficult. Significantly, the writing features speculation and incorporates ideas with his knowledge (level six).

**'Meaning': level five**

Students develop simple concepts and concrete material, and occasionally attempt to deal with complexity or abstract ideas. Writing shows awareness that meaning can be made more precise through the use of details, examples and explanations.
Lloyd makes attempts to deal with complexity and detail. He understands the value of detail, example and explanations.

'Style': level five

Students rely on relatively simple sentence structure, with occasional experiments with more complex or elaborated elements of style. (These experiments are not always effective.) A sense of audience and awareness of other people is clearly evident. In paragraph writing, a rough rhythm may indicate that students are able to keep in mind what they have already written, as they construct a new sentence.

This essay shows experiments with more complex or elaborate elements of style (not always effective). Sentence length changes regularly, and there is some sense of flow (see level six).

'Form': level five

The writing follows a logical pattern and indicates a sense of structure. Students apply the basic rules of most common forms and formats, although they may lapse occasionally or have difficulty with some of the more complex conventions. They tend to follow standard structures and formats without attempting to adapt these to ideas or purpose. They use specialized language with little support, but may be tentative (and sometimes inaccurate).

Like level six, this writing follows a consistent organization and pattern. Consistent with level five, Lloyd applies basic rules and conventions of form and genre, but there is no attempt to adjust or adapt them to his purpose.

'Surface features': level five

Students use conventional spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure in most cases. Errors tend to be associated with complex language or sentence structures, although some may be consistent problems (as characteristic spelling mistakes that are repeated). Students may make substantial revisions to the form and content of their first drafts.
In common with writing at level four, Lloyd follows standard rules and conventions in spelling most common words and in sentence construction. Surface feature errors tend to be associated with complex language or sentence structures.

'L2 characteristics' identifiable in Lloyd's writing: a number of errors in gender (he does not appear to have bothered to use a dictionary); errors in choice of indicative/subjunctive; errors in choice of preposition (penser de rather than à; en + city); errors in vocabulary (un person; Emma regardait = avait l'air); pronoun errors (le/lui) etc.

Illustration 12

Lloyd clearly has a wide vocabulary and can make himself understood. Is he aware that many of the errors in this piece of writing are within his control? Is he aware that he really retold the story and avoided the comparisons asked?
Level Five Writing - for Self-realization

Iolanthe wrote a paragraph (134 words) in response to an assignment to describe herself, produced at the beginning of September in her grade 8 French language arts. The theme of her piece is being different. Iolanthe sent me the draft which she handed in for a mark. The paragraph was hand written (see illustration 13). Iolanthe shows signs of beginning to work at the sixth level.

Snapshot' description: level five

Sense of growing control with instances of complexity or specialized use of language or structure. Includes details, examples, and explanations to help make meaning clear. Often uneven: the writer may focus to perfect one aspect of the piece but pay less attention to others.

Iolanthe's writing includes details, explanations and examples to help make the meaning clear. Her paragraph is often uneven.

'Reader' description: level five

The reader can usually understand the writer's purpose, and respond to the ideas offered and/or to the language and form used.

The reader can become engaged in this piece of writing and grasp subtleties (level 6).

'Meaning': level five

Students develop simple concepts and concrete material, and occasionally attempt to deal with complexity or abstract ideas. Writing shows awareness that meaning can be made more precise through the use of details, examples and explanations.
Iolanthe develops simple concepts, but attempts to deal with complexity and abstract ideas. She seeks precision through detail.

'Style': level five

Students rely on relatively simple sentence structure, with occasional experiments with more complex or elaborated elements of style. (These experiments are not always effective.) A sense of audience and awareness of other people is clearly evident. In paragraph writing, a rough rhythm may indicate that students are able to keep in mind what they have already written, as they construct a new sentence.

In this paragraph the sentence structures are relatively simple shows with occasional use of more complex or elaborate elements of style.

Form': level five

The writing follows a logical pattern and indicates a sense of structure. Students apply the basic rules of most common forms and formats, although they may lapse occasionally or have difficulty with some of the more complex conventions. They tend to follow standard structures and formats without attempting to adapt these to ideas or purpose. They use specialized language with little support, but may be tentative (and sometimes inaccurate).

In this piece of writing Iolanthe follows a standard structure without any attempting to adapt it to the ideas contained.

'Surface features': level five

Students use conventional spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure in most cases. Errors tend to be associated with complex language or sentence structures, although some may be consistent problems (as characteristic spelling mistakes that are repeated). Students may make substantial revisions to the form and content of their first drafts.
Iolanthe uses conventional spelling, punctuation and sentence structure in most cases. Surface feature errors tend to be associated with complex language or sentence structures, possibly carelessness. (Par example might be caused by L2 interference, or possibly by simple sounding out.)

'L2 characteristics' identified in Iolanthe's writing: errors in gender (ma future; le fôret; la reste; nouveaux choses); an error in choice of preposition (à la Nouvelle Zélande = en N.Z.); errors in vocabulary (les issues = les questions; une Jeep convertissable = décapotable; promener = se promener; support = appuyer).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Septembre 8</th>
<th>Iolanthe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon espérance est que ma future soit brillante et claire pour la reste de ma vie.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Illustration 13

Level Five Writing - as Culture

Iolanthe also submitted a poem (86 words plus title) written later in her grade 8 year. This is a cry from the heart from a caring adolescent. Her poem was hand written (see illustration 14). Like her earlier writing, this poem has some characteristics of level six.
Snapshot' description: level five

Sense of growing control with instances of complexity or specialized use of language or structure. Includes details, examples, and explanations to help make meaning clear. Often uneven: the writer may focus to perfect one aspect of the piece but pay less attention to others.

Key elements of the genre appear under control in this sample of Iolanthe's writing (see level six). Her attempts at sophistication are somewhat uneven.

'Reader' description: level five

The reader can usually understand the writer's purpose, and respond to the ideas offered and/or to the language and form used.

The reader can become engaged in this piece of writing (level six) and respond to the ideas presented.

Les Enfants

On entend les cris des enfants,
Les cris de souffrance et de faim.
On voit leurs corps tremblants
Leurs vêtements salés.

Les unes plus âgées essayent d'être braves,
Ils protègent les unes plus petits
Tous ont très peur
La violence des rues est tout qu'ils savent
Ils vivent pour chaque heure

Mais il y a de l'espoir pour leurs âmes déchirées
On peut les aider extrêmement
Avec nos donations
Leur coeurs seront réparés
Pour guérir les nations

S'il vous plaît, libérez les enfants.

Illustration 14
'Meaning': level five

Students develop simple concepts and concrete material, and occasionally attempt to deal with complexity or abstract ideas. Writing shows awareness that meaning can be made more precise through the use of details, examples and explanations.

Iolanthe shows awareness that meaning can be made more precise through the addition of details, examples and explanations. She has incorporated her idea -- probably inspired by television -- with her own knowledge and imagination (level 6).

'Style': level five

Students rely on relatively simple sentence structure, with occasional experiments with more complex or elaborated elements of style. (These experiments are not always effective.) A sense of audience and awareness of other people is clearly evident. In paragraph writing, a rough rhythm may indicate that students are able to keep in mind what they have already written, as they construct a new sentence.

In writing this poem, Iolanthe gives evidence that she has selected certain words for shading of meaning and has a growing repertoire of styles (level six). She demonstrates a sense of audience.

'Form': level five

The writing follows a logical pattern and indicates a sense of structure. Students apply the basic rules of most common forms and formats, although they may lapse occasionally or have difficulty with some of the more complex conventions. They tend to follow standard structures and formats without attempting to adapt these to ideas or purpose. They use specialized language with little support, but may be tentative (and sometimes inaccurate).
In this piece of writing Iolanthe follows a logical pattern and indicates a sense of structure. She has made a start at using specialized language.

'Surface features': level five

Students use conventional spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure in most cases. Errors tend to be associated with complex language or sentence structures, although some may be consistent problems (as characteristic spelling mistakes that are repeated). Students may make substantial revisions to the form and content of their first drafts.

Conventional spelling was used in most cases. Errors are associated with complex language or are based on L2 characteristics; exception: er/é confusion.

'L2 characteristics' identified in Iolanthe's writing: les unes for both genders (it would have been better omitted); tout qu'ils = tout ce qu'ils; extrêmement = extrêmement.

Level Five Writing as Friendly Communication

Hilda is thirteen and in grade 7. Her writing is generally typical of level 5 (see illustration 15). It was her first letter (229 words), and was written with care. She made 7 changes with 'white out', probably when rereading her letter.

'Snapshot' description: level five

Sense of growing control with instances of complexity or specialized use of language or structure. Includes details, examples, and explanations to help make meaning clear. Often uneven: the writer may focus to perfect one aspect of the piece but pay less attention to others.
Hilda's writing contains instances of complexity when she describes her soccer playing. Simple sentences dominate however -- as in level four. She includes details, examples, and explanations to make meaning clear: her family situation is explained, she describes her appearance, and elaborates on her sporting and other favorite activities. Her writing is a little uneven, but the overall impression is positive.

'Reader' description: level five

The reader can usually understand the writer's purpose, and respond to the ideas offered and/or to the language and form used.

The reader can readily understand Hilda's purpose in writing and respond to the ideas offered and the language used.

'Meaning': level five

Students develop simple concepts and concrete material, and occasionally attempt to deal with complexity or abstract ideas. Writing shows awareness that meaning can be made more precise through the use of details, examples and explanations.

This writing has been developed with essentially simple concepts and concrete material. This writing shows awareness that Hilda uses details, examples and explanations to make her writing precise.

'Style': level five

Students rely on relatively simple sentence structure, with occasional experiments with more complex or elaborated elements of style. (These experiments are not always effective.) A sense of audience and awareness of other people is clearly evident. In paragraph writing, a rough rhythm may indicate that students are able to keep in mind what they have already written, as they construct a new sentence.
Hilda depends on relatively simple sentence structure and occasionally more complex elements of style. Her writing demonstrates a sense of audience and awareness of other people.

Bonjour,


J'ai une chienne qui s'appelle Neecha, une hamster qui s'appelle Carina et 3 chats qui s'appellent Smokey, Alan et Patchas.

J'aime jouer le soccer et le volleyball. J'aime aussi jouer au badminton. J'étais sur une équipe de soccer et c'était amusant. Tout le monde m'appelait "The Giant Slayer". Ils m'appelaient ça parce que je jouais de défense et je bloquais tous les files qui étaient beaucoup plus grande que moi. J'aime nager et j'aime promener dans les bois. Il y a des bois proche de la maison de ma mère qui s'appelle "Cougar Canyon." C'est très jolie la pendant l'été. Il y a une mur fait d'agricole qu'on grimpe. Ça c'est très amusant.

Mes sœurs s'appellent Michelle, 16 ans et Connie, 10 ans.

Je dois aller maintenant, et j'ai hâte de vous entendre encore.

Ton amie.
'Form': level five

The writing follows a logical pattern and indicates a sense of structure. Students apply the basic rules of most common forms and formats, although they may lapse occasionally or have difficulty with some of the more complex conventions. They tend to follow standard structures and formats without attempting to adapt these to ideas or purpose. They use specialized language with little support, but may be tentative (and sometimes inaccurate).

Hilda's writing shows a sense of structure, and she applies the basic rules of the friendly letter. She makes no attempt to adapt these to her purpose.

'Surface features': level five

Students use conventional spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure in most cases. Errors tend to be associated with complex language or sentence structures, although some may be consistent problems (as characteristic spelling mistakes that are repeated). Students may make substantial revisions to the form and content of their first drafts.

Hilda uses conventional spelling, punctuation and sentence structure in most cases. She made some homophonic errors and was unsure whether the rock is argile or agrile.

'L2 characteristics' identifiable in Hilda's writing: ambiguity about jouer + a sport (jouer le/jouer au); a few gender confusions; j'aime promener (= j'aime me promener); être sur une équipe (= jouer pour une équipe); confusion of vit and vive in the present indicative; j'ai 13 ans et en 7e années (= j'ai 13 ans et je suis en 7e année).
In accordance with her French language arts assignment, Louise, a grade 11 student, prepared this essay for practice in writing a descriptive text while taking a position for or against. She has used the opportunity to explore and express her own feelings, and therefore this writing has certain elements of writing for self-realization. The text (179 words) has characteristics of both levels five and six, primarily the latter. With her 'good copy' Louise included her first draft and the adjective lists she prepared during the planning stage. The work was hand written, double spaced. A typed copy is shown below (see illustration 16).

**Snapshot' description: level six**

Key elements of the form or genre appear to be under control, and the writer shows attempts at sophistication in some aspects of writing. Integrates information from various sources and may include abstractions and/or speculation. Growing vocabulary and use of specialized language. Few errors.

Consistent with level six writing, the key elements of Louise's essay seem under control -- with serious attempts at sophistication. Her writing includes speculation, but is sometimes a little uneven (level 5). The overall impression is very positive.

**'Reader' description: level six**

The reader can become engaged in the writing, and grasp subtleties and complex ideas and relationships.

The reader can become engaged in the writing and grasp certain subtleties,
complex ideas and relationships.
Meaning: level six

Students deal with complex content and their writing often features abstraction and speculation. They draw on facts and ideas from various sources, and incorporate these with their knowledge, experience, and imagination to shape precise meaning.

There is evidence that words were selected deliberately for shadings of meaning. This was, in fact, a prime objective of the assignment. Louise combines ideas with her imagination to shape precise meaning.

Illustration 16

L'Avortement

Il faut d'abord rappeler que plusieurs d'entre-vous sont trop conservateur pour moi. Ouvrez vos yeux un peu et voyez les statistiques : il faut noter que 76 % des femmes ressentent des émotions heureuses et de soulagement après un avortement, dit un étude américain. Néanmoins, le 17 % des femmes qui resentaient des émotions de culpabilité et de traumatisme était en général ceux qui devait faire la décision eux mêmes, contre leurs parents ou leurs partenaires.

Il ne fait pas de doute que si une femme est violé sexuellement, l'avortement doit être une option, par conséquant si elle l'aura gardé, la vie de cette pauvre enfant ne serait pas très heureuse. Donc la femme doit avoir le choix de faire ce qu'elle veut. Pourtant le fait que les gens essaient de prendre les choix comme celle-ci pour les femmes eux-mêmes me rends très fâchée. Quelques idées fausses du côté pro-choix sont que certaines personnes disent que l'avortement est moralement mal en effet ces gens ne doivent pas le faire - mais pour tout les autres, ça doit être une option. Considérons le cas que la majorité du peuple croit que c'est plus mal d'enlever un enfant aimer dans le monde.

Comment est-ce que tout le monde peut dire qu'après un avortement, les femmes vont souffrir de culpabilité, de traumatisme et d'hostilité envers leurs partenaires. Pourtant ils ne considèrent pas le fait que chaque grossesse leur remet les mêmes sentiments que l'avortement, mais celles de la grossesse restent plus longtemps que celle de l'avortement.
On peut conclure en disant que si on prend des choix comme arrêter l'avortement au Canada, pour les autres, qu'est-ce qu'on peut dire de la liberté des choix. Aujourd'hui c'est un choix personnelle et personne doit prendre des choix pour les autres.

'Style': level six

Students display a growing vocabulary with evidence that some words have been selected for precise shadings and subtleties of meaning. Sentences come from a growing repertoire of styles, each chosen to fit a particular context. Sentence length changes regularly, and a variety of complex sentence patterns are apparent in most samples. There is some sense of flow.

Louise's writing is striking in its passion. Clearly words have been selected for precise shadings and subtleties of meaning. Sentence length changes regularly, and a variety of complex sentence patterns are apparent. She has developed a sense of flow.

'Form': level six

The writing follows a consistent organization and pattern. Students follow the basic rules and conventions of standard forms and genres, and apply some of the more complex and specialized rules that apply to different forms and disciplines. They may experiment with adapting or developing their own forms. They use specialized language smoothly and appropriately.

The basic rules of the genre are followed (see level 5). Louise has difficulty with some of the more complex structures, however she uses specialized language smoothly and appropriately at times, at times requiring support (level 5).
'Surface features': level six

Students follow standard rules and conventions. Any errors that appear are usually the result of experimentation, carelessness, or attempts at complexity. Some minor problems may appear consistently (e.g., a repeated misspelling or punctuation error).

Louise has a number of homophonic spelling errors, but she uses conventional spelling in most cases (level 5). Her errors are generally associated with experimentation, complexity, possibly carelessness, and English interference.

'L2 characteristics' identifiable in Louise's writing: almost always errors of gender and associated errors of agreement.

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Level Six Writing - for Self-realization

Katrine, a fifteen year-old grade 10 student, wrote this essay in school for a province-wide contest. The theme of the contest was the advantages of bilingualism in career choices. Because she used the opportunity to explore and express her own feelings, this writing has significant elements of writing for self-realization. At the same time it has some of the characteristics of writing to learn. The essay (retyped below as illustration 17) has 465 words plus title. The work was done on computer, double spaced, with the accents added later by hand.

Snapshot' description: level six

Key elements of the form or genre appear to be under control, and the writer shows attempts at sophistication in some aspects of writing. Integrates information from various sources and may include abstractions and/or speculation. Growing vocabulary and use of specialized language. Few errors.
In Katrine's essay, the **key elements of the form appear to be under control.** The author has made serious **attempts at sophistication.** Her writing includes **abstractions and speculation.** There are few errors.

'Reader' description: level six

The reader can become engaged in the writing, and grasp subtleties and complex ideas and relationships.

The reader can readily feel involved in a dialogue with the writer (see level 7).

'Meaning': level six

Students deal with complex content and their writing often features abstraction and speculation. They draw on facts and ideas from various sources, and incorporate these with their knowledge, experience, and imagination to shape precise meaning.

In this essay, Katrine deals with complex content and her writing contains some abstraction and speculation. Ideas of her own, combined with her knowledge and imagination have been woven together. Some ideas were incorporated deliberately with her knowledge and experience to shape meaning.

'Style': level six

Students display a growing vocabulary with evidence that some words have been selected for precise shadings and subtleties of meaning. Sentences come from a growing repertoire of styles, each chosen to fit a particular context. Sentence length changes regularly, and a variety of complex sentence patterns are apparent in most samples. There is some sense of flow.

Katrine's writing is well crafted, displaying a good vocabulary, with words selected for precise shadings and subtleties of meaning. Sentence length changes
regularly, and complex sentence patterns are found throughout. Language is clear and precise (see level 7).

'Form': level six

The writing follows a consistent organization and pattern. Students follow the basic rules and conventions of standard forms and genres, and apply some of the more complex and specialized rules that apply to different forms and disciplines. They may experiment with adapting or developing their own forms. They use specialized language smoothly and appropriately.

The basic rules and conventions of the genre have been followed. Specialized language is used smoothly. Sometimes there is a tendency to get a little diverted from the main theme and to address the advantages of bilingualism generally.

'Surface features': level six

Students follow standard rules and conventions. Any errors that appear are usually the result of experimentation, carelessness, or attempts at complexity. Some minor problems may appear consistently (e.g., a repeated misspelling or punctuation error).

Katrine follows standard rules and conventions. Errors are usually the result of experimentation, attempts at complexity or the fact that Katrine is writing in a second language; however the problems are quite minor. There are a few accents missing.

Illustration 17

Le Bilinguisme

Le bilinguisme est très bénéfice à beaucoup de carrières. Les portes des occupations merveilleuses et intéressantes s'ouvrent beaucoup plus pour les individus qui connaissent bien plusieurs langues. Comme peu de gens apprennent deux langues dès l'enfance, être bilingue pour beaucoup de personnes signifie apprendre eux-mêmes une autre langue.
Quand on cherche un travail, les employeurs choisiront généralement les personnes qui sont les mieux qualifiés pour l'emploi. Le bilinguisme peut être un énorme avantage, surtout si vous cherchez un poste dans le tourisme. Dans un hôtel, par exemple, le but est de rendre les clients heureux et à l'aise. Si vous pouvez leur parler en leur propre langue, ce but serait mieux atteint. Dautres métiers qui sont facilités par le bilinguisme sont les emplois sur une croisière internationale ou comme hôtesse de l'air.

La connaissance de deux langues est essentielle pour certains emplois. Pour obtenir un poste dans l'O.N.U., il faut connaître deux langues. Aussi, pour être un ambassadeur dans un pays il faut connaître la langue du pays dans lequel vous travaillez ainsi que celle du pays duquel vous êtes ambassadeur. Évidemment, pour être un traducteur pour un coups judiciaire ou pour les média, il faut que vous connaissiez couramment deux langues.

Le bilingualisme offre la possibilité de travailler dans les pays étrangers. Vous pouvez être un professeur et enseigner aux gens une deuxième langue. Par exemple, si vous connaissez le français et l'anglais, vous pouvez enseigner l'anglais comme deuxième langue dans le Dominique, la Guyane, le Monaco et le Niger. De plus, les voyages sont beaucoup plus plaisants quand vous n'avez pas besoin de toujours consulter votre petit dictionnaire pour comprendre, et vous pouvez parler avec les habitants. Si vous êtes à l'aise dans un pays, l'expérience vous sera plus relaxe et plus bénéfice.

La langue d'une culture est une partie clé de leurs coutumes. Par exemple, les poèmes épiques de Homer sont plus appréciés s'ils sont lus dans le grec originel que dans l'anglais. Dans la traduction, les mots perdent souvent leur effet voulu. Les poèmes traduits ne coulent pas comme dans leur langue d'origine.

Dernièrement, la connaissance d'une deuxième langue aide à la compréhension de votre langue maternelle. Souvent, quand on apprend une nouvelle langue, on apprend la grammaire et la structure des mots. Ceci renforce les bases grammaticales que vous avez appris dans votre propre langue, ainsi que toutes les langues qui la ressemblent. Par exemple, si on comprend la grammaire dans le français et l'anglais des autres langues d'origine latine.

En conclusion, le bilinguisme peut améliorer votre emploi, vos vacances et la compréhension de ta première langue. Même si le bilinguisme n'aide pas votre mode de vie, c'est intéressant et fructueux d'apprendre une duxième ou même une troisième langue.
'L2 characteristics' identifiable in Katrine's writing: consistency of pronoun (si on..., tu...; vos vacances... et...ta première langue); vocabulary (benéfice à should be avantageux pour).

Level Six Writing - as Culture

The poem presented here, typical of level six, was written as a class assignment by Irma, a student in grade 8. She was inspired by the English version of the Huron carol. The poem (see illustration 18) is imitative but not a translation. It has a total of 78 words. The work was done on computer with the accents added later by hand.

Snapshot' description: level six

Key elements of the form or genre appear to be under control, and the writer shows attempts at sophistication in some aspects of writing. Integrates information from various sources and may include abstractions and/or speculation. Growing vocabulary and use of specialized language. Few errors.

The key elements of the form appear to be under control. Irma has integrated information about the Huron carol with her knowledge and appreciation of the French language. There are few errors.

Illustration 18

La neige tombait sur les sapins
Les oiseaux chantaient guère
Il restait que des arbres nu
Contre le ciel d'hiver

Refrain : Chante, les anges
C'est le temps pour célébrer
Chante, les anges
Le roi est né
Dans le ciel l'étoile du nord
Guidait les hommes à la grange
Les chasseurs dans le forêt
Entendaient les voix des anges

Refrain :
Le ciel est devenu plus clair
L'étoile du nord brillait
Les bergers sur les collines
Arrêtaient pour écouter

Refrain :

'Reader' description: level six

The reader can become engaged in the writing, and grasp subtleties and complex ideas and relationships.

The reader is able to take the meaning for granted and feel involved in a dialogue with the writer (see level 7).

'Meaning': level six

Students deal with complex content and their writing often features abstraction and speculation. They draw on facts and ideas from various sources, and incorporate these with their knowledge, experience, and imagination to shape precise meaning.

In creating this poem, Irma drew on her own knowledge of the Huron carol and her experience and imagination.
**Style**: level six

Students display a growing vocabulary with evidence that some words have been selected for precise shadings and subtleties of meaning. Sentences come from a growing repertoire of styles, each chosen to fit a particular context. Sentence length changes regularly, and a variety of complex sentence patterns are apparent in most samples. There is some sense of flow.

Irma has used clear and precise language, incorporating the rhythm and rhyming patterns of the English version. Words were chosen for their shadings. The stanzas have a simplicity of style appropriate for the poem's purpose.

**Form**: level six

The writing follows a consistent organization and pattern. Students follow the basic rules and conventions of standard forms and genres, and apply some of the more complex and specialized rules that apply to different forms and disciplines. They may experiment with adapting or developing their own forms. They use specialized language smoothly and appropriately.

The basic rules and conventions of the genre have been followed.

**Surface features**: level six

Students follow standard rules and conventions. Any errors that appear are usually the result of experimentation, carelessness, or attempts at complexity. Some minor problems may appear consistently (e.g., a repeated misspelling or punctuation error).

Irma's carol has very few errors -- only noticeable when the reader is searching for them.

**L2 characteristics** identifiable in Irma's writing: one error in gender.
Level Six Writing - as Friendly Communication

The poem presented above, typical of level six, was attached to Irma's first letter (450 words). Her letter (see illustration 19- retyped) was prepared using a computer, and she added the accents later by hand.

Snapshot' description: level six

Key elements of the form or genre appear to be under control, and the writer shows attempts at sophistication in some aspects of writing. Integrates information from various sources and may include abstractions and/or speculation. Growing vocabulary and use of specialized language. Few errors.

The key elements of the form appear to be under control. Irma has integrated information from various sources. Growing vocabulary.

'Reader' description: level six

The reader can become engaged in the writing, and grasp subtleties and complex ideas and relationships.

The reader is able to take the meaning for granted and feel involved in a dialogue with the writer (see level 7).

'Meaning': level six

Students deal with complex content and their writing often features abstraction and speculation. They draw on facts and ideas from various sources, and incorporate these with their knowledge, experience, and imagination to shape precise meaning.

Irma's writing is drawn from various sources which she has incorporated with her knowledge, experience and imagination.
Style': level six

Students display a growing vocabulary with evidence that some words have been selected for precise shadings and subtleties of meaning. Sentences come from a growing repertoire of styles, each chosen to fit a particular context. Sentence length changes regularly, and a variety of complex sentence patterns are apparent in most samples. There is some sense of flow.

Irma has a growing repertoire of sentence styles. Sentence length changes regularly, with a variety of complex and simple sentence patterns. There is a sense of flow.

'Form': level six

The writing follows a consistent organization and pattern. Students follow the basic rules and conventions of standard forms and genres, and apply some of the more complex and specialized rules that apply to different forms and disciplines. They may experiment with adapting or developing their own forms. They use specialized language smoothly and appropriately.

The writing follows a consistent organization and pattern. Irma follows the basic conventions of the friendly letter form.

Illustration 19

dimanche, le 16 janvier, 1994
Chère Mme. Wright,

Merci à toi de me donner l'opportunité de communiquer avec quelqu'un pendant quelques semaines! J'aime beaucoup correspondre par lettres, mais il y en a jamais personne qui s'intéresse de le faire pendant une période étendue.

J'habite en [ville] dans une maison avec une belle vue des montagnes [nom] et le montagne Baker dans les États-Unis. J'habite avec mon père, ma mère et ma petite soeur, [prénom], qui a dix ans, qui est dans le cinquième année à l'école élémentaire [nom]. L'année passée, j'allais à l'école élémentaire [nom] en [ville]. J'aime beaucoup l'école secondaire, mais c'était difficile de quitter l'école où je suis allée pendant six ans. Mon amie préférée, qui s'appelle [prénom], va maintenant à l'école secondaire [nom]. J'admets que ce n'est pas facile, sans [prénom de son amie], mais j'aime [nom de son école] quand même.

Quand je ne suis pas à l'école, je danse le ballet, tap, jazz et le théâtre musical. Je danse tous les jours après l'école, mais j'ai toujours le temps pour finir mes devoirs. Dans nos classes, nous apprenons les exercices pour les examens et des danses. L'été de 1994, en juillet, ma classe de ballet voyage à New York pour une caravane de danse qui dure quatre jours. Après ça, nous allons visiter des places comme le Café Hard Rock, la Statue de la Liberté, et surtout, Macy's et Tiffany's. On espère aussi voir le ballet de New York, et les spectacles Kiss of the Spiderwoman et Miss Saigon.

J'ai eu des très bonnes vacances, mais je suis pas tout à fait habituée à être encore à l'école. Le jour de Noël, ma tante et mon oncle, qui habitent à Nanaimo, ont venu pour quelques jours. Le Jour de l'An, je suis allée à Nanaimo pour le diner chez ma tante. Plusieurs membres de ma famille ont venu de Port Alberni, de Vancouver, et de Victoria, et c'était amusant de les voir.

Merci de me laisser correspondre avec toi. J'espère t'écrire bientôt ; il faut maintenant que je fasse mes devoirs!

Sincèrement,

[Irma]

'Surface features': level six

Students follow standard rules and conventions. Any errors that appear are usually the result of experimentation, carelessness, or attempts at complexity. Some minor problems may appear consistently (e.g., a repeated misspelling or punctuation error).

Irma's letter has relatively few errors -- most are only noticeable when the reader is searching for them. The errors are primarily careless or of an L2 character. A missed verb form: je ne les aimes pas.
'L2 characteristics' identifiable in Irma's writing: prepositions before names of places; some errors with verbs conjugated with être (ont venu); a very few errors of gender; pronoun order (merci à toi) and parallelism (could be surface feature); word choice: mais il y en a jamais personne (= mais il n'y a jamais personne). It is useful to note that Irma's errors in relation to the amount of writing are very few.

Level Seven Writing - to Learn

Of the written work submitted other than personal letters, only one sample came close to level 7 - a major project done by Irma and two others in Social Studies. Each took responsibility for certain 'chapters'; Irma did three sections. Her work has characteristics of both levels six and seven, primarily level six. The project is extensive and the final draft, except for drawings and the addition of accents, was prepared at the computer. A passage is shown below (see illustration 20).

'Snapshot' description: level seven

Clear and purposeful effect is sustained within the conventions of the form or genre the writer uses. Writer conveys precise meaning, and may take on various stances to write from beyond personal experience. Language, sentence structures, and form seem to have been chosen for a specific purpose.

The key elements of a social studies project for secondary school seem under control -- with serious attempts at sophistication (level 6).
Illustration 20

(Extracts from

*Le Sikhisme aujourd'hui et comment la religion affecte la vie tous les jours*)

Le Sikhisme est devenu plus grand pendant les années, et maintenant il y a des Sikhs qui vivent tout autour le monde. Il y a seulement un petit quantité de Sikhs qui vivent en Inde maintenant, seulement 2 % de la population. L'Inde est maintenant divisé selon la langue qui est parlée, avec des unités d'administration séparés, et la plupart des Sikhs vivent dans l'état Punjab : ils forment à peu près 60 % de la population là. Le Punjab était fondé en 1966 par le gouvernement indien à cause des révoltes qui étaient causé par les Sikhs. Les Sikhs presserent encore le gouvernement pour aggrandir l'état, parce que le territoire qu'ils ont reçu était beaucoup plus petit qu'ils voulaien.

.... Comme je l'ai dit, en Canada, il y a le conflit entre les Sikhs et les Canadiens à propos des turbans qui font partie des croyances des Sikhs. En Canada, dans les légions, tu ne peux pas porter des chapeaux ou n'importe quoi qui est sur la tête, comme une forme de respecte. Il y a des Sikhs, qui ont combattu dans les guerres avec les Canadiens, qui veulent entrer les légions avec leurs turbans. On a eu un incident comme ça le Jour de Souvenir en 1993. La branche Newton en Surrey, Canada, a refusée de laisser cinq vétérans de guerre qui portaient des turbans entrer la cérémonie. Dans ces dernières années, plusieurs autres branches ont fait la même chose. Cette question est très difficile à traiter, parce qu'il y a beaucoup d'opinions sur le sujet....

'Reader' description: level seven

The reader is usually able to take meaning for granted, and may feel involved in a dialogue with the writer.
The reader can usually take the meaning for granted. Irma's writing is clear. The writer feels engaged from time to time, as when she discusses the Newton Legion's behaviour in relation to the wearing of the turban by Sikh veterans.

'Meaning': level seven

Students present ideas effectively in extended writing on a range of topics. Examples, reasons, and details are focused, relevant, and create precise meaning; generalizations and abstractions are appropriate, sources are integrated smoothly with personal meaning. Students may write from outside their personal experience, and take on various stances, or roles.

Ideas are presented effectively in extended writing. Examples, reasons and details are focused, and relevant. She incorporates facts with her own knowledge (level six).

'Style': level seven

Students show clear awareness of both definitions and emotional effect of the words they choose. Language is clear and precise. Sentences are varied in pattern and length, and the writing flows smoothly with only minor disruptions. Ideas shift frequently and effectively between general and specific, abstract and concrete. Students may use language in a consciously unusual way, or seem to be playing with language/ideas for special effects.

More in keeping with level six, Irma's writing exhibits a growing vocabulary, a variety of sentence styles and types. There is some sense of flow.
'Form': level seven

The writing is coherent and organized with a clear pattern of development both in the overall structure, and within individual sections or paragraphs. Students use the rules and conventions of various forms and genres appropriately and smoothly. They may adapt or create structures to suit their purposes. Extended writing flows smoothly from an effective opening, through a series of events, ideas or examples, to an appropriate conclusion.

The writing is organized with a clear pattern of development both in the overall structure, and within individual sections or paragraphs. As in level six, she uses specialized language smoothly and appropriately. Irma's respects the basic rules and conventions and form.

'Surface features': level seven

Students make few errors. These tend to be noticeable only when a reader is looking for errors.

As in level six, Irma uses stand rules and conventions. Any errors other than L2 errors are largely the result of attempts at complexity.

'L2 characteristics' identifiable in Irma's writing: a few errors of gender and associated errors of agreement; some insecurity about choice of definite and indefinite articles; appropriate preposition before a specific place; word choice (Il y a seulement un petit quantité de Sikhs = Il n’y a qu’une proportion restreinte de Sikhs...; Les Sikhs pressurent encore le gouvernement pour aggrandir l’état.... = Les Sikhs font encore pression sur le gouvernement pour qu’il agrandisse l’état). From within the 2000-3000 words written in her part of the project, I found: sont très mentionnables (= vaut la peine de mentionner); occasional inappropriate cultural use of tu/vous/on ; minor errors with negative structures; one or two slips (à + le, de + le).
Marilyn, a grade 12 student, sent me her draft of the oral composition she prepared for her end-of-year exam, giving her opinions on peace (see illustration 21 for extracts from the composition).

'Snapshot' description: level seven

Clear and purposeful effect is sustained within the conventions of the form or genre the writer uses. Writer conveys precise meaning, and may take on various stances to write from beyond personal experience. Language, sentence structures, and form seem to have been chosen for a specific purpose.

A clear and purposeful effect is sustained within the conventions of the genre. Marilyn conveys precise meaning, and her language, sentence structures and form seem chosen for a specific purpose.

Illustration 21

Extracts from La paix

A mon avis, la paix mondial ne sera jamais possible. Je voudrais enormement que ce ne soit pas ainsi, mais je pense vraiment que c'est presque impossible que tout l'humanité soit d'accord au sujet de la paix mondial - et cela en même temps. C'est vrai qu'il y a beaucoup de gens qui veulent avoir la paix (tout le monde que je connais la voudrait) mais il n'ont pas le pouvoir de convaincre chaque individu au monde. On peut seulement y contribuer de notre mieux. Tous les jours, on fait ce qu'il faut ; on est gentil envers les autres, on s'excuse quand on blesse quelqu'un et on se sent coupable quand on fait quelque chose de mauvais.

.... On doit aider les autres pour qu'ils soient aussi chanceux que nous le sommes. La plupart des gens comprennent ce message et font de leur mieux pour être de bons individus. La plupart des gens veulent atteindre la paix. Mais il y aura toujours cet individu gourmand qui n'hésitera pas à impliquer les autres dans ses jeux pour recevoir ce qu'il desire.
Dans la vie quotidienne, quand on rencontre un obstacle, on sait que ce n'est pas la fin du monde. On l'accepte simplement comme un autre d'avoir la paix mondial....

'Reader' description: level seven

The reader is usually able to take meaning for granted, and may feel involved in a dialogue with the writer.

The reader feels involved in a dialogue with the author.

'Meaning': level seven

Students present ideas effectively in extended writing on a range of topics. Examples, reasons, and details are focused, relevant, and create precise meaning; generalizations and abstractions are appropriate, sources are integrated smoothly with personal meaning. Students may write from outside their personal experience, and take on various stances, or roles.

The examples, reasons and details provided by Marilyn are focused, and relevant. Precise meaning is created, and sources are integrated smoothly with personal meaning. (The part of her essay which relates her reading on the subject to the issue was not reproduced here.)

'Style': level seven

Students show clear awareness of both definitions and emotional effect of the words they choose. Language is clear and precise. Sentences are varied in pattern and length, and the writing flows smoothly with only minor disruptions. Ideas shift frequently and effectively between general and specific, abstract and concrete. Students may use language in a consciously unusual way, or seem to be playing with language/ideas for special effects.
Marilyn's language is clear and precise. The ideas shift frequently and effectively between general and specific and between abstract and concrete.

'Form': level seven

The writing is coherent and organized with a clear pattern of development both in the overall structure, and within individual sections or paragraphs. Students use the rules and conventions of various forms and genres appropriately and smoothly. They may adapt or create structures to suit their purposes. Extended writing flows smoothly from an effective opening, through a series of events, ideas or examples, to an appropriate conclusion.

The writing is cohesive and organized with a clear pattern of development.

Marilyn's uses the rules and convention appropriately and smoothly.

'Surface features': level seven

Students make few errors. These tend to be noticeable only when a reader is looking for errors.

There are very few errors -- noticeable only when searched for, a missing accent here or there.

The only 'L2 characteristics' identified in Marilyn's writing: an error of gender

There is evidence of great attention to detail (and probable research).

Level Seven Writing - as Culture

Kate, now in grade 11, was a grade 9 student at the time she wrote this story. Her commitment to eliminate suffering and extend Christianity around the world is transparent (see illustration 22).
'Snapshot' description: level seven

Clear and purposeful effect is sustained within the conventions of the form or genre the writer uses. Writer conveys precise meaning, and may take on various stances to write from beyond personal experience. Language, sentence structures, and form seem to have been chosen for a specific purpose.

A clear and purposeful effect is sustained. Kate conveys precise meaning and writes from beyond her personal experience. Her language and form seem chosen for a specific purpose.

'Reader' description: level seven

The reader is usually able to take meaning for granted, and may feel involved in dialogue with the writer.

The reader may feel involved in a dialogue with the writer.

Illustration 22

Le Miracle

La ville ressemblait à une région sinistrée. Les maisons étaient penchées vers le sol. Plusieurs entre elles étaient si délabrées que les murs tombaient et il manquait des parties des toits. Les routes étaient détruites jusqu'au point où elles étaient des chemins de boue. Les cours des maisons étaient inondés d'eau polluée. Les jouets qu'on avait achetés pendant que les parents avaient de l'argent étaient abandonnés car les enfants étaient trop misérables pour s'amuser. Chaque vêtement avait plusieurs trous. Ils étaient si affamés que leurs visages ressemblaient à des squelettes. Les deux raisons pour cela étaient que la ville était très pauvre car un essaim de locustes avait détruit les champs et la guerre civile empêchait l'aide de l'Organisation des Nations Unies. Chaque fois qu'ils essayaient de venir, l'armée avait tiré sur leur camion.
Dans cette ville il y avait un garçon qui s'appelait Abidjawa. Il avait dix ans, mais il avait l'air d'un garçon de sept ans. Ses parents avaient été tués pendant la guerre il y a un mois. Cette nouvelle l'a paralysé. Ça n'affectait pas sa santé parce qu'il n'avait pas de nourriture quand-même.

Mais un miracle est arrivé le 5 mai. Des Forces de Maintien de la Paix sont entrés dans la ville avec des provisions immenses de nourriture et de vêtements. Une fille de vingt ans a trouvé Abidjawa sur les escaliers de sa maison. Après cinq heures elle a réussi à le faire parler. Elle a trouvé qu'il avait besoin d'un ami alors elle l'a introduit à Jésus-Christ. Chaque jour elle lui lisait la Bible. En apprenant à propos du ciel, Abidjawa s'est débarrassé de la peine de la mort de ses parents.

Sa perspective du monde a changé dramatiquement. Il est devenu un enfant aimable et énjoyé. Il a fait des amis qui sont devenus les Chrétiens aussi. Abidjawa et ses amis ont déménagé à une ville avec une bonne école pour apprendre à lire et écrire. Quand ils ont terminé l'école, ils ont voyagé autour du monde pour enseigner aux autres la joie de faire partie de la famille de Dieu. Ils ont aidé beaucoup de personnes à changer leur vie pour le mieux. Ces personnes ne vont jamais oublier ces garçons qui ont été envoyés du ciel.

'Meaning': level seven

Students present ideas effectively in extended writing on a range of topics. Examples, reasons, and details are focused, relevant, and create precise meaning; generalizations and abstractions are appropriate, sources are integrated smoothly with personal meaning. Students may write from outside their personal experience, and take on various stances, or roles.

The examples, reasons and details are focused. Sources are integrated smoothly with personal meaning. Kate writes from outside personal experience, but is involved emotionally. The sense of time is not very clear - we seem to move too quickly from a grim present to an idyllic present.
Style: level seven

Students show clear awareness of both definitions and emotional effect of the words they choose. Language is clear and precise. Sentences are varied in pattern and length, and the writing flows smoothly with only minor disruptions. Ideas shift frequently and effectively between general and specific, abstract and concrete. Students may use language in a consciously unusual way, or seem to be playing with language/ideas for special effects.

Kate's language is clear and precise. She is obviously aware of the meaning and emotional impact of the words chosen.

Form: level seven

The writing is coherent and organized with a clear pattern of development both in the overall structure, and within individual sections or paragraphs. Students use the rules and conventions of various forms and genres appropriately and smoothly. They may adapt or create structures to suit their purposes. Extended writing flows smoothly from an effective opening, through a series of events, ideas or examples, to an appropriate conclusion.

The writing is generally coherent and organized with a clear pattern of development. Kate uses the rules of the descriptive genre very effectively. The narrative genre is less mature. The opening was superbly effective, the conclusion somewhat disappointing after such a start -- though appropriate for her needs.

Surface features: level seven

Students make few errors. These tend to be noticeable only when a reader is looking for errors.

There are very few errors -- noticeable only when searched for, and mainly the result of carelessness or attempts at complexity (see level 6). An example of carelessness (?) is the word *enjoyé*, where she meant to type *enjoyed*. 
The 'L2 characteristics' in Kate's writing: the teacher made minor corrections to the penultimate copy (la meilleure to le mieux; a devenu to est devenu; le lisait to lui lisait; étaient tués to avaient été tués; ce nouvelle to cette nouvelle; jouer to s'amuser; en guerre to pendant la guerre).

Level Seven Writing - as Personal Communication

Marilyn, then in grade 12, sent me this letter (316 words) in response to my letter of introduction (see illustration 23).

'Snapshot' description: level seven

Clear and purposeful effect is sustained within the conventions of the form or genre the writer uses. Writer conveys precise meaning, and may take on various stances to write from beyond personal experience. Language, sentence structures, and form seem to have been chosen for a specific purpose.

A clear and purposeful effect is sustained within the conventions of the form.

Marilyn's letter conveys precise meaning.

'Reader' description: level seven

The reader is usually able to take meaning for granted, and may feel involved in a dialogue with the writer.

The reader is able to take the meaning for granted and feel involved in a dialogue with the writer.
'Meaning': level seven

Students present ideas effectively in extended writing on a range of topics. Examples, reasons, and details are focused, relevant, and create precise meaning; generalizations and abstractions are appropriate, sources are integrated smoothly with personal meaning. Students may write from outside their personal experience, and take on various stances, or roles.

Marilyn draws on facts and ideas from various sources and incorporates these with her own knowledge and experience (see level six).

'Style': level seven

Students show clear awareness of both definitions and emotional effect of the words they choose. Language is clear and precise. Sentences are varied in pattern and length, and the writing flows smoothly with only minor disruptions. Ideas shift frequently and effectively between general and specific, abstract and concrete. Students may use language in a consciously unusual way, or seem to be playing with language/ideas for special effects.

The language is clear and precise. Sentences are varied; the writing flows smoothly. Language has been used for special effect (see the concluding paragraph).
Chère Irene,

Je m'excuse de ne pas avoir écrit plus tôt, mais je suis très occupée en ce moment. J'ai les examens au ministère en mathématiques, en chimie et en français. Aussi, je suis en gymnasium et on a des compétitions qui commencent bientôt. En plus de ça, je danse beaucoup et j'aide un étudiant en 'French 12'. Les mardis et jeudis soirs, je travaille à Canary Island (un magasin de vêtements) un peu les fins de semaines, et les soirs mais plutôt durant les vacances.

Alors, tu peux voir que je me préoccupe bien de jour en jour.

Cependant, quand j'ai du temps libre, je aime aller au cinéma avec mes amis, manger aux restaurants, louer des vidéos, ou même lire un bon livre. Ma famille a un billet de ski pour les samedis soir à Cypress, alors j'apporte ma meilleure amie Sarah et on s'amuse vachement !

Au plus sérieux maintenant : le futur. J'espère aller à S.F.U. en septembre et étudier la loi et aussi continuer avec le français. Eventuellement, je veux devenir avocat car j'aime persuader les gens et je crois en l'égalité et en la justice. C'est aussi vrai que j'aime l'argent et que je veux m'établir une vie stable avant d'avoir des enfants. Et je veux certainement avoir des enfants - je les adore, et je trouve que la maternité est incroyable.

Donc, pour atteindre tous mes buts, je dois concentrer sur mes études pour que je puisse aller à l'université. Je suis l'enfant unique de...
The writing is coherent and organized with a clear pattern of development both in the overall structure, and within individual sections or paragraphs. Students use the rules and conventions of various forms and genres appropriately and smoothly. They may adapt or create structures to suit their purposes. Extended writing flows smoothly from an effective opening, through a series of events, ideas or examples, to an appropriate conclusion.

The writing is generally coherent and organized. Marilyn uses the rules and conventions of the genre appropriately and smoothly.
'Surface features': level seven

Students make few errors. These tend to be noticeable only when a reader is looking for errors.

There are very few errors -- noticeable only when searched for: tout fini bien (= Tout est bien qui finit bien.); fin de semaines (= fins de semaine); le future (= le futur)

'L2 characteristics' in Marilyn's writing: de ne pas avoir t'écrit = de ne pas t'avoir écrit; je garde-bébé = je garde les bébés; la loi = le droit; je crois en l'égalité et en la justice = je crois à l'égalité et à la justice; apporter = amener; pour les samedi soirs = le samedi soir.

Analysis of Findings

- Length: Students' letters tended to increase in length more in relation to their writing level than to their grade.

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</table>

Figure 5: Word count, by grade, of letters received


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Figure 6: Word count, by level, of letters received

The anomalies in Figures 5 and 6 are explained by one or two extremely prolific writers and one or two who are definitely students of few words. Nonetheless, a pattern is evident: the higher the level of development, the more likely the student is to write at some length. Older children typically write longer letters than young ones.

- The Snapshot: Whether or not the 'snapshot' is useful in the analysis process, it was not difficult to sort the students' writing in French into the levels described in the British Columbia Ministry of Education publications, Evaluating Writing Across Curriculum (1992a; 1992b). I have taken the Ministry document at its word and chosen not to work further with this description.

- The Reader: This category of analysis is concerned with the reader's engagement in the writing, the extent to which she or he grasps the intended meaning, sees relationships among ideas or events, follows a
suggested sequence, becomes engaged. The writer's *voice* may be heard. The development of students' writing in French seems to parallel that of students writing in English (see figure 7 below). Students clearly speak to the reader in these letters, even from the kindergarten stage. The extent to which the reader has to guess at meaning in the early primary letters would depend on the reader's experience with emergent writing and with French immersion students.

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Figure 7: Reader, distribution of performance by grade and level

French immersion students appear to very aware of the reader -- which may be more a reflection of the nature of the friendly letter than anything else. In this project, the letter writing was *authentic*, whereas the samples
of writing done for classroom assignments were for a limited readership, possibly just the teacher as evaluator. Some students may, in time, learn to be their own best readers -- but this has limited value for many students since the prime purpose of writing is to communicate.

- Meaning: What is the writer attempting to convey and what is the writer's understanding of that meaning? Has the writer grasped a concept or understood his or another's personal feelings? Is she able to summarize or tell an engaging story? As we see in Figure 8, the student writers were apparently able to achieve these purposes according to their developmental level -- as in all likelihood they are able to do in their writing in English once they reach the intermediate years.

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Figure 8: Meaning, distribution of performance by grade and level
- **Style**: Style is one manifestation of *voice*. It encompasses the student's choice of words, her use of figures of speech, his variety of sentence types, their precision and flow. Once again, student writers seemed to have a grasp of the requirements of style in relation to their level of writing (see figure 9).

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Figure 9: Style, distribution of performance by grade and level

- **Form**: Form deals with the application of rules of organization. These can vary from the rules for writing up a lab to writing a standard paragraph or essay. It is primarily a matter of convention and may be culturally highly significant. Within the descriptions provided, student writers in French immersion seem to be developing their understanding of form (see figure 10).
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<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 10: Form, distribution of performance by grade and level

- Surface features: As explained earlier, for the purposes of analysis, I divided the surface features to reflect those which sound correct from those which do not. This was to establish whether the errors were truly related to surface features (errors in application of spelling and grammatical rules) which are highly unlikely in a native speaker, from those which might be more appropriately classed as second language errors (see figure 11).
The issue of surface versus L2 errors was a very interesting exercise and probably the most significant part of the study.

Certain surface errors are the same as we might expect in English -- errors of punctuation and sentence construction, by which I mean run-on or incomplete sentences. I am not referring here to structures which are within sentences and which are particular to French, such as the position of the object pronoun. Errors which regularly appear in French writing, such as the -er/é confusion or verb endings which sound the same have been treated as surface errors. Silent plural endings and spelling errors which are not syntactic, for example beacoup, fall into this category.
The following figures illustrate the types of 'errors' by grade. The incidence count is by individual sample and not by number of times the 'error' type appears in a piece of writing. In cases where the number is very high or low in relation to the amount of writing there will be an accompanying comment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Incidence</th>
<th>Total Samples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-standard or no punctuation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper/lower case confusion</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergent spelling</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copywriting</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Incidence</th>
<th>Total Samples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergent punctuation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper/lower case confusion</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete sentence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergent spelling*</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 13

*This is the norm with these children. The copywriting which was often a part of kindergarten is no longer seen.
**Surface Features - Grade 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Incidence</th>
<th>Total Samples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergent punctuation</td>
<td>9*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete/run-on sentence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homophonic spelling</td>
<td>9*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The incidence within most samples is very low.

**Surface Features - Grade 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Incidence</th>
<th>Total Samples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation errors</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete/run-on sentence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homophonic spelling*</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Beginning with grade five, spelling will be divided into homophonic spelling (words or syllables which sound the same or almost the same) and standard spelling mistakes.

**Surface Features - Grade 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Incidence</th>
<th>Total Samples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation errors, spacing, capitals</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete/run-on sentence</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Errors in standard spelling</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homophonic errors</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 14

Figure 15

Figure 16

171
**Surface Features - Grade 6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Incidence</th>
<th>Total Samples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation errors, spacing, capitals</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete/run-on sentence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Errors in standard spelling*</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homophonic errors*</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 17  * A high number of errors within the samples.

**Surface Features - Grade 7***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Incidence</th>
<th>Total Samples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation errors, spacing, capitals</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete/run-on sentence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Errors in standard spelling</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homophonic errors</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 18  * While the writing is stylistically still somewhat naive, the surface errors seem on the decline.

Secondary school students tend to write much longer letters and class assignments. My strategy for accounting for these is to qualify the number of samples with the words *rarely, sometimes* and *frequently*. Thus, in the grade 8 review of homophonic errors, six of the nine samples contain errors, and these are frequent. Of course, from time to time there are students who do not conform
to the group norm; I qualify these as *variable* (some may have only one or two errors while others may have several).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surface Features - Grade 8</th>
<th>Incidence</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Total Samples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation errors, spacing, capitals</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete/run-on sentence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Errors in standard spelling</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homophonic errors</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>frequently</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Errors when using sophisticated structure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surface Features - Grade 9</th>
<th>Incidence</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Total Samples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation errors, spacing, capitals</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete/run-on sentence</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Errors in standard spelling</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>frequently</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homophonic errors</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Errors when using sophisticated structure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 20

173
### Surface Features - Grade 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Incidence</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Total Samples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation errors, spacing, capitals</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete/run-on sentence</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Errors in standard spelling</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homophonic errors</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Errors when using sophisticated structure</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 21**

### Surface Features - Grade 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Incidence</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Total Samples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation errors, spacing, capitals</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete/run-on sentence</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Errors in standard spelling</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homophonic errors</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>frequently</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Errors when using sophisticated structure</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>variable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 22**
Surface Features - Grade 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Incidence</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Total Samples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation errors, spacing, capitals</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete/run-on sentence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Errors in standard spelling</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homophonic errors</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Errors when using sophisticated structure</td>
<td>4*</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 23 * Complexity becomes the norm with much of the writing at this level and brings its new problems. However as far as the writing is concerned, *ça vaut la peine.*

Once the surface errors (as illustrated above) were separated from L2 errors, the levels of writing are much more comparable to those described in English reference sets.

The significance of this approach will be discussed in Chapter 5.

* Second Language Considerations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>L2 Characteristics - Kindergarten</th>
<th>Incidence</th>
<th>Total Samples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable (name only)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copywriting</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 24
### Figure 25

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Incidence</th>
<th>Total Samples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender confusion</td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word order</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate word choice</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de le, à le, de les, à les</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omission of/inappropriate preposition</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Bob wrote, "Je fé deux sport le socer et lacros." He appears to hear *lacrosse* as two words which accounts for one 'error'.

2. One example here is the *gens/personnes* confusion. The other seems to be 'baby talk': *moi a. (j'ai)*. Perhaps this is really not a L<sub>2</sub> characteristic.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Incidence</th>
<th>Total Samples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender confusion</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word order</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb forms</td>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate word choice/idiom</td>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronoun confusion</td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de le, à le, de les, à les, pas des, etc.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omission of/inappropriate preposition</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Cleo wrote, "...moi et mon frère cherche." This may also be heard by young francophones. Is the error misplaced? Cara used, "Mon chien est 12 ans," (the first of many). Cordelia wrote: je va. Is this phonetic or not?

2. Typical example: *la lettre de toi*
**L2 Characteristics - Grade Four**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Incidence</th>
<th>Total Samples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender confusion</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word order</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb forms</td>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate word choice/idiom</td>
<td>82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronoun confusion</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de le, à le, de les, à les, pas des, etc.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of agreement that can be heard</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of English (e.g., track and field)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omission of/inappropriate preposition</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Verbs conjugated with *avoir* when *être* is the correct choice are becoming common.

2. The use of *juste* rather than *venir de* is frequent, as is *je suis 9 (ans)*.
Figure 28

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>L2 Characteristics - Grade Five</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Characteristics</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender confusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate word choice/idiom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronoun confusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de le, à le, de les, à les, pas des, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of agreement that can be heard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractions not made (e.g., que il)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of English (e.g., track and field)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omission of/inappropriate preposition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>1</sup> The future with *aller* is sometimes confused with the past with *avoir/être*.

<sup>2</sup> The use of *jouer* with *de* or *à* is usually inappropriately constructed.
### L₂ Characteristics - Grade Seven*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Incidence</th>
<th>Total Samples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender confusion</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word order</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb forms</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate word choice/idiom</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronoun confusion</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de le, à le, de les, à les, pas des, etc.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of agreement that can be heard</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructions not made (e.g., que il)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of English (e.g., track and field)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omission of inappropriate preposition</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The first incidence of inappropriate construction of a series using words such as *de, à* and *en* has appeared. It was not included in the count.
The students in the secondary school tend to write much longer letters and class assignments. As in the case of surface errors, my strategy for accounting for these will be to qualify the incidence with *rarely*, *sometimes* and *frequently*.

Figure 30

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Incidence</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Total Samples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender confusion</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>frequently</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word order</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb forms</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate word choice/*</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idiomatic errors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronoun confusion</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>de le, à le, de les, à les, pas des, etc.</em></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of agreement that can be heard</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractions not made (e.g., <em>que il</em>)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of English (e.g., <em>track and field</em>)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural considerations *</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confusion of definite and indefinite article</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omission of/inappropriate preposition</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>frequently</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The use of *tu* when *vous* would be more appropriate; the use of the conditional for politeness.
## L2 Characteristics - Grade Nine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Incidence</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Total Samples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender confusion</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word order</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb forms</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate word choice/</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idiomatic errors</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronoun confusion</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de le, à le, de les, à les, pas des, etc.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of agreement that can be heard</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractions not made (e.g., que il )</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of English (e.g., track and field)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural considerations *</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confusion of definite and indefinite article</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omission of/inappropriate preposition</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The use of *tu* when *vous* would be more appropriate; the use of the conditional for politeness.
Figure 32

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Incidence</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Total Samples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender confusion</td>
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<td>sometimes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word order</td>
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<tr>
<td>Verb forms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inappropriate word choice/</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idiomatic errors</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronoun confusion</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>rarely</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>de le, à le, de les, à les, pas des, etc.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of agreement that can be heard</td>
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<td>rarely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractions not made (e.g., que il )</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of English (e.g., track and field)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural considerations *</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confusion of definite and indefinite article</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omission of/inappropriate preposition</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>frequently</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

* The use of *tu* when *vous* would be more appropriate; the use of the conditional for politeness.
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Characteristics</th>
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<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Total Samples</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
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<td>8</td>
<td>rarely</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb forms</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
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<td>rarely</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sociocultural considerations *</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confusion of definite and indefinite article</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omission of/inappropriate preposition</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>frequently</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>1</sup> Grade 11 students seem unwilling to 'look it up' — unlike grade 12 students who generally understand the value of 'doing it right'.

184
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Incidence</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Total Samples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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* The use of *tu* when *vous* would be more appropriate; the use of the conditional for politeness.
Summary of Findings

The analyses of student writing development indicate some significant similarities and differences between the patterns of development of writing in English and of French in immersion. The sense of reader and of meaning, style and form are achievable in writing in French in French immersion using the same or similar criteria to those used for English language arts.

Surface features present significant differences depending upon the definition used for French writing. Because the students are writing in a second language, they have to work with a less familiar code and as they mature have to confront first language interference. By limiting the description of surface features to those characteristic of francophone children learning to write in French (homophonic errors, errors in orthographe d'usage, capitalization and punctuation errors, for example) it becomes somewhat feasible to use the surface features descriptions while respecting what they are intended to identify. However, for immersion students this does not end the analysis.

Second language interference characteristics are found in virtually all non-francophones' writing. While this is to be expected, it is appropriate to help students reduce the 'unFrenchness' of their writing (and speech) as far as possible. Dealing with them in an evaluation instrument such as reference sets will involve describing in detail what can be expected at each of the various levels.

The sequence of development is not as apparently linear as for the other descriptions:
• The youngest children seem not to have much L2 interference. The prime exception seems to be related to gender. Are they operating in two largely independent codes? Are their errors 'baby talk'?
• By grade 2, certain patterns are beginning to appear: *Je suis 7* or *Je suis 7 ans.* Are the children consciously or preconsciously beginning to compare languages?
• By grades 4 and 5, the amount of interference reaches quite a significant level. Are the students now reaching into their English code regularly to be able to fill in their language gaps in French? Are they paying attention to their thinking?
• Writing seems to 'improve' during the next 2 or 3 years. Are the students now starting to sort out the codes again, this time in a reasoning, problem-solving way? Are they paying better attention to their thinking?
• Through the secondary years, students take on bigger challenges. Their reading and writing in English and their reading (and possibly writing) in French have given them a sense of what can be done. Their reach and their grasp seem to move sometimes farther apart and sometimes closer as they stretch their wings. Have they the heart to meet the challenge? Does the school support them?
• Those who continue on to grade 12 seem to develop a level of maturity and competency in written French which should allow them a good variety of options for future use of their second language.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

Summary and Discussion

At the beginning of this project I asked myself this question: are the patterns of development in immersion student writing in French as a second language similar to those of their peers in English? I also wondered about the value of reference sets as a tool for assessing student writing in immersion, and to what extent writing in French in immersion is qualitatively and quantitatively different from that of peer writing in English. Finally, I asked myself if my study might inform any future development of an appropriate assessment tool for immersion writing. What other discoveries might be made? Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) argue that the value of this type of research "is perhaps most obvious in relation to the development of theory" (p. 23). After two years of reading, writing and reflecting, I believe that I can hazard some answers to my questions and add to the development of theory.

The answer to the first question is a qualified yes. The comparisons of immersion writing to the descriptions for writing in English as they pertain to reader, meaning, form, and to a somewhat lesser extent, style appear applicable to immersion students. Students writing in French, according to these four measures, produce writing which passes through the various levels with some students reaching level seven.
As illustrated in Figures 5 and 6, the length of the pieces of writing increases generally as students move up the levels. Immersion students appear ready to write at length as their skills mature.

The development of children's writing in English is said to follow a rough pattern. This pattern is not even and advances on a broken front, however there is a pattern (B.C. Ministry of Education, 1992b, p. ii). Does this same pattern hold for the student whose writing development happens first in French? (No effort was made to determine if any of the students involved in this study began to write in English before kindergarten, or if they played at writing in English through the early years of French immersion, though it is safe to guess that at least the latter would be true.) One might expect that there would be a lag and that this lag might have certain characteristics which differ from the usual English pattern. As might also be expected, the profiles of immersion student writing also illustrate an advance on a broken front and vary considerably from student to student. More importantly, there is also a clear sense of growth over time. This is consistent with evidence found by Edelsky (1986).

I believe that a reasonable attempt can be and has been made to situate immersion student writing in French, independent of grade level, at the various levels of the developmental continuum provided for English writing. A general observation is that the writing samples are by and large less sophisticated than the samples provided in English reference sets, however this is perhaps less true or apparent at the emergent stage. For my purposes, 'less sophisticated' means that the language is more basic. For immersion students, flights of fantasy and originality are to be found more in the realm of ideas than in word choice and structure. This suggests, not unreasonably, that the limitations of vocabulary
narrow the choices available to students when they are not deliberately using synonym dictionaries and other resources. This does not mean that all student writers shy away from complex sentence structures if they serve their needs. In fact they are often the Achilles heel of bright secondary students.

Writing for the reader is developmentally strong with these students (see Figure 7). Again, this is consistent with the evidence found by Edelsky (1986). A sense of audience is more or less automatic in interpersonal correspondence. The decision to use letter writing as authentic communication was deliberate. Too often writing in the classroom is done for a limited readership, the teacher. Some students may, in time, learn to be their own best readers -- but this too can 'only be taken so far' since the purpose of writing is to communicate.

Do the children convey meaning -- the meaning intended -- feelings, information, understanding? In the reference sets 'meaning" evolves from the personal and immediate, to the speculative and imaginative, to multiple sources, to abstraction, to complexity, and ultimately to a blending of these, with the ability to take on various stances and roles. Despite this formidable challenge the student writing shows consistent progress in this dimension (see Figure 8).

Style becomes individual as the young writer acquires voice. Variety, precision and flow demonstrate the sophistication and maturity of the writer. Certain immersion writers are clearly developing significant ability in this area. A few samples displayed characteristics of level 7 style (see figure 9). As suggested above, there seems to be a lag when comparing their writing in French with peer (or their own?) writing in English -- particularly at the late elementary and secondary levels. Some of this seems related to lack of confidence and an
awareness of the complexity of the task, combined with the knowledge that their writing in English is done with greater ease. I received writing samples from a few older writers who appear to have avoided writing in French as much as possible. A couple of them admitted it outright. Samples of using language in a "consciously unusual way" or "playing with language/ideas for special effects" are rare. As Leboulanger-Salerno (1989) suggests, when a person is able to play with language and to grasp play on words, he or she is able to participate at the cultural level and is thus able to sense the implicit and hear the unsaid. One primary writer referred to a very small acquaintance as "un moulin à paroles" -- clear evidence of the learning potential which well selected children's literature can provide. Are similar samples also rare in student writing in English? Probably -- though less so, I suspect. With style, it is often the familiar problem of reach and grasp. What is imagined may be so much more interesting and effective than what finally appears on paper, particularly if the thinking was elaborated without reference to supportive resource materials or floated between two languages.

Concerning form, applying the rules of organization seems to be as well developed in French as in English. These conventions of genre are generally similar across languages, at least western European languages. Certain differences can be found, such as in the formal business letter, but the more problematic genres are not represented in this research (see Figure 10). Culturally appropriate forms (for example, tu/vous and the conditional for politeness) are treated as L2 characteristics in this study.

The surface features descriptions, however, only work if a means is found
to divide the contents of this category. The influence of English second language characteristics and the narrower vocabulary and syntactical base with which these children work makes this clear. I believe it is very important to avoid what Edelsky (1986) refers to as a deficit model. These children are growing and learning every day, and the writing samples are inspiring.

Some skills are handled extremely well. The children in immersion grasp the rules of punctuation very quickly. Even with the differences, they use capital letters appropriately most of the time. They outgrow the problems of run-on and incomplete sentences. And, most important, if you 'listen' to their writing it is better than it looks.

Regular spelling (orthographe d'usage) is generally quite strong, and spelling based largely on endings, mostly silent (orthographe grammaticale), is relatively weak. However this is also often true of young francophone writers (see Alberta Education, 1995).

Studies of immersion students' writing in French in comparison to writing by francophone students indicate that there are significant differences at all ages. (For a synopsis of analyses of student writing in French immersion as compared with standard French, see Rebuffot, 1994, pp. 90-105). There are ongoing problems related to agreement, gender and certain verb forms as well as some lack of sociolinguistic competence (confusion of tu and vous and lack of use of the conditional for politeness). Certain fossilized forms recur in what is sometimes referred to as 'speaking immersion'. Students use the family of verbs indicating movement and direction (arriver, descendre, monter, etc.) less than francophone student writers, and also show weaknesses in choice of
prepositions. This particular study would support Rebuffot's summation of the most common weaknesses.

Second language characteristics which distinguish these students from their francophone peers appear to proceed through stages and also seem susceptible to correction if appropriate instruction techniques are used.

The importance of 'appropriate instruction' is painfully apparent. The students who dislike writing have some comments that need to be taken to heart. They use words like 'grammar' and 'syntax' as epithets. Those who say they love writing obviously have acquired a sense of empowerment. Unlike the less effective writers, they never talk about grammar. (This is supported by the research of Petrosky, 1997, and Hillocks, 1987.) Some of the participating students are learning to eliminate learned errors; however some seem insensitive (desensitized?), some appear inhibited, --but some write wonderfully.

Are reference sets, therefore, a helpful tool for assessing student writing in French?

Certainly, I found some frustrations working with the English reference set descriptions. One such annoyance is the use of words such as "growing" and "increasing". My reaction was consistently to wonder -- compared to what? The other frustration I experienced was what to me seemed to be a large leap from level four to five. The scale appears to move from primary to high school without ever passing through a middle, or Go, or collecting $200. However, as I suggested in Chapter 4, reference sets prepared specifically for immersion students could serve to provide a sense of the normal sequence of development
and what can be expected at each level (as opposed to grade). Using appropriate
reference sets should provide direction for individualizing the expectations of
writing skills acquisition and serve as a reminder of what reasonable
expectations are.

There is a need to establish what typical writing in French immersion is,
and what it looks like at the various levels. Besides rethinking 'surface features',
research for this purpose would need to examine further the second language
characteristics which students bring or develop. My observations, as noted at the
end of Chapter 4, lead me to think that the neophyte in kindergarten or grade
one accepts the second language as a package and does not begin to make
comparisons across languages until possibly grade 2. It is in late primary and
particularly in grades 4 to 6 that the English 'interference' patterns appear and
begin to fossilize. Secondary students strive (or quit trying) to erase these
patterns from their writing -- some with considerable success.

If these observations can be substantiated, far from being a sign of deficit,
the introduction into immersion language of English language patterns is a sign
of intelligence, a growth in understanding of how languages work, and of their
similarities and differences, in fact a developmental stage. This, in turn, has
implications for teaching. Incorporating the contrastive study of language
patterns, whether formally or informally, might assist students in avoiding
fossilization of their French.

French immersion children's writing in French is quite understandable.
Is the quality of their writing good, bad or indifferent? The question seems
wrongly put. What should be asked is what are the significant patterns of growth -- and that should be followed with acknowledgement of the fact of growth.

The use of criterion-referenced marking scales in evaluation of writing based on the student's developmental level(s) and preferably derived with student input would be a practical and potentially very effective approach. This could become part of the student-teacher conference. It would provide opportunities for the student to acquire metacognitive strategies and understanding, and would serve to inform instruction (see Freedman & Sperling, 1985).

With one exception, I found no noticeable difference between the writing of children for whom English is a second language and of those for whom it is a first language. The young writer in question seems well behind his peers, and this could be for reasons other than or additional to his English as a second language status. (Samples of his writing were not selected for illustrative examples.) Differences were noted between the writing of boys and girls. Generally the girls were more voluble and more careful, but there were very interesting exceptions to this rule. The size of the data base probably is insufficient to make any firm statements in either case.

Limitations of the Study

This study has certain clear limitations:

• The size of the sample, and its uneven distribution across grades and abilities may limit its usefulness. There are no grade threes, there are strong and weaker students and some grades are more representative of one or the other.
No effort has been made to relate teacher practice to student performance.

Do the 'blips' in the tables reflect a stage or do they tell us more about individual writers?

One student provided six samples while others provided only one. The average was about two.

The use of the English language reference set.

Would the primary and intermediate results look different if they had chosen to send me other samples of their writing?

Significance for Classroom Practice

This has been a pleasurable experience for the children and particularly for me. It is probably an obvious remark, but the more enthusiastic the classroom teacher was for the project, the greater the student participation. This was a great opportunity for me to see at first hand the value of authentic communication. The implications for teaching are obvious. Writing should serve a purpose which is meaningful to reader and writer (Graves, 1983). Many teachers I know or observe are becoming increasingly sensitive to the importance of authentic communication. Some are involved in class twinning, have initiated writing by older students for younger readers in their schools, or are beginning to have students "surf" the networks to "talk" to other students. Some encourage students to write real letters to seek information or express opinions on public issues; others have their students develop surveys, administer them, analyse the data and prepare a report; others develop a school newspaper in French.

Is writing learned or taught? The answer, of course, is both (see again Graves, 1983, and others). However, for language learning to occur, language
must be used and used and used, both orally and in written form. Administrators, teachers and parents need to understand that helping children acquire a second language requires more of teachers than simply their ability to speak French and teach francophones.

The issue of helping students develop a more effective style could be enhanced by linking literature and writing (Bélanger, 1991; Williams & Snipper, 1990) and by developing a writers' workshop approach (Graves, 1983). Playing with figures of speech in short pieces could extend the students' repertoire. From student observation in other contexts, I believe that the importance of resource materials in French cannot be overstated; students should not be led to think that writing to inform or to learn is an exercise in translation.

A greater openness is required if we are to help children understand and use the L1 'interference' and make it an opportunity. Sharing with them the wonder of the similarities and differences in the way things are said and written in the two languages seems a worthwhile educational objective.

It is appropriate in the beginning years to ignore English. However, when the child is heard to say, "Je suis huit," the teacher (en français!) might use this as an opportunity to show the child why she wanted to use that structure, an English sentence with French words, -- and then to identify the structure that will be acknowledged by French speakers. This study of similarities and differences should help children grow in both languages and might serve to reduce the amount of fossilization. While these discussions would be informal and reactive in primary years, some degree of formalization could prove
interesting and profitable for older students. Older students should also have the opportunity to study constrastive logic and rhetoric (Kaplan, 1984).

Edelsky (1982) and Cumming (1989) have concluded that what a child knows about writing in the first language forms the basis of new hypotheses rather than interferes with writing in another language. Application of the explicit or tacit knowledge which the child brings can appear as either surface similarities or differences. From this it can be inferred that certain underlying L1 processes have been used in L2 writing. Getting at the reasons for the 'errors' is a way in, or as Edelsky puts it, examining these data "provide[s] wonderful windows into otherwise hidden processes" (1986, p. 168).

Silva (1993) suggests that secondary teachers need to give more time to the planning in writing, to work through their drafts in stages, separating revising and editing. At the same time they should sensitize their students to what L1 readers expect. Silva also suggests that strategies for dealing with the unfamiliar or problematic need to be taught. Finding ways to provide a visually stimulated classroom and modeling a personal interest in writing are also recommended (see Florio-Ruance & Clark, 1985). This research project would suggest that these strategies are appropriate.

The importance of a literacy environment for younger children which provides a smorgasbord of models, materials and reasons for writing, as identified by Loughlin & Martin (1987), would seem consistent with what this study suggests.
Lastly, strategies which help teachers, parents and children understand the developmental nature of writing, the activities which enhance it and those which do not, are needed. Letters and other exchanges with people who speak French give students greater access to the cultural component of language acquisition. The importance of this component in developing effective spoken and written French is outlined by Rebuffot (1994, pp. 209-210).

**Significance for Future Research**

This study has helped me identify at least four questions for future research:

- An in-depth study of how the L₁ and L₂ support and detract from each other would be useful;
- A methodology which makes constructive use of English language 'interference' is needed;
- A tertiary analysis of this or similar data would be helpful -- to establish which 'errors' seem to disappear and which tend to remain stubbornly in place, and why;
- French immersion reference sets which address surface features and second language characteristics would help teachers, parents and students understand where they are and where they may reasonably expect to go next.

It is my fond hope that this study will in some small way advance the art and science of teaching in the French immersion classroom.
References


207


Appendix 1  The coding form

This a sample of the coding form developed for this study.

Analysis of Writing  Student:  Grade:  Sample No.
The Context:  

Description:  
Snapshot:  

Reader:  

Meaning:  

Style:  

Form:  

Surface Features:  

L2 Characteristics:  

Purpose:  

Developmental Continuum:  

209
### Evaluating Writing Across Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Snapshot</strong></td>
<td>Clear attempts to write, with some recognizable letters and perhaps a few familiar words. Focuses on exploring written forms and on recording personal experiences.</td>
<td>Strings of recognizable words with some basic sentences. Focuses on immediate personal experiences and interests. Writing may include imagined content and descriptive words.</td>
<td>Simple sentences may be arranged in a variety of recognizable formats according to the writer's context and purpose. Focuses on personal experiences and interests, and typically writes in the first person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Reader</strong></td>
<td>The reader relies on similar patterns in the writing rather than on conventional decoding and frequently needs to consult the writer in order to understand the writing. The reader may recognize an occasional word.</td>
<td>The reader can understand some words without help from the writer, but has to pause to figure out many of the words and fill in the gaps.</td>
<td>The reader can recognize most of the words and develop a sense of the overall meaning, but may have to read slowly because of frequent unconventional spelling and/or punctuation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Writer and the Writing</strong></td>
<td>Students write about immediate experiences — students' names, letters, and words they see in books or other print. Sometimes they intend to convey a specific meaning; other times they are just exploring. They often believe that their writing conveys their intended meaning.</td>
<td>Students write about their personal experiences and interests, and may include imagined content. They are able to read their own writing aloud for at least a short time after writing, but later may not remember what they intended.</td>
<td>Students write about their experiences and interests, and include events and information they remember or imagine. Writing tends to be direct and concrete, but may include some generalizations, speculations or imaginings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Style</strong></td>
<td>Students choose words that represent people, places, and things that are important to them.</td>
<td>They may include descriptive words, and often repeat a favorite word or description.</td>
<td>Students rely on short, simple sentences that are roughly the same length. They usually write in the first person, and use pronouns frequently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Form</strong></td>
<td>The work &quot;looks&quot; like writing — for example, writing goes across the page. Students may imitate the forms they see around them, for example, labels, lists, paragraphs. They often use letters to write labels for a picture.</td>
<td>For example, they may number items in a list, begin a story with &quot;once upon a time,&quot; or finish with &quot;the end.&quot;</td>
<td>The writing has form and sequence, although these may not be consistently sustained. Students use some transition words or links between ideas, but the transition may be abrupt. They may use a variety of simple forms — personal topics, labels, stories, notes, poems, lists, reports — and use specialized vocabulary when they are given the words as part of the task. Stories have a beginning, middle, and end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Surface features</strong></td>
<td>Students may write some familiar words, such as their names, in a way that others can understand. One letter — often an initial consonant — may represent a whole word.</td>
<td>Students use spaces to separate words, and begin to include punctuation marks although they may not follow standard rules (for example, they may insert a period at the end of each line rather than at the end of a sentence).</td>
<td>Students use conventional spelling for most words, but the number of errors may interfere with meaning. They can check their work by reading it aloud, and they show willingness to make some changes. When they don't know how to spell a word, they often sound it out.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The Definition of Terms

**NOTE:** Each description does not necessarily describe a discrete stage of development, but rather is a collection of observations about student writing organized according to a common structure. While the descriptions, at first glance, might appear to be similar to analytic rating scales, they are not rating scales and cannot be used to evaluate directly student writing.

**SNAPSHOT:**

Provides a quick overview: an advance organizer to help the reader understand the rest of the description. The snapshot should not be used to categorize a student writing sample.

**ROLE OF THE READER:**

Explains the stance taken by the reader. Readers approach different types of writing in different ways. For example, we read the work of a seven-year-old differently from how we read a newspaper. Also, the reader's knowledge and values affect how the reader sees a piece of writing. Readers make meaning through the lens of their prior experience and values.
The writing has clear form and a logical sequence. Simple sentences dominate, with occasional instances of complexity (e.g., subordination). Ideas are developed or elaborated to make meaning clear. Content may draw on a variety of sources. Variety of words used increases.

The reader can read most of the words easily, but may have difficulty following the sequence and understanding the relationship among the ideas or events. Readers often notice variations in their feelings about the place for ease of reading) and find it difficult to summarize an overall impression.

Students use a variety of sources (e.g., books, friends, experiences, imagination) and may combine pieces of information to develop the content. Writing shows some consideration of the reader, and of the need to develop or elaborate ideas to make meaning clear. While writing is basically simple and straightforward, some evidence of abstract thought and generalizations (or overgeneralizations) may appear.

Students show increasing precision in choosing words. Sentences repeat the same pattern, but include different lengths. Simple ideas are sometimes elaborated through detail, example, reason, dialogue or setting, although this elaboration may be irrelevant or unfocused. The writing suggests emerging awareness of an audience or community, and may take on an objective tone.

The writing has form and sequence. Students apply the basic rules or conventions they have been given for the forms of writing used in various subject areas, and use specialized language when given some support. Transitions between ideas seem generally smooth and natural. In extended writing, students group related ideas together and use paragraphs. Words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs longer than a standard length are reasonably clear.

Students follow standard rules and conventions for most common words and construction of basic sentences. Surface errors are not particularly noticeable, although some inconsistencies in spelling may appear, along with sentence errors that are largely due to misuse of punctuation marks (e.g., using a comma in place of a period).

Slopes of growing control with instances of complexity or specialized use of language or structure. Includes details, examples, and explanation to help make meaning clear. Often, the writer may focus on perfect one aspect of the piece but pay less attention to others.

The reader can usually understand the writer's purpose, and respond to the ideas offered and/or to the language and form used.

Students develop simple concepts and concrete material, and occasionally attempt to deal with complexity or abstract ideas. Writing shows awareness that meaning can be made more precise through the use of details, examples, and explanations.

Students deal with complex content and their writing often features abstraction and speculation. Then, the writer's ideas and facts appear from various sources, and incorporate these with their knowledge, experience, and imagination to shape precise meaning.

Students display a growing vocabulary with evidence that some words have been selected for precise meanings and subtleties of meaning. Sentences come from a growing repertoire of styles, each chosen to fit a particular context. Sentence length changes regularly, and a variety of complex sentence patterns are apparent in most samples. There is some sense of flow.

Students rely on relatively simple sentence structures, with occasional elaborated or elaborated elements of style. (These experiments are not always effective.) A sense of audience and awareness of other people is evident. In paragraph writing, a rough rhythm may indicate that students are able to keep in mind what they have already written, as if they construct a new sentence.

The writing follows a logical pattern and indicates a sense of direction. Students apply the basic rules of most common forms and formats, although they may make occasional spelling mistakes and use some of the more complex conventions. They tend to follow standard structures and formats without attempting to adapt these to ideas or purpose. They use specialized language with little support, but may be tentative (and sometimes inaccurate).

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The writing follows a consistent organization and pattern. Students apply the basic rules and conventions of standard forms and genres, and apply some of the more complex and specialized rules that apply to different forms and disciplines. They may experiment with adapting or developing their own forms. They use specialized language smoothly and appropriately.

Students follow standard rules and conventions. Any errors that appear are usually the result of experimentation, carelessness, or attempts at complexity. Some minor problems may appear consistently (e.g., a repeated misspelling or punctuation error).

Writing involves applying organizational rules about writing. Often students learn to use rules unconsciously, when they hear stories, for example. Some-time, students are taught these rules explicitly, in, for example, science reports and standard line-paragraph essays. Form and organization are structural rules, such as how paragraphs or sections of writing can be organized, as well as to the conventions associated with particular types of writing. Writing a social studies report requires the use of different rules than those writing a learning log in a mathematics class. Such rules are often called conventions of the genre.

Clear and purposeful effect is sustained within the conventions of the form or genre the writer uses. Writer conveys precise meaning, and may take on various stances to write from beyond personal experience. Language, style, and format seem to have been chosen for a specific purpose.

The reader is usually able to take the material as granted, and may feel involved in a dialogue with the writer.

Students present ideas effectively in extended writing on a range of topics. Examples, reasons, and details are focused, relevant, and make precise meaning; generalizations and abstractions are appropriate, and ideas are integrated smoothly with personal meaning. Students may write from outside their personal experience, and take on various stances, or roles.

Students show clear awareness of both definitions and emotional effect of the words they choose. Language is clear and precise. Sentences are varied in pattern and length, and the writing flows smoothly with only minor disruptions. Ideas shift frequently and effectively between general and specific, abstract and concrete. Students may use language in a consciously unusual way, or seem to be playing with language ideas for special effects.

The writing is coherent and organized with a clear pattern of development throughout the overall structure, and within individual sections or paragraphs. Students use the rules and conventions of various forms and genres appropriately and smoothly. They may adapt or create structures suitable to their purposes. Extended writing flows smoothly from an effective opening, through a sequence of events, ideas or examples, to an appropriate conclusion.

Students make few errors. These tend to be noticeable only when a reader is looking for errors.

MEANING:
The nature of any writing is affected by the meaning the writer is attempting to convey and the writer's understanding of that meaning. The purpose of any piece of writing is to create and communicate meaning, whether that meaning is about a particular concept, personal feelings, ability to synthesize information, or the power to tell an engaging story.

STYLETHE words, the figure of speech, and the variety of sentences a writer uses are all expressions of style.

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SURFACE FEATURES:
These features are the elements of the writing that are most immediately apparent to the reader, and which include the application of grammatical and spelling rules. The purpose of these rules is to help make writing more consistently comprehensible. Students may make errors in these rules, but they may be doing so for a variety of reasons. They may be unaware of a rule, they may have difficulty remembering the rules of a rule, or, in experimenting, they may misuse rules.

211