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Canada

MAKING A MEANINGFUL CONNECTION:
THE INTEGRATION OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND WRITING

by

Josephine K. Sahli

B.Ed.(Elem.) The University of British Columbia, 1976

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS
in the Faculty
of
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ABSTRACT

This thesis involves a four part, descriptive investigation of the meaningful integration of physical education and writing at the elementary school level. It proposes that the teaching of a broad-based physical education program, founded on Rudolf Laban's framework for the analysis of movement, provides a rich and varied context for writing. The thesis describes a variety of game, gymnastic and dance experiences which foster written expression. It identifies three types of writing which evolve naturally from physical education experiences: transactional writing (writing intended to instruct, inform or persuade an audience), expressive writing (writing written for oneself or trusted people close to the writer) and creative or poetic writing (language used aesthetically to create a certain mood or effect). The thesis argues that writing helps children to reinforce, clarify or extend their experiences beyond the traditional context of physical education. The thesis concludes with a sample of children's writing, relating to physical education experiences, which reflect the goals of the Primary program foundation document (B.C. 1990c) and the draft of The intermediate program: Foundations (B.C., 1992).

This thesis describes writing and physical education experiences as interdependent and interrelated. It provides evidence of writing that helped children develop a better understanding of themselves and the physical experience. As well, it provides evidence of topics generated from the physical education experiences that helped children to learn more about writing. The thesis defends the writing which developed from the physical education experiences as personal and meaningful to each child.

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

Over the past ninety years, there has been a significant change in the teaching and philosophy of physical education. Tracing the major historical developments helps the reader to understand how the past has influenced the present. Of even greater importance is a fuller understanding of how the present teaching of physical education might challenge the future to ensure a prominent role for physical education in the elementary school curriculum.

Prior to the First World War, the programs of Germany and Sweden greatly influenced those in North America. The Germans established a rigid system of gymnastics requiring considerable equipment and specially trained teachers (Dauer and Pangrazi, 1986, p. 3). The Swedish system comprised a series of exercises which the children could perform on the playground or beside a desk in the classroom (Dauer and Pangrazi, 1986, p. 3). During this time in Canada, physical education programs consisted mainly of tumbling, formalized gymnastics and/or drill exercises. The predominant educational thinking at this time viewed physical education solely as a means for developing the body. During World War One, however, military training programs, which shifted from strict calisthenics to include games and sports, helped

broaden the school program.

Early in the twentieth century the philosophy of John Dewey strongly influenced the teaching of physical education.

In Democracy and education Dewey (1919) writes:

Experiences have shown that when children have a chance at physical activities which bring their natural impulses into play going to school is a joy, management is less of a burden and learning is easier. (pp. 228-229)

Dewey's Cardinal Aims of Education which included "the promotion of health" and "worthy use of leisure time" became the responsibility of the school. Unfortunately, during the depression years of the 1930's the significant role of physical education in the school curriculum diminished and in many cases was eliminated entirely (Dauer and Pangrazi, 1986, p. 3).

During the Second World War, physical fitness became the main objective of physical education programs. In 1943, the Canadian Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, established ten years earlier, initiated Canada's National Physical Fitness Act. To assist the goal of promoting national physical fitness, the act provided for: an extension of physical education in all educational institutes, better facilities, the encouragement of sports and athletics and increased attention to the professional training of specialists in physical education.

Post-war research in the areas of growth and development, motor learning and physical performance promoted

a more balanced program of physical activities. At the same time, the "preparation for leisure" became a stated aim of the school curriculum (Dauer and Pangrazi, 1986, p. 3). This facilitated the inclusion of a gymnasium in each new school built and the establishment of new facilities in the community.

At this time, Britain's leadership influenced changes in the overall educational system in countries throughout the world. In Britain one of the most significant reforms in education took place in physical education (Blatt and Cunningham, 1981, vii). A new perspective, emerging from the work of Rudolf Laban, a dance and efficiency expert, focused for the first time on the body, mind and spirit relationship in movement (Great Britain, 1952, p. 85). Thornton (1971) explains that Laban's theories "provide a way of more fully understanding man, for they are aimed at stimulating an awareness and an appreciation of the reciprocal link between the body and mind as it is displayed through movement" (p. 1).

Laban's extensive study of human effort and movement, relating to work, dance and theatre, resulted in a new theory in dance which he called, "educational movement." His analysis of movement provided a framework for presenting children with new challenges. Through the study of movement problems, children could explore a fuller range of movement. Laban (1975) described the most obvious difference between

traditional European dance and "modern dance": "Instead of studying each particular movement, the principle of moving must be understood and practised. This approach to the material of dancing involves a new conception of it, namely, of movement and its elements" (p. 10). Laban's analysis of movement included the elements of: space, time, weight, flow and relationships. This described what the body could do (body concepts), how the body could move (effort concepts), where the body could move (spatial concepts), and its relationship to other performers or apparatus (relationship concepts).

Initially teachers adapted Laban's analysis of movement to teach dance and gymnastics, but eventually it became incorporated into all components of the physical education program. This method gained popularity as it placed little emphasis on competition and focussed attention on the success of the individual and ways to maximize individual potential.

Today movement education holds a firm place within the British school system and other countries of the world (Blatt and Cunningham, 1981, pp. vii-viii). In Canada, however, this approach has been slow to emerge even though advocated in most Canadian physical education curriculum guides (Thomson, 1980, p. 11). The Elementary school physical education (B. C., 1975; hereafter referred to as the Physical Education Curriculum Guide) Curriculum Guide states:

The objectives of a broad physical education

program provide for learning experiences in social, emotional and mental development. These objectives are realized when each child becomes aware of the capabilities and limitations of his/her body through a knowledge of the principles of movement, relates this knowledge to the mind-body concept, and then effects optimum growth and development through contribution to and participation in physical education. (p. 2)

Thomson's 1980 study of British Columbia's elementary school physical education programs revealed that only 50% of the teachers surveyed included a movement education approach in their teaching (p. 16).

My experiences over the past twelve years as a district and school physical education resource teacher, a faculty associate and elementary school administrator suggest a further decline in the understanding and implementation of physical education at the elementary level. My most recent administrative experience indicates that while five out of ten full-time teachers, at my present school, utilize a movement education approach, the intermediate teachers use predominantly a direct method of instruction. Reviewing the collaborative 1992 winter preview (January - March) of the intermediate teachers indicates 75% of the physical education time designated to the teaching of traditional games, 15% to gymnastics and only 10% to dance. The small amount of time devoted to the teaching of gymnastics and dance does not auger well with a broad-based, experiential program. In the psycho-motor domain these teachers rely primarily on activities that provide for the release of energy, the

development of game skills and physical fitness. In the cognitive domain, they involve students primarily in the learning of rules and strategies of various games; and they rely solely on the development of fair play and sportsmanship in the affective domain. This situation is not unique to this particular school. Discussions with administrative colleagues and district personnel throughout the province indicate similar conditions in other schools. While the Physical Education Curriculum Guide recommends daily physical education, a telephone survey of elementary administrators, within this writer's district, indicates that only six of forty-six elementary schools participated in a daily physical education program during the 1991 -1992 school year.

Although many changes in the philosophy and teaching of physical education have evolved during the twentieth century, a greater understanding of physical education in the elementary school curriculum is required. Goodson (1987) explains that "practical" subjects such as physical education still carry with them a low status compared with other "academic" subjects concerned with a child's "intellectual development" (p. 4). Unfortunately, many teachers still view physical education as an adjunct to the curriculum. Its implementation remains narrow in scope and its significance on the development of the "whole" child greatly undervalued. Teachers seldom provide opportunities for students to prepare for their physical education experiences or extend their

learning in the classroom, and rarely do they provide opportunities for students to discuss and write about their physical experiences. Kirk (1988) stresses: "Unless we as professionals are willing and able to make a case for the educational value of our subject, then our potential to contribute to education as an emancipatory process will be strictly restricted" (p. 44).

Quality physical education concerns itself with more than just "playing a game" and recreation. Along with its significant contribution to a child's overall physical development, it also plays an important role in a child's cognitive, social, emotional, aesthetic and artistic development. This study strives to demonstrate the potential of movement education for curricular integration and its impact on the education of the whole child.

RATIONALE

The British Columbia Primary program foundation document (B. C., 1990c; hereafter referred to as the Primary Program) and revised draft of the Intermediate program: foundations (B. C., 1992; hereafter referred to as the Intermediate Program) promote learning experiences that foster a child's personal growth in the areas of: social and emotional development, social responsibility, intellectual development, physical development, aesthetic and artistic

development. The new programs emphasize critical, creative and reflective thinking. Both documents identify curricular integration as a focus for the education of British Columbia's school-aged children. Furthermore, the programs recommend that teachers present learning experiences as a meaningful whole through integration, both, within a subject area and across the separate subject areas.

The earlier draft document of the Intermediate program (B. C., 1990a) describes integration "as more than a methodology or strategy. It is an orientation that accepts the integrative nature of knowledge and interconnected relationships that exist between and among all things" (p. 89). It further states that the separation of subjects and the specification of discrete learnings within each subject "has given rise to the disintegration of personal learning and fragmentation of school experiences" (p. 89). The Primary Program emphasizes learning experiences that help children make connections: between the curriculum and their own lives and experiences; between existing and new attitudes, skills and knowledge; between the curriculum and the real world; across the curriculum; and with others to create an integrated community of learners (p. 25).

The vague interpretation of curricular integration in the first draft of the Primary program (B. C., 1989) and lack of research supporting it prompted me to complete a field study on the topic The integration of reading, writing,

listening, speaking and movement with elementary school-aged children. This pilot project provided the impetus for my research. It describes children's responses to a variety of stories and poems studied through movement and documents their writing related to this and other physical education experiences. The study supports not only the integrative nature of the individual subject areas (i.e. physical education and language arts), but also the significant impact on learning when integrating across the two curricular areas.

The children's writing collected for the pilot project confirms that physical education concerns not only the physical well-being of a child but the total educative process for that child. The children's written expression revealed experiences in all contexts of movement: social, emotional, intellectual, physical, aesthetic and artistic. In the area of language arts, children engaged in the writing process discussed and listened to each others' ideas. They read their own writing, the writing of peers and often read related stories and poems. They provided suggestions for peer revision, served as an audience for the published writing and developed an appreciation and understanding of good writing.

When integrating the study of stories and poems with movement, the children committed themselves to long periods of reading, writing, listening, speaking and movement activities. They often read and reread a story or poem many

times to extract the action words and analyze the movement vocabulary. Forrester and Reinart (1989) explain: "Becoming physically involved with stories and reading draws children to hours of voluntary reading practice" (p. 74). Likewise, it fostered hours of practice in the physical domain. The children worked individually, with a partner or in a small group to interpret the text by developing and polishing movement sequences. Prior to or following the physical experience they wrote learning log responses or their own stories and poems. Each time, discussion and writing helped the students to prepare for or extend the physical experience.

In their writing the children shared their hopes, fears or understandings of the physical experience with others: the teacher, their peers, sometimes other students or staff in the school, and sometimes their parents. The rationale statement in the British Columbia Language Arts English primary-graduation curriculum guide (B. C., 1990b; hereafter referred to as the Language Arts English Curriculum Guide) supports this finding: "Through writing and speaking, students learn to clarify thought, emotion and experience, and to share these ideas, emotions, and experiences with others" (p. 13). Through the written expression the children further clarified or reinforced the movement vocabulary and concepts studied. They made decisions about their work in the gymnasium - analyzing those areas for further practice or

new areas for exploration. Above all, the children's writing demonstrated an appreciation for the movement experience and provided a vehicle for the celebration of learning and accomplishments. Since the children's writing in the pilot project provided the greatest insight into the meaning of physical education, it is the writing that serves as the focus for integration with physical education in the present study.

Researchers use the term integration in a variety of different ways. Humphrey (1990), a physical educator promoting the integration of physical education in the elementary school curriculum, describes integration in its simplest terms as: "the process of making whole. To integrate is to make whole or bring together the parts of the whole in functional unity, or to become complete" (p. 56). Jacobs (1989) also an educator in the area of curricular integration, refers to integration across the curriculum as interdisciplinary studies. She defines interdisciplinary as: "a knowledge view and curriculum approach that consciously applies methodology and language from more than one discipline to examine a central theme, issue, problem, topic or experience" (p. 8). The Primary and Intermediate Programs describe integration on two levels, incorporating both definitions. First, they emphasize the need for "personal integration," helping children to make sense of their learning by drawing upon prior knowledge and

experiences. Second, they describe the facilitation of learning through "curricular integration." This involves helping children to make meaningful connections between the various content and skill areas addressed within a subject, between subjects or within two or more related subjects.

This thesis draws upon the definitions of Humphry and Jacobs for an interpretation of the term integration. First of all, physical education supports each of the goals of the Primary and Intermediate Programs, thus providing a "whole" experience in itself. Physical education affords children opportunities for maximum successful endeavors in expressive and functional (or objective) movement. It allows children to develop physical and motor fitness through activities that interest and challenge them. It provides opportunities for creative and self expression. Physical education also fosters social and emotional development. When working alone, children are encouraged to use self control, take risks and become self-directed. When working with a partner or small group many opportunities exist for children to learn to share, co-operate, be considerate of others and tolerate their needs. Through the analysis and interpretation of movement, children develop an understanding and appreciation of that movement. Second, when integrating physical education with language arts, writing provides a powerful context to reflect, think critically and creatively about the physical education experience. The integration of the two

curricular areas, therefore, allows children to learn more about writing as well as physical education.

On the topic, "Intellectual and practical criteria for successful integration," David Akerman (1989) raises two pertinent questions concerning successful integration:

"1. Does it make intellectual sense to integrate part of the curriculum? 2. Does it make practical sense all things considered?" (p. 25).

Intellectually, writing helps children make personal sense of the physical experience which can be shared with others. Graves (1991) explains:

I write to make sense of something for myself. But if I am true to the subject and have listened carefully to my text, I will also make a contribution to others in the class. I want the children to realize that writing causes others to act, provides information for their own thinking and writing, and is a source of enjoyment as well as a medium that can trigger new thoughts, stories and information in their classmates. (p. 56)

Writing also allows children to further explore both the expressive and functional elements of movement in a variety of forms and for a variety of purposes (e.g. transactional, creative or poetic, expressive). It provides children opportunities to analyze any one or combination of ideas related to the physical experience. Additionally, writing serves as a means for evaluation and reflection.

Writing helps me to transcend myself in space and time. When I reread a piece I wrote months ago, I witness how I have changed since then; or I may read into a chronicle I wrote many years ago to relive that day or retrieve information from it.

These are the miracles of writing. (Graves, 1991, p. 62)

The use of writing to express a physical experience involves cognitive processes which foster new learning and understanding. Langor and Applebee (1987) express the view that "good writing and careful thinking go hand in hand" (p. 3). Berthoff (1981) also considers thinking and writing as profoundly related. She explains that "to teach composition is to teach the process of making meaning" (p. 18). She describes the writing process:

The composer develops and organizes ideas, makes statements and creates images by way of discovering the parts he or she wants to assemble and, in the process, invents and orders an assembly to suit purpose and audience. If we teach composing as a mode of learning, a way of thinking, then we will be teaching it as a process. (p. 20)

Analyzing the practical perspective of integration, advocates of writing across the curriculum (Fulwiler and Young, 1982; Newkirk and Atwell, 1982; Atwell, 1990; Graves, 1991; Langor and Applebee, 1987) stress that thinking is taught best when related to some content. Physical education provides rich and meaningful content for thinking and written expression. Lucy Calkin (1986) in The art of teaching writing explains that writing becomes meaningful to children when it "connects with the purposes and interests that energize their lives" (p. 111). For many children the physical education class serves as the favourite part of their school day. D'Ambrozio in "Understanding writing"

(Newkirk, Atwell, 1982) states: "I continually urge them [students] to use their own experiences for subject matter, because on such subjects they are genuine experts" (p. 52).

Another practical issue for consideration involves the constraint of time upon teachers with an ever demanding and expanding curriculum. Developing the language and ideas generated during physical education classes in the classroom during the language arts time, allows the physical education time to be devoted to the daily, vigorous activity required by children. Fitness Canada in Because they're young Active living for Canadian children and youth (1989) recommends a minimum of thirty minutes daily activity for the maintenance of good health. Furthermore, writing educators agree that children require daily opportunities for writing over extended periods of time, in a variety of forms and for a variety of purposes. Calkin (1986) states: "If students are going to become deeply invested in their writing, and if they are going to draft and revise, sharing their texts with each other as they write, they need the luxury of time" (p. 23). She continues: "I urge teachers to set aside an hour a day, every day, for the writing workshop" (p. 25). Physical education then provides another medium for written expression in the classroom. The integration of writing with physical education allows children to learn more, not only about the physical experience and the writing process, but also about themselves. It addresses personal integration and curricular

integration in a meaningful way.

The questions for investigation in this study include:

1. What types of physical education experiences provide a context for writing?
2. What types of writing evolve from physical education experiences?
3. How does writing help children to reinforce, clarify or extend the physical experience?
4. How does the integration of physical education and writing reflect the goals of the Primary and Intermediate Programs?

RESEARCH DESCRIPTION

This thesis involves a four part, descriptive investigation of the integration of writing and physical education, with elementary school-aged children, in a lower mainland school in British Columbia during the 1989-1992 school years. The first phase of the investigation involves a description of the games, gymnastics and dance experiences which provided a context for writing. The second phase of the investigation examines the types of writing which evolved from the physical experiences. The third phase explores the ways writing helps children to reinforce, clarify or extend the physical experience. Finally, the research describes the ways in which the integration of physical education and

writing reflects the goals of the new Primary and Intermediate Programs.

The writer worked with six different classes, approximately one hundred and forty children, over the three year period. While she worked with five of the classes (i.e. 1YP/2YP, 2YP/3YP, 3YP/4YP, 4YP/Grade 4, Grade 4/5) for an entire school year, she worked with a grade 6/7 class for only four months. Throughout this paper the terms first year primary (1YP), second year primary (2YP), third year primary (3YP), and fourth year primary (4YP), introduced by the British Columbia Ministry of Education in 1990, refer to children in kindergarten, grade 1, grade 2 and grade 3, respectively. Occasionally this writer worked with other children in the school, completing demonstration lessons for teachers in the area of physical education and writing. These occasions are documented.

INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL

The teaching of physical education, comprised a daily, balanced program of games, gymnastics and dance. A movement education approach was predominately used for instruction during physical education classes. Based upon a wide range of themes, in the above three areas, the children were involved in the solving of movement problems, the creating of movement sequences and inventing and playing of games.

Indirect teaching and free play accompanied the introduction of any new concept or piece of apparatus, and direct teaching was offered as the children demonstrated an interest and/or the ability to learn a formal skill. For example, in gymnastics the opening of a lesson included some free time to work on the mats or other apparatus relating to the theme introduced. Rather than expect all children to learn a headstand or handstand at the same time, the theme of balance allowed the children opportunities to explore all different ways of balancing and to work at their own ability level. As the children demonstrated the strength required and interest to perform a headstand or handstand they were taught individually or in small groups. Children's polished skill or sequence demonstrations, accompanied with an analysis by the teacher or a student, served as a model for the entire class.

A half hour writers' workshop time followed each physical education class. Apart from writers' workshop, some opportunities were provided for writing prior to the physical education class. Approximately 10% of the writing time was devoted to discussion and/or writing about physical education. During writers' workshop, the children were encouraged to select their own topics for writing. Although many prewriting experiences involved discussion, brainstorm or visualization relating to the physical experience, the children were not compelled to write creatively about the experience unless it was meaningful or of interest to them.

The number of physical education lessons in the gymnasium which led to writing varied. On some occasions a single experience prompted a creative written response (e.g. an individual sequence); on other occasions (e.g. the study of a story or poem), up to eight lessons were used to develop the themes prior to writing. The children usually worked from two to five days to complete the writing process which led to a published piece of work relating to a physical education experience. At times all children were involved in a related free writing or letter writing activity or the writing of learner response logs. Learning logs were introduced for the purpose of encouraging children to think further about the physical experience. An interactive teacher comment followed each entry; however, the mechanics of writing were not focussed upon in this activity. Teacher responses, whenever possible, modelled the correct mechanics, including the spelling of those words spelt incorrectly by the student. An expectation of late primary and intermediate students included the courtesies of correct spelling, punctuation, capitalization and grammar in their published writing.

During writers' workshop, children received instruction, through short mini lessons of approximately ten to fifteen minutes, on the writing process. Topics included: drafting; self, partner or group editing and proof-reading; publishing and presenting. The children were introduced to several

forms and genres of writing, and models of good literature were shared with them. When writing creatively about a physical experience, the children chose the specific topic and writing form.

The teaching of physical education and writing for this thesis, along with the writing samples collected, were the work of this writer entirely, except for two different occasions when the writer acted in a resource teaching/team teaching capacity with one of the teachers in the school. On one occasion the writer completed the teaching of a gymnastics lesson in the gymnasium while the classroom teacher carried out the writing in the classroom. On another occasion the classroom teacher, in collaboration with this writer, involved his students in the self-evaluation of the physical development goal. A description of these experiences accompanies the research. The work with buddy classes in the school involved instruction by this writer.

DEFINITIONS

Creative writing: Also known as poetic writing, written language which functions as art. Words are used aesthetically to create a certain effect or mood, as in poetry, drama or fiction (Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod, Rosen, 1975).

Direct teaching method: This teacher-centred method is also known as the command method. The teacher controls the structure of the class, selects the type of activity and equipment to be used as well as what and how each child is expected to perform (Kirchner, 1989; Warrell, 1985).

Drafting: The writer's first attempts to construct personal meaning of his or her ideas. (Calkins, 1986; Graves, 1983; Hornsby and Parry, 1985). Nothing is permanent at this stage; therefore, the focus is on the ideas not the mechanics of writing.

Editing: Also known as revision, the act of revising one's writing to tighten, clarify or link ideas. The writer might add or delete words and/or ideas or rearrange words or ideas.

Expressive movement: Movement which involves a personal response intended to express ideas and feelings. This includes the improvisation of a story or the creation of a dance or sequence (Blatt and Cunningham, 1981).

Expressive writing: Writing which reveals the writer verbalizing his or her thoughts. It is written for oneself or trusted people very close to the writer. It includes first drafts, response log entries, letters, diaries or journals. Expressive writing is the matrix from which

transactional and creative writing evolve (Britton et al., 1975).

Free writing: A writer concentrates on a particular topic for a short period of time (approximately ten minutes, non-stop), putting down whatever thoughts come to mind (Calkins, 1986; Fulwiler and Young, 1986).

Functional movement: Movement with a clearly recognizable purpose such as walking, running, or the performance of a specific skill such as catching a ball or a traditional dance step in square dance (Blatt and Cunningham, 1981). It is also known as objective movement.

Indirect teaching method: This method allows children, individually or collectively, to select the activity and/or equipment to be used (Warrell, 1985).

Journal writing: This is a recording of one's private thoughts, feelings, opinions or questions. Sometimes the writer explores with words or ideas for further writing. Journal writing is written for oneself or trusted people close to the writer. A teacher reads and responds to the writing only when requested to respond by the child.

Learning log: This is a personal reflection of what one knows, has learned or would like to learn. It is written for oneself or trusted people close to the writer. A learning log serves to help the writer think and learn. A teacher might respond to the ideas presented but not address the mechanics of writing.

Learning process: Within the movement education approach children develop skills and gain an understanding of movement through: exploration, selection, repetition and polish (Kirchner, Cunningham, Warrell, 1978; Warrell, 1985). First, children explore a variety of movements in response to a given movement task. They explore the movement in relation to the elements of: time, weight, space and flow. Second, they select those movements they wish to practise, often combining them into a sequence. Third, they practise the individual actions repeatedly so that they blend and flow smoothly. Finally, repeated practise results in a polished movement or sequence.

Limitations teaching method: The teacher provides movement problems or challenges that can be solved in a variety of ways but limit the activity or movement in some way (Kirchner, 1989). This method permits and encourages children to work at their own level of ability within a given framework. It is also known as problem-solving or guided

discovery.

Mechanics of writing: This refers to the conventions of written language including: punctuation, capitalization, spelling, poetry or paragraph structure. Attention to the mechanics of writing occurs during the last stage of drafting.

Movement analysis: A description of the movement principles, originally proposed by Rudolf Laban, including the concepts of: body awareness, space awareness, the qualities of movement and the relationship of the body to other performers and/or apparatus (Blatt and Cunningham, 1981).

Mini-workshop: A short period (usually ten to fifteen minutes) of instruction offered by the teacher relating to some element of effective writing or the mechanics of writing (i.e. spelling, punctuation, capitalization, word omission or grammar) (Atwell, 1990; Calkins, 1986; Graves, 1991). This might involve a small group of students or the entire class.

Motor fitness: The ability to move at one's optimum level with: co-ordination, speed, agility, power and balance (Warrell, 1985).

Movement education: The teaching of physical education based upon Laban's analysis of movement which allows children to progress at their own rate (Blatt and Cunningham, 1981; Warrell, 1985). Through a study of movement problems within a given theme (e.g. travel, roll, balance), children become involved mentally and physically learning more about what their bodies can do, how their bodies can move, where their bodies can move and the possible relationships with partners, groups or apparatus.

Physical education: The learning process that contributes to a child's social and emotional development, social responsibility, physical development, intellectual development, and aesthetic and artistic development through the medium of movement and physical activity. This includes the teaching of: games, gymnastics, dance, outdoor pursuits and aquatics where facilities permit.

Physical fitness: The ability to perform physically at one's optimum level in the areas of: muscular strength, muscular endurance, cardiovascular endurance and flexibility (Warrell 1985).

Presentation: The sharing of one's writing with an audience. This involves oral reading, a static display or drama.

Pre-writing: Also known as rehearsal, the writer generates ideas for writing. Ideas can be formulated when: engaged in an activity, talking, brainstorming, observing or reading.

Proof-reading: The writer attends to the mechanics of writing. He or she checks for the correct spelling, punctuation, capitalization, poetry and paragraph structure, or word omission. Proof-reading occurs when the final draft has been completed.

Published writing: A copy of the writer's best work which is shared with an audience. For late primary and intermediate students, published writing contains the courtesies of correct spelling, punctuation, capitalization and grammar (Atwell, 1990; Calkins, 1986).

Transactional writing: Writing which aims to inform, persuade or instruct an audience in a clear, concise manner (Britton et al., 1975). This includes: the writing of definitions or explanations, essays, term papers, lab reports or book reviews.

Visualization: The teacher combines relaxation techniques with an oral narrative to help writers create mental pictures of real or imaginary experiences. Visualization helps the writer to activate prior knowledge and strengthen

comprehension.

Writing conference: An interaction of the writer with a teacher or peer that helps the writer discover, clarify or refine what he or she wants to say (Atwell, 1990; Calkins, 1986; Graves, 1991). Conferencing involves active listening, a sincere response from the listener and the asking of questions which helps the writer to interact with the work in progress.

Writing process: The act of composing one's ideas and thoughts into meaning. This process involves the inseparable and blended elements of: prewriting or rehearsing, drafting, editing or revising, proof-reading, publishing and presenting.

CHAPTER II

**WHAT TYPES OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION
EXPERIENCES PROVIDE A CONTEXT FOR WRITING?**

Teachers require an understanding of physical education beyond physical training and the traditional game, gymnastic and dance skills to provide experiences that contain a rich and varied context for writing. Lessons that encompass a child's body, mind and spirit require the teacher to have a full understanding of movement and the stages of child growth and development. As well, teachers require considerable training and skill in observation. The teacher who understands that early primary children tire easily and recover quickly or that upper intermediate children sometimes experience periods of poor co-ordination and awkwardness selects tasks and plans lessons accordingly. The teacher with a well developed sense of observation knows when a task is too easy or too difficult for a child or when a child is ready for partner or group work.

This study incorporates the teaching of physical education based upon Rudolf Laban's principles for the analysis of movement. While Laban's work concerned itself primarily with dance his ideas also translate effectively to the teaching of gymnastics and games. "An important first step in learning about movement is to understand how to describe body actions with a consistent vocabulary" (Blatt

and Cunningham, 1983, p. 15). Laban's framework for the analysis of movement helps teachers to describe body actions and the effort elements associated with movement. It provides a vocabulary that facilitates the presentation of meaningful problem-solving situations so that children can progress at their own rate of development. It assists teachers with the observation and guidance of movement so that children learn to understand their full physical capabilities. Most importantly, it allows for the planning of physical education lessons using a variety of stimuli including language, literature and music.

Laban's four basic categories include:

1. Body Awareness - An understanding of what the body can do.
2. Space Awareness-An understanding of where the body can move.
3. Qualities of Movement - An understanding of how the body can move.
4. Relationships - An understanding of the possible partner, group or apparatus work related to the movement.

Body awareness concerns itself with body actions. A major goal in the early stages of movement is to help children express themselves confidently through their own movements. Laban (1975) recommends that we first introduce children to movement through gross body actions that evolve

naturally from their movement such as: running, jumping, leaping, twisting and turning. He observed that children initially react to stimuli rather than imitate; hence teachers should guide children with suggestions rather than ask them to copy or conform to some adult standard of movement. "In the early stages there is always a danger of losing children's spontaneity by over-correction, and allowing self-consciousness to creep in as a result of superimposing adult conceptions of movement" (p. 21). Correction and formal guidance take place when children feel secure in their movement and fully understand the significance of what is expected of them.

The more subtle aspects of control relating to the use of space, weight, time and flow demand further refinement of movement. An awareness of space involves the use of personal or general space; the use of directions - forwards, backwards, sideways and diagonal; and the use of pathways - curved, straight and zig-zag. Space awareness also involves the use of different levels - high, medium and low. Prior to introducing children to directional movement and pathways they require plenty of opportunity to use the space imaginatively.

How the body moves gives expression to movement. The qualities of movement are explored through the elements of time, weight and flow. The time element reveals itself in the contrast of quick and sudden movements or slow and

sustained movements. The weight or effort factor relates to the amount of force involved in an action. The tension might be firm and strong or light and delicate. Laban (1975) explains: "Dance movements should be evolved from the strong, direct, quick type of effort; light sustained movements develop naturally later" (p. 21). The final element relating to the quality of movement concerns the flow of movement. It may be free flowing, smooth and continuous or bound, stopping and jerky.

Relationships involve working with a partner, a group or apparatus. Before introducing children to partner and group work they require an opportunity to become familiar with their own body movements. Later they can work together matching movements in unison, following a leader simultaneously, responding successively such as a question/answer response, mirroring each others' actions or contrasting movements. Laban (1975) explains that children do not develop the urge to imitate until the later stage of development:

The later stage in an infant's development includes the urge to imitate, so that the teacher can now give the child opportunities of watching others and immediately performing what has been observed, thus developing the sense of movement observation and an increasing consciousness of action at the same time. (p.21)

Kirchner, Cunningham and Warrell (1978) describe a learning process that bridges Laban's work and allows the teaching of physical education to become an extension of the

classroom where thoughtful learning takes place through careful guidance. The four stages described in the solving of movement problems include:

1. Exploration and Discovery
2. Selection
3. Repetition
4. Polish (p. 38).

Physical education classes should provide opportunity for each component of this learning process. In the beginning children require opportunities to explore their own ideas in response to a movement problem. "Exploration and experimentation provide the foundation for building self-confidence and developing skill" (Warrell, 1985, p. 25). Selection, the stage following experimentation, involves the children selecting those actions most appropriate to interpret the movement problem and linking them together to form a movement sentence, sequence or dance. Through questions and student demonstration the teacher guides the learning. The children work to make each individual action blend smoothly with the one that follows. Repetition or practice comprises the third essential component of the learning process. Repeating the selected actions many times helps the children to improve the quality of the movement. Whereas with young children practice may be relatively short within a single lesson, older children may take several lessons to complete a movement composition or learn a skill.

Although learning at the primary level focuses upon exploration and experimentation, the danger exists that teachers, who lack experience and skill with careful observation or are so impressed with creativity, will neglect to foster either skill, quality or an understanding of movement concepts. "Problem-solving, to be a valid part of the teaching learning environment must lead systematically to insight and skill" (Bean, 1985, p. 22). Children with movement experience should move with confidence and be expected to strive for polished work.

The most memorable physical education experiences for myself and the children involved the interpretation of literature with movement, without curricular barriers between the reading, writing, listening and speaking. To integrate language and movement effectively teachers require knowledge of the principles of movement. As well, they require an understanding of how to select stories or poems for movement interpretation. Any story or poem selected must include rich movement vocabulary or present vivid images for movement interpretation. The literature must provide enough depth of emotion or ideas to sustain expression in movement and allow children to expand their movement vocabulary, otherwise they will quickly lose interest.

When interpreting a story or poem, it is **not enough** to simply ask children to "**be**" the witch or monster. This results in mere imitative actions and restricted movement.

Children must be taken beyond the superficial experience of moving like an elephant by stomping their feet on the floor while using one hand for a trunk and the other for a tail. They require opportunities to discover their full range of body movements and, in this example, to explore all different ways of moving while learning about weight and heaviness and how this relates to strength and lightness.

Very young children love the rhythm and repetition of nursery rhymes. It is natural and valuable, both in language and movement, and for this reason provides a logical place to start. The printed word takes on special meaning once children have had an opportunity to explore rhymes through movement.

This short, simple rhyme delighted the primary children, elicited a rich movement response and provided an opportunity for the children to write their own rhymes.

Frogs jump
Caterpillars hump

Worms wiggle
Bugs jiggle

Rabbits hop
Horses clop

Snakes slide
Sea-gulls glide

Mice creep
Deer leap

Puppies bounce
Kittens pounce

Lions stalk -
But -
I walk!

From Tiny verses for children
Evelyn Beyer

The poem served not only as an opportunity to explore such basic locomotor skills as walking, hopping, creeping and leaping, but also as a stimulus to broaden the children's movement experiences and have fun with some of the less familiar actions such as wiggling, jiggling, pouncing and stalking.

A first step in presenting stories or poems for movement involves familiarizing children with the theme or mood of the piece. Since poetry, like music, is an aural art, children require opportunities to listen to it prior to encountering it in print. After reading this poem to the children and allowing them to react to it, I provided further opportunity for them to explore the rhythm and mood through choral reading. Forester and Reinhart (1989) explain that choral reading, like expressive movement, helps children to forget themselves and become deeply immersed in the experience. "Unison reading [also known as choral reading or echo reading] has all the fun and good feelings of a sing-along.... The safety of participating in relative anonymity engenders feelings of self-confidence and eagerness to learn even more about reading" (p. 48).

Following discussion and several readings of the poem, the children were ready to analyze it for our work in the

gymnasium. They easily extracted the action words (e.g. jump, hump, wiggle, jiggle, hop, clop) which I recorded on the board under the category - "What the Body Can Do." Questions such as: "How would a puppy's bouncing action differ from a kitten's pouncing action?" or "Would a frog use the same pathway as a worm?" delighted the children and generated spontaneous activity as they physically attempted to demonstrate the difference in meaning. Paul's comment, frequently expressed by other children in such situations: "I can't really explain it, but I can show you," reinforces the significance of physical involvement. Becoming physically involved with the vocabulary helped the children to internalize meanings and understand the range of meaning associated with a word. Perhaps the single most important proposition derived from Piaget's work for educators in the classroom is that children learn best from concrete experiences. Piaget (1970) states: "Knowledge is derived from action. To learn an object is to act on it and transform it" (p. 29).

Under the category "How the Body Can Move," the children suggested words such as: lightly, flexible, heavy and strong. High in the air contrasting with low to the ground and straight pathways versus curved pathways were some of phrases identified under the category, "Where the Body Can Move." Suggested "Relationships" included partners, matching sequences and contrasting sequences.

Once the children analyzed Evelyn Beyer's poem for the what, where, how and appropriate relationships, they were then ready to move into the gymnasium. Each stanza provided the thematic content for an entire movement lesson. They quickly demonstrated the distinction between bounce and pounce and learned the meaning of an unfamiliar word such as "stalk."

Exploring the image "Rabbits hop," the children distinguished hopping low to the ground using short, quick steps with hopping high in the air using long, slower steps. They hopped for distance staying low to the ground, then tried bounding high in the air and landing low to the ground. They learned to land with resilience by contacting the floor on the balls of their feet and giving in the ankles, knees and hips. Investigating the line, "Horses clop," the children explored all different ways of galloping: varying their step, speed and pathway.

The two lines provided an opportunity to introduce matching sequence work to the early primary students and contrasting sequence work to the older primary students. A simple example of the latter involved one child hopping low to the ground, two feet to two feet using a straight pathway, while the other child galloped high in the air one foot in front of the other, using a curved pathway. Another interpretation involved one child hopping low to the ground in a straight pathway, while the partner contrasted the

action by galloping high in the air curving in and around him. In yet another example, the contrasting sequence became a race as the child hopping tried to escape from the child galloping.

Following the physical experience the children were encouraged to write their own poems depicting their experience in the gymnasium or an idea arising from the experience. The poem and movement vocabulary were prominently displayed throughout the classroom. Dawn, a third year primary student, established her own identity with the poem:

jumping
humping
jiggling
but I am walking

wiggling
hopping
clopping
but I am walking

stalking
bouncing
pouncing
but I am walking

creeping
leaping
sliding
but I am walking

Louisa, a fourth year primary student, humorously identified her favourite action in this first draft:

This is a story about a worm who wiggles all day,
He wiggles in the dirt,
And he wiggles in driveways,
He wiggles in the grass,
And he wiggles on my desk,

The rest of the time he just sleeps like a log,
I'm sure glad he doesn't hop like a frog.

While the children's writing resulting from our work with this poem expressed similar, simple ideas and rhyme scheme, it was their first reading and writing experience with me. Valerie Moore (1981) explains: "The more poems they are involved with, exposed to, the more they are moved to experiment with their own rhythm and rhymes, and their own creative sources" (p. 36).

After devoting several classroom lessons to the poem and eight lessons in the gymnasium I questioned whether I had spent too much time with such a simple rhyme. My anxiety quickly subsided when Matthew, three days following our final sequence work, inquired: "Aren't we going to do frogs jump anymore?" Others quickly joined him. On another occasion when supervising on the playground a group of fourth year primary children, bubbling with excitement, chanted the poem at me from behind a tree. They had quite naturally memorized the poem and took great delight in reciting it. Allison left this charming note for me following our work in the classroom: "A rhyme or tune makes learning more fun."

The next poem studied with a group of first and second year primary children served as demonstration lessons for the classroom teacher. It resulted in spontaneous movement right in the classroom.

Like a leaf or a feather
in the windy windy weather

we whirl around
and twirl around
and all sink down together.

In J. Boorman Dance and language
experiences with children
Anonymous

When reading the poem to the children they automatically interpreted each line with movement. While seated on the floor they rotated from their waist or swayed from side to side, with their hands fluttering in the air. Margaret Atwood stresses that the first step in helping children to enjoy literature involves providing opportunity for them to recite words, chants or rhymes while keeping time - pounding the table, clapping their hands, stamping their feet or using percussion instruments. When pausing for the children to share the pictures they had formed in their minds during the reading of the poem, I was fascinated to hear Britt-Lise and Matthew recall images from "The Nutcracker."

I quickly invited the children to read the poem and interpret the actions while standing up. The more capable readers modelled the reading while the emergent readers followed along. First we paused after each line to allow the children plenty of opportunity to repeat the action. Then I displayed the phrases in a pocket chart and we recited the same line over and over again while they interpreted the action (e.g. we whirl around, we whirl around, we whirl around; and twirl around, twirl around, twirl around). Through the kinaesthetic sense the children learned to speak

the words "whirl" quickly and forcefully, "twirl" lightly and smoothly, and "sink" slowly and softly. The children collapsed in the middle of the room exhausted after reading and rereading the poem many different ways with accompanying actions. Leaving the classroom this day I sensed a feeling of satisfaction from all the children - they had worked hard.

In the gymnasium the next day the children worked to bring the literal interpretation of the poem closer to an artistic expression. The classroom teacher and I watched in awe as the children moved without inhibition to develop the theme of whirling, twirling and sinking. They whirled high in the air on their toes and low to the ground on their buttocks. They explored twirling on two feet; on one foot, then the other foot; and from one foot to the other foot. Twirling caused some of the children to feel dizzy so I simply asked them to rest until they were ready to start again. It was fascinating to observe their speedy recovery rates. Focussing on the soft, delicate feel and light weight of a feather helped the children to land "without a sound." As they explored sinking to the ground, while leading with different parts of their bodies, we concentrated on the smooth, continuous flow of movement.

The children eagerly worked with a partner to combine their best ideas into a dance. While Matthew twirled on his buttocks and slowly let his head bring him to a resting position on the ground, Brendon twirled high above him on his

toes, then let his hands lead him to the ground resting over Matthew. Jennifer and Kimberly wove in and out of each other then joined hands to sink to the ground together.

Returning to the classroom I asked the children if together we could write a poem about our experience in the gymnasium. Britt-Lise spoke as confidently as she danced. As she spoke, I recorded her words on the board. When she paused she required only the prompt: "What did you do next?"

We went around and around and around,
Twirling with our hands,
This way and that,
This way and that,
Softer and softer,
We landed on the ground.

The smile on this six year old's face revealed the sense of pride of a true author. Britt-Lise realized that this was her poem. The other children quickly celebrated her success. Prior to writing, we had discussed the difference between a story and a poem. The children complimented Britt-Lise on the rhythm of her words and the effective use of repetition. They also agreed that Britt-Lise's poem left them with a real picture in their minds.

Britt-Lise's poem provided inspiration for the other children to write. Brendon (age 6) eagerly returned to his desk and drafted a poem he called, "Canadian Leaf."

Arod arod
Softle folig
Don don don
Up up up
Softle twirling

(Translation: Around around
Softly falling
Down down down

Up up up
Softly twirling)

As the children wrote, Graham approached me and asked, "Do we have to write about this or can we write about something else?" These children were used to selecting their own topics for writing, and this served as a good reminder for me, even during our integrated lessons, to allow the children the flexibility of choosing a different topic. I realized that not every child would find stimulation for writing from the dance experience, every time. Boorman (1973) warns teachers not to "force the children to learn in an unnatural way, or to express themselves in an unnatural form" (p. 23). Graves (1983) emphasizes the importance of teaching children to select their own topics for writing. "With best topic," he writes, "the child exercises strongest control, establishes ownership, and with ownership, pride in the piece" (p. 21). Interestingly however, given the choice, the children almost always wrote about the dance experience. The dance experiences which elicited a strong movement response from the children also elicited a rich written response. The movement words explored in the dance often came to life in the children's writing.

During a classroom study of bears I read the story, Stubborn bear to a group of first and second year primary

children. In the gymnasium we contrasted the lumbering movements of a big, fat bear with the weak, lopping movements of the skinny bear refusing to eat while stubbornly waiting to catch a fish. Returning to the classroom Kevin enthusiastically asked if he could write his own story. I suspect the images and language used to interpret the movement in the gymnasium did not translate easily into the rhythms, repetitions and patterns of poetry. Kevin (age 6) wrote:

Wans upon a tim livd a beer. It was geting food for the winter. He cam upon a lac. He stuk his poy in the watr. he wavd his poy arawnd and pold a fish out of th watr. and then he thumpt dack to hes haws And bared it un tul sumr Agun. then he satld and fel aslep.

(Translation: Once upon a time lived a bear. It was getting food for the winter. He came upon a lake. He stuck his paw in the water. He waved his paw around and pulled a fish out of the water. And then he thumped back to his house and barred it until summer again. Then he settled and fell asleep.)

After two short months in second year primary, Kevin's choice of words, his use of conventional spelling and the risk he was willing to take with writing were impressive. While the writing does not convey direct evidence of the movement experience, the rehearsal for this story evolved from Kevin's participation in our integrated activities.

The topic of shadows fascinated the fourth year primary students and provided wonderful opportunities for a variety of movement and writing activities. The poem "Coycat" evoked a very playful response from the children.

COPYCAT

Copycat, copycat,
Shadow's a copycat!

Out in the sun
Whenever I run,
It runs.
Whenever I twirl,
It twirls.
I curl up small.
It curls up small.
I stand up tall.
It stands up tall.

Copycat, copycat,
Shadow's a copycat.

Whenever I hide,
It hides.
I spread out wide.
It spreads out wide.
I pat my head.
It pats its head.
I fall down dead.
It falls down dead.

But when I go inside to stay,
Copycat, copycat goes away!

From Don't eat spiders
Robert Heidbreder

Outdoors the children gleefully played partner shadow tag. Drew described it in his response journal: "It started out, say Tom was it, he would have to tag Sally's shadow before she was it. It was fun!" The children also experimented with mirroring and follow the leader activities: running, stopping, twirling and curling. Indoors the poem provided the impetus for students to improve the quality of their matching partner sequence work. They combined the theme of travelling while meeting and parting with that of balance and static shapes (wide, narrow, stretched and curled).

Following the first lesson outdoors we experimented with free writing. The children wrote non-stop for eight minutes on anything which came to their minds relating to this experience or the topic. The mood of the room became very serious as I too put pen to paper. The outdoor experience had provided everyone with something to write about. Most students continued to write at the end of the eight minutes.

Paul's free writing led to this poem capturing the fun of our experiences outdoors:

COPYCAT

Running, jumping and twirling,
 Oh, isn't it fun?
 Partners are shadows,
 Shadows are partners.
 Trying to get the shadow to move,
 Cm'on shadow, move!
 Run, stop,
 Run, twirl,
 Run, jump, land and twirl.

Joyce Boorman (1973) in describing her work with children, language and movement, writes: "It appears that the words which had excited the children and which had come to life for them in the dance lesson became incorporated into their writing" (p. 3).

While Jennifer (age 8) incorporates images from the playground lesson, her imagination took her a step further:

My Tricky Shadow

Shadows,
 Shadows,
 Shadows.
 Two of everything!
 Two of you,
 Two of me.

My shadow does the same things as me,
 My shadow copies me.
 I jump,
 My shadow jumps.
 I run,
 My shadow runs.
 I think my shadow likes me!
 Jump, hop, run,
 Have fun!
 Sometimes my shadow comes to school with me.
 But early in the morning,
 When the sun is not up,
 My shadow does not get up,
 Then I am lonely.

Matthew's inspiration led him beyond the movement experience:

"Hello."
 "Hello."
 "My shadow won't stop copying me."
 "My shadow won't stop copying me."
 "Stop it shadow."
 "Stop it shadow."
 "Hmmm."
 "Hmmm."
 "Stop it!"
 "Stop it!"
 "That's it, I'm going inside."
 "That's it, I'm going inside."
 So I go inside,
 And shadow goes away.

Working with these children for only one hour each day, I once again missed a wonderful opportunity to capitalize on the curiosity and fascination sparked by a particular subject studied. Our physical experiences along with the reading and writing quite naturally precipitated an interest in the scientific topic of shadows and light.

Once the children had been exposed to writing about their physical education experiences and had opportunities to share and listen to others' writing, their work in this area

frequently provided topics for writing during writers' workshop. Erika (age 10) highlights some of her experiences with movement:

Gymnastics, games, dancing too,
 All are really fun to do.
 Twirling, swirling, jumping in the air,
 Oh boy, I want a bigger dare.
 I twirl, I swirl, I jump in the air,
 I flip, I turn and land softly on my feet.
 I'm gonna' sweat from all this heat,
 I stretched my bridge,
 I curled my roll,
 And that was my goal!

Darren (age 9) shares his exuberance for some of our activities in an acrostic poem:

Physical Education

P laying Games,
 H op and jump.
 Y oung and old kids yelling,
 S kipping,
 I like P. E.
 C an we play Dr. Dodgeball?
 A wesome moves!
 L ook at me I can do a flip!

E xciting,
 D on't yell,
 U p and down, high and low,
 C limbing,
 A pparatus,
 T ie in Dr. Dodgeball,
 I nteresting footwork,
 "O h no! It's time to go!"
 "N o it's not...Oh!"

The children's successes or disappointments with gymnastic sequence work evoked a strong emotional response. Matthew (age 9) describes his frustration following a gymnastics lesson:

Running, jumping,
 Oh no,

I had a sequence,
 But it wasn't shown.
 It was great,
 It was wonderful,
 Darn! It wasn't shown.
 "Louisa, show your sequence please."

Matthew's poem prompted an important discussion on ways we could provide all children an opportunity to share without taking away too much of the valued activity time.

Louisa (age 10) celebrates her success with sequence work:

Sequence

S - is for the Super Sequence.
 E - is for Every time I made it perfect.
 Q - is for the Queen would love it!
 U - is for travelling Up, down and around.
 E - is for Everyone saw me.
 N - is for Never doing it wrong.
 C - is for, "Can I do it?"
 E - is for Everyone's watching.

During a gymnastics demonstration lesson for another teacher, the teacher spontaneously wrote his own poem on the chalkboard while I worked with his second and third year primary students on the theme of bridging and rolling. This type of shared experience provides a wonderful model for students and stimulates a dynamic energy for all participants. He wrote:

Gymnastics is so challenging
 I remember jumping from the vault and going
 into a forward roll
 Oh the excitement
 Thinking, remembering, trying, succeeding!
 Making that graceful jump,
 Holding that long balance
 Perfecting that forward roll
 Friends watching my every move
 The pride in my heart

The moment of success
Gymnastics is the best!

As this teacher wrote, the children periodically looked up from their work to see what he was doing. Observing their teacher writing enhanced the children's attention to their own task. At the completion of the gymnastics lesson he shared his poem with the children and explained how they had inspired him to write.

In the classroom he reviewed the process he had used to write his poem. Graves (1983), Murray (1989), and Smith (1988) stress the need for teachers to model writing with their students. Smith (1988) writes: "Teachers should write with their students. When teachers engage in assignments (or better yet, enterprises) with their students, the writing of everyone improves. To learn to write one must read like a writer, which requires behaving like a writer" (p. 74). Students need to hear teachers think aloud about the composing process. "If they see us write, they will see the middle of the process, the hidden ground - from the choice of topic to the final completion of the work" (Graves, 1983, p. 43).

On the board the teacher brainstormed with the children the many feelings they associated with their work on the apparatus. They also discussed the challenges they had encountered. It was not surprising to find every child had a story to tell.

Megan (age 8) expresses confidence and pride in her work:

Gymnastics

Gymnastics is exciting,
Doing my bridge,
Feeling proud,
Knowing every move.
Jumping to get on the box,
Seeing the box shake as I jump,
Feeling relieved,
Thinking I did well,
Gymnastics is so neat!

Lindsay (age 8) describes the feeling of satisfaction upon completion of a difficult task:

Gymnastics is spectacular.
Trying hard to remember the sequence,
It made me feel nervous,
People looking at me from every end,
It was challenging doing back bends
and very hard bridges.
Ashley rolling out from under me,
A big sigh of relief,
Gymnastics is fabulous.

The playful element of games also motivated many children to write. Following a study of concrete poetry, Crystal (age 12) used the form to reveal her joy in playing a simple game of tag.

1, 2 Chicken Stew!

1, 2 chicken stew,
3, 4 I want more,
5, 6 mix it with sticks,
7, 8 toss it on a plate!
9, 10 how about a hen.

1 foot, 2 foot, 3 foot hop,
4 foot, 5 foot, 6 foot, stop!

In, out,
Up, down,
Let us hang all around.

Out, in,
Down, up,
Let us hang all about.

Free play with hoops at the beginning of a games lesson inspired Erica (age 9) to draft the following story:

In Gym - Use Your Imagination

Free play with the hoops. I can't wait. Use a big, red hoop or a small, blue hoop. Use your imagination. You can imagine being in a circus seeing tigers leap through the big, red hoops or seals leap through the small, blue hoops. Oh no, where is the circus tent? "Erica, will you show your sequence?" Oh, I must have put up my hand. I must have been daydreaming. Oh no, I forgot my sequence.

In the following poem, Arthur (age 9), who still required plenty of opportunity to work on his own with a piece of apparatus, reflects his delight and absorption with a task when he was left to do so. He wrote:

Playing Ball

I can kick it,
And punch it up high,
Kick it to the top,
And let it fall.
It's falling, it's falling, it's falling fast,
I, I, I got it!

Paul's inspiration for writing followed our work in games involving the theme of throwing and catching. Upon completion of the individual, partner and small group activities, including the invention of their own games, the entire class was ready to play a game of Doctor Dodgeball. During writers' workshop Paul (age 9) wrote the following poem:

Oh no! Balls coming towards me,
 Think, Paul, Think!
 Oh! Jump, Paul, Jump.
 Jump!
 Yeah... They missed me.
 Hey why are all my teammates lying down?
 Don't tell me they won.

During my early work with a group of grade seven students I quickly became acquainted with their only interest in physical education classes and that was to play "the game" and win. In discussions with these students I discovered they had no experience with dance or creative movement, spent little time with skill development and most time playing only traditional games. To acquire meaningful writing of an integrated nature I capitalized on their interest in sports and games. Following a study and movement interpretation of the poem, "The Base Stealer" I invited the students to write about their own game experiences. This was a topic with which most of the students were familiar - they wrote easily. Graves (1983) explains: "The easiest place for any writer to begin writing ... is in writing about something you know" (p. 12). The following poems clearly reflect the interests and

attitudes of this grade seven class:

The ball comes soaring through the air,
 Turning up the slightest hair,
 You swing the bat,
 And hear the crack,
 The crowd still silent with suspense,
 Watches the ball drop short of the fence.
 As you make for second,
 The crowd slowly beckons,
 As you slide for third,
 Over all else, the umpire's voice is heard,
 He bluntly signals out,
 So you leave, though filled with many doubts.

Andrew (age 12)

Volleyball is fun,
 Spiking the ball over the net,
 It's your serve.
 Match a point,
 Sweat trickles down your face,
 The facts - You're gonna win.
 Right into the open space,
 You've won the game.

Aaron (age 12)

During physical education classes I frequently teamed my older students with younger buddy classes. One such occasion involved the fourth year primary students working with the first year primary students on a games lesson involving the theme of bouncing. Following the class the teacher explained that her children had learned far more about bouncing from their older buddies and attempted many more challenges than they ever would have during a lesson with her as the only instructor.

This time the physical education experience provided an excellent opportunity for the introduction of letter writing. The fourth year primary students corresponded with their

first year primary buddies in a most encouraging way.

May 17, 1990

Dear Amy,

I enjoyed working with you. You were learning so quickly. I liked the game we did together. It was a lot of fun! Thank you for being my partner.

Sincerely,
Erica

May 18, 1990

Dear Michael,

I really enjoyed watching you and your friends bouncing the balls in the gym. Boy, you are good. It's a lot better than I could do when I was in kindergarten. I look forward to our next class.

Yours truly,
Paul

The response log entries arising from the work of a second year / third year primary class with a fourth year primary / grade four class in dance confirm the benefits of peer tutoring. The children were asked to write about the thing they most enjoyed and the thing they least enjoyed about the dance experience. Writing makes children's thoughts visible and concrete and provides important feedback for the physical educator.

Lisa (age 8) wrote:

It was fun to work with older students. And I lerned new stuff. I liked the way Taryn and her grup styeld there dance. I didn't dislike anything.

(Translation: It was fun to work with older students. And I learned new stuff. I liked the

way Taryn and her group styled their dance. I didn't dislike anything.)

Taryn (age 9) explains:

It feels good to work with a younger kid. I liked the way I could teach them how to do a step and they could understand. There was nothing I disliked.

In summary, the physical education experiences which motivated children to write included experiences in all areas of the physical education curriculum: games, gymnastics and dance. Integrating the world of movement with the world of language, through a study of stories and poems, provided a dynamic force for writing. Challenging students to polish gymnastic sequence work, whether individual, partner or small group, and to share this with others also elicited an enthusiastic written response. The opportunity for free play activities and the playful element of games such as tag and skipping, as well as the individual, partner and small group game challenges triggered many interesting topics for writing. A strong interest in sports and traditional games inspired an important written response from the grade seven students. Finally, involving the older students in the peer tutoring of the younger students also promoted meaningful written expression. A broad based, experiential physical education program provides rich and varied opportunities for writing.

CHAPTER III

**WHAT TYPES OF WRITING EVOLVE
FROM PHYSICAL EDUCATION EXPERIENCES?**

In an effort to better understand the writing process and define the stages in the development of writing abilities, James Britton, Tony Burgess, Nancy Martin, Alex McLeod and Harold Rosen (1975) undertook an extensive study of 2,122 pieces of writing by students from sixty-five schools in their first, third, fifth and seventh years. Their research culminated with a classification of writing into three distinctive categories: expressive writing, transactional writing and poetic or creative writing. This study adapts the categories defined by Britton et al. to describe the writing which evolved from our physical education experiences.

Expressive Writing

Britton et al. (1975) describe expressive writing as "thinking aloud on paper" (p. 89). It is writing intended for the writer's own use or trusted people very close to the writer. Often it reveals as much about the speaker as it does about the topic. Expressive writing helps writers to find out: what they know, what they have learned, what they believe or even what they will write. Fulwiler and Young (1982) explain that expressive language serves as "our

primary means of personalizing knowledge" (p. 4). They also describe it as "writing to learn" (p. 5). In his essay "The argument for writing across the curriculum," Fulwiler urges the use of expressive writing in all subject areas and at all levels (Fulwiler and Young, 1986, p. 24). While expressive writing comprised only 5% of the total writing samples studied by Britton et al. (1975), the physical education classes described in this study provided many opportunities for expressive writing. It took the form of journal writing, learning log responses and personal letters.

The authors contributing to the book Roots in the sawdust (1985) distinguish between writing to learn and learning to write. Whereas the goal of learning to write involves improving the quality of written work, writing to learn focuses on better thinking and learning. Steve Pearce describes the teacher's role when children write to learn as in journal or learning log writing: "Writing to learn means accepting the value of writing that does not lead to a finished product, writing that evinces thought but does not merit the careful scrutiny which a finished piece of writing deserves" (p. 4).

Journal writing served an important function for those students I worked with in the gymnasium as they used it to express their feelings and opinions or ask questions about our work. Since the journals contained the students' private writing and explorations with ideas or words, I read and

responded only to those entries they wished to share with me. Knowing that I responded to their writing incited an enthusiastic response from the students. The written communication provided a natural forum for reading and writing and served as a wonderful vehicle for getting to know my students better. A common frustration for teachers involves finding the time to talk privately with students and showing a personal interest in each one of them. Opportunities for response in students' journals eliminated some of this frustration for this writer.

Erika, a grade five, physically talented student, when reflecting upon her interests and needs during physical education classes, caused me to do my own reflection and re-evaluate the music I had chosen for a Halloween creative dance unit. She wrote:

October 29, 1992

Dear Ms. Sahli,

What I like in gym is games and dancing. The thing I don't like about dancing is the Monster Mash because I think it is a little babyish and it doesn't have anything to do with hard movements. I like challenging stuff! I'd like to suggest a game and I want better music. PLEASE!

Kimberly, one of Erika's best friends in grade five, expressed similar sentiments in her journal entry:

October 29, 1992

Ms. Sahli are we going to play volleyball? I like playing tag games. Can we get some better music for dancing?

The draft document of The intermediate program:

Foundations (1992) stresses the need for teachers to promote "personal integration" and to help students make connections with their experiences. It suggests that "involving students in some aspect of curriculum decision making may enhance perceived relevance" (p. 98). Journal writing served not only as a way of involving students in some of the decision making related to physical education activities, but it also provided another avenue for me to explain the reasons for choosing or not including a particular activity.

In Erika's journal I responded:

I'm sorry you're not enjoying the music. Would you like to help me find something more suitable after school?

Writing a satisfying response to Kimberly's first question presented more of a challenge; however, she appeared satisfied with the reply:

Kimberly,

Most students, especially the grade fours, are still learning to throw and catch a ball and do not yet seem ready to learn how to bump, volley or serve. We will play modified games such as blanket volleyball or throw and catch volleyball.

I'm glad you're enjoying the tag games. You look fit when you're playing.

Erika also mentioned that she'd like better music. Can the three of us meet after school to listen to my tape?

Mallory, a grade four student, explores her feelings about our work in physical education. She wrote:

October 28, 1992

In P.E. I mostly enjoy gymnastics because I'm interested in it. I think gymnastics is easy. I don't like dancing because it's too hard. Dancing I'm not good at.

Mallory required reassurance that she could be successful in dance. Unlike Erika and Kimberly, creative dance appeared to be a new experience for Mallory, I responded:

Mallory,

You're doing just fine with dance. You are able to keep time to the music and, with practice, I'm sure you'll soon feel more comfortable making up your own routines.

Students utilized a learning log to reflect upon or evaluate what they had done or learned and to set goals for themselves. When asked to explain what she had learned following a games lesson on the theme of bouncing, Taevah, a third year primary student, wrote:

When playing with the balls I learned that you can switch hands to steer the ball.

Jennifer, a fourth year primary student in the same class, explained:

When playing with the balls I learned that it is hard to jump over a rope and bounce the ball at the same time. For that you need lots of skill.

Upon completion of the gymnastics theme of rolling, Laura, in grade four, describes what she learned:

I have learned a lot in gym. I have learned the forward, backward and sideways roll. The forward roll is very easy. All you have to do is put your head on the floor, tuck your chin in and roll. The sideways roll is very hard. Ms. Sahli says I have to curl up. I try hard but I can't do it. I just can't do it. I am very good at the backward roll. It is the same as the frontward roll only you move backward. You rock from your buttocks to your shoulders and flip both legs over your head.

Frequently I invited the children to share their learning log entries with each other. Just as student

demonstrations in the gymnasium prompted students to respond to new challenges so did the sharing of their writing. Following Laura's sharing of this response the students all reviewed the sideways safety roll. Many students volunteered to show Laura how to tuck in her knees, elbows and chin. Graves (1991) encourages the sharing of "learning stories" in the classroom:

"This is what I learned and this is how I learned it." A sense of potential is the foundation upon which teachers and children can raise expectations for each other. The more we know what we know, the more we can challenge ourselves, direct our energies, and work with renewed intensity. The more we look for a child's potential, the more we can enjoy teaching, because we see real progress at the very points we have identified. (p. 144)

Colin, in fourth year primary, explains what he must remember for baton passing during track and field relay activities:

When I run a relay I must get it right. Passing: You receive the baton with your right hand and you immediately pass it with your left hand.

The response log entry of Meghann, a grade four student, illustrates how involved the children sometimes became in their writing, and how the writing helped the children learn more about themselves. She describes what she liked best in her work with the large apparatus and what she would still like to learn:

Gymnastics is challenging and fun at the same time. Out of the box, the ropes, the climbing wall, the bars, the benches, the mats, the balance beam and the ladder my favourite is the box. I don't know why I just like it. I'm not very good at gymnastics but I still like it. Some things I

want to be able to do are cartwheels, headstands, handstands and be able to climb to the top of the ropes. But I know I'll never be able to do any of that stuff. The best I'll be able to do is climb to the middle of the ropes and do summersaults instead of cartwheels and handstands and stand on my feet instead of my hands or head. But I still like gymnastics.

Gymnastics is hard. It takes a long time to build the strength to climb a rope. It's been five years and I still can't do it. But I still like gymnastics.

I've just read this over and I'm wondering why I like gymnastics.

On the one hand, the writing of this response helped Meghann to reach a better understanding of what she wanted to accomplish with what was realistic. On the other hand, her response forced me to examine further ways to help all children develop the upper body strength necessary to be successful with such tasks.

Returning to the classroom after our work on the large apparatus at the beginning of the week, my third and fourth year primary students set their own goals for the rest of the week. Brian, in fourth year primary, describes his challenge:

My goal is to get better at going down the ropes hand under hand.

Chad, also in fourth year primary, wrote:

I'd like to learn to do a roll in the middle of the ropes. I will learn this by watching others.

In fact, Chad accomplished his goal before the end of the next period, without assistance from me.

Frank Smith (1988), in Joining the literary club,

stresses the need for meaningful and relevant reading and writing opportunities. Our work in the gymnasium with buddy classes resulted in many wonderful opportunities for written communication between two classes. Following one of our combined classes I encouraged the fourth year primary students to write letters to their first year primary buddies. The students quickly learned the proper format for writing a friendly letter in this natural context. Smith (1988) encourages this type of "incidental" learning. He explains: "Learning about language is not the primary aim, but rather the by-product of some other activity" (p. 7).

Louise and Stephen wrote delightful letters of encouragement to their buddies.

May 17, 1990

Dear Kindergarten Students,

I was really impressed by the way you were bouncing the balls. The tricks you learned with the balls like bouncing the ball and turning around, putting your leg over the ball, rolling the ball down your back and bouncing it were really neat. I hope to work with you again in gym.

Sincerely,
Louise

May 17, 1990

Dear Kindergarten Class,

I was amazed at how you learned so fast. You were doing tricks before I knew it. I think that very, very, very soon all of you will be doing tricks with the balls.

Sincerely,
Stephen

Stephen Smith (1991) encourages educators to learn more about the teaching of physical education by observing children on the playground and carefully listening to the language they use (pp. 46, 47). Further to this, this study indicates that the physical educator also has much to learn from children's writing. Writing provides a permanent record of children's thoughts and language. Both Louise and Stephen refer to their buddies as learning new "tricks". Neither students perceived their buddies as learning new skills. Smith explains that by listening to the children, "we may come to appreciate, for instance, the tricks that tend to become the focal point of a young child's activity. We see how tricks are learned and how they impinge upon a child's own sense of physical accomplishment" (p. 47). He continues: "In place of a technical language of skill development, I think we can develop a more child-oriented conceptualization of how physical competence can be taught" (p. 47). Much of the writing included in this study supports Smith's notion that children often learn physical skills in natural "play-like" settings by observing and challenging each other to do "tricks."

Transactional Writing

The second function of language described by Britton et al. (1975) involves transactional writing used to: inform,

advise, persuade or instruct an audience. Fulwiler and Young (1982) describe transactional writing as "the language of schools" (p. 4). They lament the fact that "the further along in school children go, the less expressive writing they are asked to perform" (p. 5). Britton's study revealed that 64% of the writing samples collected involved the transactional mode. The researchers found serious implications in this figure: "The small amount of speculative writing certainly suggests that, for whatever reason, curricular aims did not include the fostering of writing that reflects independent thinking" (p. 197). In this study purposeful opportunities for transactional writing appeared less frequently than opportunities for expressive or poetic writing. While the need to assess children's learning and hold them accountable for their learning arose frequently, writing of a self-evaluative nature, as described in the expressive mode, served a more useful function.

In his book, Integration of physical education in the elementary school curriculum, James Humphrey (1990) describes the need for "purposeful and meaningful" writing opportunities for children (p. 126). In one example he writes: "Some teachers have found that it is very desirable and interesting practice to have children copy rules and regulations for various activities" (p. 126). While the display of such written material might promote purposeful reading, the copying of materials suggests a mechanical

operation. The following examples attempt to describe a more valuable approach to writing in the transactional mode.

The building of a strong foundation for the safe use of apparatus, when working in the gymnasium or on the playground, serves as an important goal of the early primary physical education program. In an effort to investigate the safety rules the first and second year primary students had learned, following an introduction to the large apparatus, the children were asked to illustrate with a picture and/or words one safety rule they had practised when working on the equipment. After a display and class review of each child's work I felt satisfied that they understood the routines. Samples of the writing from the second year primary children follow:

Wate for the uthr people to get oof befor you get on.

(Translation: Wait for the other people to get off before you get on.)

Amy (age 6)

In the gym I wus on the rops. I went to the top, and Kam down hand under hand and wen you get down you do a safty roll.

(Translation: In the gym I was on the ropes. I went to the top and came down hand under hand. And when you get down you do a safety roll.)

Jennifer (age 6)

Woch out four uther people jump land and rol.

(Translation: Watch out for other people. Jump, land and roll.)

Sarah (age 6)

Another experience resulting in the use of transactional writing occurred following the invention of throwing and catching games by my fourth year primary / grade four class. Their task involved writing a description of the game they had invented so that other groups might be able to try it. Laura wrote:

My group and I played a game called pass the bean bag. This is how you play it. You all stand in a circle. You get one bean bag and pretend it is a hot patato. You pass it around in the circle from one person to the next. If you get caught holding the bean bag too long, you will get burned. That's how you keep the bean bag moving.

Once the children had written up their games they met in small groups to share their writing. Each group selected at least one of the games, described by another group, to play the following period.

On another occasion I asked this group of students to describe for me and their classmates the game they most enjoyed playing during the second term and why they enjoyed it. During a mini writing workshop the children examined ways to sequence their ideas and include all details so that their classmates could actually read the explanation and play the game, without any further verbal instructions. Jenny, a grade four student, chose to use numbers rather than sequential words (e.g. first, second, third) to describe the game she most enjoyed. She wrote:

I like games where you have fun so I will tell you about one. One of my favourite games is Dr. Dodgeball because you can work in groups. I like it when you dodge the ball. I like to play it

because it's not only fun it's an exciting game. Now I will tell you how to play:

- 1) You split up in two teams.
- 2) Get six balls and give three balls to each team.
- 3) You have to hit the other team players below the waist.
- 4) When you're hit you have to drop to the floor.
- 5) The doctor has to drag you to the medical room corner.
- 6) Then you are free.
- 7) The first team to get all players to the ground wins.

Now you know how to play.

When children wrote to inform or explain something to their peers or the teacher, they seldom personalized the writing or took risks; consequently writing for themselves, in the expressive mode, served a more useful purpose in helping them to understand the physical experience or their physical development. While children need to learn to summarize and report information accurately, the transactional writing in this study served the least satisfying function in helping children to learn more about themselves or physical education. The most meaningful writing in the transactional mode found in this study involved the sharing of the invented games. In this case, the sharing provided a genuine purpose for writing and reading.

Poetic or Creative Writing

Contrary to the study of Britton et al. where poetic writing comprised only 18% of the total writing samples, the

dominant mode of expression identified in this study involves poetic or creative writing. "Poetic writing uses language as an art medium" (Britton et al., 1975, p. 90). Words are used aesthetically to create a certain mood or effect such as in poetry, drama or fiction. Poetic writing is written for one's own pleasure and the pleasure of others and not as a means to some other end. Sometimes the physical education experiences promoted poetic writing of a highly emotional nature, at other times the experiences inspired a sensory response, and still other times the experiences incited writing of a humorous nature.

At the beginning of each new year I encourage the children to tell their stories about previous physical education classes and experiences - their favourite as well as most dreaded times. Following the oral sharing of some of these stories, Adrijana, a fourth year primary, E.S.L. student, new to our school, wrote her own story. It captures her excitement for our adventure playground equipment and, I suspect, our daily physical education program.

I Love Running and Jumping

Once upon a time there was a little girl who liked to run and jump. One day the little girl had to go to school but she was not allowed to run and jump. She begged the principal so she could run and jump but he said no. The girl hated everyone. At the end of the year the girl got a new school. The new school has a playground and lots of equipment to play, run and jump. The girl likes everyone in the school, even the principal.

When the children heard stories about physical education

experiences or read stories then interpreted the movements, they often wrote stories. On the other hand, when the children worked in the gymnasium using word pictures or the rich movement images or vocabulary of poetry, the creative writing often resulted in poetry. The rhythm, repetition and patterns involved in creating movement sequences translated well into the language of poetry.

The use of the large apparatus in the gymnasium presented an exciting challenge for most students and resulted in poetic writing revealing a very strong inner voice. Soon (grade 4) describes her initial apprehension then courage in jumping over the box:

A Box Is Chasing Me

A box is chasing me,
 I can't stop,
 So I will close my eyes,
 Rats!
 He ran over me,
 I will do it again,
 The box is chasing me again,
 What can I do?
 Oh no!
 He's getting faster.
 I know,
 I will jump over him.
 Did I do it?
 Yes, I did it!
 Horray for me!
 The box sure got a lesson.

Aileen (grade 5) in this piece of writing, appears to overcome her sense of fear when working on the large apparatus.

Climbing the wall,
 Feeling so small,

Trembling, frightened that I will fall,
Daringly doing a sequence across the beam,
It isn't as bad as it really seems.

The writing of Tristane and Katie reveals a strong sense of pride in the successful handling of risk-taking activities on the apparatus.

Climb up the climbing wall,
Then do a swift turn on the box,
Do an interesting roll on a mat,
Flip and twirl over the bars,
Even though I'm scared,
I dare to do a flip!
The world is turning upside down,
And then I land perfectly!
I climb up the ropes,
I put hand over hand,
I am being daring and risky,
But I do it anyway.

Tristane (grade 4)

Gymnastics

Risky, daring,
Outrageous fun,
I have now accomplished it and I'm done.
The dangerous jumps, the freaky flips,
I never gave up,
I tried my best.
Practise, Practise,
It makes me feel proud,
That since I practised,
I did it well.
I feel great,
I feel secure.

Katie (grade 4)

During mini writing workshops I often shared with the children models of different writing forms to provide them with a broader base to express their own ideas. "When we invite children to choose their form, voice and audience as well as their subject, we give them ownership and

responsibility for their writing. This transforms writing from an assigned task to a personal project" (Calkins, 1986, p. 6). As the children experimented with the writing forms during writers' workshop they frequently drew upon their physical education experiences for their choice of topic.

Brian, fourth year primary, uses the topic "Dance" to write his own simile:

Dance is like a magic hand,
It pulls you on your feet,
And makes you move to the beat.

Taevah, third year primary, inspired by Brian's poem, wrote her "comparison" poem on the same topic:

Dance is like a flying bird,
It makes me feel free.
When I hear the music beat,
I want to dance and move my feet.

Carly, fourth year primary, uses her experience on the trestle to write a cinquain poem:

Trestle
Super, Awesome,
Flipping, Twirling, Spinning,
The trestle is really fun,
The Bars

Jennifer, fourth year primary, chooses the cinquain structure to share her enthusiasm and commitment for learning the "Long Jump":

Long Jump
Superb, thrilling
Running, flying, jumping
Try your very best to win
Swanguard

Susie, grade four, uses the haiku form to write her poem "Frisbees" following our work outdoors:

Flying, spinning through the air
 Watch them soar high above
 Colourful saucers.

Michael, grade seven, uses rhyming couplets to write his humorous, yet serious, interpretation of "Fitness Rules."

If you want more muscle,
 Don't sit down - get up and hustle.
 Don't sit still like a log,
 Get right up and run or jog.
 Don't relax in your shorts,
 Hurry up and join some sports.
 Don't just sit around with your date,
 Bring him or her around to lift some weights,
 Don't lie around to fry in the sun,
 Get up and get a tan on the run.
 If the weather's not nice, don't refrain,
 Get out and dance in the rain.
 If it's flexibility you want to catch,
 Don't just yawn, get down and stretch.
 If you eat junk food, you'll have weight to fight,
 You'll feel better if you eat right.
 Follow these rules accordingly,
 And live your life more happily!

Whether the children wrote to learn as in their journal or learning log responses or learned to write while developing their poetic responses, the writing evolved quite naturally from their physical education experiences. When they explored their feelings or opinions about our work in physical education or assessed what they had learned and still wanted to learn, they used expressive language. It developed as an extension of their speech and allowed for the unstructured, free flow of thoughts. The children's expressive writing revealed sincerity and a genuine sense of themselves. Often I responded to their learning log and journal responses prompting an ongoing dialogue. The expressive writing promoted thinking and learning about the

physical experience. The poetic writing, on the other hand, focussed on the effective use of language. The children used the movement vocabulary for its own sake to entertain an audience rather than to communicate with themselves or the teacher. They worked hard arranging the movement ideas and vocabulary to create a formal pattern. Often they revised their writing several times to achieve a successful outcome. Here, the physical experience promoted thinking and learning about writing. The most commonly expressed form of poetic writing involved poetry. It appears the children more easily conveyed their strong emotional or sensory response to the movement experience in poetry than in prose. Just as the children invented patterns, repeated and practised the patterns to create free flowing movement sequences, so they translated the language of movement to create the repetitive phrases, patterns and rhythms of poetry. The two worlds, the world of writing and the world of physical experiences, became interdependent and interrelated.

CHAPTER IV

**HOW DOES WRITING HELP CHILDREN TO REINFORCE,
CLARIFY OR EXTEND THE PHYSICAL EXPERIENCE?**

Considerable research exists supporting writing across the curriculum, however this relates predominantly to writing in the Language Arts and English curricula or writing in the content areas of Social Studies, Mathematics and Science (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1986; Graves, 1985; Graves, 1991; Hansen, Newkirk and Graves, 1985; Applebee and Langer, 1987). Limited research exists describing writing in the area of Physical Education. Boorman (1976) and Blatt and Cunningham (1981) describe the integration of stories, poems and word pictures with expressive movement, but this relates entirely to creative dance and creative writing. While the authors explain that the movement vocabulary used in the dance experiences frequently appeared in the children's writing [e.g. "It appears that the words which had excited the children and which had come to life for them in the dance lessons became incorporated into their writing" (Boorman, 1976, p. 3)], the writing is viewed as an extension of the physical experience primarily in an aesthetic context. The present study presents children's writing in all three areas of the physical education curriculum (i.e. games, gymnastics and dance) and demonstrates not only how writing in the expressive and transactional mode helped children to learn more about the physical experience, but also how the

children's poetic writing contributed to this.

Langer and Applebee (1987) describe writing activities, designed by teachers in the content areas, to serve three primary functions: "(1) to gain relevant knowledge and experience in preparing for new activities; (2) to review and consolidate what is known or has been learned; and (3) to reformulate and extend ideas and experiences" (p. 136). Studies of writing in the content areas (Applebee and Langer, 1987; Britton et al., 1975; Fulwiler and Young, 1982; Fulwiler and Young, 1986) indicate that writing to learn occurs most frequently in the context of expressive and transactional writing. This study, however, also includes poetic or creative writing which, in some cases, developed naturally during writers' workshop, without a predetermined plan of the teacher. This chapter considers the ways the three forms of writing served to reinforce, clarify or extend movement experiences for children.

Reinforcing the Physical Experience

The effective teaching and learning of physical education concepts and skills when using a movement education approach involves the building of an extensive movement vocabulary for both the teacher and the students. The vocabulary provides a framework for helping students to explore movement problems in a variety of ways. In

describing effective teaching practices, Murray and Wall (1989) explain: "Our aim is to encourage versatile movement by increasing students' movement vocabularies and their ability to select appropriate motor responses to the challenges set " (p. 71). The following examples demonstrate how poetic writing helps to reinforce the movement vocabularies introduced during physical education classes.

To avoid the narrow interpretation of travelling on the large apparatus using the limited space words of up, along, and down, words such as "over," "under," "around," and "through" stimulate imaginative movement and encourage children to use all body parts when travelling. The preliminary discussion, writing, then publishing and sharing of the following two poems during writers' workshop reinforced the gymnastics vocabulary introduced, for these two young writers as well as their third year primary classmates.

Going over,
 Going under,
 Going way up to the top,
 Going through too.
 I don't know about you,
 But I like travelling.
 Do you?
 I like P. E..
 Don't you?
 Going all around,
 Going through the bars,
 Slithering up the ropes like a snake,
 We climb the ropes so high.
 I hope you like climbing,
 Because I do.
 I jumped way up in the air,
 So might you, too.

I hope that when you get there,
Nobody gets hurt.

Ryan (third year primary)

We climbed over boxes,
We slipped through the bars,
We twirled on the ropes,
And slid down the benches.
I love travelling over, under,
Running around the gym.
Travelling is fun.

Darren (third year primary)

The following writing samples demonstrate not only evidence of the movement vocabulary introduced but also the teaching points that guided the children's learning. Brandon's poem "To Be A Gymnast" emphasizes two such points when working on the ropes:

Climb, climb, climb,
Hand over hand,
Higher and higher,
Do a balance at the top,
Jump down low,
Land on the balls of your feet.

Brandon (grade 4)

In the next poem, Kate consolidates her learning, both in the physical and intellectual domain; as well, she celebrates her success.

Super Sequences

Gym, gym, gym, wow,
It's so much fun.
I push off my feet
Then land on the balls of my feet and roll!
I start again and I put my weight on my hands
and do a backward roll!
Again I jump and do a forward roll!
Again we do our sequence,
Again we do it.

But finally we don't have to practice anymore
because ...
It's POLISHED!

Drew's poem seems to reveal the self-talk that children use when practising a specific skill or polishing a movement sequence. In composing his poem, he rethinks each step he used to make his sequence "perfect." Through the writing Drew makes sense of the gymnastics experience and he, too, celebrates his success.

Well Done

And stop. Freeze please.
Drew will you show your sequence?
Oh no! Do I have to show my sequence?
I almost forgot the whole thing,
I've just got to try my best,
I'm ready.
Running quickly, bending my knees
and using strength to land softly,
So far, so good.
Now I have to jump,
Pushing off my toes,
Using my hands to get height,
I succeeded that time.
O.K. this is the last easy one,
Landing,
Smoothly, carefully, softly,
That was perfect.
Oh no, I'm in trouble,
I have to roll,
It's doubtful I'm going to make it.
First, I'll tuck in my chin,
I've got to do this smooth now,
I Did It! I Did It!

Interpreting his experience in writing allows Drew to advance his understanding of the skills related to jumping, landing and rolling. Langer and Applebee (1987) explain how writing assists the learning process: "As new learnings mature, they become internalized as part of the student's own repertoire.

They move from the interpersonal setting of instruction to the inner world of knowing and remembering" (p. 144).

Clarifying the Physical Experience

Sometimes we used writing to help us clarify the movement actions and prepare for our physical education experiences in the gymnasium. An integrated study of the story The three billy goats gruff illustrates this. Following my reading of the story in the classroom, the children experimented with the movement vocabulary. They picked up the natural rhythm of the words with their feet as they chanted: clip, clip, clip, clip; clip, clop, clip, clop; clop, clop, clop. While discussing the movement possibilities for each Billy Goat, I recorded the children's ideas on the board under the categories - "What the Body Can Do," "How the Body Can Move," and "Where the Body Can Move." I then invited the children to close their eyes and visualize the Billy Goat they would most like to characterize in the gym. (e.g. Would they portray the oldest Billy Goat stomping on the bridge with huge powerful steps, or would they move cautiously like the smallest Billy Goat, starting and stopping, with lighter skipping steps? Perhaps they would interpret the movement of the middle-sized Billy Goat stepping with a more even pace at a moderate speed?)

Subsequent to the visualization activity the children

responded in their learning logs. The writing served as a lense to help the children preview their movement interpretation. Meghann wrote:

I want to be the little billy goat gruff.
I will go soft on my feet and skip.

Jennifer described the same character but anticipated the movement differently:

I'm a teeny, tiny Billy Goat.
I like to run and jump.
I move lightly on my feet.

Keil wrote:

I will be the oldest Billy Goat
Gruff. I will be strong and
use lots of weight to move.
I will move slowly.

Working in small groups of three, the children then shared their writing. I tried to ensure representation of each Billy Goat in the groups, but there were few children interested in characterizing the medium-sized Billy Goat. In the gymnasium the children explored possible movement patterns for each Billy Goat, then polished a sequence to interpret the movement of their character. Finally they worked in groups of three to dramatize the scene of the Billy Goats crossing the bridge. The visualization, writing and discussion prepared the children for the movement activities, resulting in a strong commitment to their task this day.

Sometimes we used writing to help us clarify the quality of movement. A study of the poem, "The Black Snake," resulted in wonderful interpretive reading in the classroom

but disappointing sequence work in the gymnasium. Initially the children seemed more interested in producing accompanying sound effects than focusing on the quality of movement.

The Black Snake

Black snake! Black snake!
 Curling on the ground,
 Rolled like a rubber tire,
 Ribbed and round.
 Black snake! Black Snake!
 Looped in a tree,
 Limp as a licorice whip
 Flung free.
 Black snake! Black snake!
 Curving down the lawn,
 Glides like a wave
 With its silver gone.
 Black snake! Black snake!
 Come and live with me!
 I'll feed you and I'll pet you
 And then I'll set you free

From Piping down the valleys wild
 Patricia Hubbell

In preparation for the second movement lesson I again used a visualization and writing activity. The writing seemed to help Taevah (third year primary) develop a clearer picture for her work in the gymnasium. She wrote:

I am going to tuck my toes to my back with my hands touching my toes. With them on my back I'll then roll around. I'm going to push both hands out for set you free.

Chad (fourth year primary) wrote:

I am going to try rolling, curving, gliding and flinging with my group. I'm going to move slowly.

Concerned that Chad simply copied the words from the poem, I asked him how he would fling his body. Chad clarified the action:

I will run and jump.

I did not document the children's movement to determine if, in fact, they used the movement ideas presented in their learning logs; however the seriousness with which they approached their work in the gymnasium, and consequently the quality of their sequence work during the second lesson, greatly improved from their first attempt.

Along with the writing activities preparing students for work in the gymnasium, student writing served other important functions. It became an ideal vehicle for self-evaluation, reflection and making meaning of the physical experience. Following a gymnastics sequence presentation for parents, Jenny, grade four, wrote this reflection:

Gymnastic Routines

If you've made a mistake before you polish, its so hard to stop doing the mistake. It takes about a week to polish. I was afraid that if I made a mistake the audience would laugh at me. Here is a saying that I remember: Continue if you make a mistake or get hurt, and don't let the audience know.

A permanent record of the children's thoughts also allowed them to look back and reflect upon their progress or development. At the beginning of the first term, Brian, fourth year primary, set these goals:

I need to work on changing faster.
I need to work on freezing faster.
I need to work on playing fair.

A conference with Brian at the end of the term revealed that he: (1) could still be faster at changing with "not so much

talking"; (2) was now doing "pretty good" when the teacher asked the class to freeze; and (3) was playing much fairer. He explained: "I don't argue with the rule maker. I don't say the ball didn't hit me when it did." The learning log enabled Brian to assess his progress and revise his goals. Graves (1985) states: "Writing preserves an author's knowledge, skills and thought processes, it gives children a new perspective as time passes. At the end of the year, they are often amused to look back at their more primitive efforts and proud to see how far they have come" (p. 111).

Both Derek and I celebrated his positive change in attitude toward dance when reviewing his response writing. In February he wrote:

I felt uncomfortable because I don't dance too much.

In March his response log entry read:

In gym we do folk dancing and folk dancing is fun. Folk dancing is so much fun that I do it at home. We are learning a new dance today.

Often the learning log responses helped the children to analyze and clarify the skills they were practising. Brian, fourth year primary, describes his accomplishment working on the theme of rolling in gymnastics:

I can do a backwards roll better. I'm putting my hands by my ears.

Lisa's response, third year primary, required further clarification. She wrote:

In gymnastics I learned to do a backward sholder roll and I think I'm getting better at it.

I responded:

Great to hear Lisa!
What are you doing to make it better?

Lisa then clarified:

I'm pushing as hard as I can.

Lisa had been working hard to gain enough momentum to roll over when rocking from her buttocks to her shoulders.

The writing in this section highlights learning in the physical as well as the affective domain. The children used transactional writing to clarify the movement actions for interpretation in the gymnasium or the skills they were practising. They used expressive writing to clarify their goals and assess their progress.

Extending the Physical Experience

Often our work in creative dance, using stories, poems or word pictures, provided the stimulus for the children to extend their thinking in the creative or aesthetic domain. The words which had come to life for the children in dance often translated into poetic writing. As the children explored with poetry forms to interpret their movement or sensory images they learned more about writing.

The poetic writing that followed the movement lessons for our study of the poem, "Black Snake" includes evidence of the physical experience, but the children moved far beyond this to capture their sense of wonder and curiosity with

snakes. Jennifer's poem emerged in the form of questions. She wrote:

Snake!
 How do you move snake?
 Is it hard to be a snake?
 How do you glide like you do?
 How do you slither like an S
 on the soft, silky grass?
 How do you go s s s th with your tongue?
 I want to be a snake.

The question format that Jennifer chose for the writing of her poem excited me. While reading her poem to the class as an example of a new format, I sensed a tremendous feeling of pride from Jennifer. Her facial expression seemed to say: "Did I really write that?" Murray (1989) explains: "The best writing always surprises. It surprises the writer, surprises the editor, surprises the reader. An individual voice rises off the page and speaks" (p. 114).

Meghan, fourth year primary, also experimented with the question technique. She wrote:

How do you move so quickly and quietly?
 How come you slither and not walk?
 You always look so curious.
 Are you curious?
 Please tell me snake.
 Please tell me.

Following the interpretation of a movement story using the stimulus of balloons, Amy, in second year primary, wrote her first poem.

M, I Blon! Gos with the
 tree it sells wit the wid,
 it sells, with the brese!

(Translation: My balloon goes with the tree,
It sails with the wind,
It sails with the breeze.)

Erika, a grade 4 student, inspired by a movement lesson using the same stimulus wrote this poem:

The Balloon

High Low,
Low High,
It twirled and it fluttered and it sailed by.
In the sky it balanced and bumped,
It went higher, and HIGHER AND
HIGHER AND POP!
It swayed
 Down and
 Down and
 Down and
 Down
It landed softly on the ground.

The writing of the children was as important for me to read as it was for them to write. While they learned more about themselves, the physical experience or the writing process, I learned more about their attitudes, knowledge and abilities. Often the writing helped me to improve my instruction which in turn improved the children's quality of movement.

The following poems of Louise and Katie reveal how poetic writing extended learning in the physical domain. Their writing reflects the feelings of many of their classmates at that time. Many still found the backward roll difficult to perform. The writing indicated a need and/or desire to become more proficient with the backward roll. It was a roll Louise and Katie could easily master so they were ready for some direct instruction.

Louise, fourth year primary, wrote:

Backwards Roll

Frontwards,
 Sideways,
 Oh no, here comes the toughy,
 Backward.
 "And stop ...
 Please freeze.
 Louise, will you show your sequence."
 Shucks,
 Here comes the backward roll,
 I did it,
 Yea!

Katie, fourth year primary, wrote:

It was a race in gym,
 We have to run,
 Softly and smoothly.
 The race started,
 I am running the way we are supposed to run.
 "Freeze please."
 Oh no,
 We have to do a backward roll,
 I like running better.

Besides informing me of her apprehension to perform a backward roll, Katie's poem also reminded me of her love for competition and the need to incorporate some element of this in the program. I wondered how Katie could correlate our opening activity with racing. Interestingly, Katie incorporated the teaching points "softly and smoothly" in her writing.

Children write best when they have a "real" story to tell. Writing involving a rich, personal experience evokes a strong voice from children. It was not until I invited a group of grade 6/7 students to write about their favourite sports that the boys presented an authentic voice related to

a physical experience. Jeremy, grade 6, wrote:

Soccer

The whistle sounds,
The game gets under way,
What's this, a break away?
So soon,
A shot,
A save,
Everything is O.K.!

Jeremy conveys a compelling sense of himself in this poem. When I read the poem I hear Jeremy talking and I visualize him in action on the soccer field.

The connection between physical education experiences and children's writing is perhaps best described by Erika's self-evaluation of her favourite piece of writing during the fall term. Erika, grade 4, wrote:

My favourite piece of writing this term was "Gym." My poem had a great rhythm and it is very interesting to read because of the rhythm. It kind of makes you move to the beat. I guess my rhythm is pretty catchy. I included a fun ending.

Erika's self-evaluation highlights the correlation between the language of movement and the language of poetry. Erika describes the strength of her poem in terms of "catchy rhythm" and "beat." Confident movement also conveys a sense of rhythm and beat.

The writing involved in extending the physical experience predominantly took the form of poetic writing. It allowed the children to translate their movement experience or the sensory images related to the physical activity into aesthetic expression. The strong emotions revealed in the

poetic writing allowed us to discuss the physical components relating to physical education as well as the children's attitudes and feelings.

Conclusion

The children wrote often and for a variety of purposes with successful outcomes. In evaluating their writing I found significant evidence of improved thinking, increased enjoyment of the physical experience and more effective communication. The writing experiences in which the children engaged, in collaboration with myself and their classmates, helped them to become more self-directed and critical of their work and more willing to take risks in their writing and physical endeavors. While the transactional and expressive writing helped the children to set goals and clarify their movement interpretations, feelings or attitudes about physical activity; the poetic writing served to reinforce the movement vocabulary and concepts taught as well as extend their thinking into the aesthetic domain. The predominant use of poetic writing reinforces the powerful connection between writing experiences and movement experiences. The rhythms, patterns and repetition involved in learning about movement translate into the rhythms, patterns and repetition used in the writing of poetry. The integration of writing and physical education provides children with an intrinsic link to learning.

CHAPTER V

**HOW DOES THE INTEGRATION OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION
AND WRITING REFLECT THE GOALS OF THE PRIMARY
AND INTERMEDIATE PROGRAMS?**

This study demonstrates that writing and physical education support and enhance each other contributing to the total education of the child. The writing helped the children to learn more about themselves and physical education, while physical education promoted written expression helping children to communicate and learn more about the writing process. More importantly, the study demonstrates how writing in the expressive, transactional and poetic mode helped children to reinforce, clarify and extend their learning in both curricular areas.

A focus on the goals of the Primary and Intermediate Programs articulates the educational significance of integrating writing with physical education. It also defines the powerful connection between the two curricular areas. The children's writing, integrating their physical experiences, reflects all goals of the new Primary and Intermediate Programs. The goals of the Physical Education and Language Arts English Curriculum work hand in hand with the overall goals of the Primary and Intermediate Programs to provide a framework which allows children to reach their full potential. Within the framework, just as the goals relating to games, gymnastics and dance are interdependent and

interrelated, so are the goals relating to reading, writing, listening and speaking. Furthermore, the goals of the Primary and Intermediate Programs including social and emotional development, social responsibility, aesthetic and artistic development, physical and intellectual development are interwoven.

Perhaps the best example, within this study, demonstrating the inseparable nature of the two curricular areas and the program goals was our integrated study of the Hallowe'en poem, "The Death Dance of the Whirly Gums." Wizardry and the supernatural provide an appealing topic for integration for most children at Hallowe'en, and this poem caused great excitement for this group of fourth year primary children, both in the classroom and the gymnasium.

The Death Dance of the Whirly Gums

The whirly gums came out that night,
They came to dance in the green moon's light,
They run and jump and twist and turn,
Their big red feet tramp down the fern.
And then as the midnight hour draws near,
The female whirly gums appear,
With toothless grins and pointed chins
They strike up a tune on their hammershins.
And harken now to their dreadful cry
The rattle of bones as they slowly die.
And now the music quick becomes
Their feet step to the beating drums.
With hair all wild, and beating hearts
They jerk and twist in fitful starts,
Their teeth fall out, their nails crack
As strength to dance the dancers lack.
Their tongues loll out, the temples throb
And one by one the dying mob
Sink down to death
They danced to death.

In E. Warrell Movement education
a three part workshop for early
childhood and primary teachers
Elizabeth Powell

Prior to sharing the poem with the children I displayed the title, "The Death Dance of the Whirly Gums," on the chalkboard. The children speculated possible interpretations of the poem, then illustrated with a picture what they thought a whirly gum might look like. Within the artistic realm the children experimented with the colours and textures that best interpreted their ghost-like, often grotesque, shapes and figures. We displayed the pictures throughout the classroom, then compared these to their interpretations following a reading of the poem.

A discussion of the poem led to an interpretative, choral reading by the children. They divided the poem into six natural parts allowing one part for interpretation by each group. Straight away they suggested dimming the lights and incorporating sound effects. The children shook, tapped or pounded the tambourine to accent words such as: run, jump, twist, turn or stamp and scraped their nails on the hand drum to interpret phrases such as "their teeth fall out" and "their nails crack." Culminating the artistic representation, the reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing activities, the children analyzed the poem and defined the theme: running, jumping, twisting, turning and stamping for our first lesson in the gymnasium. Charged with

energy, the children experienced some difficulty controlling their movement. As they raced about the gymnasium jumping, twisting, turning and stamping, at one point they shouted at me to turn off the lights. While this served as a temptation to halt the activity, instead I curtailed the excitement more gently by recalling the last three lines of the poem:

And one by one the dying mob
Sink down to death
They danced to death.

My head spun as we exited the gymnasium this day, but it was clear that the children loved the poem and we had experienced legitimate pandemonium. Through the movement, the children "lived" the poem. Blatt and Cunningham (1981) explain that expressive movement helps children turn "vicarious literary experiences into living ones" (p. 8).

A second lesson in the gymnasium allowed the children to refine and polish the movement vocabulary introduced on the first day. Following the lesson, the children were encouraged to write about the movement experience. The strong physical involvement evoked by the poem from each child seemed to free the children to write a personal response. Laura's poem confirmed for me that we successfully channelled the energy towards positive outcomes. She wrote:

In gym yesterday,
We twisted and turned,
The way Whirly Gums do.
I like them.
Don't you?
We jumped up high,

And turned in the air,
 The way Whirly Gums do.
 It is very hard,
 To turn in the air.
 Would you like to try it too?
 Why don't you?
 I would like to see you.
 Don't forget,
 Practice makes perfect.

When engaged in poetic writing children automatically engage in thinking. For this poem Laura brainstormed, selected, developed and organized her words and ideas to reveal the movement experience as well as a strong sense of self. Laura used the rhythm of the language to convey the rhythm of the movement. Berthoff in The making of meaning (1981) explains:

The composer develops and organizes ideas, makes statements, and creates images by way of discovering the parts he or she wants to assemble, and, in the process invents and orders an assembly to suit purpose and audience. If we teach composing as a mode of learning, a way of thinking, then we will be teaching it as a process (p. 20).

Further to the cognitive component involved in the writing of the poem and the aesthetic arrangement of words to convey meaning, Laura interpreted the physical domain through the movement vocabulary (i.e. run, jump, twist, turn) and delivered an important message, of a moral nature, to peers. Her poem demonstrates an appreciation for hard work, the mastery of movement and beauty of effort. Nettleton (1980), in "Physical competence as an educational objective," describes experiences which promote such attitudes as a major goal of the physical education program (p. 46).

While the goals of the Primary and Intermediate Programs are interwoven, the next section attempts to highlight the individual goals most prominent in the children's writing. Although the children were involved in developing their thinking abilities each time they wrote, particularly when engaged in poetic or expressive writing, the intellectual goal will not be addressed separately for each piece of writing. Instead, this goal will be addressed through the writing that demonstrates reflective or creative thinking about the physical experience or writing that extends the physical experience into another domain such as the aesthetic or artistic.

Social and Emotional Development

Essential to children's growth and development within the Primary and Intermediate Programs are the goals relating to social and emotional development. "Emotional and social well-being determine the way we feel, think, and act" (B.C., 1990c, p. 53). These goals concern themselves with positive self-esteem, a realistic sense of identity, and confidence in one's abilities. They also concern respect for individual differences and the ability to demonstrate empathy and compassion for others. Helping children to understand and express their feelings plays an important role in the social and emotional development of children. Writing provided a

valuable vehicle for helping children to reflect, discuss and share their feelings about physical education experiences. This study includes many samples of children's writing, in the expressive and poetic mode, which reflect the positive development of children's social and emotional well-being.

Colin, fourth year primary, describes a positive attitude toward competition. In his response log he wrote:

When I sprint I feel confident. Whether I win or not I will know that I tried my best.

Erika, grade 4, displays a similar, positive attitude in her response:

I don't like to compete very much, I just want to do my best. It doesn't matter if I don't come first. If I did my best that's what matters for me.

Mallory, grade 4, who described gymnastics as her favourite physical education activity, expresses her confidence poetically. She wrote:

I stretch my back,
I make an arch,
My hands are stretched,
My bridge is strong.

The effect of the poetic language was generally more powerful and more sharply felt by the children as an audience than expressive language.

Brian, fourth year primary, uses the rhythms and patterns of poetry to involve the reader in his game of tag. He wrote:

Tag

Running,
 Running,
 Can't catch me.
 I go faster but it's too late,
 I got tagged,
 Now I'm it.
 First I chase him,
 Then I chase her,
 I tagged Peter,
 Now I've got to get away.

Brian willingly worked with boys and girls in the gymnasium. I applauded his efforts for showing this in his poem. Children in this age group sometimes segregated themselves into boys and girls when dividing into partners or groups.

Darren, grade 4, when responding in his learning log learns more about his predisposition for risk-taking. In sharing his writing with classmates he helps them to develop a better sense of their own potential in this area. He wrote:

The most challenging thing I did was jump one foot to the other from box to box. I was successful. When I did it first it was freaky but I pushed that out of my mind and did it again.

In another learning log response Darren illustrates the impact of a supportive learning environment. This time he wrote:

I like the rap dance because my group got lots of compliments. I feel more confidence.

Stephanie's story, "Gym Poetry" also reveals the dynamics of a positive classroom environment. Her story, written about two classmates, unfolded following a gymnastics presentation at the mall.

Gym Poetry

Shannon's over there. Can't you see her?
Wow! Amazing! Look at her. Perfecto! Good
landing, Shannon. Now look at Carly. Great! I
love that sequence. Fantastic - a backward roll!
Oh, oh, Shannon's going to laugh. Don't laugh,
please don't. It will wreck your sequence. You
spent alot of time on it. Good! She didn't laugh.
Carly, your turn again. Oh heaven help me, I'm too
young to die. She made it through though. Good
going Carly and Shannon!

The children's poetic and expressive writing, above all else, celebrated their love for, and positive participation in, physical education activities. Logsdon et al. (1984) emphasize the significant role of "success" in a child's motor development. "Experience and research ... do suggest that, to promote motor development, the movement environment must have an atmosphere of success and satisfaction. It needs to be fun" (p. 82). The children's writing indicates that Physical Education is one area of the elementary school curriculum where children can meet success and develop positive attitudes about themselves and their work with others.

Social Responsibility

The goal of social responsibility moves children beyond the establishment of a personal identity to an understanding and appreciation of the needs of others (B.C., 1990c, p. 86). The Primary and Intermediate Programs stress the need for children to learn skills of co-operation and collaboration as

well as to appreciate the contributions of others. They value "cultural identity and diversity" (B. C., 1992, p. 29). Expressive writing most commonly helped the children to reflect and assess their progress or set goals in this area.

Meghan, fourth year primary, set this goal for her work in physical education at the beginning of the year:

In gym I need to work on going with other partners not just the same partner every time.

When Colin, fourth year primary, drafted this lead to a story, I automatically invited him to share it with his peers. He wrote:

I wonder who I'll go with?
What? No partners left!
I have to go by myself.

His writing provided an important opportunity for the children to explore their feelings about what it feels like to be left out in partner or group situations and to brainstorm possible solutions to eliminate the problem. Indeed many children's behaviour changed positively as a result of our shared reading, writing and discussions in this area. From a writing perspective, we all agreed Colin used a successful lead as he immediately captured my interest.

Darren, grade four, copes very well with the responsibility of working with a younger student in the gymnasium. He confirmed this in his learning log response:

I like working with the younger students because it gives me the opportunity to be the teacher. I sometimes get nervous but I get over it.

Stephanie, grade four, describes some of the frustration

involved in working with a younger student; however, her introduction indicates that the benefits far outweigh the drawbacks. Stephanie wrote:

I feel great helping Nicholas to learn some steps in dance. I like how the younger students listen close to what you have to say. I disliked the way we had to redo our sequence because the younger students could not do the steps.

Laura's letter to her primary buddy perhaps best captures the essence of the social responsibility goal. She wrote:

January 29, 1990

Dear Ashley,

Thank-you very much for inviting me to see your dragon dance. I was really impressed how fast you learned the right movements with your hands and feet. How did you do it? Thank-you for letting me try it too. It was great fun. It looks easy but it is very hard. I really liked your ending. I hope we will be able to work together again soon.

GUNG HAI FAT CHOY!

Sincerely,
Laura

Firstly, Laura describes an appreciation for the hard work of her buddy. Secondly, she demonstrates an enthusiastic attitude for their work together. And finally, the writing reveals an appreciation for the dance of another culture.

Aesthetic and Artistic Development

Both the Primary and Intermediate Programs encourage learning opportunities that engage children in aesthetic and

artistic expression. The Intermediate program: Foundations
document states:

Students' aesthetic and artistic development is furthered by providing learning opportunities that enable them to

- . discover and respond to creative and imaginative expression
- . create
- . experience a sense of wonder
- . explore and express their human spirit
- . value the expressions of cultures
- . be aware of and appreciate design. (p. 35)

While many movement opportunities arose in the gymnasium for expressive or creative movement, writing provided yet another vehicle to extend the physical experience into a creative response. In this study only the poetic writing, specifically poetry, served to enhance the children's aesthetic and artistic development.

Chad, fourth year primary, not only chose the movement vocabulary carefully, but he also arranged the words so that the reader becomes involved in the dynamics of a game of tag. Chad's poem read:

CROWS AND CRANES

G A T N
 N D R I G
 I
 D V R W E E
 I E E Y H R
 L
 S
 O G N
 D D I G T O P L A C E S U N K N O W N
 A
 G R
 N O
 I U
 V N
 O D
 M
 U N N I V R I E T O
 R N I G N E E Y D R C I N

OH DARN I GOT CAUGHT!
 NOW I'M CRANE.

Erica, fourth year primary, successfully transformed this next piece of writing, intended to serve a transactional function (i.e. describe the movements you will use to interpret the poem "Black Snake"), into creative expression serving the same purpose. While she does not necessarily clarify the movement actions, Erica uses a careful selection of words and the rhythm of the language to convey images of movement. She wrote:

In gym we are going to move like snakes.
 I don't mean be snakes,
 I mean move like snakes,
 Curving and curling with our arms and legs.
 My mom told me that snakes, especially black ones,
 are poisonous.
 Well, I'd rather not meet one,
 So I will glide and slither everywhere,
 Up and down.
 I'd rather move like a snake than be one.

Darren, grade 4, artistically arranged the words in this acrostic poem to describe his enthusiasm for the large apparatus in gymnastics: He wrote:

Apparatus in gym
The Perfect thing for gymnastics
CaPtain of the box
Awesome!
Run up and jump
"CaReful up there," says the teacher.
Totally unbeatable!
Utterly the best!
Super.

The children frequently expressed their movement experiences poetically, often arousing a sense of wonder and curiosity in their classmates. Transforming the physical experience into an aesthetic expression required the work of a creative mind. Interpreting physical education experiences with poetic writing helped the children to broaden their aesthetic and artistic abilities.

Physical Development

"Physical well-being is an integral part of total well-being. It is essential for living and learning" (B.C. 1990c, p. 82). The writing in this study indicates that the children engaged in activities that promoted physical fitness, helped to develop physical skills and provided an understanding of movement concepts and game skills. All three modes of writing demonstrate the physical development goal. Expressive writing, the most prevalent, reveals the

children's personal reflections about their progress in the physical domain, the poetic writing demonstrates the internalization of movement vocabulary and movement concepts, and the transactional writing involves the recall of information to inform the teacher about the learning.

A regard for and appreciation of safety measures is essential to the physical well-being of children. Michelle, second year primary, explains one safety rule she learned. She wrote:

One iv the safte wols is to tick your had in your chest

Translation: One of the safety rules is to tuck your head in your chest.

Accompanying her picture of a child on a rope, Carly, second year primary, explained safety when working on a rope:

You shd navr slid dan kum dan had By had

Translation: You should never slide down, come down hand by hand.

While the children's writing is still in the emergent stage and the wording awkward the intent of their writing is clear. Michelle learned to tuck her chin on her chest when rolling and Carly learned to come down the rope hand under hand.

Ashley, fourth year primary, seems to be learning about the need for vigorous physical activity. The final line of his learning log read:

I have learned that when you breathe hard you have done a good job.

Stephanie, fourth year primary, personalizes her understanding of our work with frisbees. She describes her learning related to catching:

Something I learned in my work with frisbees was you run to catch. You can not walk or stand still or you might get hit or not catch it.

As early as third year primary Craig demonstrates an understanding of the importance for participation in physical activity. He also personalizes his understanding:

I like gym because it's fun and helps me think. I feel better after gym.

Erika, grade 4, explains one thing she learned about track and field:

One thing I learned was how to pass a baton. You accept the baton in your right hand then pass to your left hand. Then you pass the baton to the other person's v shaped hand.

Jennifer, fourth year primary, describes the physical challenge she accomplished during a gymnastics lesson:

The most challenging thing I did was a cat leap on the balance beam.

In analyzing her greatest physical challenge during a gymnastics lesson, Erika, grade 4, identifies a teaching point that helped her to improve a handstand off the ladder.

She wrote:

The most challenging thing I did today was a handstand off the ladder because the first time I did it I didn't tuck my feet and I almost fell.

Following my collaboration with a grade 6/7 teacher in

the school, the teacher initiated the students' self-evaluation in all goal areas of the Intermediate Program.

Laura's poem "The Sequence" illustrates the internalization of an important teaching point when performing a forward roll. Laura, fourth year primary, wrote:

Running, jumping, landing, rolling,
No good,
I didn't tuck in.
Here I go again -
Running, jumping,
"And stop.
And freeze, please.
Laura, will you show your sequence."
Oh no,
Here I go!
Running, jumping, landing, rolling,
I did it!
I tucked in!

Cory's reflection in the area of "Physical Development" reveals a healthy, realistic attitude. Cory, grade 6, wrote:

I've learned to accept that I'm not great in volleyball. I think I've improved my serve though. I'm not throwing the ball in the air and hitting it. I can now hit better. I'm pretty much getting the right kind of nutrition. I go to the gym so I care about my body.

The writing provides evidence of the children's self-evaluation in the physical domain. It indicates an awareness of the need for physical activity and fitness. It includes descriptions or an analysis of those behaviours that helped the children improve performance or acquire skills. As well, the writing demonstrates that the children participated in a variety of physical activities.

Intellectual Development

"Intellectual development may be defined as the process of deriving meaning from experience through acquiring, structuring and restructuring knowledge (B.C., 1990c, p. 57). As mentioned earlier, all the children's writing in this study demonstrates the use of cognitive skills. Whether expressing a feeling about a physical experience or communicating thoughts and ideas, the writing involved thinking. On the simplest level, the children recalled the movement vocabulary and safety rules in their writing. On a higher level, they analyzed and evaluated their work and extended it into creative expression. This section addressing the writing which involved personal reflection or creative thinking transpired in the form of expressive writing or poetic writing. Meaningful transactional writing which required the children to think deeply about the physical experience or extend their thinking did not appear in this study.

In this first piece of expressive writing, Dawn, fourth year primary, critically examines her preference for music and dance. She wrote:

I really love to dance I just don't like the music.
Ballet is my best type of dance. I like the soft
music.

Britton et al. (1975) describe their interest in children's use of expressive language:

Expressive language interested us particularly, both because it represented some overlap between speech and writing, and because looked at developmentally, it seemed to be the mode in which young children chiefly wrote. Its relationship to thinking, moreover, seems particularly direct and this suggests its importance as a mode of learning at any stage (p. 11).

While the next piece of writing appears simply to present a list of ideas, Dawn thought carefully about what she had learned in this unit. She includes both the psycho-motor and affective domains. Her learning log response appeared in point-form:

Things I Learned

1. Backward Sumersault
2. Foward Sumersault
3. Safety Roll
4. Have Fun
5. Polished Sequence

Jennifer's writing, fourth year primary, illustrates how our work in physical education extended the experience and led to an evaluation of writing. Jennifer wrote:

My favourite piece of writing during the first term was "My Tricky Shadow." I think I have really explained well how my shadow does the same thing as me. My poem has terrific rhythm. I have used a good ending.

Following an interpretive reading of the poem "Black Snake" Michael, fourth year primary, experimented with the movement images from the poem. He drafted:

They slither like spaghetti
 They roll like a tire
 They curve like the letter S
 They glide like a wave on water

I suspect the word pictures helped Michael with the movement

interpretation in the gymnasium.

Colin, fourth year primary, creatively extended his thinking about basic locomotor skills. He drafted these vivid images:

When I jump I feel like an astronaut in space,
When I run I feel like a race car driver,
When I skip I feel like a boxer ...

Kathryn, grade 4, translated her creative dance experience into this creative piece of writing. She wrote:

ME AND MY BALLOON

Round and round,
I go around.
High, low,
Side to side,
I can do it in a row.
Twirling, whirling,
I spin around.
I yell, "I'm getting dizzy."
I'm in a poise,
What do I do?
I hold it there,
I count: 1-1000, 2-1000, 3-1000,
Then I get up,
I flutter into my ending poise,
I say good-bye to my balloon.

Rob's conceptualization of movement as illustrated in the following poem is of a highly sophisticated nature. While most of his peers viewed football as a tough, aggressive sport, Rob appreciates the significance of moving without making contact - "like a graceful dancer." He wrote:

Football

He runs with the ball,
Like a graceful dancer.
He throws the ball,
The pass is intercepted,
The defence runs it back.
He dodges with such skill,

He's tackled,
He falls in the end zone.
TOUCH DOWN!

Rob (grade 7)

Berthoff (1981) writes: "The work of the active mind is seeing relationships, finding forms, making meanings: when we write, we are doing in a particular way what we are already doing when we make sense of the world" (p. 12).

Whether the children wrote expressively or poetically, to guide their learning or to entertain, they used language to facilitate thinking. In all cases the writing evolved from their first-hand, physical experience. Writing about their physical experiences allowed the children to expand their repertoire of thinking strategies.

In summary, as the children reinforced, clarified or extended the physical experience through their writing, they made many personal connections with physical education which demonstrate positive development in all goal areas of the Primary and Intermediate Programs. In the area of cognitive development, the poetic writing served to reinforce the movement vocabulary and movement concepts taught. It also helped the children to extend their physical experience into aesthetic expression. In the area of physical development, the transactional writing helped the children to analyze and clarify the movement concepts and game skills taught while the expressive writing allowed the children to set goals and assess their progress. In the areas of social

responsibility, social and emotional development, the poetic and expressive writing promoted healthy personal and interpersonal relationships. It provided a vehicle for problem-solving and discussion, allowing the children to articulate their feelings and devise appropriate plans of action. The writing also allowed the children to celebrate their successes in physical education. Finally, extending the physical experience into aesthetic expression allowed the children to appreciate the beauty of effort, mastery of movement and effect of hard work. Similarly, it helped them to appreciate the beauty of poetic expression and motivated them to learn more about writing. They worked hard to arrange words and devise patterns to convey meaning about their physical experiences. Writing about their physical experiences helped the children to learn about the connection between physical education and writing. While they learned that writing helped them to understand their physical education experiences, they also learned that physical education provided interesting and meaningful topics for writing.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates the potential of physical education for writing and the impact of writing on the reinforcing of physical education. While the physical experiences provided successful, personal opportunities for each child which led to purposeful writing, the writing allowed the children to clarify their learning in physical education. The integration of physical education and writing promoted legitimate educational experiences relating to all goal areas of the Primary and Intermediate Program. It helped the children to make connections within the separate subject areas and across the two curricular areas to extend their learning. The following examples provide evidence. When the children used conversation to tell a story about an experience in the gymnasium, this was the time they were challenged intellectually to learn the use of quotation marks, not at some predetermined time of a program. When the study of snakes in creative dance aroused the children's sense of wonder and curiosity, this was the time they were encouraged to ask questions and learn more about researching. Likewise in physical education, when the children's learning log responses indicated a keen desire to climb to the top of the ropes, this was the time the children were challenged physically to focus on strength building activities that would help them to accomplish the goal. When the children's

writing indicated a positive change in attitude in dance, this was the time we celebrated their social development. When the children tried to capture an interesting physical experience in poetic writing, this was the time they were motivated to learn more about poetry forms and the rhythm and patterns of poetry. The integration of physical education and writing allowed the children to learn in a meaningful context.

The meaningful integration of physical education with language experiences presents a strong argument for the physical education of the classroom teacher. With an ever demanding timetable many schools in British Columbia do not meet children's daily physical activity time requirements, yet alone allow time for integrated activities. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, the physical education specialist is often forced to select activities and analyze stories and poems for movement independent of student input. Involving the students greatly contributes to the experience of learning as a meaningful whole. Due to the importance of daily activity, the physical education specialist does not have the time to integrate children's physical experiences with writing. Most classroom teachers, on the other hand, lack the knowledge about physical education and the direct involvement with children in the gymnasium or on the playground to promote meaningful, integrated writing opportunities.

And yet, who is in a better position than the classroom teacher to integrate the curriculum? It is the classroom teacher who best knows the children's interests and their physical, social, emotional, intellectual, aesthetic and artistic needs. It is the classroom teacher who has the responsibility and curriculum time to present meaningful reading, writing, listening and speaking opportunities for children.

The physical education of classroom teachers may not be as difficult to achieve as one might think. An attentiveness to the physicality of language and a rudimentary knowledge of movement education methodology provides a framework for teaching physical education. If teachers understand Laban's basic categories for the analysis of movement - what the body can do, how the body can move, where the body can move and its possible relationship to partners, groups or apparatus - they can design meaningful problem - solving situations that allow children to work at their own level and to expand and improve their quality of movement. Movement education places a strong emphasis on children learning and discovering for themselves and from peers. It allows children to become physically competent through the process of exploration, discovery, selection and repetition. Just as children learn to become keen observers of movement as they learn from each other, so too classroom teachers can learn to become proficient observers and analyzers of movement. The role of

teachers in the classroom parallels the role of physical educators in the gymnasium: they guide and facilitate learning. The classroom teacher trained in movement education moves from the classroom to the gymnasium without disruptions, eliminating the teaching of isolated subject areas.

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