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AN EXPLORATION OF PEER-EDITING
IN A FIRST GRADE CLASSROOM:
AN INFORMAL STUDY

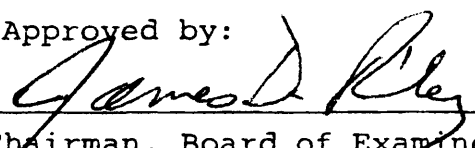
By


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B.A., University of Montana, 1979

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Education
1983

Approved by:


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AN EXPLORATION OF PEER-EDITING
IN A FIRST GRADE CLASSROOM:
AN INFORMAL STUDY

A Professional Paper
Presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
University of Montana

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by
Robert D. Edgar
August 1983

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to explore the impact of peer-editing upon aspects of children's writing ability. While peer-editing has been cited as important in the teaching of writing, there is little empirical evidence that provides direction for its implementation in instruction.

There is a paucity of research that provides information on the impact of peer-editing on the quality of children's writing. It is unclear as to the extent that peer-editing influences mechanical and content related aspects of children's writing. In addition, because of the much discussed relationship between reading and writing, it was deemed important to explore the extent to which peer-editing affects students who employ varying reading strategies.

Background

The purpose of this section is to review the current literature on the teaching of writing in the first grade. Specifically, this review will serve as an exploration of the impact that peer-editing has on certain aspects of student's writing ability and will provide a backdrop for the informal study presented in this paper.

This section reviews: a) The Writing Curriculum

In Schools, b) Functions of Writing, c) Integrating the Language Arts, d) Objectives to Integrating, e) Aspects of Peer-Editing, and, f) Transition to Peer-Editing.

The Writing Curriculum In Schools

One of the most significant challenges facing teachers in the elementary schools is the need to integrate the language arts processes. Children respond more enthusiastically to the writing of others once they have experience with writing and editing processes. According to Platt (1977),

Children often have greater success if their first reading attempts are written by themselves. The student's ability to organize thoughts in writing is helpful for full comprehension of someone else's written thoughts.

In terms of a basal reading program, children often have difficulty relating to the language of the author. Goodman (1976) states, "Without a connection between a child's experience and the printed materials, comprehension cannot take place." Therefore, an integrated reading and writing curriculum should emphasize instruction of writing and reading in such a way that both teacher and student become a part of a complete language arts curriculum.

Functions of Writing

Reading and writing are methods of communication with oneself and others. To prevent miscomprehension, numerous abilities must be mastered by the writer/reader.

Stotsky (1982) states,

By requiring students to respond in writing to words and ideas that they are asked to recall, reproduce, restate, select from, generalize, reorganize, integrate, or elaborate upon, we may be providing them with the most active comprehension practice possible. Combining reading instruction with different kinds of writing activities may help to teach reading comprehension in possibly the most meaningful way-and it may be the missing link in reading comprehension.

Integrating the Language Arts

Peer-editing is an effective means to integrate reading and writing in a first grade classroom. Peer-editing reveals to children the relationship of reading and writing. The reading of children's works and the writing processes involved are seen as interrelated processes. By reshaping their writing, children not only realize personal satisfaction, but also begin to feel the power of their words and recognize the impact of their written language.

Teachers of the language arts can help children become better readers, writers and speakers by engaging children in the process of peer-editing. Through peer-editing children experience a comprehensive language arts situation (writing, reading, speaking and listening). A comprehensive language arts situation encourages children to read, write, speak and listen in combination.

Through peer-editing children learn to become analytic of their written efforts as well as becoming sincerely interested in the procedure of improving what they have

written.

Through peer-editing children become aware of the processes proficient writers use to improve what they have written. Through rewriting activities (group-editing, peer-editing and student/teacher conferences), first grade children can begin to understand the difficulties involved in writing and children become aware of mechanical and content related difficulties in writing. Adler (1982) states,

If we want students to learn to write well, to find their errors, to edit their writing, to become independent performers of this skill we call writing, we must help them solve the mysteries of the process. Of course, if we want to continue to dominate we sustain the mysteries.

Teachers must take the mystery and confusion out of both reading and writing and facilitate full involvement and understanding in the language arts processes and help children solve these mysteries.

Moreover, Stotsky (1982) states,

Clearly, reading is inherent in most writing. All writing is a putting down on paper of one's own thoughts or the thoughts of others; by its very nature, writing should entail reading. Many kinds of writing require conscious attention to different aspects of the written language of others; this may not only enhance student's skill with the element of written expression, but also improve their understanding of written language in general.

Thus both elements of reading and writing should be taught in combination for greater understanding of our language.

Objectives to Integrating

Many primary-aged children see printed language as beyond critique. Students need to be involved with the processes of creating, critiquing, revising and publishing written works.

Bissex (1980) states that "children learn as experimenters, constructing and revising their own rules until they can produce sentences like those of the mature speakers they hear."

Through peer-editing children integrate the communicative processes. Peer-editing enables children to be in control of their language, help themselves solve problems and diminish the sometimes threatening role of the teacher as the "master" of the language processes. In addition, Chomsky (1971) states, "Early writing helps children explore and experiment with the same letter/sound relationships they must use in reading." Many first grade children, not having an extensive background in spelling, tend to phonetically spell words from letter sounds they have previously internalized. By allowing children to experiment with sound/symbol relationships and experiencing words without an overbearing criteria to spell perfectly, children will enthusiastically pursue writing. Given the contrary, children will retreat from the writing processes and the mysteries continue.

Finally, De Ford (1981) states that

Nothing is more essential to the education of our children than watching the children themselves, and second, as educators, we need to view reading and writing as integrated processes-not isolated skills to be practiced, dissected and analyzed in artificial settings.

Teachers must observe their children actively engaged in the language arts processes and as educators we need to conceptualize and implement these processes as interoperations rather than disengaged exercises to be experienced and analyzed in an unreal environment.

Aspects of Peer-Editing

Prior to undertaking any form of editing, children need positive experiences in writing and reading. A first grade writing program needs to encourage children to write as soon as they walk through the schoolhouse doors in September. Children possessing writing skills will be apparent. Those students who cannot write should be quickly noted and may need some direct teaching of skills and possible remediation of sound/symbol relationships.

A first grade teacher may then use children's initial writings as examples for the class to group-edit by using an overhead projector or the chalkboard for display. In such group-editing activities, the source of the writing should remain anonymous.

Hypothetically, through group-editing, children begin to realize the need for mechanical and content related

proficiency. The first grade teacher who wishes to implement a writing program in their classroom must realize that at the onset of such a program, the goal is not to achieve perfection. The goal of such a program is to engage students in the improvement of their writing. For example, during peer-editing in the first grade, children tend to spell words just as they hear them. Teachers who insist on perfect spelling in the first grade inhibit their student's writing.

Transition to Peer-Editing

Once children begin to write and have many experiences with group-editing, the first grade teacher may proceed with peer-editing. Modeling the editing process through group-editing is extremely important for it affords students a structure for editing another person's writing. Group-editing also facilitates a "team effort" attitude in the classroom rather than the "teacher controlled" climate.

Thus here it is suggested that peer-editing can have a substantial impact on student's writing ability. However, there is little empirical evidence suggesting the specific impact that peer-editing has on children's writing abilities.

The aim of this study is to supply some of the information that is needed to implement peer-editing in a first grade classroom.

Questions to be Explored

Since this is an informal study, there are no specific hypotheses presented. However, to guide the direction of this study, the following questions serve to focus the analysis of the impact of specific peer-editing procedures.

1. What is the effect of peer-editing on mechanical elements of children's writing?

2. What is the effect of peer-editing concerning the content of student's writing?

Definition of Terms

To guide the reader, the following terms are defined directly. Other terms are defined within the body of this paper.

Peer-Editing

Peer-editing is the process by which students may identify and correct mechanical and content related errors in their writing by utilizing classmates as editors rather than relying on the classroom teacher.

Mechanics

The term mechanics concerns such written elements as correctness of spelling, punctuation, capitalization and the use of margins.

Content

The term content concerns how effectively the intended message is transmitted to the reader. Content also refers to the sentence/passage length, vocabulary and the sentence sense.

Comprehension

Comprehension is the ability of the reader to answer questions based on the printed material on the literal, interpretive and applied levels. (Herber 1978)

Group-Editing

Group-editing is the process by which students, as a group, jointly review and reshape written work by determining errors in mechanics and content.

Top-Down Processing

The top-down reader is one who makes meaningful substitutions while reading that do not match the printed material. For example, "In olden days he rode his horse to school." The reader might read, "In olden days he rode his pony to school." The top-down reader may be capable of answering questions that make sense in terms of the question but do not necessarily reflect the passage.

Adams (1980)

Bottom-Up Processing

A bottom-up reader is one who laboriously sounds out words but cannot answer inferential questions to link his knowledge and the printed material on the page. For example, "The wild dog sprinted toward the small child." The bottom-up reader might read through the preceding sentence as follows: "The wilb wild dog springed sprints sprinted town toward the smell small child." The bottom-up reader, even though self-correcting, still does not understand what is read. Adams (1980)

Integrated Processing

There are two types of integrated readers. Children who attempt to integrate and those who are successful in integrating top-down/bottom-up processing. The reader who attempts to integrate the top-down/bottom-up processes is one who can answer literal level (factual) questions but not inferential level questions. The reader who attempts to integrate the top-down/bottom-up processes sometimes makes substitutions that are meaningful but not close to the actual print.

The reader who successfully integrates the top-down/bottom-up processes reads fluently with expression and captures meaning (literal and inferential) from the passages read. Adams (1980)

Procedures

The procedures section delineates general considerations as well as steps in implementing peer-editing in this study.

General Considerations

In terms of group-editing on a first grade level, the first priority in terms of composition is "Does this writing make sense?". For example, one student writes, "Bks b brn." (Bikes be brown.) Teacher: "Does this make sense?" Children: No. Bikes can be brown would be a better way to say it." Teacher: "How else might we say this?" Children: "Some bikes are brown. My bike is brown. John's bike is brown." The teacher should list all student responses on the chalkboard.

Through group and peer-editing we encourage children to experiment with their language. Although some first grade children may not spell "bikes" correctly, they can write so that reading may take place using their own linguistic organization and most importantly, be involved, in the reading and writing processes.

Once students feel comfortable working together in a group-editing situation the peer-editing process may begin.

Steps In Implementing Peer-Editing

The steps in implementing peer-editing in a first grade classroom are as follows:

Step 1: Developing Sensitivity. Teachers must prepare children to be sensitive to other children's feelings. This is based on the assumption that children must be prepared to seek understanding and receive constructive criticism from their peers. First grade children, having no extensive background in the publication of the language arts, become easily embarrassed when asked to project their writing to their peers if there are mistakes in their writing. Thus there is need for developing sensitivity in group and peer-editing sessions. At this stage of the writing process, children need to know what may happen if someone else edits their paper. Consider the six year old child who rides the school bus home and proudly shares what he wrote in class that day. If the author is not prepared for what might be said about his writing by other children and adults, the student/writer may lose any desire he has to share his work in the future. If the child is prepared for what might be said he begins to seek editing help.

Before beginning any performance, oral or written, the children need to discuss each other's feelings about performing. Certain rules of understanding must be agreed upon before sharing takes place. Below is a sample discussion that occurred during Stage 1:

Teacher: "I am a person who thinks his writing is not very good. I'm scared to show it to anyone but I decide to share it with the whole class during "Show and Tell" time. While standing in front of my friends in class, I feel nervous, but I read my work anyway. I make a mistake with some of my words and everyone in the class laughs at me. How do you think I feel?"

Children: "You would feel sick. You would cry. You would probably run out of the classroom."

Teacher: "If a person makes a mistake and you didn't understand something, what could you do to find out what they meant without making them feel bad?"

Children: "You could raise your hand and ask them what they meant. You could talk to them about it at recess."

Once a sense of each other's feelings is established, the children may proceed with the peer-editing process. This leads to the next step-the defining of criteria.

Step 2: Defining Criteria. One of the more challenging aspects of peer-editing at any grade level is to determine the criteria upon which peer-editing focuses. It is helpful to provide a sample of writing produced by a student at that particular grade level for defining criteria. The teacher should select a passage that

contains many errors that coincide with skills already introduced. By pairing children and asking them to look for certain types of errors and noting where these errors take place, the peer-editing process begins. At the first grade level, it is recommended that the children look initially for sentence sense. Teachers should instruct the children to note any sentences that don't make sense and discuss alternative possibilities with their partner in editing.

It is very important at the onset of peer-editing to encourage students to look for only one type of error. Once children feel comfortable and are proficient in editing one type of error, then the teacher may wish to introduce other criteria. When presenting multiple-criteria for editing, the teacher may wish to approach this form of editing in the following way:

Student Passage: "the are ways so bad we didned get to go
out people cud stop makeing the are so
bad by not berning wood wen they heve
other hete."

Teacher: "Are there things in this story that don't look right?"

Children: "Some of the words aren't spelled right. You are missing some capital letters at the beginning. You need some periods. Some of the parts don't

make sense."

Teacher: "Can you think of any questions you could ask yourself as you are reading this story?"

The following were some of the questions the children agreed to ask themselves while reading the story as an editor.

Children:

"Do you like the beginning?"

"Does it sound right?"

"Is there a better word?"

"Are the words spelled right?"

"Are there periods at the end of sentences?"

"Are capital letters where they should be?"

"Is there anything that doesn't look right?"

The teacher may want to inform the children that when we do different types of writing we might look for different things. For example, when we write poems it is very difficult to apply some of the above mentioned criteria because of the mechanics and content variability of poetry.

Once the criteria has been established, taking into account the skill abilities of the children, students should be ready to experiment with various techniques of peer-editing on their own writing. Procedures for

implementing various peer-editing techniques are as follows:

Step 3: Peer-Editing Techniques. This phase applies the criteria that was defined in Step 2 with a variety of techniques for peer-editing. The first and potentially least effective method of editing is where the children read and edit their own work. When children read their own writing they sometimes read in things that are not there or become "blind" to errors embedded in their content. Therefore children should exchange their writing with peers for editing purposes.

Children should first exchange their writing with another child whom they feel comfortable with to serve as a responder or editor. Having exchanged their writing with a friend, each child is instructed, as an editor, to read for the criteria mentioned in Step 2. If the editors find anything that doesn't look right, they bring it to the attention of the author and discuss the possible need for correction or revision. This technique is useful for finding mechanical problems with children's writing.

Under no circumstances should an editor make any marks on the work of the writer. The decision to make changes lies with the author, not the editor.

When the child's writing has been edited, the roles of author and editor are reversed. The writer becomes the editor and the editor assumes the role of the author. In

a first grade classroom this technique takes about twenty minutes for a three paragraph passage. This includes the reversing of roles. Once the children feel comfortable with this technique, the teacher may model another form of peer-editing.

With this technique the children exchange their writing again. This time the writers read their writing aloud to a listener. Either the writer or the editor may stop the process at any time for clarification if something does not make sense. Once any and all discussion has taken place, the reading of the passage continues until the editing of the passage is complete. Then the roles of reader and listener are reversed and the process begins again. Children find this technique helpful for finding run-on sentences, sentence fragments, as well as other mechanical and content related errors in their writing.

Still another technique involves a process where a reader reads the child's work to the child/author. Not only does the reader experience new reading material, but, the writer has the opportunity to hear his work read aloud. Either child may stop the process at any time if something does not sound right. The children read, listen and discuss elements that better their written efforts.

Another technique involves having the children assume positions as editors at designated stations for the purpose of peer-editing. For example, half of the class

are editors while the other half of the class move from station to station to have their writing edited for specific criteria. The children should print the criteria-related questions on a card that sits on the editing table for the editor's reference. For example, one question on the card at the punctuation station might read, "Do the sentences end with an end marker?" While one station edits for punctuation, another is checking for capitalization and still another looks for sentence sense. Once each student has been through each station the roles are reversed. The editors become the authors and the authors become the editors.

When the children have defined the criteria they will edit, the peer-editing process works. By having first graders determine and write the questions on the station cards, they acquire a greater ownership and independence in the peer-editing process.

Although the focus of these activities is the improvement of one's writing, the reading process flourishes. Not only is each student/editor employing a diversity of reading skills but also, the student must assume the role of the teacher/tutor to justify and explain why some particular element does or does not make sense or why a certain word is misspelled. The student/editor also learns more about the author he is reading for and the group becomes even more cohesive as a team of writers;

not just a classroom of children.

The object of editing a student's paper is to offer a more perfect paper. The peer-editing process offers a means for students to understand the reading and writing processes clearly and bring about a better attitude for publication of works. Most importantly, it allows the student the opportunity to be in control of his language.

Step 4: Publication. This step involves the publication of the children's work in some form. Publication involves communication between the author and his audience. While this last step may not appear to be an actual element of the editing processes, it must be considered so, otherwise the peer-editing process and the writing process in general, have no purpose.

Publication may take form as sharing the writing in the classroom orally, displaying written works on a bulletin board, reading the writing over the school intercom or actual publication in the local newspaper.

If peer-editing can be shown to have a positive impact on certain aspects of student's verbal learning behaviors, peer-editing may prove to be a valuable addition to the research of writing and/or reading in the primary grades.

Case Descriptions

Cases 1, 2 and 3 can be described as bottom-up readers. That is they laboriously sound out words, self-correct themselves frequently, and show little skill in comprehending material from passages.

Case 1: Reading. James is a reader who is very laborious in his reading. While James reads he will spend quite a bit of time on any given word that is not familiar. Sometimes, instead of attempting to sound out a word he will hold his head in his hands and stare at the word. Although James has much ability in phonetic skills, he does not necessarily use the skills while reading a story. James's comprehension skills are poor. When asked to make inferences or recall specific parts of a story, James rarely answers.

James uses much finger pointing while reading silently and is very deliberate while reading orally. He was retained in the first grade last year because of his "poor progress" in reading.

Writing. James is hesitant to write anything on paper. His first writing attempts took a considerable amount of time to complete. James spends a great deal of time on the correctness of his handwriting strokes and often ignores content related elements of his

writing. (see sample 1a)

James was hesitant to enter his written work in the Young Author's Conference. He reluctantly displays his written work on the classroom bulletin boards and displays.

Case 2: Reading. Kathy is an extremely verbal child who came to the first grade already quite able to read. Kathy is very eager to read but many times works hastily and does an inadequate job. Kathy is sought by many other students because of her reading proficiency.

Kathy reads with a great deal of expression but reads so rapidly that she makes numerous mistakes in context.

Kathy's comprehension skills are hindered both factually and inferentially when she reads quickly.

Writing. Kathy spends much of her free time in the classroom writing in her journal. When she writes she usually goes to great length in developing her text at the expense of being redundant with her writing. Kathy has ability as a speller and is sought by other children because of this skill. Kathy is an extremely competitive writer who has difficulty when making a mistake.

Kathy always is willing to share her work with the class and frequently displays her written work in school displays.

Case 3: Reading. Susan is a student who is easily intimidated by the teacher. When asked to read aloud or share some written work orally, she becomes extremely nervous and withdraws from participating.

When sounding out a word, Susan becomes so involved in sounding it out that by the time she gets to the end of the word, she has already forgotten the beginning.

Susan's comprehension skills are greatly hampered by her inability to recognize words quickly without slowly sounding them out.

Writing. When Susan writes she loses sentence meaning in the process of sounding out spellings of words. Susan is overcoming this by reciting her stories into a tape recorder and then going back and writing from her dictation.

Cases 4 and 5 can be described as top-down readers. That is they make meaningful substitutions while reading that do not match the printed material. Top-down readers also can answer questions that make sense in terms of the question but do not necessarily reflect the passage.

Case 4: Reading. When Ben reads he reads with few hesitations. When Ben is faced with multi-syllabic words he stops, views the word, then verbalizes the word without laboriously sounding the word out. When Ben reads

orally he often makes substitutions that do not change the meaning of the sentence.

Writing. Ben exhibits great enthusiasm to write and spell correctly. Ben's determination to spell perfectly stunts the length of his compositions. He also has difficulty with proper usage of punctuation and capital letters in his writing.

Ben enjoys reading other children's writing very much and is quick to point out errors.

Ben always volunteers to share his stories with the class as well as display his work on the bulletin boards in class.

Case 5: Reading. When Jessie reads she reads confidently. When Jessie makes substitutions she sometimes corrects herself or provides substitutions that do not alter the meaning of the passage.

Jessie's comprehension skills are adequate. Her reading does not hamper her ability to answer factual and inferential questions about the material she has read.

Writing. As a writer, Jessie is very reluctant to put her thoughts on paper. She is most concerned that something will go home that is not perfect. Although Jessie's work is good, she rarely cares to share her work with the class orally. She does share her work on the bulletin boards and in the displays.

Jessie volunteered to usher guests at the Young Author's Conference. (a conference held yearly in Missoula, Montana for the displaying of children's written works and the presentation of workshops for teachers, parents and children interested in children's writing.) She was also featured in the local newspaper for her works presented at the conference.

Cases 6 and 7 can be described as Integrated readers. That is they either attempt to integrate the top-down/bottom-up processes and can answer literal level (factual) questions but not inferential level questions. They also sometimes make meaningful substitutions but not close to the actual print or they successfully integrate the top-down/bottom-up processes and read fluently (with no hesitations or substitutions) and capture meaning from the passages read.

Case 6: Reading. Debbie is a student who tries to read so rapidly that most often the text would not make sense. I encourage Debbie to slow down and read as if she were speaking conversationally. When Debbie does slow her reading rate she reads fluently with no substitutions or hesitations.

Debbie's comprehension skills are erratic and are definately affected by her rate of reading.

Debbie's favorite school activity is to read aloud to other students. To do this she chooses library books or reads from her journal.

Writing. Debbie has difficulty with her sentences making sense. She seems to lack sentence structure. When she reads her writing to herself her lack of sentence sense is evident. Debbie also has difficulty with proper usage of end markers, capitalization and the use of margins. Proper use of vocabulary also poses a problem.

Debbie enjoys sharing her work in front of the class as well as on bulletin boards and in displays.

Case 7: Reading. When Jake reads he reads with a lot of expression. Jake reads smoothly and fluently. He comprehends extremely well material presented in texts.

Jake's parents informed me that reading is very much a part of their home environment and that Jake enjoys reading and being read to every day.

Writing. Jake constantly goes to his journal whenever he has any free time. He displays a great deal of imagination in his writing. His sequencing skills are outstanding and as a result his stories develop very nicely. Jake's weaknesses in writing are mechanical. He has difficulty with capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and margins.

Analysis of Case Data

Data was analyzed on the first and seventh passages that were peer-edited by first grade students. The passages that were written by the first grade students were composed in approximately thirty-minute writing sessions or composed during students free time in class. Topics were selected by the students from a list of journal topics compiled by the first grade children at the beginning of the school year.

The comparisons were analyzed focusing on changes in mechanics and content for Bottom-Up, Top-Down and Integrated readers. Immediately following each case narrative are writing samples that were edited in peer-editing sessions with each child. For example, Case 1's writing samples are labeled "1a" (first editing session) and "1b" (seventh editing session). Each editing session took thirty minutes to complete however, some students would take their writing outside for editing on their own time.

Cases 1, 2 and 3 are described as bottom-up readers. Refer to pages 9 and 10 for definitions.

Case 1: In terms of peer-editing, James had difficulty interacting with other children at the onset. In that James came to our classroom after the other children

had begun peer-editing, he was given a quick introduction of the editing process. I paired James with one of the more proficient editors in the class who also showed much compassion for the writer. This helped ease James into the peer-editing process.

Mechanics. James's initial compositions lacked capitalization and punctuation. Also, James had little or no idea what the purpose of the margin was. James's spelling was consistently good throughout the school year.

Through peer-editing James became proficient in a number of mechanical elements of writing. He made progress in terms of proper usage of capitalization, punctuation and the use of margins. (compare 1a with 1b)

Content. James's initial compositions were very factual in nature. By the seventh editing session James's writing increased in terms of imagination and in terms of length of passage. James also expanded his vocabulary usage by the seventh session. (compare 1a with 1b)

Process. At the seventh peer-editing session, James began to read without laboring over words. He would no longer hold his head in his hands and stare when encountering a word he did not know. Instead, he would sound out the word and continue. In terms of comprehension, James would rarely let any information slip past him in the end.

on are field trip
we went
to a
Christian church
to sing
we sang
songs and
ate cookies
and drank
punch.

I I I
 be her feed help and I
 I dont have a rosey but name would
 sister
 a sister
 I would
 a sister
 I would
 a sister

Case 2: Through group and peer-editing, Kathy began to see our class functioning as a team of writers and readers. Once peer-editing began, Kathy's neatness in her work improved significantly. When she realized that we were not competing against one another, she took more time to complete assignments and as a result had a finer, finished product.

Mechanics. Kathy made minor improvements in terms of punctuation (compare 2a with 2b). Most of Kathy's mechanics were consistently good throughout the year.

Content. By comparing samples 2a with 2b you will notice that Kathy's vocabulary usage increased as did the length of her compositions. Kathy also became much more descriptive in her writing as well.

Process. Kathy's overall reading speed decreased during the time the class peer-edited. This decrease in reading speed carried over to her oral reading of textbook material. Kathy's overall comprehension increased significantly when she slowed her reading speed. She also began enunciating words much more clearly as a result of her slowing down.

I like School

2a

I like school because we learn

to read, and I like the teachers

there names is Mr. Edgar and

Mrs. Griel. I relly like my

teachers.



Friends are important
because you can love them.

My can... care for
you and hug you. And can
help you and make you
happy when you are sad.

Also when you go to
the store, they will come
with you. My babysiter is my
next door neighbor. And
play games with them.
You can play marbles with
them.

Case 3: Susan was extremely intimidated by reading for the teacher at the beginning of the school year. At the seventh editing session (3b) Susan read proudly and calmly.

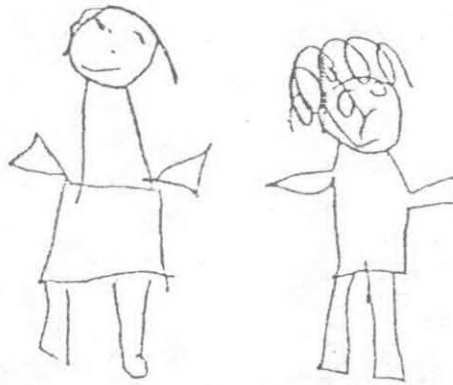
Mechanics. At the first editing session, Susan was deficient in capitalization and punctuation. By the seventh editing session, Susan made substantial gains in terms of punctuation and capitalization. Susan's spelling also improved as did her use of margins.

Content. In comparing 3a with 3b, Susan improved in terms of sentence sense, length of passage, the use of new vocabulary and the descriptiveness of her vocabulary.

Process. Susan's dependence on sounding out every word decreased. Through writing experiences Susan's sight vocabulary increased. In the end Susan did not need to recite her thoughts into a tape recorder to be written later as dictation.

In terms of comprehension, Susan made slight progress in proficiency of answering factual and inferential questions. Susan was reluctant to read some basal material aloud but rarely missed the opportunity to read her own writing orally.

me and my friend want to the home
of Old Sara. She gave always
some thing good to eat for me and my
friend we like going to but we are
to old



If I could have
a bobby sister and
brother I would
have a sister and
she will have a
nosed nose
and hazel/green eyes
and brown hair
with lots of freckles
like me and
she will be
be pretty.



Cases 4 and 5 are described as top-down readers.

Case 4: As was the case with most of my first grade students, Ben's writing was very brief at the onset of the first grade. He had a strong desire to write and read but did not have the skill to carry these desires.

Mechanics. Ben's initial efforts in writing contained capitalization and punctuation but with little knowledge concerning where to use these elements. Ben made slight gains in terms of punctuation and capitalization usage (see 4a and 4b). His spelling remained excellent.

Content. In comparing 4a with 4b, Ben's writing improved in terms of sentence sense, use of vocabulary and length of the passage. Ben also began to use the dictionary extremely well as a result of his desire to upgrade his oral and written vocabulary.

Process. Through the process of peer-editing, Ben's acquisition of phonetic skills was rapid and his knowledge of sight words expanded quickly as well.

Ben enjoyed reading other children's writing much more than the stories presented in the basal reader and would frequently ask to read other children's compositions when he had free time. Ben began to make fewer substitutions when reading orally.

I am the principal
I will move the school. And I will
move the water fountain. The good room
is a candy room. The bad room
is a I.S.S. room.

On



I think smoking is bad for you because

it hurts your lungs. If you want to know,

how, I'll tell you how. It gets in your lungs

and causes cancer. And if you don't want to

die, you should not smoke. But if you are all

ready keep doing it. Because your body will be
asking for you to smoke.

THE END

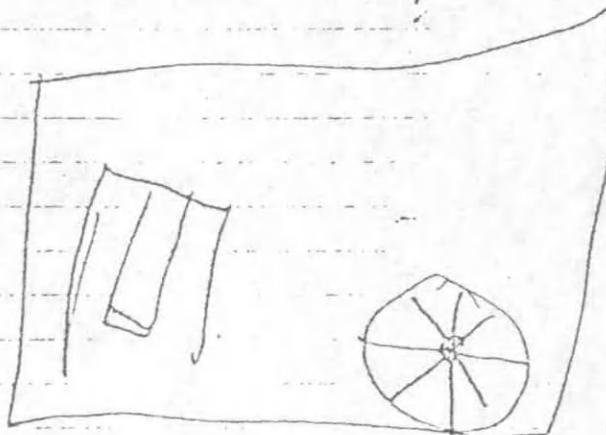
I hate it when I have to go home.

Because I love school so much.

Because you get to learn and you get to
work. And you get to play games.

And play with your friends out on the
play grounds. I love all the teachers
in the school. Even the student teachers.

THE END



Case 5: When Jessie began the first grade she was very apprehensive about revealing her reading and writing skills. Jessie would rarely share any of her works with the rest of the class because of her fear of making a mistake.

Mechanics. Jessie's initial writing attempts revealed an uncertainty concerning placement of capital letters and punctuation. By the seventh editing session, Jessie had made substantial gains in terms of punctuation and capitalization. She also increased her spelling vocabulary.

Content. Jessie experienced expanded vocabulary skills as a result of writing and peer-editing. The length of Jessie's written work improved from the first to the seventh editing session.

Process. When Jessie would read aloud and edit another student's paper, she would read the piece with much expression. Jessie's ability to comprehend factually and inferentially improved through the peer-editing process. She began to make few substitutions and read much more fluently.

Jessie began to relate skills already learned to other students through the peer-editing process. With peer-editing and formal reading instruction, Jessie became a successful integrated reader.

ok

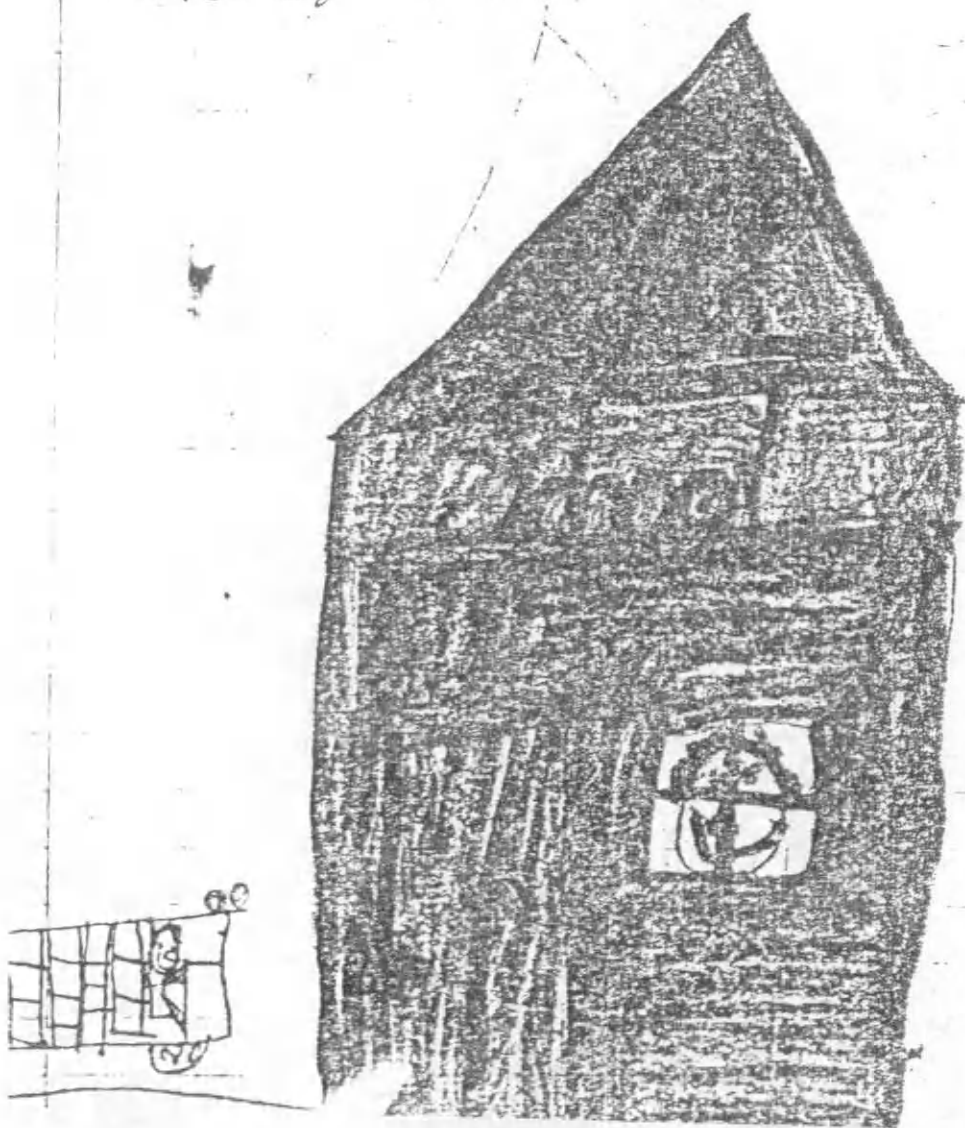
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5a

School time

I Like School

School is fun In Mr
Edgar class room. On
my math masters
I have passed my plus
fours.



SMOKING.

I think smoking is bad because it is bad for your lungs. Smoking is just horrible. It may give you cancer.

Smoking can kill you. If you smoke it goes into other peoples lungs.



Cases 6 and 7 are described as integrated readers.

Case 6: When Debbie began writing in the first grade she had great difficulty writing anything that made sense. She would run sentences together that had no relationship at all. By the seventh editing session, Debbie was making sense.

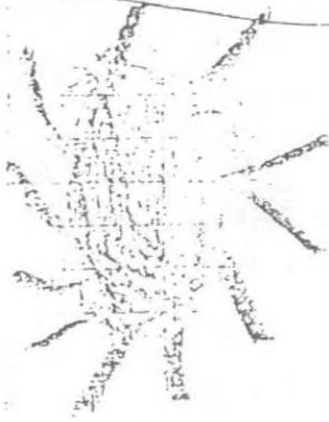
Mechanics. Through peer-editing, Debbie made gains in her correctness of spelling, capitalization, punctuation and the use of margins.

Content. The length of Debbie's writing increased and her sentences made sense. Debbie became much more descriptive in the words she chose to use in her text.

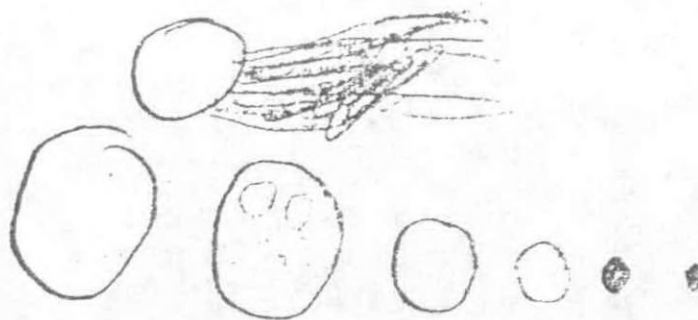
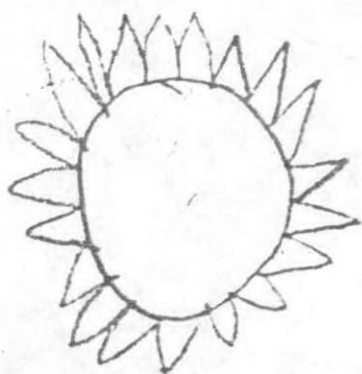
Process. As a result of Debbie's successes, she wanted to share her revised efforts with the rest of the class. Debbie learned through understanding mechanics of writing that punctuation is included in print for a reason. Debbie slowed down with her reading. Her fluency and comprehension improved immensely. Debbie became a successful integrated reader.

this is a good day is the
 I am good how do you
 this day is snow today

I think it is a good day
 I don't mind I'm good
 I'm glad sometimes I'm



There is a comet tonight.
There is going to be a comet
tonight, it will come at dark.
I will tell you how it's made?
It is hot-gas and fire and dust.
Some times it sparks.



Case 7: in the beginning, Jake was reluctant to write more than just a few sentences. When the editing criteria was presented for "What else can you tell me?", Jake blossomed as a writer. Jake would continuously ask himself this question while developing his stories.

Mechanics. Jake made slight gains in terms of spelling and really no improvement in terms of punctuation. When Jake would read his compositions, he would not run his sentences together, yet he did not understand the need for punctuation.

Content. Jake's writing grew in length. His use of descriptive words improved his stories. He made progress in terms of sentence sense and overall sequence of his writing.

Process. In terms of comprehension, Jake's ability to recall facts and make inferences concerning his writing and the writing of others improved greatly.

When Jake would read his stories he would read smoothly with a great deal of expression. He would assume roles of the characters he developed by using props, facial gestures and different voices for each character portrayed.

to Ddy
I did some extra
work Mrs. Greil thought
it was neat

We went to the First Christian Church
we sang songs, grandma's feather bed and in
some other songs, they gave us cookies and punch
when we went back to our school they wanted us
to come back. I hope we made
Valentine cards for them we were trying
get pencils

Mr. Egar was gone for five days he couldn't
come to school as soon he was gone because
he was on a gerix box

The little angel
 there was a little angel
 he was four. But he could not fly
 so he could not go any place. :|
 one day there was a special
 flying place. all of the other angels
 were going it just opened & the
 little angel could not fly he did not
 go at school the next day he
 told his friends they thought
 he was stumped not to go
 they did not know that he could
 not fly he must go at
 school the next day
 he told his friends
 they thought he was down
 not to go they did not
 know that he could not fly
 on May 9/83 there was
 a nother special dance
 it was even more special
 his friend could not go beca
 they were sick when they
 told the little angel he
 made fun of them
 after he told his friends he could not
 fly. that to friends not to make
 fun of some body beca it mite
 hapin to you.

Conclusions

It appears that peer-editing can improve student's abilities to refine the mechanical and content related skills of their writing. In the previously mentioned cases the following improvements were shown.

Mechanical

Five students showed growth in capitalization skills.

Seven students showed growth in punctuation skills.

Four students showed growth in spelling skills.

Content

Seven students showed growth in length of writing.

Seven students showed growth in vocabulary usage.

Four students showed growth in sentence sense.

There was no clear-cut distinction in terms of the effect of peer-editing on readers who employ different strategies of reading processing (bottom-up, top-down and integrated processing).

Implications for Instruction

Teachers should employ the process of peer-editing in classroom situations for the following reasons:

1. Peer-editing allows children the opportunity to be in control of their language; to make decisions to better their written work.

2. Through the peer-editing process the teacher may observe implementation of skills mastered by students.
3. Peer-editing integrates the language arts (reading, writing, speaking and listening) and discloses their relationship to students.
4. Peer-editing offers the teacher a practical situation in which to teach, reinforce and reteach skills involved in all language arts processes.

Implications for Future Research

In that this study was informal in nature, it would prove valuable to undertake an experimental design for a similar study to determine the effectiveness of peer-editing compared to traditional reading and writing instruction. A larger sample of students would aid such a study.

A study that would evaluate the impact of group and peer-editing on student ability to comprehend printed material would be extremely valuable in terms of curriculum planning of the language arts.

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