1992


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Dialogue journal writing in a foreign language classroom:
Assessing communicative competence and proficiency

Baudrand-Aertker, Lynn Patricia, Ph.D.
The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col., 1992
DIALOGUE JOURNAL WRITING
IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM:
ASSESSING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE AND PROFICIENCY

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Curriculum and Instruction

by

Lynn Baudrand-Aertker
B.S., Louisiana State University, 1986
M.Ed., Louisiana State University, 1987
December, 1992
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ABSTRACT

This research studied dialogue journal writing, as it occurred between a teacher and twenty-one students in a French III high school. Results on attitude questionnaire indicated that dialogue journals helped students overcome their fear of the written form and increase their self-confidence and willingness to write. By demystifying the writing process, writing in their dialogue journals helped these students develop positive attitudes. The results on writing proficiency pre and post-tests indicated that students performed as well or better than students after four years of a foreign language in a high school setting or four semester of college instruction. The dialogue journals served as a bridge to other kinds of writing such as the topics in the writing proficiency test. To arrive at characteristics of good language communicators, three independent measures were used: (1) holistic assessment of communicative competence of the dialogue journals, (2) results on a proficiency writing test, (3) analysis of the dialogue journals based on Gutstein's (1987) model of communicative competence (quantity, coherence, topical appropriateness, functionality, and interactional awareness). The relationship among these three measures were seen to be indicative of student communicative competence in dialogue journal writing. The results of both the proficiency writing post-test and the holistic ranking showed a high correlation with the following characteristics of good language communicators: quantity (the total number of words), interactional awareness (percentage of answered questions), grammar (percentage of correct verb conjugation and tense/mood), and the function of analyzing, evaluating, and reflecting. The holistic ranking also showed the following characteristics of a good language
communicator: the function of reporting personal facts, the function of requesting general information, the function of request for opinions, the range of language functions used, the miscellaneous topic domain, the range of topic categories written about. The best predictors for the holistic ranking of the dialogue journals were the total number of functions used and the total number of words written. The best predictor for the results on the proficiency writing post-test was the percentage of correct usage of tense/mood verbs. These findings provide support for the inclusion of dialogue journal writing in the foreign language classroom.
INTRODUCTION

Foreign language writing instructors and researchers are searching for more effective classroom models to help with the instruction of writing. Most have sought to answer the question: what is the most effective method to achieve the highly complex, cognitively involved skill of writing for foreign language students? The process of this inquiry has led to the work of a varied group of scholars including second language acquisition researchers and theorists, composition researchers and theorists, and cognitive psychologists.

The past fifteen years have witnessed a major paradigm shift in the area of writing, moving the emphasis from product to process. According to Hairston (1983), the product-centered, traditional paradigm stressed expository writing, made style its most important element, and maintained that the writing process is linear, and needs to be determined by writers before they start to write. Most importantly it emphasized the mechanics of surface language features of the final product rather than the message or the way communication is attempted.

The process-centered paradigm, on the other hand, focuses on writing processes. It teaches strategies for invention and discovery, it considers audience, purpose, and context of writing, and it emphasizes recursiveness in the writing process. Within this paradigm, research on texts and text analysis is developing rapidly. Hairston (1982) includes research in linguistics and cognitive sciences as part of the new paradigm for
teaching writing and emphasizes that process theory is diverse, flexible, and still emerging.

In recent years, foreign language learning has gone from meaningless drills and abstract explanations to serious efforts at achieving genuine communication. The present-day focus on communication shifts the emphasis away from prescribed teaching methods and techniques, including its "correct" ways of selecting, sequencing, grading and presenting the language, toward an instructional environment where students explore their ideas and thoughts, and communicate with a purpose and a specific audience in mind. According to proponents of communicative teaching, foreign language acquisition is best attained in learning environments and contexts that acknowledge communication and meaning as central to the learning experience. Until recently, interest in communication and learning has focused more on oral language use rather than on writing which is considered to be a relatively solitary, non-interactive activity. However, several scholars (Staton, Shuy, Kreeft Peyton & Reed, 1982; Britton 1982)) argue that writing, like speech, is also socially embedded, functional and interactive, and that writing development, like oral language development, may be facilitated by opportunities to engage in meaningful interaction.

Dialogue journal writing represents one instance of a growing number of approaches to interactive writing. In their journals, students write regularly to the teacher. The teacher writes back, not as an evaluator of the writing, but as a co-participant in it. Because the interaction is written and time passes between contributions by the participants, both can introduce a number of topics in one journal entry. Topics are
introduced, responded to, and dropped as the writers see fit. Both teacher and students profit from treating writing as a mental process and as a mean of communication. When students realize that teachers read their writing to understand what they are trying to say rather than to judge their grammar and usage, they write more, and with greater fluency and satisfaction because their writing involves them personally (Barnett, 1989). Thus dialogue journals constitute an excellent activity to foster language development and language acquisition.

Due to the fact that there exists no research in the use of dialogue journals in foreign language classrooms, the purpose of this dissertation is to study the effects of writing in dialogue journals on students enrolled in a third year high school French classroom. Three aspects are to be studied:

1. the effect of dialogue journals on writing performance;
2. the attitude of students toward dialogue journals;
3. selected characteristics of good language communicators based on the works of students whose journals have been rated the most communicative in the class by three native speakers.

The results of the above findings will be compared to other dialogue journal studies in English as a second language and in first language. Second, the impact on the writing and use of proficiency tests to evaluate writing will be reviewed. Finally, applications
for classroom practice and curriculum writing will be suggested based on the results of this research.

The remainder of this chapter will focus in greater detail on each of the above aspects of this research. It is divided into five sections. First a brief summary of the history of the teaching of writing in foreign language classes permits the reader to understand the many changes this skill has undergone. The second section of this chapter explains the recent developments in teaching writing as a process. Section 3 describes dialogue journals and provides a rationale for their use as a source for developing communicative competence in writing. The fourth section gives evidence of the significance of this study in the advancement of research in foreign language acquisition. The final section defines terms used in this study.

A History of the Teaching of Writing in Foreign Languages

Writing once held a prominent place in education. The Greeks considered its mastery a central concern of their curriculum. They made little distinction between learning to write in one's native language or in another. Both processes involved imitating the prose of masters until one's own sense of style was developed. After the Middle Ages, writing in foreign languages was increasingly limited to translation, however it remained a major goal of foreign language instruction up until the audiolingual revolution of this century (Dvorak, 1986).
Audiolingualism is associated with oral language practice, the demise of the grammar-translation method, and the repudiation of the favored status which written language skills had previously enjoyed. Most proponents of audiolingualism considered writing "essentially sound transferred to a different modality, talk on paper," (Prochoroff, 1963, p. 63). The principal focus involved learning "to shape the script and spell the words" that one had already learned how to say (Mackey, 1965, p. 231). Exposure to written language was to be delayed until students had developed a strong oral base; once writing instruction had begun, students were to use only the vocabulary and patterns previously made familiar from oral drilling. Learning a second language meant overcoming a habit formed when acquiring the first language and replacing it, or at least overcoming its influence, when learning the second language. Learning was not viewed as a mental process but as a mechanical one. The set of habits that made up the first language was seen as interfering with the acquisition of the new set. The mechanism for acquiring a new set of habits was the habit formation paradigm of response, conditioned to a particular stimulus, and then generalized to other similar stimuli. Thus, by urging students to "write only what you can say," teachers hoped to help them avoid the pitfalls of interference from their native language and the subsequent building of bad habits in the target language. The quality of language was determined by the relative presence or absence of error. Preferably, error was anticipated and avoided, but if this were not possible, then it was remedied through careful correction and repeated practice.

The audiolingual approach has gradually given way to a more communicative view of language and language learning, and to the notion that the system which the learner
develops is neither based entirely on his or her first language, nor on the target language. In communicative interchanges, teachers are to react to the content of the students' language instead of focusing on its accuracy. Thus, in teaching a modern language, the most general purpose is to enable students to communicate with native speakers of the language, and to understand the culture better. In the past few years, foreign language education has proposed many new theories which have called for significant changes in the way languages are taught (Rivers, 1981; Krashen, 1982; Omaggio, 1986). Today it is fashionable to use a communicative approach rather than a linguistic approach. Instead of teaching students vocabulary words or grammatical structures in isolation, teachers are urged to help students view and use the language as a tool, one which will enable them to accomplish a specific communicative purpose (function) in a particular form and setting (situation) about a particular subject (topic). The focus is always on what the students can do with the language content and how well they can do it (proficiency). Consequently, there is greater recognition of the need for personal writing assignments (Chastain, 1976; Rivers, 1981).

In the past several years, the concept of "proficiency" and "proficiency oriented instruction" has sparked a great deal of interest and discussion among theorists and practitioners in second-language education. This interest has been growing steadily ever since 1979, when President Carter's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies, in its report entitled "Strength through Wisdom," recommended that a common,
nationally recognized standard for measuring language proficiency be adopted by all foreign language educators in this country. The work of establishing proficiency guidelines for all four skills (speaking, reading, writing, and listening) was accomplished by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and The Educational Testing Service (ETS) under a federal grant entitled "A Design for Measuring and Communicating Foreign Language Proficiency." The ACTFL guidelines for proficiency in writing describe nine levels of writing ability: novice-low, novice-mid, novice-high, intermediate-low, intermediate-mid, intermediate-high, advanced, advanced-high, and superior. These levels of proficiency are not to be associated with particular courses of study, but rather with the ability of writers to handle and use the language. These levels are expansive in scope, ranging from the ability to copy and transcribe to the ability to write position or research papers and formal and informal correspondence. Following the format of the guidelines in the other skills, the guidelines in writing set forth statements of function (task or purpose), content or context (topic or subject matter), and accuracy (including discourse structure, style, grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, and spelling) for each level.

Classroom instructors are urged to teach writing in ways that promote proficiency in the functional and communicative use of language. High school students in their first year of foreign language study are asked to write "lists" within a certain context. An assignment might say: "you have invited a few friends over to your house for a party;
with your partner make a list of items that you will need: food, decoration, music, etc." This activity is communicative and corresponds to the novice level of proficiency. Later on, students are required to write postcards and letters such as: "you have just arrived in France to spend a month as an exchange student; write a postcard to your parents." This represents the intermediate level on the proficiency scale.

Today's foreign language teachers are bombarded with several new developments and ideas. Audiolingualism had been a reassuring and structured time for teachers; they had been told that they only needed to follow to the letter prescribed steps of teaching in order for students to be able to communicate with native speakers. Now, many new foreign language acquisition theories are emerging; audiolingualism is no longer the answer. Teachers are left in the classroom with the uncomfortable knowledge that no one true solution to language acquisition exists, and that numerous variables (for example, characteristics of the social setting, personal characteristics of the learner such as cognitive and learning style, etc.) account for some of the differences in foreign language learning. In writing instruction alone, the key words of this decade are: communication, proficiency, and process. Teachers are urged to promote communication and proficiency in the written language, but also to respond to the students' writing in a way that underscores writing as a process.
Therefore, teachers wonder how they should respond to students' writing in order to develop these communicative writing skills and foster a process approach to writing? The following section addresses this question.

Recent Developments: Writing as a Process

Most foreign language teachers faced with student writing reach for the red pen and begin correcting errors of form such as spelling, agreement, word order, verb ending, etc. Even those teachers who have learned to tolerate student errors in spoken language so as not to miss the intended meaning often cannot do the same with a written message (Chastain, 1988). Research in both first and second language writing generally shows that correcting students' errors does not lead to more accurate composition (Semke, 1984; Osterholm, 1986; Dvorak, 1986). Other studies in both first and second language writing also indicate that many writers have a "task overload," that is, interference between the message itself, the manner in which it should be stated, and the surface accuracy of that statement (Dvorak, 1986). Zamel's study (1983) of six ESL students found that this interference inhibited especially the least skilled writers. When teachers correct everything, students may be faced with too many changes to absorb and incorporate.
Given the lack of progress in student writing, Zamel (1982) in her study of the responding styles of fifteen ESL teachers, surveyed teacher comments and corrections on 105 student compositions. She describes her findings as follows:

ESL writing teachers misread student texts, are inconsistent in their reactions, make arbitrary corrections, write contradictory comments, provide vague prescriptions, impose abstract rules and standards, respond to texts as fixed and final products, and rarely make content-specific comments or offer specific strategies for revising the text (p. 86).

According to Cohen (1987), who analyzed student reactions to teacher correction of compositions in second language, students are more interested in comments on content and organization, but teachers are more concerned with accuracy and form. Many teachers present students with a confusing response to their work. On one hand, they treat the students' writing as though it were in its final form by assigning a final grade to the composition; on the other hand, they make suggestions more appropriate to a rough draft.

James Britton (1982), in Language and Learning, reminds us that our language is first of all a way for us to be with one another, to commune as well as to communicate. He is against the over riding concerns of most teachers with issues of control in writing. Britton warns against a system of schooling which uses writing largely as a tool for testing, so that most of what students write is destined less to be read than it is to be corrected. He insists that no one can learn to write well without first being given the
chance to write about what matters to him/her and second, writing to a reader who will respond not merely to the form but also to what the writer has to say.

The view of writing as a process suggests a number of important modifications in the foreign language approach to the teaching of writing. It appears that the teacher's most important role in the process of learning to write is that of being a good reader. That is, the teacher must be willing to read and respond to student writing in terms of the clarity, coherence, and effectiveness of its content, whether or not that writing is grammatically error-free. If foreign language writing instruction is to be effective, it must find a way to be a satisfying rather than an intimidating experience for students.

The proponents of the process approach are arguing for an evaluation of writing according to the student's "communicative competence." It is difficult for students or teachers to think of writing as a purposeful or communicative exercise if the primary goal, whether stated or unstated, is grammatical accuracy. In order for student writing to be more effective, and for the reading of student writing to be more enjoyable, it is important to create other purposes for writing. Offering students imaginative and interesting topics on which to write is important; even more important is helping them to approach their task in terms of two questions: to whom are you writing? for what purpose?

Researchers need to give additional attention to the development of a more communicative approach to the evaluation of student writing efforts. A number of
people (Chastain, 1980; Fischer, 1984; Gaudiani, 1979), have offered alternatives to the grade based solely on grammar. While all of their suggestions are helpful, an unresolved weakness of each is the perception by students and teachers that evaluation of content is the "subjective" part of the grade while the grammar evaluation is "objective." Clearly, if students are to be taught how to write, the criteria for good content in a composition must become as objectively defined as those governing its grammatical accuracy. As foreign language teachers and researchers become more familiar with the process approach to writing, more pragmatic insights regarding both the teaching and evaluation of content and organizational principles should emerge.

Foreign language teachers must be aware of the research on the process of writing, and therefore should understand that writing by nature is exploratory and provocative. It is never finished, but serves as a step upon which further steps can be taken. It is provoked by previous speech or writing, and in turn provokes additional writing. However, much school-based writing conceals the dynamic nature of the writing process, and therefore students can be deceived into thinking that writing must always be perfect and final. To dispel this notion, we need classroom activities which teach writing as a process, which are rewarding and satisfying to students, and which can be evaluated in a way that is meaningful and helpful to students and teachers.
Dialogue Journals

Dialogue journal writing is a safe practice ground on which beginning writers in a foreign language can experiment and develop their writing abilities in a situation which is meaningful to them. James Moffett explains that "ideally, a student would write because he has intent on saying something for real reasons of his own and because he wanted to get certain effects on a definite audience" (1983, p. 193). Studies of dialogue journals with native English speakers (Staton, Shuy, Kreeft Peyton & Reed, 1988) and limited English proficiency students (Hayes & Barhuth, 1985; Kreeft, Shuy, Staton, Reed & Morrow, 1984) indicate that when students write over time with real audiences about topics that interest and concern them, there is remarkable development in their desire to use written language and in their facility with it. Such writing can lead students to increased confidence in their ability to write in a foreign language, which in turn can make them more likely to take risks and make commitments to writing that can facilitate the development of their writing abilities.

A dialogue journal is a conversation between a teacher and an individual student. However, this conversation differs from all others they may have, in or out of the classroom; it is written, it is completely private, and it takes place regularly and continually throughout an entire school year. All that is required is a bound notebook and a teacher who is interested in what students have to say and committed to writing regularly to each of them. Students write regularly in the journal, as much as they want.
and about whatever they choose, and the teacher writes back, not grading or correcting
the writing, and not responding with simple platitudes or evaluative comments such as
"Bien! (good)" or "Commentaire interessant (Interesting point)". The teacher is a
conversational partner, who accepts what is written and responds as directly and openly
as possible, while keeping in mind the student's language ability and interests. The
value of the dialogue journal lies in the open exchange of ideas that can occur, and the
cconcerned and warm acceptance by the teacher of the students' writing (Peyton, 1990).

Fear has been expressed that dialogue journals in high school foreign language
classrooms are not possible due to the students limited knowledge of the target language.
In the present study, twenty-one students enrolled in a high school French III class
participated in dialogue journal writing throughout the school year. Two examples
between two students and this teacher/researcher show evidence that foreign language
learners can express themselves in writing long before they have mastered its forms and
structures. (The examples below and those throughout this study are drawn from the
actual "written conversations" between this teacher/researcher and her students. In all
cases the writing is reproduced as it was written, without changes to grammar, spelling,
or punctuation.)

February 5, 1991
Jacques:  Bonjour,
ça va? Cette jour avant, je dors à 3 heure à matin. Je suis très, très fatigué.
Mon term-paper est difficile et long mais cette weekend je fais ça beaucoup.
"L'étudiant du mois" est une récompense de l'étudiant qui fait la bonne note dans
la classe. Dans chimie, j'ai 101%. Cette note est la plus bonne note dans la classe. Pour cla, mon prof me donne cette récompense. Dans le tournoi de maths je participe dans "Trigonometrie" et "Advanced Matematique".
J'ai peur que la guerre dure longtemps. Beaucoup de soldats mourira. Triste, triste. Regardes-tu le tennis à la télé? Hier ma famille téléphone ma famille en Inde. Tout le monde là va bien. Ma stéréo est rupture. Remercie dieu parce que il a une garantie pour une année. Je l'ai acheté à 7-2-90!

Jacques!

Teacher: Mon cher Jacques,

Tu es très amusant, tu as un grand sens de l'humour, j'ai toujours beaucoup de plaisir à lire ton journal.
101% en chimie, c'est extraordinaire. Est-ce que tu sais quelle profession, tu veux faire plus tard?

Je partage avec toi tes inquiétudes sur la guerre. Mon mari me dit que les alliés font très bien, et qu'il n'y aura pas beaucoup de mort. Moi, je ne comprends pas tout. A la télé, ils disent que les américains bombardent l'armée Irakienne toutes les trois heures, comment est-ce possible que ce ne soit pas encore fini?

Mes parents habitent au Maroc, c'est un pays arabe, et en ce moment il y a beaucoup de manifestations pour Saddam Hussein.

Au revoir

February 14, 1991

Jacques: Mme,

Bonjour, aujourd'hui est le jour de la Saint-Valentin!


La guerre ne soit pas fini parceque les aliés ne bombardent pas la population civil. Je crois que il y a beaucoup de manifestation pour Hussein. Les arabes aiment Hussein parcequ'il bombarde Israel. Cet monde est très désorde. Il ya beaucoup de problèmes Est-ce que la humanité arrive à destin.

Jacques

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Teacher  Mon cher Jacques,

La Saint-Valentin est la fête des amoureux. Est-ce que tu as une petite amie?
Vous avez tous beaucoup de travail en ce moment. Moi aussi, quand j'étudie je mange, et j'adore le chocolat, hélas!
Comment s'est passée la Foire de Sciences?
Ce semestre j'ai moins de travail que le semestre dernier, j'enseigne 4 classes au lieu de 6 classes. J'ai plus de temps pour écrire dans vos journaux, pour corriger les interrogations écrites et pour préparer mes classes.
Bien sur que le monde est en désordre, c'est le chaos. Je pense que nous faisions la guerre pour protéger notre genre de vie. Il y a tellement de différence entre la façon que les américains vivent et comment vivent les pauvres dans les autres pays. C'est un déséquilibre qui va être de plus en plus difficile à maintenir.
Mon père a envoyé sa femme et ses enfants en France parce que c'est trop dangereux de rester au Maroc, il y a trop de manifestations.
Au Revoir.

Jacques:  Mme,

Bonjour, ça va?

Ce weekend, je joue beaucoup de tennis. Le 18 est l'anniversaire de ma soeur. Elle a 10 ans. Non, je n'ai pas une petite amie, Dommage! La Foire de Science, Ah oui, Je reçois la place seconde. Tu as de la chance ce semestre. J'ai plus, plus, plus, de travail que le semestre dernier. Je n'ai pas de temps.

La guerre est très déplorable. Mais, tous les guerres sont déplorables. C'est grave que ta famille quitte Maroc. Je sympathise avec eux.

J'achète une nouvelle cassette ce weekend. Mon term paper a 13 pages écrite à la machine. Très long, n'est-ce-pas? Nous bâtirons une nouvelle maison cet été. Elle se trouve à Perkins, proche Kennilworth! Je suis très impatient! j'ai beaucoup de devoir, il faut que je parte maintenant!

Qu'est ce que tu fais ce weekend?

Raconte-moi!

Au revoir

The second exchange is with Renee.

January 31, 1991

Teacher  Bonjour Renée

Non je n'ai pas vu "Carte Verte" encore, j'espère y aller la semaine prochaine. C'est l'histoire d'un français qui épouse une américaine qu'il ne connaissait pas. Ils l'épouse pour pourvoir vivre et travailler en Amérique et avoir "la carte verte".
En ce moment je ne lis pas, parce que je passe tout mon temps libre à écrire ma dissertation et à lire des articles sur mon sujet. Je serai heureuse quand j'aurai fini, c'est un travail très difficile, pénible et solitaire.
Je ne connais pas les livres de V.C. Andrews, mais quand j'aurai fini ma dissertation, je lirai ces cinq livres. De quoi parlent-ils?
Au revoir

Renée
Bonjour Madame,
Qu'est-ce que c'est la dissertation? Pourquoi est-ce que vous la faites si elle est penible et solitaire? Combien de temps est-ce que la dissertation va faire à finir?
Qu'est-ce que vous faites pour Mardi Gras? Est-ce que vous allez à la Nouvelle Orleans? Je ne pense pas que je vais aller. Je suis allée l'année dernière pour le Krewe de Bacchus parade. Dennis Quail a été le marshal de cette parade. Est-ce que vous allez à la parade de la ville espagnol? Je suis allée une année. Il y a deux ans, mon professeur de Français I a été dans la parade et il s'habille comme Carmen Miranda avec des autre hommes. Il a été aussi dans un orchestre et il a joué à la Fest-for All.
Samodi, c'est l'anniversaire de ma meilleur amie. Nous allons faire des courses ensemble samedi. Je ne peux pas attendre. Je ne la vois pas depuis les vacances de Noel.
Je ne sais pas que vous dites par "De quoi parlent-ils?", expliquez, s'il vous plait.
Au revoir, Renée

February 2, 1991
Teacher
Salut Renée,
De quoi parlent-ils = quelle est l'histoire
La dissertation est une recherche, puis après il faut écrire un papier expliquant la recherche puis il faut la défendre oralement devant un comité de 7 personnes, c'est ouvert au public. Je le fais parceque je veux avoir mon doctorat, c'est un rêve que j'aimerais réaliser. Je pense finir à Noel prochain ou au printemps 92. A Mardi Gras, je pense que je vais rester à Baton Rouge, peut-être que j'irai voir la parade de la ville espagnol, ça depend si il fait beau ou si il pleut. Je connais ton professeur de Français I, mais j'ai oublié son nom. Je sais qu'il n'habite plus à Baton Rouge maintenant.
Ou habite ta nouvelle amie. Si elle habite à Baton Rouge, à quelle ecole va-t-elle?
Au revoir
Bonjour Madame,
Le nom de mon professeur de Français I est Dr. Russel Bailey. Il habite à Floride maintenant ou il enseigne à une université. Comment est-ce que vous le connaissez?

Ma amie s'appelle Brigette. Je la connais depuis quatre ans. Elle habite à Baton Rouge près de la rue de Jones Creek. Elle va à Woodlawn. Nous n'allons pas faire des courses ce week-end parce qu'elle est une gardienne d'enfants et elle doit regarder les enfants.

Dans le premier livre "Le Jardin des Ombres", une femme qui s'appelle Olivia va marié un homme. La fille d'Olivia a marié son frère, mais ils ne savent pas qu'ils sont des frères et soeurs. Ils pensent qu'ils sont demi-oncle et nièce. Olivia n'aime pas le mariage et elle pense aussi qu'ils sont méchants. Dans le deuxième livre "Fleurs dans le Attique", Olivia a fermé à clef ses petits-enfants à cause de quoi sa fille a fait. Dans le troisième livre "Petales sur le Vent" deux enfants tombent amoureux et le cycle va continuer.

Au revoir, Renée

Jacques and Renée, as all the students in this study, demonstrate that extended conversations between foreign language students and their teacher is possible. In their responses, these two students are attentive to the teachers questions and comments: they also control the topics of conversation. These two excerpts are also included to show evidence that students writing in dialogue journals have characteristics of "authentic" writing rather than characteristics of "school assigned" writing. "Authentic" since the aim for both parties is to communicate as equal partners, and not "school assigned" because the teacher does not correct errors.

Especially in the beginning stages of learning a foreign language, students need writing that does not overwhelm, discourage or frustrate them. The dialogue journal is a safe practice ground on which beginners can experiment and develop their writing.
abilities in a situation meaningful to them. Britton (1982) calls this form of writing "expressive writing" because it assumes various forms such as thinking aloud on paper, expressing feelings and needs, and being preoccupied with the present moment. Expressive writing is a basic beginning point for students in the "initial stages of grappling for a new concept" (p.150). Dialogue journal writing gives them the opportunity to build their confidence as writers while they develop skills that can be used in other kinds of writing. In their early journal entries, students summarize information because it is impossible for them to tell their whole life story:


Later in the year, they explain their point of view in order to help the reader understand the importance of their opinion:

Dans le monde, je pense que les problèmes les plus importants sont l'éducation et la famille. Beaucoup de gens n'ont pas une éducation, et ils ne peuvent pas lire ou travailler. Si ils travaillent, ils n'ont pas beaucoup d'argent. Pour avoir un meilleur monde, on faut étudier pour comprendre les technologies. Ce n'est pas bien que les gouvernements donnent beaucoup d'argent aux personnes. Les gouvernements devraient dépenser l'argent sur les écoles et les universités, et font les personnes étudier et travailler. Aussi, beaucoup de mariages ont fini dans un divorce. Les familles ne restent pas ensemble. Les personnes ne prennent pas la responsabilité pour leur actions. Je pense que c'est très triste, et j'espère qu'il sera mieux dans le futur (Jerome, May 1, 1991)

They write persuasive argument as they try to convince the reader of the impact of certain experiences in their lives:
Hier, pendant j'étais à la bibliothèque, quelqu'un a volé mon sac! Avant qu'il a disparu, j'ai reçu une nouvelle carte de bibliothèque, et j'ai du recevoir une autre carte! Tous les bibliothécaires à Goodwood ont savu mon problème. Nous avons cherché tous la bibliothèque, mais nous ne puvions pas le trouver. Le soir avant, je venais de transferer tous mes photos de mes amies et ma famille à mon nouveau portefeuille. Aussi, mon carte de social sécurité était dans mon sac, mais je suis heureuse que je n'avais pas l'argent. Assez de nouvelles mal (Michele, May 6, 1991).

Dialogue journals enable teacher and students to get to know each other in ways that simply are not possible otherwise (Jones, 1991). They do this, in the words of Joy Peyton and Leslee Reed (1990), by "opening an entirely new channel of communication" (p. 19). In class there is rarely sufficient time to talk to each student regularly or in much depth. Moreover, students may be embarrassed or afraid to speak openly with a teacher in front of others. Nadine, a French III student in this study wrote:

*I have become a lot closer and have come to appreciate my teacher. She has offered me some good advice and knows a lot about my personal life.*

Dialogue journal writing can serve as a focal point for a class in a number of ways. Journals can generate topics and can give the classroom teacher a valuable glimpse into the students' lives and concerns. From the exchanges grow topics that can be explored further, both in the journal and through other means. Michele wrote at length about her worries concerning a boys's feelings about her:

*Nous avons dîné à Benigan's ce soir là. Maintenant, je ne sais pas si je vois Victor. Les autres personnes me dirent qu'il m'aime. Pourquoi il ne me dit pas? Les autres personnes me disent qu'il est trop timide. Je sais qu'il est timide, mais il semble être timide seulement quand il est avec moi. Mais à les autres personnes (particulièrement les filles), il n'est pas timide du tout. Pourquoi? avez-vous une explication? souvent à l'école, je deviens très jaloux des autres filles parcequ'elles*
(particulièrement dans ma première heure ou il y a vingt filles et quatre garçons) draguent avec lui. Elles savent que je l'aime et souvent quand elles draguent avec lui, elles disent, "arretons, Michele est jalouse." Mais elles continuent. Je me dis souvent, "beaucoup d'autres personnes me disent toujours qu'il m'aime, mais il drague avec les autres filles. Est-ce qu'il m'aime vraiment? Une de mes amis, Polly, lui a demandé s'il m'aime, et il dit, "oui". Mais est-ce que c'est la vérité? Comment est-ce qu'on sait la vérité? J'espère qu'il peut me dire s'il m'aime. Je serai triste s'il ne m'aime pas, mais au moins je peux savoir la vérité. L'amour est trop compliqué. Est-ce que vous avez eu les problèmes comme ça? Je ne comprends pas et je ne comprendrai jamais l'amour (Michelle, April 8, 1991).

The above segment is an excellent example how a dialogue journal can impact on a curriculum. Taking this entry as a base, the teacher/researcher had students create and act out dialogues in which they used functions such as expressing feelings of anger, breaking up a relationship with a person of the opposite sex, and asking for forgiveness by apologizing. The dialogues were followed by students dictating to the teacher a letter which she wrote on an overhead transparency. Students on an imaginary trip in France were to write a letter to their American boy/girlfriend to explain why the relationship could not continue. The point here, in the Michelle example, is that a curriculum topic could be imposed upon a group of learners, but preferably should emerge through the journal exchange which the teacher continues as a topic of conversation. According to Moffett (1983), "the teacher's art is to move with this movement (Michelle's initiation of a topic of great interest to her), a subtle act possible only if the teacher shifts her gaze from the subject to the learner, for the subject is in the learner"(p.57). The teacher's
primary concern is, or should be, students' experiences with language rather than their perfection of prescribed forms.

The same characteristics of dialogue journals identified by different researchers (Staton, Shuy, Peyton, & Reed, 1988; Kreeft, Shuy, Staton, Reed & Morroy, 1984) apply to the examples of the dialogue journals written during this study.  

1) The writing has the qualities of good conversation. Both the students and the teacher can choose topics to discuss. Both can contribute equally, making comments and offering observations and opinions, requesting and giving clarification, asking and answering questions.

2) The writing is student-generated. The teacher also initiates topics, but most often responds to the students' topics, supporting and encouraging their writing.

3) The writing is continual. The regular journal exchange allows students to discuss certain topics with their teacher over a period of several days or weeks, such as the discussion with Jacques on the War in the Gulf.

4) The writing is functional. Students write to accomplish a wide variety of real purposes. They might request information ("Qu'est-ce que c'est la dissertation?"), or clarification ("Je ne sais pas que vous dites par 'de quoi parlent-ils?'"), state an opinion ("La guerre ne soit pas fini parceque les alliés ne bombardent pas la population civil"), describe a personal problem ("Hier, pendant j'étais à la bibliothèque, on a volé mon sac"), express a complaint ("Je ne comprends pas et ne comprendrai jamais l'amour").
5) The writing is varied in terms of topic, genre, and length. Although students are allowed to write about personal topics, they may also be encouraged to discuss nonpersonal topics, such as things they are studying in school, books they are reading, or current events. They write descriptions, explanations, narratives, complaints, or arguments with supporting details. Entries or topics may be as brief as a few sentences, or they may extend for several pages.

The Need for the Study

Although dialogue journals have been studied in many different settings (first language acquisition, English as a second language, content areas) and with students with special needs (deaf students, retarded students and handicapped students), there has not been a study of dialogue journals of native English speaking students in a foreign language classroom. Since dialogue journals meet all the different criteria which have been found to be optimal in fostering writing development and language acquisition, there is a need to study dialogue journals in a foreign language setting.

In addition, writing is often neglected in foreign language classes. The tendency is to view writing as the least useful of the four language skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing), and as a skill which should be taught to students who have had extensive language instruction. This may lead to the conclusion that writing is less important, and that it can be sacrificed to spend more time on the other three skills.
This study responds to this negative view of writing by evaluating students' improvement in writing and by studying the dialogue journals to see how extensively students write, on what topics, and using which language functions.

The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (1986) provide a description of the communicative skills associated with each proficiency level. There is a need for empirical studies, such as the present research, to determine which level of writing proficiency students should reach after a certain number of hours of instruction.

Expressing one's thoughts in writing is difficult even under the most supportive circumstances. Foreign language teachers need to consider carefully all the students' psychological and emotional attitudes toward written communication assignments. This study responds to this need by studying students' attitudes toward dialogue journals.

Nowadays teachers are to ensure the quality of activities and interaction by observing a specific set of essential principles, loosely bundled together under the name communicative approach. Given our knowledge about language acquisition, it is no doubt the case that the teacher is no longer given clear-cut syllabus specifications, lesson plans and sequences, detailed descriptions of proper techniques at proper times, etc. In this sense, previous methodologies such as the Direct Method, the Audiolingual Method, and others were much more specific and gave teachers detailed advice and instructions. Teaching materials were able to prescribe exactly how the teaching was to be carried out. This clarity and prescriptive precision is by and large lacking in communicative
teaching proposals, so that the teacher has much less external guidance available for judging the teaching. These increased responsibilities require knowledge and understanding of classroom processes and of human interaction in general. Classroom research, such as the present study, is therefore of direct interest to the communicatively oriented teacher.

By observing communicative language in writing, researchers can learn more about communicative competence itself. By understanding the contributing factors which allow some students to be more communicative than other students, teachers will have the tools to foster these skills in all students. This study responds to this need by analyzing the dialogue journals in terms of quantity, coherence, topics, functions, and interactions.

The Research Questions

This researcher will study dialogue journals looking at three different aspects: (1) student improvement in writing, (2) students' attitude toward dialogue journal writing, and (3) characteristics of communicative competence which make this activity successful. Specifically, the following questions will be examined:

**Research question one:** Do students who have written in their dialogue journals throughout the school year improve significantly in their level of writing proficiency?
Research question two: Do students who have engaged in dialogue journal writing throughout the school year have a positive attitude toward writing in a foreign language?

Research question three: Do students who are more communicatively competent write more than their less communicatively competent classmates?

Research question four: Do students who are more communicatively competent show more of an awareness of their audience than their less communicatively competent classmates?

Research question five: Do students who are more communicatively competent elaborate more than their less communicatively competent classmates?

Research question six: Do students who are more communicatively competent write using "more syntactically dense" (Fillmore, 1979) sentences than their less communicatively competent classmates?

Research question seven: Do students who are more communicatively competent generate fewer grammatical errors than their less communicatively competent classmates?

Research question eight: Do students who are more communicatively competent use a wider range of language functions than their less communicatively competent classmates?

Research question nine: Do students who are more communicatively competent use certain functions more often than their less communicatively competent classmates?
**Research question ten:** Do students who are more communicatively competent write about topics from certain domains more than their less communicatively competent classmates?

**Research question eleven:** Do students who are more communicatively competent write about topics from a wider variety of content areas than their less communicatively competent counterparts?

**Definition of Terms**

The following key terms are used frequently in this study and therefore need to be defined at the outset. Several of the analytic terms are explained in greater detail in Chapter Three.

**Acquisition** - is the internalization of rules and formulas which learners use to communicate in the L2. In this sense the term "acquisition" is synonymous with the term "learning." However, Krashen (1981) uses these terms with different meanings. "Acquisition," for Krashen, consists of the spontaneous process of rule internalization that results from natural language use, while "learning" consists of the development of conscious L2 knowledge through formal study (Ellis, 1986).

**ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines** - describe four proficiency levels (novice, intermediate, advanced, and superior) for each of the four language skills. These guidelines are used to determine the degree of general proficiency demonstrated on communication tasks by
the person being rated. Following the format of the Guidelines in the other skills, the
Guidelines in writing set forth statements of function (tasks or purpose), content or
context (topic or subject matter), and accuracy (including discourse structure, style,
grammer, vocabulary, punctuation, and spelling) for each level (Magnan, 1985).

Attitudes - are a sets of beliefs students have about such factors as the target language
culture, their own culture and, in the case of classroom learning, of their teacher and the
learning tasks they are given. These beliefs influence language learning in a number of
ways (Ellis, 1986).

Competence - is the internalization of rules by learners which are then organized into
a system. This constitutes learners "competence." The actual use of this system to
comprehend and produce utterances is referred to as "performance." Researchers (and
linguists) disagree about the exact nature of "competence". Some (e.g. Chomsky) view
competence as entirely linguistic, while others (e.g. Hymes) view competence as
communicative (i.e. "communicative competence" consists of both knowledge of
linguistic rules and knowledge of how these rules are used to communicate meanings)
(Ellis, 1986).

Discrete point tests - attempt to measure one grammar point at a time. They do not
reflect the way language is actually used. They focus on form, rather than on
communication. They contribute little to one's language proficiency.
French III - equivalent to the third year of high school French. At the end of French III students have had approximately 450 contact hours in the classroom. This level corresponds to three semesters of college instruction.

Input - constitutes the language to which the second language learner is exposed. It can be spoken or written. Input serves as the data which the learner must use to determine the rules of the target language.

Interlanguage - is the term coined by Selinker (1972) to refer to the systematic knowledge of a second language which is independent of both the learner's first language and the target language. It refers to stages in learning a language.

Proficiency tests - measure what students can do with what they have learned; that is, how well they are able to use the language in natural situations. In a proficiency test, student achievement is measured against an absolute standard. The absolute standard is that of the educated native speaker.

Target language - is the language that the learner is attempting to learn.

Topic discourse - is "a proposition (or set of propositions) about which the speaker is requesting or providing new information" (Keenan and Schieffelin, 1976, p.338).

Topic initiation - refers to introducing new discourse topics (Staton and Kreeft, 1982).
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first part, historical in nature, explains the widespread use of dialogue journals. Part II reviews the background for the theory of communicative competence used in this dissertation. Part III reviews studies of the relationship between student attitude, writing, and writing development. Part IV details selected research on the analysis of dialogue journals which provided the original impetus for this work.

Historical Perspective

Dialogue journals were first studied by Staton in 1979 when she was a Ph.D candidate in counseling psychology. She analyzed journals from a sixth grade class whose teacher, Leslie Reed, had used them as a means of communicating personally with each student in order to promote their personal growth as well as their language development. Her students wrote daily, usually choosing their own topics. The following day, students received written responses which encouraged them to continue the conversation. In the early 1980's, Mrs. Reed began teaching nonnative speaking sixth-graders, and Joy Kreeft, Roger Shuy, and others undertook the first studies of dialogue writing in an ESL context (1984). Since then, dialogue journals have been used and/or studied in several other settings including the following:

1. In university courses ESL students interacted in their dialogue journals with professors about a wide range of topics depending on the nature of the course, including concepts covered in the course, literature being read, writing in progress, adjustment to
a new culture, and career goals. In these dialogues, students had consistent opportunities to use English in a variety of ways, and to use and further develop higher levels of thinking and self-expression (Steffensen, 1986, 1987, 1988).

2. In teacher development courses and in in-service workshops, writing with professors allowed prospective and practicing teachers to reflect on course content, their experiences in the classroom, and their development as teachers, and prepared them for keeping journals with their own students (Brinton & Holten, 1989; Roderick, 1986).

3. In adult basic education and literacy classes, adults at the beginning stages of learning English, native and English speakers who were nonliterate moved beyond practicing discrete skills and slowly began to experience written English as a means of personal empowerment, as they learned to discuss issues that were important to them (Hester, 1986; Klos, 1988).

4. In ESL and bilingual classrooms, children at lower elementary levels began the dialogue journal by drawing or writing a few words, and gradually gained more facility as they continued to write and read the teacher's responses. Dialogue journals provided a highly social, nonthreatening way to lead them into other kinds of school-related reading and writing activities (Bailes, Searls, Slobodzian, & Staton, 1986; Peyton, 1990).

5. In classrooms for deaf students, English was often a second or foreign language. Dialogue journals gave these students the opportunity to use writing for genuine communication (Bailes, 1986; Staton, 1985; Walworth, 1985, 1989).

6. In foreign language classrooms, dialogue journals provided a safe practice ground from which students developed their writing skills. Short articles by Martin(1989), Pesola
& Curtain (1989) and by Popkin (1985) provided a rationale for the opportunity to extend the use of the foreign language in an authentic, communicative way. Some practical suggestions were also given by these writers pertaining to the implementation of this activity, such as posting expressions of "feelings" on a chart for easy reference as well as labeling classroom objects.

7. In settings for mentally handicapped and learning disabled students, dialogue journals were also used. For some who previously had been considered nonreaders and -writers, the dialogue journal became their first and most extended reading and writing experience (Farley, 1986; Flores, Rueda, & Porter, 1986; Peyton, & Steinberg, 1985).

8. In counseling high risk students, who were not necessarily language limited, but who had demonstrated little success in school, teachers and counselors found that these students became motivated to read and write using dialogue journals. The safety and distance of written interaction opened up communication possibilities that were blocked in oral face-to-face conversations (McGuire, 1986; Staton, 1997).

In short, dialogue journals have proven flexible and adaptable to a wide variety of communication settings, and teachers continue to report success with them in situations that broaden the range still further.

Dialogue Journals and Communicative Competence

One of the purposes of the present study is to determine some of the contributing factors found in the dialogue journals of good language foreign communicators. The analysis of these factors is based on a theory of communicative competence in writing

Comprehension of Gutstein's model requires a review of communicative competence in dialogue journals as it was first discussed by the pioneers of dialogue journal analysis (Staton, Shuy, Kreeft Peyton, 1982). The sociolinguistic model of "communicative competence" was used initially in trying to analyze dialogue journals. The model was originally suggested by Hymes (1972) and then was later developed by Roger Shuy and his colleagues at the Center for Applied Linguistics during extensive studies of children's functional language (Griffin & Shuy, 1978). This model assumed that competence involved knowing how to use language to get things done, to accomplish one's intentions and purposes, and that such competence was developed from infancy, even before specific linguistic strategies were available. The realization of competence was lifelong, and like all human development, consisted of learning new strategies for accomplishing language functions in new contexts (Brown & De Loache, 1978; Shuy, 1981). Staton, Shuy, Kreeft Peyton (1982) also found Grice's (1975) perspective on conversational cooperativeness especially helpful as a working model of communicative competence. Grice describes the ideal conditions for rational human communication in four maxims, which he claims represent the intuitive knowledge of all language users, and which each participant in a conversation follows and assumes the other speaker is also following. Grice's Cooperative Principle for conversation includes four specific maxims with which each language user is familiar. These are (1) the Maxim of Quantity - that utterances will
contain sufficient information about the topic at hand, (2) the Maxim of Relation - that the information will be relevant to the topic, (3) the Maxim of Quality - that the utterance will be sincere, and (4) the Maxim of Manner - that what is said will be clear, not ambiguous or obscure. Staton, Shuy, Peyton Kreeft (1982) found that the students' writing in their dialogue journals during a school year conformed admirably to these maxims.

To the above four maxims of conversational cooperativeness, Gutstein (1987) added the concept of fluency using Fillmore's (1979) definition of oral fluency which she transferred to the written medium. She claims that communicative competence has the six following components: Quantity, Coherence, Appropriateness, Creativity, Functionality and Interactional Awareness (1987). Gutstein first four components are identical to Fillmore's.

1) Quantity. The first kind of fluency which Fillmore discusses is "the ability to talk at length with few pauses, the ability to fill time with talk" (1979, p. 93). This component is also equivalent to Grice's Maxim of Quantity. It relates to the actual amount of language generated.

2) Coherence. The second type of fluency that Fillmore describes serves, to a degree, as a caveat to the first, since someone who talks at length may not necessarily make sense. Fillmore describes this kind of fluency as "the ability to talk in coherent, reasoned, and 'semantically dense' sentences" (p. 93). A communicatively competent speaker of a language uses language in a coherent, reasoned way. His speech reflects not only grammatical accuracy, but perhaps even more importantly, it includes clear semantic
and syntactic relationships between sentences. His speech has meaning and it makes sense. In Grice's terms, "coherence" falls in the category of "Manner". A coherent, understandable speaker will a) "avoid obscurity of expression", and will also b) "avoid ambiguity" (Grice, 1975, p. 46). Clarity of expression entails using intelligible, unambiguous language that the interlocutor will understand.

3) Topical Appropriateness. The third kind of fluency discussed by Fillmore is "the ability to have appropriate things to say in a wide range of contexts" (p.93). A person with this kind of fluency is "verbally at ease in many different kinds of conversational settings" (p. 93). In terms of communicative competence, a speaker must command several important aspects of this ability; the speaker must control register, style, and vocabulary levels. The speaker must endeavor to bring up topics appropriate to the speech situation, topics about which he has something meaningful or appropriate to say, topics which might be of interest to the hearer, or about which the hearer might have something to add. Gutstein relates the characteristic of topical appropriateness to Grice's Maxim of Relation. In general conversation, relevance is mutual expectation on the part of interlocutors. In Grice's terms, the expectation is that "a partner's contribution ... be appropriate to the immediate needs at each stage of the transaction" (1975, p. 47). Appropriateness, explains Gutstein, can apply to content, style register, and other aspects of the interaction.

4) Creativity. The fourth kind of fluency that Fillmore describes is the ability to "be creative and imaginative in language use" (p.93). In terms of communicative competence, such a speaker is at ease with the language and is able to express himself
in creative and unusual ways, he can play with language, make jokes, and find novel ways of expressing his ideas. Creativity in language is part of the composite of communicative competence, but in actual practice, may play a secondary role, since very few instances of creative writing have been reported in second language learning.

Gutstein adds two additional qualities of communicative competence which are not linked to aspects of Fillmore's four points of fluency (1979). She calls these two qualities "functionality" and "interactional awareness."

5) Functionality. This fifth criteria of communicative competence is the degree to which a speaker uses language successfully to accomplish goals in the real world. If the speaker's goal is to obtain information, can he do so successfully? If he wishes to apologize, complain, question, inform, thank, and so on, can he do so effectively in every possible speech situation? Functionality may be seen as the sum of Fillmore's characteristics; however, language can be lacking in one or more components (e.g., it may be ungrammatical, lack coherence) and still achieve the goal for which it was intended.

6). Interactional Awareness. This sixth criteria of communicative competence means that the speaker's utterances should reflect an awareness of or sensitivity to the audience. The speaker makes efforts to include the audience/interlocutor in the communication via topic selection, elaboration, continuation or discontinuation of topics.
Gutstein (1987) in her study of the assessment of communicative competence used a triangulation approach. The first measure was the students' grade point average (GPA), the second measure consisted of an analysis of aspects of discourse topic management, and the third measure was the holistic evaluation of communicative ability in the journals.

Students were rated on each measure, and stratified into high, middle and low groups of equal size. Correlations between the three kinds of measures were then determined. The holistic ranking and the GPA's correlated very highly (.86), supporting Gutstein's hypothesis that GPA's in some way assess students' communicative ability in addition to their proficiency in the traditional skill areas. The correlation between the discourse topic results and the two other measures was also significant. This correlation suggested that the linguistically based discourse topic analysis was also a valid indicator of student communicative ability.
In analyzing the journals themselves, Gutstein studied four of the six components of communicative competence, Quantity, Coherence, Topical Appropriateness, and Interactional Awareness. She did not study two of the components, creativity and functionality, even though she had added "functionality" in her definition of communicative competence. Each of the four components of the discourse topic cluster (quantity, coherence, appropriateness, and interactiveness) was analyzed using the following discourse measures.

1. Quantity: Number of initiations
   - Initiations per entry ratio
   - Difference between number of student/teacher initiations
   - Incorporating initiations (to introduce a new but related topic)
   - Sentence-topic ratio
   - Student percentage of initiations

2. Coherence: Sentence-topic ratio

3. Appropriateness: Recycled topics
   - Continued topics
   - Content of topics
   - Variety of topics
### 4. Interactiveness:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of initiations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recycling topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporating initiations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continued topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic domains</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The rank ordering of the dialogue journals matched almost identically the GPA and the discourse topic cluster. The strongest relationship between discourse topic measures and the other two parameters was found with the topic initiation cluster. With the exception of incorporating initiations, which only a few students produced, the majority of those students with high GPAs and high holistic evaluations were also in the upper third of the class on the topic initiation measures. Those students with low GPAs and low holistic rankings also were generally in the lower third on the topic initiation measures. The middle group showed mixed results on all the discourse topic measures. As is expected, the discourse topic features discriminate better and more clearly at the upper and lower levels than in the middle of the spectrum.

Gutsein's study offers two major contributions to the field. First, the findings provide a baseline for assessing discourse topic management skills in the dialogue journal writing of these students. Second, the study shows that three types of assessment, used in combination, provide an assessment of students' communicative ability in interactive writing, thereby validating these measures as used in the context of dialogue journals.
Gutstein’s study corroborates her initial intuitions and observations, and those of many other teachers, that dialogue journal writing facilitates and demonstrates the acquisition of communicative competence.

Studies of the Relationship between Student Attitudes, Writing Instruction, and Writing Development

Among the various questions, two important questions addressed in this study are as follows:

1. Do students have a positive attitude toward dialogue journal writing?
2. Does student proficiency in writing improve significantly over one school year during which writing is limited to dialogue journal entries?

In order to address properly these questions the following studies are discussed, since they all show strong evidence of the positive relationship between attitude and writing development.

The first major studies on student attitude were pioneered by Eubert (1967). In his Wisconsin Study he pointed out the importance of student attitude in ascertaining the degree of student success in the writing process.

Not long after, following in Eubert’s footsteps, Daly and Miller (1975) wrote extensively on the role that attitude plays in the writing performance of college students. They described the research procedure used in the development of a reliable likert-type scale for measuring attitudes toward writing. All of their research has shown a high correlation between attitude toward writing and performance in writing. Students with
negative attitudes avoided situations where writing is necessary and chose occupations and academic majors believed not to require much writing. Students with negative attitudes also scored lower on standardized tests of writing aptitude and ability, and used fewer words and less qualification in their written products than did students with positive attitudes. These studies provided an instrument for measuring attitude, and underscored the need for methodologies and treatments that reduced negative attitudes toward writing.

As Daly and Miller (1975) noted, "The procedure commonly used of forcing students to write is very likely the wrong choice of treatments. All one is doing is reinforcing the punishing nature of the writing act in these situations" (p. 248).

In recent years, Wolcott and Buhr (1987) explored students' attitude toward writing as a reflection of their writing performance. They found that the skills of students with positive attitudes toward writing improved significantly more than did those of students with neutral or negative attitudes. Difference in attitude accounted for the large discrepancies which occurred in the rate of improvement among students whose placement essays suggested comparable ability, and who were all enrolled in the same writing course.

Although all the above studies show a high correlation between positive attitude and writing performance, Zamel (1987) is adamant in saying that the type of instruction students receive in their writing classes is the determinant factor in fostering positive or negative attitudes. Researchers, insists Zamel (1987), need to examine more closely the writing context of the classroom. The following studies examine the effects of type of instruction and methodologies on student attitude and their writing performance. Studies
in first language settings will first be discussed followed by research in second and foreign language classrooms.

Kantor (1984) investigated teacher-student interaction in a composition classroom, and the manner in which the teacher responded to the students intuition about writing. Kantor found that the nondirective and encouraging stance of the teacher, and the supportive and comfortable atmosphere that functioned as a community of writers helped students establish a trusting relationship with their teacher. This relationship in turn encouraged the students to take the kind of risks necessary for the development of writing. It also instilled confidence in their intuitions about writing.

Similarly, Dunn, Florio-Ruand, and Clark (1985) studied the effect of the teacher motivating, encouraging, and coaching in an effort to open interaction among the classroom participants on the writing and the writing attitudes of high school students. The students in this study were given responsibility in their role as writers, and were provided numerous opportunities to write for a range of purposes and a variety of audiences. The authority that the teacher gave to his students became the basis for their developing authorship.

Both of these studies emphasize the need in writing classes for teachers to create an atmosphere where students feel that there is not "ONE" correct way to write an essay. Rose (1985) corroborates to this need in his study of "blockers" and "nonblockers". He found that students who were experiencing writer's block had learned the rules and strategies of writing from textbooks and from teachers who based their instruction on the content of these textbooks. Rose explained that textbooks are authoritative in their
directives and explanations, giving students the feeling that there is only one acceptable way to write. Selfe (1985), in a case study of writing apprehension, found that the writing anxiety of one particular student was linked to her limited writing experience throughout school and to her belief that teachers expected perfect papers.

In a study of the composing processes found among ESL students, Jones (1985) arrived at similar conclusions. He pointed out the ineffective strategies of the monitor over-user, and noted that this student had been taught by a method that emphasized the "conscious memorization" of rules and that tested the student's explicit knowledge of these rules. The monitor under-user, on the other hand, had been exposed to instruction that focused on communication.

Diaz (1984) in her research of writing development among ESL community college students, who were experiencing considerable linguistic problems, also concluded that a nonpunitive student-oriented environment, extensive opportunities to write meaningfully, and attention to process promoted more and better writing. This environment also helped these students feel more confident about their ability both to write and succeed in other second language activities. Writing, which for these students had represented an anxiety producing, school-imposed activity, became important for its own sake, as a way of acquiring more language, as a way of learning and knowing. Diaz's classroom was characterized by free writing, daily journal entries, writing groups that provided instructive feedback, teacher conferences, drafting and redrafting, emphasis on purpose and audience, content-based composition, and attention to error only during the final stages of composing.
In another ethnographic study, Hildenbrand (1985) explored in depth an ESL community college student's attitude, perceptions, and assumptions about writing, the composing strategies that the student employed, the English language instruction which she received in two different classroom environments, and the writing that was generated in these contexts. Hildenbrand found that the classroom which focused on product and mechanical corrections reinforced this student's already well-established apprehension about school-assigned tasks and her tendency to view schoolwork as a procedure for testing prescribed form and accurate information. In contrast, the other classroom emphasized the critical nature of writing meaningfully for a real purpose and audience, established an encouraging and nonevaluative environment, and provided numerous opportunities for student collaboration and peer feedback. This classroom helped build in the student an awareness of herself as a writer, gave her a sense of confidence and self-worth that served to counteract the negative influence of other schooling experiences, and enabled her to take risks as she attempted to articulate her thoughts and ideas in writing. This nontraditional classroom did not assign topics or expository papers, but rather engaged students in self-generated topics and experiential, expressive writing. Hildenbrand suggested that this approach, because it fostered an appreciation for writing as a means to explore and elaborate meaning, was particularly effective in preparing students for the demands of academic writing.

In a recent study, Zamel (1990) examined the experiences of three ESL student writers in two different classrooms over two semesters. She studied the relationship between writing development, attitude and writing instruction. The three students at
different levels of proficiency were enrolled in the same pre-composition class. Although they initially had different expectations and attitudes toward writing, by the end of the pre-composition class, they had developed similar views: all had come to view writing as a means of generating ideas, and to see themselves as participants in the process. The in-class writing in the pre-composition class involved responses to questions that asked students to weigh the issue under consideration, to go off in new directions, to interpret, or to find yet undiscovered connections. The composition topics, which the teacher offered rather than assigned, and which always allowed for a student's own choice of topics, were extensions of the in-class reading, writing, and discussion. Even the grammar work grew out of and was given a context within the reading and writing.

The second semester, the students were enrolled in two different classes, two students in one class, one student in the other. From the standpoint of surface features, these two courses differed as to curriculum, sequence of assignments, and topics assigned. But at a deeper level, both courses represented an instructional model whose goal was to accept and sanction only one kind of discourse, the teachers' rigid expectations. As a result, when these students attempted to generate their own meanings, it led to less standard texts as defined by the teachers, and consequently their unique interpretations were neither understood nor acknowledged. In contrast to the first semester course, the students' reactions to the second semester revealed the extend to which their confidence in themselves was underminded. These students were troubled by their inability to make their intentions fit those of the instructors. They seemed to question the purpose of the writing practiced in class, as well as that of the assignments to be done at home. The
students did not understand what they were asked to do and why, and felt confused when their work was found inadequate.

The studies cited so far, Kantor (1984), Dunn, Florio-Ruand and Clark (1985), Rose (1985), Selfe (1985), Diaz (1984), Hildenbrand (1985), and Zamel (1990) all reveal the ways in which students' disparate experiences in classrooms affect their reflections about and attitude toward writing. The findings point to the central role that students' beliefs, expectations, and perspectives play in the classroom. Zamel (1990) suggests the need to examine the constraints that shape instructional decisions and underlines the importance of investigating the contexts in which writing takes place.

An important experimental study addresses this issue in a foreign language setting. Semke (1984) worked with students of German to examine four different approaches to correction: (1) commenting on content rather than correcting, (2) correcting all errors, (3) combining comments and corrections, (4) and coding errors for student correction. She found that only commenting without correction increased writing fluency and language proficiency. None of the methods had a significant impact on writing accuracy. The least effective method in terms of both achievement and attitude toward writing was student correction of errors. In the results of a survey of student attitudes, most negative comments came from students who received some kind of correction. The students who received comments on content and no correction commented more positively.

Several conclusions can be drawn from this review of the literature that are pertinent to this dissertation. All of the above establish a strong relationship between type of instruction, attitude and writing development. In classrooms where risk taking is
encouraged, where trust is established, and where choice and authority are shared, writing is viewed as a meaning making event. This in turn leads students to change as writers, to adopt positive attitudes toward written work, and to demonstrate real growth in writing performance. Writing in dialogue journals encourages such a classroom atmosphere. When students converse with the teacher via journals, the focus is on real communication not on form. Teacher and students act as relatively equal partners in the discourse. Dialogue journals possess remarkable power to affect classroom relationship, and to foster in students the development of new language and writing skills.

Studies of Analyses of Dialogue Journals

This segment reviews the literature dealing with the analysis of dialogue journals. It includes the following categories: student attitude, writing improvement, quantity, coherence, topic appropriateness, functionality, and interactiveness. For purposes of clarity, these following studies are classified using the above categories although, in fact they are often interrelated.

Studies of Students' Attitude

In the concluding remarks of her research, Staton (1982) explained that the success of dialogue journals depended on the teacher's direct participation and involvement. It required that teachers use all of their skills, knowledge, and values in reaching, assisting and teaching students. The benefits of using dialogue journals to the teacher, Staton emphasized, appeared to be as great as to the student, creating a supportive, open classroom environment based on trust and mutual understanding, and allowing the teacher
to personalize instruction and to get daily feedback on student attitudes and perceptions.

Markman (1983) investigated the effects of the dialogue journal on the writing performance and attitudes of college composition students, and analyzed ways in which dialogue writing is used to fulfill individual student needs and course requirements. Five teachers taught two sections each of a required professional writing course for students of junior standing at the University of Maryland, College Park. These ten classes provided treatment and control groups totaling 161 students. All of the students in the sample responded to a writing attitude questionnaire at the beginning and at the end of the semester. In addition, pre-test and post-test writing samples were completed by students in both groups, and were scored using the Dietrich Scale. Throughout the semester, the treatment group participated weekly in a written dialogue with their teachers as a means of attending to course objectives and students' individual writing needs. The results of the study revealed no statistically significant improvement in writing skills among students in the treatment group. However, analysis of the pretest and posttest writing attitude questionnaire revealed significant improvement in attitude about writing among students in the treatment group.

Studies of Writing Improvement

Staton, Shuy, Kreeft Peyton, and Reed (1982) analyzed the dialogue journals of sixth graders and concluded that over time, students showed more proficiency in organizing their writing, and experienced a reduction of surface difficulties with spelling, syntactical constructions, and punctuation, even though their journal writing was not corrected by the
teacher. A focus on functional communication appeared to enhance awareness of the conventions of written language such as formal mechanics. Dooley (1987) studied the integration of early reading and writing skills by examining the instructional use of dialogue journals over a five-month period in a class of 10 third-grade Native American students living on an Indian reservation in northern Michigan. Students were required to make an entry of at least three lines every day, all writing was confidential, and the journals were not graded. Punctuation skills, grammar, and sentence structure improved in most cases, and the length of sentences and paragraphs improved in all cases. Ninety percent of the students indicated a positive feeling about writing, and a majority reported that they enjoyed sharing reading and writing with their classmates. Overall, results indicated that dialogue journals were successful in combining a culture-based learning style emphasizing group cooperation and pragmatic learning based on experiences.

Bode (1988) investigated the effect on language arts achievement of dialogue journal writing between either parents or teachers and first grade students who were allowed to use invented spelling. The three methods of developing language arts performance were dialogue journal writing with parents, dialogue journal writing with teachers, and the traditional, county-adopted reading/language arts program. The dependent variables were the six language arts subtests of the Stanford Achievement Test. A total of 204 subjects in three schools completed the five-month program. The MANOVA Omnibus test results were significant. Comparisons showed the following significant differences among treatment and control groups: the parent and the teacher groups, both singly and together were significantly higher than the control group. A stepdown analysis showed that
holistic writing and reading comprehension accounted for most of the variance between groups. Univariate F-test comparisons were computed for each dependent variable. These comparisons showed that both the parent and the teacher groups were significantly higher than the control group on the holistic writing evaluation. The parent group scored significantly higher than the control group on reading comprehension, dictated spelling, listening comprehension, and sentence formation. The parent group scored significantly higher than the teacher group on holistic writing evaluation, reading comprehension, dictated spelling test, word study skills, and spelling.

Exploring the acquisition of grammatical morphology in ESL dialogue journals, Kreeft (1984) found that the subjects tended to follow a similar sequence of morpheme acquisition, and that acquisition of morphemes in writing generally parallels the same order as in oral development. This study also examined in more detail (1) the linguistic factors that influence use of morphemes, (2) the importance of individual learner strategies, and (3) language background in patterns of morpheme use. Among the findings of the study were these:

1. ESL students were able to read and write in dialogue journals even before they had mastered the forms and structures of English. Over time their writing improved reflecting their own language development.

2. For ESL students, dialogue journals served social and cultural as well as language acquisition purposes. In their journals, ESL students discussed American behavior which they had trouble understanding based on their own cultural background.
3. Teacher strategies effective for eliciting student writing included the general strategy of allowing students to select topics to be discussed, and more specific strategies such as asking information and opinion questions, elaborating and adding information, and making generalizations from specific statements made by the students.

4. In her dialogue journal writing, the teacher was sensitive to the linguistic ability of each student, and modified the interactional, functional, and syntactic features of her writing accordingly.

5. The range of student language functions was clearly related to their level of proficiency in English.

6. Over time, students' writing became more interactive—they answered more questions, asked more questions, and continued more topics for longer periods of time.

7. Over time there was considerable development of the following morphological features in the students' writing: irregular past tense, progressive "be" and "-ing", and definite and indefinite articles. Other features such as regular past, possessive, present tense third singular, and plural "s", showed very little change over time.

Steer (1988) assessed the usefulness of dialogue journal writing to develop second language skills and to promote better writing in a class of pre-university students at the high-intermediate level of proficiency. She found that dialogue journal writing, when coupled with a content-based approach (in their journals students wrote about what was studied in class), was a more efficient pre-writing strategy than the traditional brainstorming-outlining-formal-essay writing procedure. One important difference in her study was that students had a greater opportunity to write from sources. This developed
such skills as recalling, synthesizing, interpreting and applying information. Steer explains that when we ask our ESL students to produce essays after one class discussion or even no preparation outside of a 15 minute brainstorming session, we are encouraging shallowness of thought, and can expect somewhat subjective writing. In doing so, we mislead our students into believing that short papers do not require extensive outside preparation.

**Studies of Quantity**

Kreeft (1988) studied the writing of 12 sixth grade students of English as a second language (ESL) by comparing the quantity and maturity of writing in three assigned tasks with unassigned entries in dialogue journals. The assigned tasks varied in topic control, audience, and purpose. Quality of the writing was examined using measures of quantity, complexity, topic focus, and cohesion. Results showed that the quantity and maturity of the dialogue journal writing were at least equivalent to that of the assigned writing on all measures, and in many cases showed more complex linguistic expression. The findings suggested that ESL students explored and demonstrated a more complete range of their writing abilities in unassigned writing about personally chosen topics than in assigned writing about teacher-selected topics. He argued therefore, that both kinds of writing were a necessary part of an ESL writing program. The dialogue journal writing was equivalent to the more formal writing in a number of ways: it was as complex syntactically as the most complex assigned writing, it contained extended texts focused on one topic, and these texts had cohesive qualities similar to the assigned texts. At the same time, the dialogue journal writing had qualities that the assigned writing did not have. At the most
basic level, the dialogue journals provided more opportunities for practice writing in English; Kreeft found that the students wrote much more in a week in their dialogue journals than they wrote in their regular school assignments. Students used a much greater variety of clause connectors than they did with assigned topics, and many students expressed more advanced cohesive relations in their dialogue journals. A comparison between dialogue journals on the one hand and assigned texts on the other, however, did not explain all of the variation found in the writing of the students. Kreeft argued that the communicative context in which both the journals and the assigned writing occurred seemed to play a role as well. The dialogue journal and assigned letter to a friend, both of which involved writing to a familiar audience about topics related to the students' own experiences or interests, differed in a number of ways from the other writing, written for a less familiar or unspecified audience, about topics that were not related to the students' personal experiences or interests. They showed greater clause complexity, a greater variety of clause connectors, lower relative frequency of repetition as a cohesive tie. When the writing context was completely depersonalized and not as directly communicative, as was the case with an essay on grasslands/desert, most students had tremendous difficulty.

Studies of Coherence

Albertini (1990) described a schema for analyzing the internal organization of dialogue journal writing, and showed how two deaf students used cohesive devices successfully in their journals. He suggested that teachers can use students' successful journal entries to make them aware that they are already writing clearly and coherently. This knowledge can empower students as writers in other contexts. The awareness that
students can produce coherent, organized texts even if they have not yet mastered surface linguistic markers is important for teachers as they attempt to help students develop their writing abilities.

Studies of Appropriateness

When Staton, Shuy, Peyton Kreeft, and Reed (1988) analyzed the text of 26 student-teacher dialogue journals from a sixth grade ESL class, they observed that the students and the teacher wrote about a wide variety of topics—academic, interpersonal, and personal. Over the year, there was a definite shift toward personal topics, as writers came to know each other, but academic, school-related concerns remained important. Student-initiated topics were recycled and developed into coherent, year-long themes in each student's journal. The teacher played a major role in focusing the student's attention on developmental tasks of personal significance—such as making friends, building up physical ability, or doing better at math—by her comments and reflective questions.

In his study, Farley (1986) examined written communication between the teacher/researcher and six educable mentally retarded students between the chronological ages of 17.2 and 19.5. The primary focus of the research was to describe the types and frequency of topics and language functions expressed by the students in dialogue journals. All six students repeatedly reported opinions, personal facts, and general facts, responded to questions, made predictions, and made evaluative comments. At least one student also wrote complaints and apologies, gave directives, asked questions, and offered thank you statements. All the students produced functionally relevant, interactive written communication. Despite the marked discrepancy between the average chronological age
of the group (18.1 years) and the average mental age of the group (10.0 years), the topics discussed in the journals tended to be more appropriate to the chronological age of the student than to the mental age. For example, 'driving' and 'marriage,' both topics of discussion, are usually legally experienced by individuals who are at least 16 years old. Graduation, another topic of discussion, generally occurs at around eighteen years of age. Discussion of high school course work was common, as was discussion of employment—both typical concerns of older rather than younger students. Although there was considerable variation in the students' performance in the production of correct linguistic structures, all students demonstrated the capability of discussing mature topics.

Kreeft Peyton, Seyoum, and Mulugetta (1988) examined the interaction strategies used by one teacher in promoting student writing in the dialogue journals of 12 limited-English-proficient sixth grade students, and the effect of these strategies on the length and complexity of the students' writing. The identified teacher strategies included requests for a reply and personal contributions made in teacher comments. They found that this teacher's approach was to respond to topics introduced by the students rather than to introduce topics, and to contribute to the dialogue by making statements and expressing opinions rather than eliciting student writing with questions. This technique resulted in a collaborative writing effort, with teacher and students mutually developing topics of interest to them, and with the students writing far more than the minimum required. This study indicated that teacher strategy affected student response to some degree, but it was not necessarily the only determining factor. For example, when these students had a topic they wanted to write about, sometimes it seemed to matter little what the teacher did in
her entry; they wrote about their topic. If they were not interested in a topic, the teacher could write about it extensively in her entry, only to receive a minimal response or no response at all. On the other hand, when teacher and student found a topic of common interest, the topic itself seemed to take over, as they both shared, questioned, and built on each other's contributions.

Studies of Functions

Staton, Shuy, Kreeft Peyton, and Reed, (1982) in their pioneer study of the dialogue journals of sixth graders, concluded that over the year, students changed in the direction of using a wider range of specific language functions--expressing more personal opinions, reporting personal facts, evaluating, and complaining more. A study of complaints (Shuy, 1982) in student writing found an increase over the year in "felicitous" complaining, that is, making explicit the injustice by giving specific evidence. Shuy observed that the teacher used questions to encourage and develop students' awareness and reflective thinking. Reflective questions effectively focused the student on considering alternative ways of handling the situation.

Kreeft and Shuy (1984) in their study of ESL students examined the language functions used by the teacher and the students in their journals, and compared patterns of function use found in these data to those found in the dialogue journals of native English speakers (from Staton, et al., 1982). This study identified clear patterns in the teacher's use of language functions, as she adapted her language to the English proficiency level of the student, and also guided the students in the use of particular functions.
As students became more competent in English, their use of language functions began to approach that of the teacher both in kind and in frequency.

**Studies of Interactiveness**

Staton, Shuy, Peyton Kreeft, and Reef (1982) found that dialogue journal writing, even for students with learning disabilities or limited English proficiency, was coherent, organized, topic-focused. Students with greater difficulty in using written language in regular class assignments generally performed at high levels of competence in their dialogue journal. Dialogue journal writing reduced the normal status and power asymmetry of student and teacher, and allowed students to engage in mutually constructed, continued conversations indicating co-membership status with the teacher based on shared interests.

Braig (1984) examined the audience awareness characteristics in the dialogue journal writing of children ages six, seven, and eight. A total of seventeen children and one teacher/researcher participated in this ethnographic study over a period of nine months. The data were collected during the usual language arts sessions in an elementary school. The children's journals, their comments about the writing process in taped interviews, and the researcher's field notes constituted the data base. Braig's findings suggested that:

1. young writers demonstrated that they considered the needs of their intended audience on communicative, affective, and reflective levels in both spontaneous and solicited contexts;

2. the young children's "talk about writing" in interviews demonstrated that they intended to meet the needs of their audience on different levels;
3. dialogue journals played a facilitating role in the development of the children's written language competence.

Within the dialogue journal context, the young writers demonstrated the ability to respond in diverse ways to a known audience over time. The dialogue journal format seemed to facilitate the children's writing development and their ability to talk about writing with respect to audience. In the process of attending to their audience, the young writers learned the personal functions such as complaining, that would best serve them personally.

Harington (1988) studied students' acquisition of a metalanguage for writing through the constant interplay of conversational processes, thus achieving a starting point for evaluative authority over their own written communication. Forty-seven eleventh and twelfth grade students, ranging from honors to remedial levels, participated in a writing center activity designed to engage students in metalinguistic activities in spoken and written communicative events. The students' written dialogue with the teacher about strategies used to compose and revise their written texts provided the principal data for the study. The analysis of dialogical communication revealed the students' potential for monitoring the language processes at work in their writing, and provided insight about how students acquire metalinguistic awareness. Five metalinguistic activities, forming a descriptive typology, suggested how students might begin to attend to their writing through a shared metalanguage. The activities included (1) poetic: monitoring the creative play of language, (2) key: monitoring voice, the spirit of self as writer, (3) audience: monitoring the initiative or responsive attention to the perceptions of an interlocutor, (4) evaluation: monitoring the specific attributions of language, focusing on the properties of
the text, and (5) setting: monitoring the social and situational aspects of the speaking/writing event. This study indicated that teachers can provide a context for metalinguistic awareness to enhance each stage of the writing process by using a social model for writing. This study suggested that a writer's evaluative autonomy first proceeds through interactive modes of communication before it can be realized by the writer alone as an individual communicator.

Staton (1984) addressed the problem of how a teacher can help students acquire those concepts, beliefs, strategies and knowledge of themselves, other persons and the world on which rational deliberation and choices about action are based. The thesis of her study is that practical reasoning is gradually acquired through extended interpersonal interactions with adults during which the child learns to observe and practice the relevant concepts and strategies for understanding and acting on the world. With many such opportunities, children are prepared for autonomy as adults. The cross-sectional studies of elaboration and attributional reasoning demonstrated how the teacher's strategies for discussing everyday experiences differ systematically from those of her students. The students often did not elaborate or provide explicit details in their accounts of events, and so the teacher demonstrated and encouraged them in this essential first step to describe and try to explain in a more specific way what was happening. The teacher also confronted and challenged common misattributions that students made. She provided the students with a useful, rational model of attributional beliefs, continually asserting the need for personal responsibility and effort. The longitudinal studies each follow one major topic in a student's journal across the nine-month school year. Slaton describes
these dialogue journals, using Bruner's (1983) phrase as instances of extended "interational scaffolding" in which the teacher assisted the student in re-examining problems from different perspectives, considering alternative actions, and incorporating new information and concepts helpful in that particular context. The first study, of one student's strategies for discussing her interpersonal problems, described how she acquired better strategies for expressing feelings, describing what happened, and reflecting on and evaluating her own actions. The second study, of a student's understanding of the connection between his own actions and achievement in math, traced the student's changes in beliefs in response to the teacher's active intervention in guiding his perceptions and reasoning through the dialogue. These two intensive studies provided a detailed picture of the actual acquisition of more socially mature and effective reasoning capacities. The journal demonstrated how students were first involved in playing the teacher's game of how to think about what happened, why things happened, and what their own actions or responses might be. Even if they did not always make the right choices, they were continuously involved in the structure of reasoning about choices and alternatives which the teacher created.

Dolly (1987) in her study analyzed the amount of responsibility ESL students assumed for advancing and repairing written conversation. She developed an analytic procedure to analyze the ten patterns of give and solicit moves based on previous research in conversational analysis and dialogue journal discourse. The data consisted of 260 dialogue journal entries composed by 12 adult ESL students and their native-speaking conversation partner, the researcher. Percentages of each move type were calculated in order to determine partners' levels of "reciprocity" (that is, sharing the responsibility for
each move type) in conversation advancement and repair. The quantitative analysis showed that the teacher's interaction with students was quite consistent (for example, the teacher always made frequent use of extending solicits), whereas students' interactional patterns varied greatly. Some students actively advanced and repaired the conversation, achieving reciprocity in a number of the ten move categories; other students, including some of the more linguistically proficient ones, played a more passive role (for example, never initiating repair and doing far more responding than soliciting or reacting). The findings suggested that the most active participants are those who make moderate use of each move type; more passive participants use one or two moves to excess, virtually ignoring others. The quantitative analysis was supplemented by a qualitative interpretation of the journals of four students of similar linguistic proficiency. This qualitative analysis sought to explain the great variation in level of conversational responsibility (ranging from least to most reciprocal) shown by four students of high linguistic proficiency.

Alice Ganz (1984) studied the evolution from egocentricity to sociocentrism by examining the dialogue journal writing of 14 second graders during one school year. The work of one student served as a model against which similarities and differences in the growth patterns of the other students were measured. The students' drawings and writings reflected their learning about the world and their relationship to it. The egocentric young writers touched on the emotional, social, and cognitive areas of learning, often listing items which interested or confused them. Later, cause and effect entered into their writing as they formulated questions and concepts, tested hypotheses, and experimented with both language and thought in their creative writing. As young writers gained a sense of
audience, their egocentrism gave way to sociocentrism, and they became aware of public
scrutiny. Peer encouragement and help in the writing process classroom allowed young
writers to become less self-conscious, and explore different modes of expression, taking
into account their audiences. Teachers should take care, Ganz advocated in concluding
her study, that the making of meaning takes precedence over correctness of mechanical
details, and that revision is gently encouraged to maintain the writer's experiences and
written expression.

Kreeft (1984) studied teacher questions in dialogue writing with young ESL students,
finding that the teacher's questions can "promote thought and facilitate communication"
(p. 247). She suggested that the questioning in these dialogue journals provided "a model
for questioning patterns between students and teachers during activities in the ESL or
foreign language classroom" (p. 247). Kreeft discovered a number of differences between
questioning behavior in the dialogue journals and the typical classroom discourse. The
teacher, as a dialogue journal partner, still asked more questions than the students, but the
student asked a significant number, and approximately two thirds of the teacher's
questions were in response to topics initiated by the students, encouraging continuation
of these topics rather than initiating new ones. Virtually none of the questions posed by
either teacher or students were display questions (such as: what am I wearing today);
rather, the teacher asked primarily informational questions, and as the year progressed,
introduced some reflective questions which required students, in Mrs. Reed's words, to "do
some thinking before they can answer" (p. 246). Clarification requests to resolve
problems of understanding (about 5% of all questions) remained nearly constant during
the year. Most students asked more questions as the year progressed, suggesting that even
the least proficient students were participating more actively. Kreeft noticed that Mrs.
Reed tailored her questions, just as she did her language functions and interactional
features, to each student's language ability. A comparison of Mrs. Reed's questions to
ESL students and to native speaking students, revealed that she used more informational
and fewer reflective questions with non-native speakers, and far more yes-no questions
with ESL students, presumably because, according to Shuy's taxonomy, responding to yes-
no questions is easier than responding to other question types.

As previously discussed, Gutstein's model of communicative competence includes
six components: Quantity, Coherence, Topical Appropriateness, Creativity, Functionality,
and Interactional Awareness. The studies in the last part of this chapter show that the
components (except for "Creativity") in Gutstein's model of communicative competence
support the interaction found in dialogue journals that foreign language learners need in
order to develop communicative competence. Dialogue journal writing in foreign language
classrooms deserves to be analyzed for the purpose of discovering even more about the
role of these components in the dialogue journal exchange. This study offers one such
analysis.
METHOD

Chapter three is comprised of four major parts: The first part contains a description of the subjects. The second part gives a brief depiction of the data sources. The third part describes the analysis and is divided into six sections. Section one discusses the method used in computing the students' writing improvement. Section two describes the information/attitude questionnaire and its analysis. Section three consists of a description of the holistic evaluations of the dialogue journals. Also included in this segment are raters' comments and observations, as well as a discussion of the relationship between the holistic evaluations and the communicative framework. Section four deals with the three aspects which make up the triangulation approach to the assessment of communicative competence: results on the proficiency writing test, holistic evaluations of communicative ability in dialogue journal writing, and the analysis of the dialogue journals. Section five contains a detailed description of how the dialogue journals were analyzed including the theory behind this analysis. Section six describes the statistical procedures used in this research. The last part of this chapter includes a list of the study's limitations.

Subjects

The subjects participating in this study included students enrolled at one of two public magnet high schools in a large southeastern metropolitan area. The term "magnet" as used in this school system indicates a college preparatory high school where students must meet certain criteria for admission. At this high school the criteria include parental consent, a 2.5 overall G.P.A. for the previous five semesters, and reading stanine of 5 or
higher on a nationally standardized test. To remain at the high school, students must maintain an overall 2.5 average.

These 21 students were enrolled in one of the three French III classes which met three times a week for ninety minutes each. The textbook used in both levels I and II of this high school program was the second edition (1982) of *French for Mastery: Salut les Amis* by Valette and Valette. This series is grammar sequenced but communicatively enhanced. Many additional supplementary materials were included for communicative and/or grammar practice.

In previous years, French III students were taught with *Voix et Visage du Monde Français* as a follow up to *Voix et Visages de la France* used in French I and II. This series is highly structured and reflects the principles of audiolingual method. At the time these 21 students arrived in French III, the school was in the process of selecting new textbooks. Under normal circumstances the French III classes should have used the continuing French for Mastery book. However, due to financial limitations that year it was not possible to purchase new books. Instead of using the old textbook it was decided to use segments of *French in Action* which was available locally. *French in Action* combines video, audio and print materials. Its most valuable component is the video program whose quality is undeniable both in terms of cinematography, and of its richness in culture because of its real-life setting in France. The video is a wonderful resource for developing communicative skills and cultural empathy.

The makeup of the class was very varied. It included seventeen girls and four boys. Five were freshmen, twelve were sophomores, three were juniors, and one was a senior. The background of these students was also heterogeneous and allowed for many
discussions on cultural differences and similarities since the native countries of the
students were as follows: Syria (one student), Lebanon (one), Korea (one), India (three),
Nigeria (one), United States (fourteen). Among the fourteen students from the United
States, four were black.

Data Sources

The data used in this study was gathered from three different sources: dialogue
journals, writing proficiency tests, and an attitude/information questionnaire.

The first source of data was the dialogue journals which were generated during a
writing was not an integral part of class except for a participation grade. It took place at
home and/or when students had finished their assigned work in class. A composition
notebook was provided for each student at the beginning of the school year. In the
classroom a special two drawer cabinet was installed for this activity. Students left their
journals in one drawer, and picked them up in the other drawer once the teacher had
replied to their entry. At the beginning of the year, the teacher stressed that the writing
could vary in length but asked for a minimum of two entries per week. Every six weeks,
students were given a grade for their writing in their dialogue journals. The grade was
based solely on the requirement of a minimum of two entries per week. Students did not
receive a better grade if they wrote more than twice a week, but 2% was deducted from
their grade for missing one entry. Writing in their dialogue journals was the only real
writing activity the students engaged in during the entire school year. They did however
participate in traditional grammar exercises found in traditional foreign language classrooms. These grammar exercises were discreet point manipulation of the language and did not require global language understanding.

The second source of data was a proficiency writing test developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and the Education Testing Service (ETS). This instrument was administered at the beginning and at the end of the school year. Is is described further in this chapter and a copy of it is in Appendix A.

The third source of data was a questionnaire of student attitude/information about writing in a foreign language. The students responded to this instrument at the end of the school year.

Analysis

As mentioned in the introduction, this part of the study is divided into six sections: writing improvement, attitude/information questionnaire, holistic evaluation of the dialogue journals, triangulation approach to the assessment of communicative competence, analysis of the dialogue journals, and statistical procedures.

Whenever applicable, the data analysis procedures used in these sections are structured around the eleven research questions proposed in chapter 1.
Section One: Writing Improvement

**Research question one:** Do students who have written in their dialogue journals throughout the school year improve significantly in their level of writing proficiency?

To assess the effect of dialogue journals on writing proficiency, a proficiency writing test was administered to the students as a pre-test on September 24, 1990 and as a post-test on May 22, 1991. That particular year, school started on August 20, 1991. The pre-test was administered a month later to allow students sufficient instructional time to review the material taught in French II, and consequently, for the pre-test to give a fair rating. The proficiency tests were evaluated by Sally Sieloff Magnan of the University of Wisconsin. Dr. Magnan is a recognized expert in the area of teaching and testing writing proficiency. She is also a nationally certified ACTFL Oral Proficiency Tester and a trainer of Oral Proficiency Interview testers.

A single-group pretest-posttest design determined any significant improvement and the confidence interval was calculated to see what probability there was that the observed difference (if any) between the pre-test and the post-test would have occurred by chance.

For purposes of the data analysis, proficiency ratings were converted to numerical scores according to the following transformations (Lange and Lowe, 1986):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proficiency Rating</th>
<th>Numerical Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Novice Low</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novice Mid</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novice High</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Low</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Mid</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate High</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced High</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The proficiency writing test was developed in 1990 by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) under a research grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The test is geared directly to the Proficiency Guidelines issued by ACTFL in 1986. It is divided into four tasks, each one corresponding to a level of the Guidelines: novice, intermediate, advanced, and superior (see Appendix A for a copy of the test). The validity of this writing proficiency test was established through research conducted by Patricia Dandolini representing ACTFL and Grant Henning from the Educational Testing Service (1990). This research provided considerable support for the use of the Proficiency Guidelines as a foundation for the development of proficiency tests.

The proficiency writing test is designed to yield only a global ability estimate. Thus, it is not as sensitive in measuring differences as an achievement test or a diagnostic test. One important characteristic of the proficiency scales is that they are not linear. As one goes up the scale, progressively more language skill is needed to reach the next level. It is useful to think of the proficiency levels in terms of an inverted pyramid, such as the one depicted in Figure 2.

One can see, by examining Figure 2, that little progress in language skills is needed to progress from novice to intermediate, but that relatively more change is needed to make the leap from intermediate to advanced, and so on. Magnan (1985) stated that the Novice Level is common in first and second year high school programs and in first year college classes. Liskin Gasparro (1984) has suggested that after four years of high school or four semesters of college language instruction, most students are still writing within the intermediate range. Students who major in language in college might be expected to write
rather consistently on the Advanced Level, whereas the Superior Level is rarely attained before the graduate level of study in a foreign language (see Appendix B for a copy of the Writing Proficiency Guidelines). Thus, according to the research, if all twenty-one students fall within the intermediate level at the end of French III, they have performed as well as most students after four years of studying a foreign language.

![Inverted Pyramid of Language Proficiency](image)

**Figure 2.**

*Inverted Pyramid of Language Proficiency* (Pardee Lowe, 1982)

**Section Two: Students' Attitude Toward Writing in Their Dialogue Journals**

**Research question two:** Do students who have engaged in dialogue journal writing throughout the school year have a positive attitude toward writing in a foreign language?

A questionnaire was developed by the teacher/researcher based on the different questions suggested by the students during a brainstorming activity. In groups of four, students discussed and wrote down questions which they thought might reflect their experience with dialogue journals (See Appendix C for a copy of the questionnaire).
On May 24, 1991 a counselor from the high school administered the questionnaires to the students. She assured them that she would not give their answers to the teacher/researcher until after the end of the scholastic year. The counselor explained to the students that their honesty was important since their answers would be part of a study.

A Lickert scale of 22 questions was used to determine attitudes. After each question, space was provided for written comments. Additionally, students could state their general opinion concerning dialogue journals by replying to four open-ended questions.

Questions one to nine allowed students to self evaluate their progress in five areas (writing, vocabulary expansion, grammar, speaking and reading) and their likes and dislikes toward these activities. Students stated their level of agreement with a series of statements using a 1 to 5 scale with the following values: 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree.

Questions ten to twenty-two asked students if they encountered certain problems during this writing such as finding topics to write about or not understanding the teacher written response and whether they had used certain strategies such as, for example, writing an outline, using a dictionary. For each question the mean, the median and the standard deviation were calculated.

Section Three: Holistic Evaluations of the Dialogue Journals

This section does not respond to one of the research questions, but it represents an indispensable component of the study. In actuality, this holistic evaluation supports much of the other data analysis.
In order to have an independent evaluative measure of the communicative ability found in the dialogue journals, holistic evaluations were used. Research has shown that holistic scoring of students written work offers a strong measure of validity and reliability and that it can be as effective, if not more effective, than objective discrete-point scoring techniques (Kaczmarek, 1980; Mullen, 1980; Evola, Mamer, and Lentz, 1980; Hombourg, 1984; Perkins, 1983).

The holistic evaluations of the dialogue journals were conducted by three native speakers of French who have no ties to foreign language learning and teaching. Since the ultimate goal for students learning a foreign language is to be able to communicate with native speakers of that language, native speakers represent a natural reference with which to evaluate the students' communicative abilities. However, because the raters were not trained professionally, they were simply asked to read through all the journals and rank order them on the students' ability to communicate with their teacher.

The three native raters who participated in this aspect of the study were chosen because they were not language teachers and came from diverse backgrounds. Rater #1 is a Belgium businessman who makes frequent trips to the United States and speaks English fluently. Rater # 2 is a French housewife who has visited the United States twice and can communicate with an American who is accustomed to speaking to foreigners. Rater # 3 is a French engineer who works in California.

The raters were instructed to read through all the journals and rank order them based on students' communicative ability. Since each rater lived in a different country, it was impossible for them to meet. Research has shown that reliability in scoring can be
improved, if readers can follow sets of common standards for judging the quality of the writing (Perkins, 1983). To compensate for the impossibility for the three raters to meet, rater #1 judged the journals first and submitted his criteria for evaluation to rater #2. When rater #2 finished the evaluation of the journals, she transmitted her criteria and those of rater #1 to rater #3.

Rater #1 reported that he had responded to the following three criteria:

1. Linguistic ability
2. How much the student invested in his journal: quantity, regularity in writing.
3. Personality of the student:
   - capability of expressing ideas on current events.
   - open-mindedness toward life.
   - receptivity and passion for life.

Rater #2 reported that she had used rater #1's criteria to create her own. She also assigned each criteria a value of 20 points. Since dialogue journals are interactive she described this activity as allowing each student to be in turn the transmitter and the receiver of information. She defined the qualities of a good transmitter and a good receiver in the following manner:

1. Transmitter
   - Exteriorization (20 points): the capacity to open up to others.
   - Personality (20 points): capability of provoking the reader's interest, capability of having opinions, being able to reflect, intelligence.
   - Linguistic Competence (20 points): Ease in writing.
2. Receiver

-Attention (20 points): to be attentive toward others. To be interested in what the other is writing. To be able to perceive variations in the writer's comments.

-Receptiveness (20 points): to accept suggestions, and opinions of others easily.

-Curiosity (20 points): the need to know, to understand the other and the world.

Rater # 3 used rater #2's criteria for classification. Using the results from the three raters an interrater reliability analysis was calculated using the Spearman rho correlation formula.

Section Four: Communicative Competence

The present study addressed the assessment of communicative competence by taking the analytical approach of triangulation. None of the three elements analyzed (Dialogue Journals, Writing Proficiency Tests, Holistic Evaluation of the Dialogue Journals) is seen to represent communicative competence by itself. The results of each element is correlated with those of the other two, thus strengthening the overall analysis (Figure 3).

The first element, analysis of the dialogue journals, is based on Gutstein's model which was described at length in chapter II. Of the six components of Gutstein's model of communicative competence (Quantity, Coherence, Topical Appropriateness, Creativity, Functionality, and Interactional Awareness) only one, Creativity, was not examined in this study. Creativity, in actual practice, plays a secondary role, since very few instances of
creative writing have been reported in second language learning, particularly at the early stage of foreign language acquisition.

Research questions three to eleven are related to the five components of Gutstein's model. The questions seek to assess if the components differentiate good language communicators from others and whether the components are the same as in the proficiency writing test.

![Diagram of Analysis of Dialogue Journals]

**Figure 3**
Triangulation Approach to the Analysis of Communicative Competence

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Section Five: Analysis of Dialogue Journals

The dialogue journals were analyzed using the five components of Gutstein's model of communicative competence: Quantity, Interactional Awareness, Coherence, Functions, and Topical Appropriateness. In this section, the analysis process for each component is described in detail.

Although it would have been advantageous to carry out an analysis on the entire corpus of the 21 journals, it was simply not economical within the constraints of time. It was determined, instead, to sample the writing of all 21 journals at three periods of the year: two weeks of writing in the Fall (October), two weeks in the Winter (February) and two weeks in the Spring (May).

With written permission from the student's parents (see Appendix D for a copy of the written permission) the dialogue journals were photocopied. These dialogue journals comprised the database for the holistic evaluations of communicative abilities and the contributing factors of good language communicators. Once the journals were photocopied, each interaction was numbered consecutively throughout the journal. Thus, the student's first entry was labeled S-1, the teacher's response, T-1; the student's next entry, S-2, and so on. The interactional numbering was consecutive without regard to days when no entries were made. Each student at the beginning of the school year chose a French first name to use in the classroom. Throughout the paper, the 21 students are referred by these French names.
Component One of Gutstein's Model: Quantity.

Research question three: Do students who are more communicatively competent write more than their less communicatively competent classmates?

Although a greater quantity of writing is not necessarily an indication of quality, it does indicate a desire or willingness to write, especially when students are not required to write more than twice a week. For students learning a foreign language, greater quantity of writing also provides more practice in using written French.

Quantity was determined by three measures:

1. The number of interactions during the school year for each student.
2. The mean number of words written per entry during the six sample weeks.
3. The total number of words written during the school year. This number was estimated by calculating the product of the number of interactions by the mean number of words written per entry.

Component Two of Gutstein's Model: Interactional Awareness

Research question four: Do students who are more communicatively competent show more of an awareness of their audience than their less communicatively competent classmates?

This criteria of communicative competence means that students' writing should reflect an awareness of or sensitivity to the audience/teacher. The students should make efforts to include the audience/teacher in the communication via topic selection, continuation or discontinuation of topics, and responses to teacher's questions.
For the purpose of this research, interactional awareness was analyzed by studying students' rate of response to the teacher's questions. The purpose of asking questions is to elicit a reply, but often several topics are addressed in one journal entry and several questions asked. Therefore, it is possible for either student or teacher to select the questions to which they are responding. At the same time, a student response to a question does indicate that the student has read and understood what was written, and in formulating the response, the student gets more language practice. Kreeft (1984) found that in all cases there is a high correlation response rate related to language proficiency. He found that the most proficient students consistently respond to almost all of the questions and the least proficient students respond to the fewest.

Interactional awareness was calculated using the percentage of student response rate to teacher questions (response/to total number of questions by teacher X 100).

Component Three of Gutstein's Model: Coherence

This component was analyzed using three criteria: elaboration, syntactic complexity, and grammar.

Research question five: Do students who are more communicatively competent elaborate more than their less communicatively competent students?

An important aspect of learning to write is the ability to produce extended text that functions as a cohesive unit. It is important to consider the writing as text, beyond the sentence level. Given the flexibility of topic choice and elaboration in dialogue journal writing, one may wonder whether dialogue journals contain any extended texts focused on one topic. Elaboration or extended text is usually defined as providing more detailed
information about a specific topic. Elaboration is one of the few distinctive features which distinguishes written language from spoken language. Writers and readers have prized elaboration in writing, and teachers have tried to teach students to "elaborate" on their topics. Like much composition instruction, the effect of this well-intentioned effort is that many students reduce the idea of elaboration to a few basic rules, such as "use lots of adjectives," "give lots of physical details," "write longer sentences," or just "write more," which they apply arbitrarily without regard for the communicative demands of the situation. In considering elaboration, we therefore need to acknowledge that it might not necessarily be a measure of good writing. In our working model of communicative competence, Gutstein (1987) points out that a reader expects and needs a sufficient quantity of information, but that too much runs the danger of ambiguity by providing so much detailed information that the basic underlying proposition or topic is lost (Grice, 1975). Thus, learning to elaborate is a complicated matter for students, because the standard is a relative one.

In order to analyze elaboration or extended text focused on one topic, we need to define "topic" as used in this study. In keeping with other work on topic in dialogue journal writing (Staton and Kreeft, 1982), the definition of "topic" in the present study is a pragmatic one. Something is treated as a topic when it is taken by a writer and a reader as an intentional object or structure of some type about which information is provided or requested (Kates, 1980; Keenan & Schieffelin, 1976). This definition does not rest only on surface elements in the language (such as grammatical subject of a sentence), but includes its establishment in the interactional structure of the language. Because we are working with extended, multiple-turn discourse, we find that topics change, merge, and
become elaborated as each participant comments on the topic, adding new, relevant information which successively changes the topic of discussion. The dynamic, functional nature of a topic makes it difficult to categorize topics neatly, and topics, once introduced, become part of a common pool to be drawn on by both participants in future interactions (Keenan & Schieffelin, 1976). In identifying topics, the present study followed the approach taken by Shuy (1981, 1982). He suggested a workable set of criteria for determining topic boundaries: (1) change of subject focus, marked by lexical items and evaluative structures to indicate the writer's focus; (2) structural evidence such as lexical markings and paragraphs or new sentences; (3) internal cohesion and anaphoric devices. Though none of these criteria is sufficient in and of itself, all of them together provide a reasonable indication of the writer's topic.

The number of sentences per topic ratio was used here as a global measure of elaboration. The sentences per topic ratio for the students was compiled by tabulating the number of sentences produced in the entries for six weeks worth of writing and dividing it by the number of topics written about during these weeks. The topics included anything students wrote about during their turns at writing. However, this method had one serious limitation in that it did not give full weight to topic continuation across turns, which itself constitutes a primary means of topic elaboration in spoken or written discourse. If a student's topic was continued by the teacher in her turn and then commented on additionally by the student in the next turn (an S-T-S pattern), the first sentence of the second comment on that same topic was not counted as elaborative. This approach underrepresents the actual amount of interactionally assisted elaboration which occurs in these students' writing.
**Research question six:** Do students who are more communicatively competent write using "more syntactically dense" (Fillmore, 1979, p. 93) sentences than their less communicatively competent classmates?

Coherence is also the ability to talk in reasoned, and syntactically dense sentence (Fillmore, 1979). A communicatively competent learner of a foreign language uses language in a coherent way. His writing reflects not only grammatical accuracy, but, perhaps even more importantly, the syntactic relationship within sentences are clear.

Most studies comparing speech and writing have found that formal, planned, written text is syntactically more complex, with a greater number of clause embeddings than face-to-face informal interaction. Therefore, one important aspect of the writing development of foreign language students is the ability to produce complex clause structures.

Clause complexity was measured by the number of clauses per T-unit, "a main clause plus all subordinate clauses and nonclausal structures attached to or embedded in it" (Hunt, 1970, p.4).

**Research question seven:** Do students who are more communicatively competent generate fewer grammatical errors than their less communicatively competent classmates?

We expect dialogue journal writing to be coherent, which according to Fillmore (1979) and Gutstein (1987) also includes being grammatical and meaningful (Gutstein, 1987). For beginning writers or learners of a foreign language, we must tailor our expectations to match the actual knowledge that the writer possesses. A beginning foreign language student cannot, for example, be expected to have the grammatical knowledge of a more advanced student. Canale and Swain (1980) in their model of communicative competence separate Grammatical Competence from Discourse Competence, which
includes coherence and cohesion. In this study it was determined that especially at the early stages of learning a foreign language, grammar falls into the category of coherence.

Many different types of grammatical analyses could be conducted. Research has suggested that errors involving verb conjugation and tense mood may be quite bothersome to native speakers (Pizza, 1980; Magnan, 1983). Since the dialogue journals were rated by native speakers, errors in verb conjugation and tense mood were studied.

Verb conjugation as defined by Magnan (1988) is the conjugated form of the verb with respect to subject and tense and mood used, regardless of appropriateness of subject and tense/mood; for compound tenses, it includes choice of auxiliary as well as its form. Tense/Mood (Magnan 1988) is the choice of tense and mood, regardless of form, provided that tense/mood is clearly marked. This category includes use of infinitive and present participle.

To analyze grammar, the percentage of correct usage were calculated: (number of correct usages / number of total usages X 100). Using a percentage of correct usage rather than a raw error count was crucial, since entries naturally differed in length and therefore in possibility of error. For each student, three percentages were calculated, (1) correct usage of verb conjugaison, (2) correct usage of tense mood, and (3) correct usage of tense mood and verb conjugaison combined.

Component Four of Gutstein's Model: Functionality

Functionality is analyzed with the following two criteria: types of function used, and variety of function used.
Two questions in this study examined the component of functionality.

**Question eight:** Do students who are more communicatively competent use a wider range of language functions than their less communicatively competent classmates?

According to Kreeft's (1982) study of dialogue journals of ESL students, the more competent in English the nonnative English speaking student became, the broader became his or her range of frequently used language function.

For each student, the total number of functions used out the total 13 functions accounting for 1% or more was calculated.

**Question nine:** Do students who are more communicatively competent use certain functions more often than their less communicatively competent classmates?

Percentage of language functions in each of the thirteen categories of functions were tabulated in relation to all functions used by each student.

There are many ways to analyze language. Traditionally, linguists have approached a written or spoken body of data from the perspective of language forms, those visible or audible elements of language that are referred to as sounds, morphemes, words and sentences. A "grammar" of a language is essentially a description of its forms, its basic minimal units. Recently, however, considerable attention has also been given by linguists to the functions of language, the things that get done when the forms are put together in acceptable and effective ways. As yet, there is not widespread agreement concerning how to analyze language functions, but important steps have been taken by linguists such as Searle (1969) Austin (1975) Grice (1975) Saddock (1974) and Levinson (1983). Those who study language functions refer to their work by several labels including speech acts, pragmatics and functionalism.
It is recognized that certain language functions are more complex than others. That is, functions such as complaining or apologizing have felicity conditions which may require several sentences in order to complete or attain felicity (Shuy, 1982). Other functions, such as reporting facts, requesting, reporting opinions, predicting and evaluating, can be accomplished in a sentence or even less than a sentence.

The procedure followed in determining which language functions were to be selected for analysis is essentially the same one that was used by Shuy (1982). Each sentence in each student entry in the six weeks sample was marked and coded for the language function or functions present. Then all functions were tabulated and noted for frequency of occurrence in each of these time periods. It became clear at this point that thirteen language functions recur with sufficient frequency among the subjects to be considered representative of almost all of the functions used in this sample. The list of thirteen functions is as follows:

1. Reporting Personal Facts
2. Reporting General Facts
3. Reporting Opinions
4. Analyzing, Evaluating, Reflecting
5. Thanking
6. Predicting and Wishing
7. Complaining
8. Apologizing
9. Request for Personal Information
10. Request for Academic Information
11. Request for General Information
12. Request Opinions
13. Request for Clarification

The thirteen language functions used by the subjects in this study are briefly defined as follows:
1. **Reporting personal facts.** The reporting of facts makes up a large portion of the speech and writing of most individuals. It is useful, however, to categorize two types of fact reporting: reporting personal facts and reporting general facts. Personal facts include events related specifically and personally to the writer. Such facts can be things that happened to the writer. Examples from the journals include the following:

   - *Pour mon anniversaire, j'ai reçu des chaussures noires, un t-shirt et l'argent pour ma bague de ma classe.*
   - *Je suis née au Agra, au nord de l'Inde et je suis arrivée aux Etats-Unis quand j'ai eu quatre ans, alors j'habite à Baton Rouge depuis dix ans.*
   - *Je ne suis pas végétarienne, je mange de la viande.*

2. **Reporting general facts.** In addition to personal facts, writers in this sample also report many general facts. These are not specific to the writer directly. Rather, they are shared facts and generalization held by a wider group of people. Examples include the following:

   - *L'église Luthérienne est un peu comme l'église catholique, mais nous n'avons pas de pape.*
   - *Agra est au Nord de l'Inde à coté de New Dehly, c'est là où est situé le Taj Mahal.*
   - *La danse du printemps est une danse ou les filles invitent les garçons.*

3. **Reporting opinions.** An opinion is an expression of feeling, preference which is not judgeable or verifiable against an external standard of norm. As such, it does not imply positive knowledge. Examples of reporting opinions include the following:

   - *Maintenant je suis heureux qu'il ne pleut pas.*
   - *Le Caravan et le Voyager sont de très bonnes voitures.*
   - *J'ai eu un bon temps à la convention française.*
   - *J'aime jouer au football, c'est un très beau sport.*
4. Evaluating, reflecting.

Students in this study often went beyond simply giving an opinion. They develop an idea through reflection and/or evaluation. They give arguments to support and justify their view on a particular topic. Examples of evaluation and reflection are as follows:

- "French in Action est une bonne méthode, j'apprends beaucoup mais elle est rasante quelquefois parce qu'elle se répète, mais nous arrivons à dire beaucoup et nous ne dépensons pas trop de temps à étudier la grammaire.
- "Maintenant, je pense que les alliés font très bien dans la guerre, bientôt je pense que les soldats commenceront à attaquer l'Irak.
- "Si nous connaissons des langues étrangères, nous pouvons communiquer avec tout le monde et résoudre les problèmes.
- "Je ne comprends pas pourquoi il y a des personnes qui veulent la guerre, ça signifie la mort de soldats, mais les américains ne pensent pas à la population d'Irak, c'est dégoutant et je ne peux rien faire, en vérité le problème est un problème arabe pas américain.

5. Thanking. Thanking is an expression of gratitude or appreciation or the acknowledgement for favors, service or courtesy. Examples include:

- "Merci pour les remarques de moi vous avez écrit dans votre dernière réponse.
- "Merci pour les compliments sur ma présentation sur l'Inde.
- "Je voudrais vous dire merci pour avoir aidé moi pour la compétition.
- "Merci pour le compliment sur mes cheveux.

6. Predicting and wishing. Predicting and wishing are found in statements where the writer expresses an indication that he or she will do something, plans to do something, or wishes to do something in the future such as the following:

- "Quand je finirai l'Air Force Academy je serai un deuxième lieutenant, mais je ne serai pas un pilote d'avion.
- "Je voudrais habiter en Turquie parce que ce n'est pas la Louisiane et c'est près de l'Europe.
- "J'aimerais étudier la culture de France, la mode etc...
- "J'espère que la classe de seconde est plus facile que la classe de troisième.

7. Complaining. Complaining involves stating a supposed prejudice against the writer and giving an account of such prejudice. Examples include:
- Je n'aime pas cette classe de français, c'est ennuyeux parce que je ne comprends pas que nous faisons et vous n'expliquez pas parce que vous allez trop vite.
- J'ai trop à faire maintenant, j'ai trop de travail ce n'est pas juste.
- Ma vie est trop difficile, je désire être toujours un enfant.
- BRHS est trop difficile, je vais mourir, l'école est si ennuyeuse.
- Je suis furieuse avec la pièce de théâtre, on aurait du avoir gagné la compétition.

8. **Apologizing.** An apology is an expression of regret for having injured, insulted or wronged another person, specifically the person being apologized to. Examples include:

   - Pardon pour avoir jeter mon dictionnaire à la fenêtre, je suis stupide.
   - J'espère que vous me comprenez mais c'est la vérité, nous devons trouver une solution, je suis désolé mais c'est la vérité.

9. **Request for personal information.** A significant amount of human interaction consists of asking questions. Most school-based writing excludes question asking by students since the traditional form of writing, the essay, is not interactive. In dialogue journals, however, many questions are asked by students. As in normal conversation, it is often necessary to request clarification, to request personal information, to request general information and to request opinions.

   In requests for personal information the student asks the teacher for information about herself. Examples include:

   - A quelle école vont vos enfants?
   - Qu'avez-vous fait pendant les vacances?
   - Est-ce que vous savez faire du patin à glace?

10. **Request for academic information.** Dialogue journal writers in this sample also request information related to classwork. Such requests are of two kinds: facts and procedures. Although these two types could be broken out separately, they were lumped together in this analysis. Examples are as follows:
-Pour la présentation sur la Syrie, qu'est ce que vous voulez: l'histoire, la musique, la géographie?
-Qu'est-ce qui se passe si nous refusons de faire une présentation?
-Est-ce que nous allons regarder une autre leçon cette semaine?
-Je désire avoir un "A" ce semestre, est-ce que c'est possible?

11. **Request for general information.** Requests for general information here refer to requests made by one student to the teacher about general facts (see 2 above). Such facts are not personal or specific to the person being asked, nor are they specific to school, classroom or academic knowledge. They refer to general knowledge. Examples include:

- Est-ce que la fête de Mardi Gras en France est comme Mardi Gras en Louisiane?
- Est-ce que les français mangent un dindon à Noël?
- En France à quel âge est-ce que les garçons ont des petites amies? est-ce qu'ils font des rendez-vous comme aux Etats-Unis?

12. **Request for opinions.** Request for opinions is different than from opinions which have been defined in 3 above. Requests for opinions are requests for expressions of feelings, preference or evaluation made by a student to the teacher. Examples include:

- Qu'est-ce que vous avez pensé de ma classe d'histoire américaine?
- Qu'est-ce que vous avez pensé de ma présentation dans la classe aujourd'hui?
- Est-ce qu'il y a un problème de racisme avec les profs à BTRHS?
- Qu'est-ce que tu penses de l'Irak et des Kurds?

13. **Request for clarification.** One of the most important language functions for the successful negotiation of schooling is that of learning how to find out what has not been made clear. In oral language there are many direct and indirect strategies for requesting clarification available to the competent speaker. Foreign language students must learn some of these strategies or face continuing confusion or ignorance in a classroom where the teacher speaks only in the target language.
- Je ne comprends pas tout ce que vous avez écrit dans mon journal le 23 octobre.
- Qu'est-ce que c'est "décontracté", tu l'écris dans la dernière page?
- Je ne comprends pas cette phrase que tu as écris "nous avons les mêmes problèmes que vous en mathématiques, expliquez-moi.

Component Five of Gutstein's Model: Topical Appropriateness

Two research questions addressed the fifth component of Topical Appropriateness.

Research question ten: Do students who are more communicatively competent write about topics from certain domains more than their less communicatively competent classmates?

Percentage of topics in each of the four domains were tabulated in relation to all topics used by each student.

Research question eleven: Do students who are more communicatively competent write about topics from a wider variety of content areas than their less communicatively competent counterparts?

The number of topic categories in which each student had written more than one percent of the total topics were added. This is the ability to have something to say in a wide range of context. A person with this kind of fluency is at ease in many different kinds of interactional settings (Fillmore, 1979). In terms of communicative competence, a writer must endeavor to bring up topics appropriate to the situation, topics about which he has something meaningful or appropriate to write about, or topics which might be of interest to the reader.

The methodology used for topic domain analysis is based on that of Staton and Kreeft (1982) and Guststein (1987). The topic domain analysis consisted of examining each student's writing during the six sampled weeks. Notation was made, by category,
as to the content of each topic. Then they were put into categories. The categories and
domains used in Gutstein's study (1987) were taken as a starting point, and some categories
were changed to represent the topics of this present analysis. The categories and their
domains are described below. The topic categories were then grouped into one of the
following four domains: Sports and Other Activities, Academic, Personal/Interpersonal,
and Miscellaneous. The breakdown of topic categories, by domain is listed in Table 1.

Under the domain of Sports and Other Activities, there are six categories. The first
is "Team Sports." Topics placed in this category included students' playing on a team
sport, such as soccer and volley ball. These were all sports activities organized by the
school. The second category is entitled "Sports-Related." Included here were any other
sports topics, for example, tennis, cross-country, track, topics about sports equipment, or
topics which were in some way connected with sports. Category three, labeled
"Extracurricular Activities," included those other activities organized for the students by
the school. Students attended these activities on an individual basis. Among these events
were club activities and school dances. Category four, "hobbies," included the writers'
special interests and activities. For example, music topics, car topics, dance topics, book
topics, and the like were placed in this category. The fifth category, "weekend," was
reserved for topics which were recountings of the writers' weekend activities. Often these
topics were generated by a teacher question such as "What did you do this weekend?"
Category 6, "other activities," contained those activities not readily classifiable under any
of the other Activity categories. In all these cases, special content in the topics precluded
their being placed in the category Hobbies.
The second domain is **Academic**. It contains four categories: Classes at School Topics, French Class Topics, Journals Topics, and University Topics. "Classes at School Topics," (Category 7) were those related to the students' classes except for the French class. "French Class Topics" (Category 8) included those relating to French class, and all other topics related to French and the students' French studies. "Journal Topics," (Category 9) were those comments, questions, and statements about the dialogue journals themselves. "University Topics," (Category 10) included all the topics relating to their future plans to attend college.

The third domain is that of **Personal/Interpersonal topics**. It contains seven categories. The category "Student," (category 11), was used when the focus of the topic was the student himself. The "Emotions/Feelings," category (category 12) includes expressions of the writers' feelings, where human feelings themselves are the topic. Category thirteen "Personal Problems," included those topics related to problems the students had outside of French class. "Health Category," (category 14) consisted of topics such as colds, fatigue. "Teacher Topics," (category 15) were those in which the teacher was the main focus. Often the students wrote about their friends. These topics were placed in a special category called "Other BRHS Students," (category 16). When the writers discussed their families, girlfriends/boyfriends, and pet dog, these topics were placed in the category of "Family Topics," (category 17).

Categories eighteen through twenty-one comprised the final domain, entitled **Miscellaneous**. Category eighteen is made of "French Topics." These were topics specifically related to information about France. Primary focus in these topics is not on the student or the teacher, but rather traditions or social customs. The nineteenth
category, "Political Topics," included those topics that discussed American and worldwide politics. Weather comments were categorized under "Weather"). Category twenty-one, "Food," contains those topics which were discussion of food.

Table 1

List of Topic Domains with Topic Categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Topic Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Domain I. Sports and Other Activities | 1. Team Sports  
|                 | 2. Sports Related  
|                 | 3. Extra-Curricular Activities  
|                 | 4. Hobbies, Other Activities  
|                 | 5. Weekend Topics  
|                 | 6. Other Activities |
| Domain II. Academic | 7. Classes at BRHS Topics  
|                   | 8. French Class Topics  
|                   | 9. Journals Topics  
|                   | 10. University Topics |
| Domain III. Personal / Interpersonal | 11. Student (as topic) topics  
|                                   | 12. Emotions and Feelings  
|                                   | 13. Personal Problems  
|                                   | 14. Health  
|                                   | 15. Teacher  
|                                   | 16. Other BRHS students  
|                                   | 17. Family members |
| Domain IV. Miscellaneous Topics | 18. French Topics  
|                                   | 19. Political Topics  
|                                   | 20. Weather  
|                                   | 21. Food |
Section Six: Statistical Analysis

Prior to calculating the relationships between the three poles on the triangulation, an interrater reliability between the results on the holistic evaluation of the dialogue journals by the three native speakers was calculated. This calculation was to indicate whether or not the rank ordering by the three native speakers was a reliable measure.

The relationship between the results on the holistic assessment of communicative competence in the students' dialogue journal writing, the students' performance on the proficiency test, and the analysis of the dialogue journals were calculated by means of a correlation study.

Correlations were calculated using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation formula. These correlations were then interpreted following Fasold (1984) who incorporated the work of Guilford (1956).

- 0.01 - 0.20  Slight, almost negligible relationship
- 0.20 - 0.40  Low correlation, definite but small correlation
- 0.40 - 0.60  Moderate correlation, substantial relationship
- 0.60 - 0.90  High correlation, marked relationship
- 0.90 - 0.99  Very high correlation, very dependable relationship

**Relationship one:** students' results on the proficiency test and the holistic evaluations of communicative ability.

**Relationship two:** (1) number of interactions and the holistic evaluation and (2) number of interactions and the proficiency test.
Relationship three: (1) mean number of words written per entry and the holistic evaluation and (2) mean number of words written per entry and the proficiency test.

Relationship four: (1) total number of words written during the school year and the holistic evaluation and (2) total number of words written per entry and the proficiency test.

Relationship five: (1) percentage of answered questions and the holistic evaluation and (2) percentage of answered questions and the proficiency test.

Relationship six: (1) percentage of correct verb conjugaison and the holistic evaluation and (2) percentage of correct verb conjugaison and the proficiency test.

Relationship seven: (1) percentage of correct verb tense/mood and the holistic evaluation and (2) percentage of correct verb tense/mood and the proficiency test.

Relationship eight: (1) percentage of correct verb conjugaison and tense/mood and the holistic evaluation and (2) percentage of correct verb conjugaison and tense/mood and the proficiency test.

Relationship nine: (1) number of sentences per topic ratio and the holistic evaluation and (2) number of sentences per topic ratio and the proficiency test.

Relationship ten: (1) number of clauses per T-unit and the holistic evaluation and (2) number of clauses per T-unit and the proficiency test.

Relationship eleven: (1) total number of functions and the holistic evaluation and (2) total number of functions and the proficiency test.
**Relationship twelve:** (1) percentage of each language function used and the holistic evaluation and (2) percentage of each language function used and the proficiency test.

**Relationship thirteen:** (1) total number of topics and the holistic evaluation and (2) total number of topics and the proficiency test.

**Relationship fourteen:** (1) percentage of topics initiated in each domain and the holistic evaluation and (2) percentage of topics initiated in each domain and the proficiency test.

A regression analysis was performed to determine which of these categories contributed the most variance to predicting the holistic rating of the dialogue journals. The elements included in the regression analysis were determined by a discriminate analysis on each category (quantity, interactional awareness, coherence, functionality, and topicality) to arrive at composite predictors which were highly correlated with the holistic rating of the dialogue journals. The same statistical analysis was performed using the results on the proficiency test as the criterion variable.

**Limitations**

This study was limited by several factors. They are as follows:

1. All of the subjects participated in dialogue writing with the same teacher. It is important to determine the range of variation among teachers or native speakers, but it may be wise to determine the scope of one teacher's interaction with a variety of students before analyzing the contributing factors of a good language learner depending on teachers' backgrounds. The single native-speaking partner also acts as a control, insuring
that the range of student variation was not affected by fundamental differences in personality or approach to dialogue writing.

2. The analytic system was developed before the data was collected. The teacher/researcher might have been affected by knowledge of the research while interacting with the students in the dialogue journals.

3. Since all the subjects were aware that only a participating grade and not an evaluative grade would appear on their records, the relationship between subjects and researcher posed less of a problem than it might in other research projects. In a project such as the present one, studying one's own students does not pose a problem in itself. If teachers are to become classroom researchers, they are likely to be studying their own students, thereby both participating in and studying a particular form of interaction. Teachers using dialogue journals will want to investigate the interaction between themselves and their students, and the present study provides a model for such research.

4. Correlations obtained in a relationship study cannot establish cause-and-effect relationship between the variables correlated. Thus, triangulation was chosen in this study to increase the confidence in the research findings.

5. The fact that all of these students had chosen to enroll in a college preparatory high school program could perhaps make it difficult to generalize these findings to other groups. Since we now live in a global age every advancement in foreign language teaching which can increase the rate of foreign language learning is of great importance for our future economically, politically, and culturally.

6. Since three raters read the dialogue journals for the holistic evaluation, the validity of the study would have been increased by having three raters evaluate the
proficiency tests. It was simply not possible within the constraints of time and support. Sally Magnan, who rated the proficiency tests, is an expert in the field of teaching and testing proficiency in writing. She is also a nationally certified Oral Proficiency Tester and a trainer of Oral Proficiency Interview Testers. Due to Sally Magnan's expertise, confidence in this research study is maintained.

7. In Gutstein's model of communicative competence, only five of the six components were considered. For each component, only certain criteria were analyzed. A complete evaluation of communicative competence would have required the study of many more criterion such as other aspects of grammar, and anaphoric reference, but time constraints prevented such completeness.
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter includes both the statistical results of this study as well as a discussion of these results. Results are presented in four sections. Section one describes the writing improvement findings. Section two interprets the results of the Lickert scale questionnaire which assesses students' attitude toward writing in the foreign language, and which reveals relevant information about the activity itself. Section three presents the results of the numerous correlation analyses while section four presents the results of the regression analysis. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the results in relation to each research question.

Results

Section One: Writing Improvement

In order to measure writing improvement a t-test for dependent sample was computed. The results of this t-test shows that the average gain on the writing proficiency test was significantly greater than zero (0) at the .01 level of significance ($t_{20} = 11.58; P = .01$). As table 2 shows, there was a highly significant gain in the Writing Proficiency Test mean scores (1.542) in the direction predicted.
Table 2

T-Test: Means and Standard Deviation of Writing Proficiency Pre and Post tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>.317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After</td>
<td>1.600</td>
<td>.346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance = .01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section Two: Attitude/Information Questionnaire

The attitude/information Lickert scale questionnaire is comprised of two parts. The first part, questions one to nine, reflects students' attitudes, and the second part, questions ten to twenty-two, is informative.

Questions one to nine

In answering questions one to nine, students were asked to state their level of agreement with a series of statements using a 1 to 5 scale with the following values: 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2= disagree, 1 = strongly disagree. For each question, the students' comments are included in Appendix E. These insightful opinions demonstrate that high school foreign language students are able to reflect on their own learning experiences. Table 3 presents the results of the Lickert scale for questions one to nine.
### Table 3

**Means, Medians and Standard Deviations of Responses to Items 1-9 on Lickert Scale Questionnaire**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Writing in my dialogue journal helped me learn French</td>
<td>4.476</td>
<td>5.000</td>
<td>.602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I liked writing to the teacher</td>
<td>4.286</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>.717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. My French writing skills have improved as a consequence of writing in my dialogue journal</td>
<td>4.429</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>.598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My French vocabulary has expanded as a consequence of writing in my dialogue journal</td>
<td>4.333</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>.658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. My French grammar skills have improved as a consequence of writing in my dialogue journal</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>.632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. My French speaking skills have improved as a consequence of writing in my dialogue journal</td>
<td>3.857</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>1.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. My French reading skills have improved as a consequence of writing in my dialogue journal</td>
<td>4.619</td>
<td>5.000</td>
<td>.740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I felt more comfortable (toward the end of the year) writing in my dialogue journal than when we first started</td>
<td>4.571</td>
<td>5.000</td>
<td>.598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. My relationship with my French teacher has changed as a consequence of writing in my dialogue journal</td>
<td>4.143</td>
<td>4.143</td>
<td>.910</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the results of the above nine questions and the students' extensive comments (Appendix E), it can safely be concluded that students showed a positive attitude toward writing in their dialogue journals both affectively and academically. They felt that writing in their dialogue journals helped them improve their overall knowledge of the target language. They perceived the effect on improving their writing and reading in particular as being stronger than on improving their grammar and speaking skills. They enjoyed writing to the teacher and felt a closer relationship with her as a consequence of this communicative activity. They also expressed that they felt more comfortable with writing in the foreign language as the year progressed, and consequently they gained confidence in their ability to write.

Questions ten to twenty-two

Questions ten to twenty-two were not attitudinal in nature. Rather, they were separate and often unrelated questions about the students' actions while they were involved in dialogue journal writing. Because each question is informational, individual items are discussed separately and include insights from student comments.

In answering questions ten to twenty-two, students were asked to state their level of agreement with a series of statements using a 1 to 5 scale with the following values: 5 = never, 4 = occasionally, 3 = sometimes, 2 = often/usually, 1 = always. The students' comments are included in Appendix E.
Table 4

Means, Medians and Standard Deviations of Responses to Items 10-22 on Information Segment of Lickert Scale Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. Do you think the teacher should have checked and corrected the grammar in your dialogue journal?</td>
<td>3.571</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>1.121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Did you think the dialogue journals were too personal?</td>
<td>4.619</td>
<td>5.000</td>
<td>.590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Did you find it hard to understand the teacher's responses?</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>.894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Did you use a dictionary when writing or reading responses?</td>
<td>2.714</td>
<td>3.000</td>
<td>1.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Did you find it hard to find things to write about?</td>
<td>3.333</td>
<td>3.000</td>
<td>1.155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Did writing in French prevent you from writing what you wanted to say?</td>
<td>3.333</td>
<td>3.000</td>
<td>.856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Would you do it all over again if you had the chance?</td>
<td>1.810</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>.828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Did you plan what you were going to write beforehand, such as an outline?</td>
<td>4.952</td>
<td>5.000</td>
<td>.218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Did you reread you entries to find grammatical errors?</td>
<td>3.850</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>.813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Did you write English words when you did not know the vocabulary words in French?</td>
<td>3.333</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>1.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Did you discuss this activity (writing in your dialogue journal) with other students?</td>
<td>3.190</td>
<td>3.000</td>
<td>.873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Did you consider this activity to be only another class assignment?</td>
<td>3.190</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>1.750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Did you read the teacher's comments and questions more than once?</td>
<td>2.333</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>1.017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. Generally, the students did not want the grammatical mistakes corrected. But nevertheless, the standard deviation 1.112 reflects a wide range of opinion among the students. Upon reading the comments, it is clear that although some students expressed the wish to have their grammatical mistakes corrected, they explained that the teacher should attend to only the most obvious errors, and that they should not be penalized for their inaccuracy. Repeatedly, they indicated that because they were not corrected, their confidence increased throughout the year, as well as their willingness to take risks.

11. The students were in agreement with not finding the journals too personal. From their comments, it is evident that they felt in control of the topics discussed in the journals.

12. At times they encountered some difficulty in understanding the teacher's responses in their journals. Nevertheless they were able to overcome the problems by looking in a dictionary, asking the teacher, or guessing through context.

13. The students did use their dictionary to understand the teacher's responses, but they used it more often when they were writing their own entries.

14. The students indicated that as the year progressed, their ease in finding topics of mutual interest to the teacher and to themselves increased.

15. Obviously, these students encountered some problems in trying to express their ideas fully in French. This is to be expected since they are still at the beginning stages of learning a foreign language. However by writing in dialogue journals, they compensated for their lack of competence in French by using strategies common
to good language communicators such as using circumlocution, selecting appropriate topics, and simplifying.

16. Even though the students answered this questionnaire at the end of the school year, they still voiced the wish to be able to continue writing in their dialogue journals. They reflected on their progress and considered the benefits of writing in their dialogue journals. Although they admitted that the writing was not always easy, they recognized its instructional value.

17. Writing in the dialogue journals was spontaneous. It represented what Britton (1982) described as "expressive writing", because it assumed various forms such as thinking aloud on paper, expressing feelings and needs, and being preoccupied with the present moment.

18. Generally, the students did not reread their entries. They gave as an explanation the fact that they were being understood by the teacher, and that grammatical errors did not count against them.

19. In general, the students tried not to use English words. They resorted to English only when they could not find another way to say it. Some students however, used more English words than others.

20. Dialogue journals were not an important topic of conversation for these teenagers. It was a private written conversation between them and their teacher. They compared the activity to a personal diary.
21. The students viewed this activity as an assignment which allowed them to improve their foreign language skills. They also considered it enjoyable compared to most homework assignments which they characterized as busy work.

22. The students read the teacher's entries more than once. The teacher wrote at a level superior to their own, and to reach full comprehension they usually had to read the response several times. They also indicated that they reread the teacher's entries in order to make sure they answered every question she asked.

Section Three: Relationship Calculations

Prior to validating each measure on the triangulation model, it was necessary to establish the interrater reliability of the three native speakers (rater 1, rater 2, and rater 3) who completed the holistic rank ordering of the dialogue journals.

Table 5 displays the ranking from the three raters. A ranking of twenty-one (21) was given to the student judged to have the best characteristics of a good language communicator. Inversely, a ranking of one (1) corresponded to the student with the worst characteristics of a good language communicator. Table 5 also presents the results on the proficiency writing posttest: Intermediate Low, Intermediate Mid, Intermediate High, and Advanced.

The interrater reliability between rater one (R1), rater two (R2), and rater three (R3) was tested with Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient symbolized by r.
Results are as follow: the average correlation was .94, all three inter correlations were significant at .01 ($r_{12}^{R} = .90, r_{13}^{R} = .93, r_{23}^{R} = .96$). Thus, these high correlations are evidence of a very dependable relationship between the three raters.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal of Rater</th>
<th>Rater 1</th>
<th>Rater 2</th>
<th>Rater 3</th>
<th>Proficiency Posttest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michele</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacques</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Int Mid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loraine</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Int Mid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Int High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angelle</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Int High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renee</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Int High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brigitte</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Int High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne K</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Int High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Int Mid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadine</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Int High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Int Mid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>Int High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacqueline</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>Int Mid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne L</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>Int Mid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>Int High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regine</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>Int Mid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>Int Mid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danielle</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>Int Mid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>Int High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christine</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>Int Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be concluded from this statistical analysis that native speakers who are not trained language teachers can agree highly on the evaluation of communicative
competence. Thus, this rank ordering can serve as a reliable measure to determine the contributing factors of good language communicators.

The results of the following relationship calculations serve to validate each measure on the triangulation model (holistic rank ordering of the dialogue journals, analysis of the dialogue journals, and the ratings on the writing proficiency post-test) as representative of aspects of student communicative ability. The validation is established if each measure or set of measures rank the students similarly to the other measures.

Relationship One: relationship one measures the correlation between the students’ results on the proficiency post-test and the holistic evaluations of communicative ability. A correlation was completed between the proficiency post-test scores and the rank ordering of the three raters (table 6).

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rater</th>
<th>Proficiency Posttest</th>
<th>P &lt; 0.5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rater 1</td>
<td>.530 (r² = .28)</td>
<td>significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater 2</td>
<td>.523 (r² = .27)</td>
<td>significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater 3</td>
<td>.535 (r² = .29)</td>
<td>significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average correlation of .53 between the results of the writing proficiency posttest and the holistic ranking of the dialogue journals indicates that there is a substantial relationship between these two elements of the triangulation. About 25% of the variance
in the proficiency posttest scores can be attributed to variance in the rank ordering of
the holistic evaluation of the dialogue journals. This is consistent across all raters.
Inversely, 75% of the variance is unexplained.

We can conclude from studying relationship one that although the holistic
assessment and the proficiency posttest take into account some of the same contributing
factors of communicative competence, they do vary on many points which will be
rendered evident by the other relationship calculations.

**Relationships Two, Three, and Four (Quantity)**

Relationships two, three, and four represent the role that Quantity plays in Gutstein's
model of communicative competence. Three measures of quantity were calculated: (Q1)
number of entries in the dialogue journals; (Q2) mean number of words written per
entry; and (Q3) total number of words per dialogue journal. Table 7 displays the results
of these three measures.

Relationship two gives the correlation between the number of entries per dialogue
journal (Q1) and the holistic evaluation of the dialogue journal by each rater, and the
correlation between the number of entries per dialogue journal (Q1) and the results on
the writing proficiency post-test.

Relationship three determines the correlation between the mean number of words
written per entry (Q2) and the holistic evaluation of each rater, and the correlation
between the number of words written per entry (Q2) and the results on the writing
proficiency post-test.
Table 7

Measures of Quantity: Number of Entries (Q1), Mean Number of Words per Entry (Q2), and Total Number of Words in Dialogue Journal of Each Student (Q3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Q3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>06394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michèle</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>12882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacques</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>04563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loraine</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>05590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrée</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>05928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angelle</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>04095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renée</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>04992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brigitte</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>093</td>
<td>03441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne K</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>03842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stéphanie</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>05168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadine</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>04524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>04320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>03255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacqueline</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>077</td>
<td>02464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne L</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>099</td>
<td>02970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>097</td>
<td>03589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Régine</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>084</td>
<td>03276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>098</td>
<td>02940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danielle</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>04144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>071</td>
<td>02059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christine</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>074</td>
<td>02738</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relationship four presents the correlation between the total number of words written during the school year (Q3) and the holistic evaluation of each rater, and the correlation between the total number of words written during the school year (Q3) and the results on the writing proficiency post-test. Table 8 summarizes the results of these relationships.
Table 8

Relationships Two, Three, and Four: Correlations between Three Measures of Quantity and Individual Holistic Rankings, Mean Holistic Ranking, and Ratings on Writing Proficiency Post-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluations</th>
<th>Number of entries Q1</th>
<th>Number of words/entry Q2</th>
<th>Total number of words Q3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rater 1</td>
<td>.6270**</td>
<td>.5602**</td>
<td>.6490**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater 2</td>
<td>.5687**</td>
<td>.5872**</td>
<td>.6651**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater 3</td>
<td>.6459**</td>
<td>.5956**</td>
<td>.6867**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average R1, R2, R3</td>
<td>.6100**</td>
<td>.5800**</td>
<td>.6700**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>.2867</td>
<td>.5157*</td>
<td>.5537**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* indicates significance level = .05  
** indicates significance level = .01

All correlations are significant at .01 between the holistic rankings of the three raters (R1, R2, and R3) and the three criterion variables (Q1, Q2, and Q3). The average correlations (.61, .58, and .67) suggest a high correlation between quantity and holistic ranking.

The correlation between the writing proficiency posttest and the total number of words Q3 is significant at .01. The correlation between the writing proficiency posttest and the number of words per entry Q2 is significant at .05. There is no significant correlation between the writing proficiency posttest and the number of entries Q1.
Relationship four is the most powerful for both the holistic ranking of the dialogue journal and the writing proficiency posttest scores.

**Relationship Five (Interactional Awareness)**

Relationship five represents the importance that Interactional Awareness has in Gutstein's model of communicative competence. This criteria of communicative competence means that students' writing should reflect an awareness of or sensitivity to the audience/teacher. For the purpose of this research, Interactional Awareness was analyzed by studying students' rate of response to the teacher's questions.

Table 9 illustrates the percentage of answered questions per student:

**Table 9**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Percentage of answered questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jérôme</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michèle</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacques</td>
<td>075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorrain</td>
<td>065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrée</td>
<td>091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angelle</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renée</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brigitte</td>
<td>094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne K</td>
<td>068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadine</td>
<td>095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise</td>
<td>088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacqueline</td>
<td>068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annie L</td>
<td>070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire</td>
<td>091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regine</td>
<td>075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie</td>
<td>065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danielle</td>
<td>057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marc</td>
<td>053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christine</td>
<td>044</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The correlation between the percentage of answered questions (II) and the holistic evaluation of each rater and the correlation between the percentage of answered questions (II) and the scores on the writing proficiency post-test was calculated. Table 10 presents the correlations for relationship five:

Table 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluations</th>
<th>Percentage of answered questions II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rater 1</td>
<td>.6714**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater 2</td>
<td>.6737**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater 3</td>
<td>.6714**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average (R1,R2,R3)</td>
<td>.6721**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>.6229**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* significance level = .05
** significance level = .01

All correlations are significant at .01. There is a marked relationship between the percentage of answered questions and each rater on the holistic evaluation of the dialogue journal. The same pattern is observed between the percentage of answered questions and the results on the writing proficiency test.
Relationships Six, Seven, Eight, Nine, and Ten (Coherence)

These relationships show the role that Coherence plays in Gutstein's model of communicative competence. This component was analyzed using elaboration, syntactic complexity, and grammar. We expect dialogue journal writing to be coherent, which according to Fillmore (1979) and Gutstein (1987) also includes being grammatical and meaningful. Five criteria were calculated: (C1) percentage of correct verb conjugation; (C2) percentage of correct verb tense/mood; (C3) percentage of correct verb conjugation and tense/mood; (C4) elaboration as determined by the number of sentences per topic ratio; and (C5) syntactic complexity as represented by the number of clauses per T-unit. Table 11 consolidates these results.

Relationship six shows the correlation between the percentage of correct verb conjugation (C1) and the holistic evaluation ranking of each of the three raters, and the correlation between the percentage of correct verb conjugation (C1) and the results on the writing proficiency test.

Relationship seven presents the correlation between the percentage of correct verb tense/mood (C2) and the holistic evaluation ranking of each of the three raters. It also gives the correlation between the percentage of correct verb tense/mood (C2) and the results on the proficiency test.

Relationship eight gives the correlation between the percentage of correct verb conjugation and tense/mood (C3) and the holistic evaluation ranking of each of the three raters, and the correlation between the percentage of correct verb conjugation and tense/mood (C3) and the results on the proficiency test.
Relationship nine displays the correlation between elaboration (C4) and the holistic evaluation ranking of each of the three raters, and the correlation between elaboration (C4) and the results on the proficiency test.

Relationship ten demonstrates the correlation between syntactic complexity (C5) and the holistic evaluation ranking of each of the three raters, and the correlation between syntactic complexity (C6) and the results on the proficiency test.

Table 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>C1</th>
<th>C2</th>
<th>C3</th>
<th>C4</th>
<th>C5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rater 1</td>
<td>.5453*</td>
<td>.5006*</td>
<td>.5949**</td>
<td>.4128</td>
<td>.1851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater 2</td>
<td>.4800*</td>
<td>.6034**</td>
<td>.6102**</td>
<td>.4105</td>
<td>.3009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater 3</td>
<td>.4855*</td>
<td>.6604**</td>
<td>.6494**</td>
<td>.3588</td>
<td>.3195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Raters</td>
<td>.5036*</td>
<td>.5881**</td>
<td>.6181**</td>
<td>.3940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>.5006*</td>
<td>.6602**</td>
<td>.6554**</td>
<td>.4084</td>
<td>.2572</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* significance level = .05
** significance level = .01

Examining the post-test scores first, one can see that the greatest proportion of variance is derived from C1 (verb conjugation), C2 (verb tense/mood), and C3 (verb conjugation and tense/mood). C2 and C3 show high correlations, C1 has a substantial correlation, but somewhat lower than C2 and C3, with C4 (elaboration) and C5 (syntactic complexity) contributing very little variance. Thus, C4 and C5 are essentially
irrelevant in terms of their contribution to post score variance. This same pattern is
clearly demonstrated in the correlations between individual raters and coherence
variables.

Relationships Eleven and Twelve (Functions)

These relationship calculations underline the importance of Functions in Gutstein's
model of communicative competence. As described in chapter three, thirteen functions
were studied:

1. Reporting Personal Facts
2. Reporting General Facts
3. Reporting Opinions
4. Analyzing, Evaluating, Reflecting
5. Thanking
6. Predicting
7. Complaining
8. Apologizing
9. Request for Personal Information
10. Request for Academic Information
11. Request for General Information
12. Request for Opinions
13. Request for Clarification

Percentage of use of each function compared to all functions was determined.
Additionally, the total number of functions (F14) accounting for more than one percent
were added.

Relationship eleven displays the correlation between the percentage of use of each
function (F1 to F13) compared to all functions and the holistic ranking of each of the
three raters, and the correlation between the percentage of use of each function (F1 to
F13) compared to all functions and the results on the proficiency writing post-test.
Relationship twelve gives the correlation between the total number of functions used (F14) and the holistic evaluation of each of the three raters, and the correlation between the total number of functions used (F14) and the results on the proficiency writing posttest. Table 12 summarizes the correlations for relationships eleven and twelve.

In relationship eleven, four functions show evidence of significance: F1 (reporting personal facts), F4 (analyzing, evaluating, reflecting), F11 (request for general information), F12 (request for opinions). Additionally, relationship twelve shows that F14, which represents the total number of functions, presents a high correlation with the holistic ranking. It is interesting to note that F1 (reporting personal facts) presents a negative relationship with the holistic ranking. The functions F1 (reporting personal facts), F4 (analyzing, evaluating, reflecting), F12 (request for opinions), and F14 (total number of functions used) display a high correlation with the holistic ranking at a significance level of .01. The function F11 (request for general information) shows a moderate correlation with the holistic ranking at a significance level of .05.

Only function F4 (analyzing, evaluating, reflecting) displays a substantial relationship with the results on the proficiency writing post-test.

Relationships Thirteen and Fourteen (Topic Appropriateness)

Relationships thirteen and fourteen explain the role that Topic Appropriateness plays in Gutstein's model of communicative competence. In terms of communicative competence, a writer must endeavor to bring up topics appropriate to the situation, topics
Table 12
Relationships Eleven and Twelve: Correlations between Each of Thirteen Functions and Total Number of Functions Used and Individual Holistic Evaluations, Mean Holistic Evaluation, and Rating on Writing Proficiency Post-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>F1</th>
<th>F2</th>
<th>F3</th>
<th>F4</th>
<th>F5</th>
<th>F6</th>
<th>F7</th>
<th>F8</th>
<th>F9</th>
<th>F10</th>
<th>F11</th>
<th>F12</th>
<th>F13</th>
<th>F14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rater 1</td>
<td>-.5795**</td>
<td>.3124</td>
<td>-.0057</td>
<td>.5110*</td>
<td>-.0916</td>
<td>.2187</td>
<td>.1747</td>
<td>-.1816</td>
<td>-.2146</td>
<td>.1094</td>
<td>.3974</td>
<td>.6376**</td>
<td>.3898</td>
<td>.6376**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater 2</td>
<td>-.7506**</td>
<td>.1649</td>
<td>-.1057</td>
<td>.6940**</td>
<td>-.0041</td>
<td>.4154</td>
<td>.1743</td>
<td>.0305</td>
<td>-.0344</td>
<td>.3458</td>
<td>.4652*</td>
<td>.7158**</td>
<td>.3207</td>
<td>.7525**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater 3</td>
<td>-.7057**</td>
<td>.2300</td>
<td>-.0662</td>
<td>.6959**</td>
<td>-.0584</td>
<td>.3633</td>
<td>.1730</td>
<td>-.0177</td>
<td>-.1635</td>
<td>.2469</td>
<td>.4697*</td>
<td>.7048**</td>
<td>.3402</td>
<td>.7794**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Raters</td>
<td>-.6786**</td>
<td>.2357</td>
<td>-.1776</td>
<td>.6336**</td>
<td>-.1541</td>
<td>.3324</td>
<td>.1740</td>
<td>-.0766</td>
<td>-.1375</td>
<td>.2340</td>
<td>.4441*</td>
<td>.6860**</td>
<td>.3502</td>
<td>.7231**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof Post-test</td>
<td>-.3965</td>
<td>.2472</td>
<td>-.3768</td>
<td>.5723**</td>
<td>-.1104</td>
<td>.22430</td>
<td>.0746</td>
<td>.2235</td>
<td>.0747</td>
<td>.4063</td>
<td>.1739</td>
<td>.3393</td>
<td>-.0096</td>
<td>.3947</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* indicates significant level = .05
** indicates significant level = .01
about which he or she has something meaningful or appropriate to write, and topics which might be of interest to the reader. As described in chapter three, four domains were studied: T1 (sports and other activities), T2 (academic), T3 (personal/interpersonal), and T4 (miscellaneous topics). Each of the four domains were separated into various topic categories.

The percentage of each topic domain (T1, T2, T3, T4) written about compared to all domains was determined. Additionally, the total number of categories (T5) written about accounting for more than one percent were added.

Relationship thirteen presents the correlation between the percentage of each domain written about (T1, T2, T3, and T4) and the holistic ranking of the dialogue journals by each of the three raters, and the correlation between the percentage of each domain written about (T1, T2, T3, and T4) and the results on the writing proficiency post-test.

Relationship fourteen explains the correlation between the total number of categories written about (T5) and the holistic ranking of the dialogue journals by each of the three raters and the correlation between the total number of categories written about (T5) and the results on the writing proficiency post-test.

Table 13 summarizes the correlations for relationships thirteen and fourteen.
Table 13

Relationships Thirteen and Fourteen: Correlations between Each of Four Topic Domains and Total Number of Domains and Individual Holistic Evaluations, Mean Holistic Evaluation, and Rating on Writing Proficiency Post-test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
<th>T3</th>
<th>T4</th>
<th>T5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rater 1</td>
<td>.1803</td>
<td>.0498</td>
<td>-.3112</td>
<td>.4117</td>
<td>.5866**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater 2</td>
<td>-.0531</td>
<td>.0982</td>
<td>-.3112</td>
<td>.5406*</td>
<td>.6002**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater 3</td>
<td>.0882</td>
<td>.1509</td>
<td>-.3018</td>
<td>.4886*</td>
<td>.6680**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of raters</td>
<td>.1072</td>
<td>.0996</td>
<td>-.3080</td>
<td>.4803*</td>
<td>.6182**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof Posttest</td>
<td>.2055</td>
<td>-.1122</td>
<td>-.2393</td>
<td>.3446</td>
<td>.4196</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* indicates significance level = .05
** indicates significance level = .01

When first looking at the holistic ranking one can see that the greatest proportion of variance is derived from T4, and T5 (T4 shows a moderate correlation while T5 demonstrates a high correlation) with T1, T2, and T3 contributing very little variance. Thus, T1, T2, and T3 are essentially irrelevant in terms of their contribution to the holistic ranking variance.

Examining the post-test scores, not one of the variables T1, T2, T3, T4, and T5 appear to be contributing to any of the variance in the results of the proficiency writing post-test.
Summary of Relationship Calculations

Table 14 summarizes the results of the relationship calculations. The reader should note that the only correlations provided are those that are significant with the holistic evaluation of the dialogue journals and/or the rating on the proficiency writing post-test. For example, only three out of the five criteria in coherence displayed significant relationships and thus only they appear on the summary table. All correlations, whether significant or not, will be discussed later.
Table 14

Summary of Correlations in Triangulation Model Using Holistic Evaluation, Rating on Writing Proficiency Post-test and Analysis of Dialogue Journals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANALYSIS OF DIALOGUE JOURNALS</th>
<th>WRITING PROFICIENCY POSTTEST</th>
<th>HOLISTIC EVALUATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Quantity</td>
<td>a. number of entries</td>
<td>.6100** holistic evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. number words/entry</td>
<td>.5800**holistic evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. total number words</td>
<td>.6700**holistic evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Interactional Awareness</td>
<td>percentage of answered</td>
<td>.6721**holistic evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>questions</td>
<td>.6229**proficiency test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Coherence</td>
<td>a. percentage of correct</td>
<td>.5036* holistic evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>verb conjugation</td>
<td>.5006* proficiency test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. percentage of correct</td>
<td>.5881**holistic evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>verb tense/mood</td>
<td>.6602**proficiency test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. percentage of correct</td>
<td>.6181**holistic evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>verb conjugation +</td>
<td>.6554**proficiency test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tense/mood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. reporting personal</td>
<td>-.6786**holistic evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>facts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. analyzing, evaluating</td>
<td>-.6336**holistic evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>reflecting</td>
<td>.5725**proficiency test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Functionality</td>
<td>c. request for general</td>
<td>.4441* holistic evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. request opinions</td>
<td>.6860**holistic evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e. range of functions</td>
<td>.7231**holistic evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Topical Appropriateness</td>
<td>a. miscellaneous</td>
<td>.4803* holistic evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. range of domains</td>
<td>.6182**holistic evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section Four: Regression Analysis

In order to arrive at a prediction model for selected significant independent variables, regression analysis was chosen as a statistical tool. The significant independent variables were the ones with the highest correlation within each of the five components of Gutstein's model of communicative competence (Quantity, Interactional Awareness, Coherence, Functionality, Topic Appropriateness). Thus, each variable which correlated the highest with the holistic ranking by the raters was entered into Multiple Regression Equation I, and in the same manner each variable which correlated the highest with the results on the writing proficiency posttest was entered into Multiple Regression Equation II.

In the relationship studies we were able to find out how important each variable was when each one was used alone in predicting the holistic ranking of the dialogue journals by the three native raters, or in predicting the results on the proficiency writing posttest. The ultimate goal was to find the relative importance of each of the variables when they are used to predict the holistic ranking or the results on the proficiency writing posttest.

Multiple Regression Equation One

The following five predictors were chosen because of their high correlation with the dependent variable: the average of the holistic rating by the raters.

(1) Q3, total number of words, had the highest correlation .6700 with the average holistic rating by the three raters and thus was chosen to represent the component Quantity.
(2) II, percentage of answered questions, had a correlation of .6721 and was determined to represent the component Interactional Awareness.

(3) C3, percentage of correct usage tense/mood and verb conjugation, had the highest correlation .6181 and was chosen to represent the component Coherence.

(4) F14, range of functions used, had the highest correlation .7231 and was determined to represent the component Functionality.

(5) T5, total number of topics discussed, had the highest correlation .6182 and was chosen to represent the component Topic Appropriateness.

A regression analysis was performed on the five predictors to arrive at the BETA Weight for each variable in order to compare the relative independent effect on the dependent variables. Table 15 summarizes the results.

Table 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>BETA Weight</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variety of topics (T5)</td>
<td>.0963</td>
<td>.601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantity, number of words (Q3)</td>
<td>.2774</td>
<td>.100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correct usage of verbs (C3)</td>
<td>.1423</td>
<td>.448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety of functions (F14)</td>
<td>.3608</td>
<td>.068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answered questions (II)</td>
<td>.1930</td>
<td>.338</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Upon examining table fifteen, we can conclude that the five variables entered in the regression analysis are in the following decreasing order of importance: F14, Q3, I1, C3, and T5. Since only F14 and Q3 approach significance levels between .0500 and .1000 it was decided to run a stepwise regression analysis. In a stepwise regression, predictor variables are entered one at a time but can be deleted if they do not contribute significantly to the regression when considered in combination with newly entered predictors.

This analysis yielded a regression equation that maximized R² (67%) with the inclusion of F14 and Q3 alone. F(2,18) = 18.57 with p>.05. Examination of the standard coefficients revealed that F14 was the most important predictor in the regression equation (Beta = .53) relative to Q3 (Beta = .41). F14 is slightly greater than Q3.

Thus, the stepwise solution arrived at a most parsimonious model. The best predictors for the holistic rating of the dialogue journals are F14 (total number of functions used) and Q3 (total number of words written). The prediction equation for regression analysis one using standardized beta (slope assumed to be 0) is: Y = .53 (F14) + .411 (Q3).

**Multiple Regression Equation Two**

For regression analysis two, the following four predictors were chosen to represent the five components of Gutstein's model of communicative competence because of their high correlation with the dependent variable: the results on the proficiency writing posttest.
(1) Q3, total number of words, had the highest correlation .5537 with the results on the proficiency writing posttest. Therefore, Q3 was chosen to represent Quantity.

(2) I1, percentage of answered questions, had a high relationship .6229 with the results on the proficiency writing posttest. Therefore I1 was chosen to represent Interactional Awareness.

(3) C2, percentage of correct usage of tense/mood verbs, had the highest correlation .6602 with the results on the proficiency writing posttest. Thus, C2 was chosen to represent Coherence.

(4) F4, analyzing, evaluating, reflecting, had the highest correlation .5723 with the results on the proficiency writing posttest. Consequently, F4 was chosen to represent Functionality.

(5) There was not any significant correlation between Topic Appropriateness and the results on the proficiency writing posttest.

A regression analysis was performed on the four predictors (Q3, I1, C2, F4) using the stepwise procedure. This analysis yielded a regression analysis that maximized R² (43%) with the inclusion of only C2. All the other predictors (Q3, I1, and F4) did not enter in the equation because of their significance level not being between .05 and .1000. F (1,19) = 14.68 with p>.05. Examination of standardized slopes (beta) revealed that C2 was the most important predictor in the regression equation (beta = .66).

The best predictor for the results on the proficiency writing posttest is C2 (percentage of correct usage of tense/mood). The prediction equation for regression analysis two using standardized beta (slope assumed to be 0) is: Y = .660 (C2).
Discussion

The results of this study can best be understood by looking again at the eleven questions posed. Each of the research questions will be discussed in the order in which they were presented in the Introduction.

**Question one:** Do students who have written in their dialogue journals throughout the school year improve significantly in their level of writing proficiency?

In response to the first question concerning writing improvement over the school year, the results of the t-test provide evidence that the students have improved significantly. It is to be expected that students improve over a school year of instruction. What is more important however, is how much they have improved in their level of language writing proficiency. At the beginning of the year the average mean was 0.580 which corresponds to a writing level between Novice-mid and Novice-high. At the end of the year the average mean was 1.600 which is a level between Intermediate-mid and Intermediate-high according to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language Proficiency Guidelines.

Magnan (1985) stated that the Novice Level is common in first and second year high school programs and in first year college classes. The results of this research agree with Magnan's findings. Liskin Gasparro (1984) explained that after four years of high school or four semesters of college language instruction, most students are still writing within the intermediate range. This study shows evidence that after only three years of high school, most students can write between the Intermediate-mid and Intermediate-high range. Gasparro (1984) has also stated that the Advanced level is reached only by
students who major in the foreign language in college. It is interesting to remark that, in this study, two Level III French students received an Advanced Rating.

It can be concluded that these twenty-one students have performed as well, if not better than most students after four years of studying a foreign language. Therefore, after four hundred and fifty hours of studying a foreign language in a high school context, students can be expected to reach at least the Intermediate-mid level on the ACTFL writing proficiency guidelines. In this study only one student received an Intermediate-low rating, eight students received an Intermediate-mid rating, ten students received an Intermediate-high rating, and two students received an Advanced-rating.

Dialogue journals appear to possess remarkable power to foster in students the development of writing skills. When students realize that teachers read their writing to understand what they are trying to say rather than to judge their grammar and usage, they write more, and with greater fluency.

These results are similar to the results obtained by Staton, Shuy, Kreeft Peyton & Reed (1988) with native English speakers and by Hayes and Barhuth (1985) with limited English proficiency students. They found that when students write over time with real audiences about topics that interest and concern them, there is a remarkable development in their facility with using written language. The results of this study clearly demonstrate that the use of dialogue journals is a good way to give students practice with writing. Dialogue journal writing can be effective in developing students' writing abilities and in assisting them in the performance of more formal composing tasks by giving them opportunities to write in an interactive context.
**Question two:** Do students who have engaged in dialogue journal writing throughout the school year have a positive attitude toward writing in a foreign language?

The attitude/information questionnaire demonstrates that dialogue journals lead students to increased confidence and a positive attitude in their ability to write in the foreign language. This makes them more likely to take risks and make commitments to writing, which in turn facilitates the development of their writing abilities. As Zamel (1987, 1990) has repeatedly explained, the type of instruction students receive in their writing classes is the determining factor in fostering positive or negative attitudes.

Students in this study were able to understand the benefits of writing in dialogue journals. They viewed this activity as helping them become better writers in the foreign language. The evidence from this study provides support for the proposition that writing in dialogue journals helps students be less apprehensive toward writing. Because topics tend to be based on students' experiences, they need not worry about finding enough information to fill the page; similarly, they are rarely blocked by not knowing what to say. In addition, students develop their own confidence as writers when they begin to feel the power of recording the events of their lives on paper. Their performance on the writing proficiency post-test indicated that as they manipulated content and grammar, they not only increased their confidence, but also shifted their attitudes toward more formal writing.

Dialogue journal writing is especially beneficial for foreign language students who lack confidence in their ability to write in the target language due to their lack of experience or practice. It gives students an opportunity to write in a nontaxing environment while they practice their writing skills.
situation to an audience who responds to what they have communicated rather than to what they have not communicated.

Perhaps the most striking conclusion of this study is the fact that dialogue journals help students overcome their fear of the written form of the foreign language, and increase their self-confidence and willingness to write. This is an important feat, since for many of us, learning to write, even in our native language, is a challenge fraught with frustration and fear. The analysis of the attitude/information questionnaire shows that writing in dialogue journals offered these students an opportunity to overcome their fear by allowing them to write about things meaningful to them in a non-evaluative, non-threatening context. Many of the students who initially felt hesitant or afraid to write in the foreign language found that they actually enjoyed writing back and forth with their teacher. Eventually, they developed the confidence that comes from having done something new and having done it well.

**Question three:** Do students who are more communicatively competent write more than their less communicatively competent classmates?

Relationship two, three, and four clearly demonstrate that quantity is an important contributing factor to determine communicative competence. Quantity played an important role both in the holistic rating of the dialogue journals and in the proficiency level assigned to the writing proficiency post-test.

The results of this study reaffirm those of Gutstein (1987), and show that quantity plays an important role in communicative competence. A good language communicator
is able to write at length. Clearly, the amount a student writes should be one factor in
the teacher's assessment of student success at a writing task.

**Question four:** Do students who are more communicatively competent show more of
an awareness of their audience than their less communicatively competent classmates?

Relationship five shows strong evidence that Audience Awareness, as determined
by the percentage of questions answered by the students, is an important contributing
factor in determining communicative competence.

Interactional awareness played an important role both in the holistic rating of the
dialogue journals and in the rating assigned to the writing proficiency posttest. The rate
of response to the teacher's questions demonstrate the students' desire to interact. As
Kreeft (1984) and Morroy (1984) point out, teachers' questions play a valuable role in
promoting and aiding student writing. By responding to the students and asking them
questions, the teacher helps the students make the transaction from guided limited
writing to extended prose.

This research also supports Kreeft's study (1984) that there is a high correlation
response rate related to language proficiency. By reading the teacher's writing and
answering her questions, students developed a greater understanding of audience in their
writing. Learning about the teacher through their journal helped these students shape
their own writing because they had a better understanding of their audience. Britton
(1982) and Applebee (1981) found that the primary type of audience for student writing
in British and American secondary schools, respectively, was the teacher-as-evaluator,
and they argued that students should have other types of audiences for their writing.
These findings suggest that the definition of audience stance taken by the teacher is crucial to students' participation in dialogue journals. Therefore, teachers need to make conscious decisions about what audience role they play in response to students' writing. Rather than simply playing the role of evaluator, teachers must practice responding to student writing as interested readers and collaborators in learning.

**Question five**: Do students who are more communicatively competent elaborate more than their less communicatively competent classmates?

Elaboration, as measured by the number of sentences per topic ratio, appears not to have an important role, neither in the holistic rating of the dialogue journals, nor in the writing proficiency ratings. These results are in accordance with Gutstein's findings. She found no significant differences in topic elaboration between students of high and low language proficiency ability.

The elaboration data in this research does not exactly correlate with the communicative competence model since the relationship of elaboration to the proficiency writing posttest and the holistic ranking is not significant. The journals of students with high holistic ranking/proficiency levels exhibit similar characteristics to the journals of students with low holistic ranking/proficiency levels.

**Question six**: Do students who are more communicatively competent write using "more syntactically dense" sentences than their less communicatively competent classmates?

Syntactic complexity, as measured by the number of clauses per T-unit did not show any significant relationship with the holistic ranking of the dialogue journals nor the rating on the writing proficiency post-test.
Although research has shown that the T-unit can effectively discriminate among writing of different proficiency levels of second language students in ESL, French, German, and Spaninh (Monroe, 1975; Cooper 1981; Flahive & Snow, 1980) it did not appear to be the case in this study. Students writing in the intermediate mid and intermediate high on the ACTFL guidelines do not display significant differences in the complexity of their writing.

**Question seven:** Do students who are more communicatively competent generate fewer grammatical errors than their less communicatively competent classmates?

Usage of correct grammar, represented by the percentage of correct verb usage (conjugation, tense/mood, and conjugation/tense mood), is a definite contributing factor in determining the holistic ranking of the dialogue journals and the rating on the proficiency test.

This study agrees with Canale and Swain (1980) who argue for the role of grammar in their communicative competence model. They explain that although "focus on grammatical competence in the classroom is not a sufficient condition for the development of communicative competence, it would be inappropriate...to conclude...that the development of grammatical competence is irrelevant to or unnecessary for the development of communicative competence" (p12). Thus, there should be emphasis on both grammatical accuracy and meaningful communication from the onset of foreign language study. Early meaningful verbal communication may not be possible without some grammatical knowledge. If the goal of language learning is communicative competence, then the language-teaching syllabus must integrate aspects of grammar.
Dialogue journal writing integrates the learning of grammar in a natural way. The use of grammatical forms and structures evolves naturally in the process of the interaction. The language in the journals is not grammatically sequenced according to some pre-established plan.

Dialogue journal writing promotes the learning of written forms of language and syntax in at least two ways. First, the desire to communicate and to maintain the dialogue gives students reason to consult, study, and use correct forms of the target language. Second, the very act of communicating in writing promotes the unconscious acquisition of written linguistic structures.

**Question eight:** Do students who are more communicatively competent use a wider range of language functions than their less communicatively competent classmates?

The more competent in the foreign language the student becomes, the broader becomes his or her range of frequently used language. The results of this study echo the findings of Kreeft, Shuy, Staton, Reed, and Morroy (1984) as well as those of Staton, Shuy, Peyton, and Reed (1988) in their research on sentence level functions. Dialogue journal writing encourages students to express in writing a wide variety of language functions, such as reporting facts, making requests, complaining, giving excuses, predicting, and so on. The weak relationship between number of functions used and the rating on the writing proficiency post-test underlines the inability of the latter to allow the use of a wide range of language functions. Thus, the ratings did not reflect the students' ability to use diverse functions; rather, it only reflected their ability to use functions that were specifically required by the nature of the test itself.
The culmination of language learning is not simply the mastery of language forms, but it is instead the mastery of forms in order to accomplish the communicative functions of language. Thus, students must be given the opportunity to use diverse functions in order to learn to communicate.

**Question nine:** Do students who are more communicatively competent use certain functions more often than their less communicatively competent classmates?

Four language functions have relevant bearing on this study due to their strong correlation with the holistic evaluation of the dialogue journals and/or the results on the writing proficiency posttest. Students who were judged good language communicators reported fewer personal facts (F1) than their less communicatively competent counterparts. This was rendered evident by a marked negative relationship between the percentage of F1 used and the holistic ranking (-.68). Although the relationship between F1 and the rating on the proficiency posttest appeared to be weak (-.39), it was also negative. The ACTFL Writing Proficiency Guidelines describe students at the Intermediate-mid level as writing about their "personal preferences, daily routine, everyday events, and other topics grounded in their personal experience". It would appear that the holistic ranking agrees with these guidelines by giving the least proficient students in this study a rating of Intermediate-Mid. The results of the writing proficiency post-test however reflects less the ACTFL guideline intermediate mid description in that many students receiving the rating of Intermediate-Mid had a low percentage of reporting personal facts.
The second important language function used is F4 which represents the capacity to analyze, to evaluate and to reflect in the foreign language. This language function is particularly meaningful, because it shows a substantial relationship with the rating on the proficiency writing posttest (.57) and a high relationship with the holistic ranking of the dialogue journals (.63). Dialogue journal writing involves students in reflective thinking, a valuable skill that may carry over to other types of writing. The act of reflecting, of stepping back from what one is writing about, to consider one's thoughts and feelings about its content, is a part of the thinking process that is involved in producing most types of writing, including more formal genres. To make a convincing argument, to explain an issue effectively, or to clarify the significance or meaning of events, writers must reflect on the content they are presenting. Evaluating, reflecting, and analyzing correspond to the Advance-plus and Superior levels on the writing proficiency guidelines. The last two functions deal with information gathering: F11 (request for general information) and F12 (request for opinions). Most educators and educational researchers agree that question asking is an important part of the learning process. In study after study of classroom interaction, it has been found that the teacher asks almost all of the questions (Politzer, 1980; Heath 1982; Dillon, 1982). For example, Politzer found that 94% to 97% of classroom questions were asked by the teacher. Goody (1978) observed that although students may and do ask questions in the classroom, they must display a certain degree of deference in doing so, so as not to create the impression that they are demanding a reply or putting the teacher on the spot. In the one-to-one journal interaction, the power imbalance between the student and the
authority role of the teacher is minimized. For the students, the power to ask questions provides a way to co-direct the course of the conversation as well as to structure, understand, and influence classroom and school events. F11 (request for general information) showed a moderate correlation with the holistic evaluation, but F12 (request for opinion) had a high correlation with the holistic evaluation of the dialogue journals. Opinion questions are rarely asked by students in foreign language classroom discourse. Dialogue journals, however, offer an opportunity to build an increasingly shared framework of mutuality and intersubjective understanding between student and teacher. Students who ask opinion questions are better communicators because through the sharing of opinions they build a foundation of understanding and knowledge. The opportunity to ask questions freely about whatever is perceived to be of immediate and real concern, and to engage in communication on a mutual basis, are basic conditions for the development of knowledge about one's own inner states (emotions, intentions, attitudes and beliefs) and for sharing a social reality (Hamlyn, 1973; Peters, 1972).

**Question ten:** Do students who are more communicatively competent write about topics from certain domains more than their less communicatively competent classmates?

Only T4 (Miscellaneous Domain) showed a moderate correlation with the holistic rating of the dialogue journals. No significant correlations were found with the results on the writing proficiency posttest. T4 included four categories: "French" topics, political topics, weather, and food. The relationship between these topics and the holistic rating given by three native speakers could be explained by the fact that French
people are notorious for being fascinated with politics and with their own culture. Also, these two topics demonstrated that these students were curious about the world. The good language communicator has the need to construct an understanding of the world and the need to acquire new knowledge about himself. He has the need to seek information about the world and his own relationship to it. Dialogue journals allow students to take the risk of becoming vulnerable enough to learn more about the way the world works.

**Question eleven:** Do students who are more communicatively competent write about topics from a wider variety of content areas than their less communicatively competent counterparts?

It seems that it is not so much what students write about that is important but the fact that they can write about a wide variety of topics. A high correlation (.62) between the holistic ranking of the dialogue journal and the variety of topic written about was found whereas a moderate correlation (.42) appears between the results on the writing proficiency writing posttest and the variety of topic written about.

**A composite picture:** A brief summary might include the following description of good language communicators in a French III class. They can write at length about a wide variety of topics using a multitude of language functions. In their writing they are aware of their audience at all times, and they are attentive to their audience's need. They make grammatical errors which do not hinder the flow of discussion. They are definitely not self-centered, they are able to reflect on different topics, they are curious and they have the desire to know, to understand others and the world.
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS
AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This research studied dialogue journal writing, as it occurred between a teacher and twenty-one students in a French III high school classroom. This form of writing was chosen for analysis because it provides learners of a foreign language the opportunity to engage regularly in authentic written communication on a one-to-one basis in the target language, and because it has the characteristics of optimal input for second language acquisition.

The purpose of this study was to investigate (1) student attitude toward writing in the foreign language after engaging in dialogue journal writing during an entire school year, 2) the relationship between writing proficiency levels and the use of dialogue journals as a means of teaching writing, and (3) the characteristics of good language communicators.

The data consisted of the dialogue journals, the results on a proficiency writing test administered at the beginning of the year and again at the end of the school year, and an attitude/information questionnaire. The results of the study, and observations based on these results, can only be applied to student groups of similar background and proficiency. However, this research has implications reaching beyond any particular language background or proficiency level.

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Without a doubt the most important conclusion of this study is the ability of dialogue journals to help foreign language students overcome their fear of the written form of a second language and increase their self-confidence and willingness to write. By demystifying the writing process, writing in their dialogue journals helps students develop positive attitudes. Since research has shown that maximum interest, preparation, participation, and achievement depend at least as much on affective characteristics as they do on cognitive abilities, the power that dialogue journals have in fostering positive attitudes cannot be overemphasized.

Throughout this research, writing in dialogue journals permitted a sharing of authority, and transformed writing into a meaning-making event. Consequently, students changed as writers. They adopted a positive attitude toward written work, and demonstrated real growth in writing performance. The confidence which these students gained made them believe in themselves as writers, in their abilities to communicate in written French, and in the possibility of improving their writing skills. Without such confidence, many of them would have been reluctant to take risks and make commitments to writing.

The above leads to the second very important finding: based on the results of a writing proficiency pre and post-tests, these students performed as well or better than students after four years of a foreign language in a high school setting or four semesters of college instruction. Although the students did not engage in any other type of writing activity during the school year, writing in their journals provided extensive practice in skills needed for other kinds of writing, and this was accomplished in a context that was
more enjoyable, less threatening, and more personally meaningful than is possible of assigned compositions. As such, the dialogue journals served as a bridge to other kinds of writing such as the topics on the writing proficiency test. Two students received an Advanced rating which is usually only attained by students majoring in the target language in college.

In order to arrive at characteristics of good language communicators, this research used Gutstein's (1987) theoretical model of communicative competence which includes the six following components: 1) Quantity, (the amount of language produced and its level of informativeness); 2) Coherence, (grammaticality, clarity of expression, cohesion and meaningfulness); 3) Topical Appropriateness, (knowledge of style, register and content conventions, which impacts on topic selection and choice of formality levels in language); 4) Creativity, (the capacity to produce or understand novel uses of language); 5) Functionality, (effectiveness in accomplishing real world goals using language); and 6) Interactional Awareness, (awareness and inclusion of the interlocutor in language production). Creativity was the only component not analyzed in this study. Communicative competence is difficult to measure in any context because it is a composite of knowledge and language production ability in a number of different areas. Therefore, no single measure can adequately represent this contract. To resolve this problem, the concept of triangulation was borrowed from ethnography and used in this research. Three measurements were selected for study: the holistic assessment of communicative ability in dialogue journal writing, the analysis of the dialogue journals (Quantity, Interactional Awareness, Coherence, Functionality, and Topical Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Appropriateness), and the students' rating on the writing proficiency post-test, a measure external to the dialogue journals themselves. The relationships among these three measures were seen to be indicative of student communicative competence in dialogue journal writing.

It was determined that the holistic evaluation of the dialogue journals represented a valid measure of communicative competence because of the high interrater reliability (.94) between the rank ordering by the three native speakers who read the journals. The moderate relationship (.53) between the holistic ranking of the dialogue journals and the results on the writing proficiency post-test suggested that the two measures did not agree on some of the characteristics of good language communicators.

The results of both the proficiency writing post-test and the holistic ranking of the dialogue journals showed a high correlation with the following characteristics of good language communicators:

1) quantity as measured by the total number of words;
2) interactional Awareness as measured by the percentage of questions answered;
3) grammar as assessed by percentage of correct verb conjugation and tense/mood;
4) the function of analyzing, evaluating, and reflecting;

Additionally the holistic ranking also showed a high relationship with the following characteristics of a good language communicator. These same characteristics, however, did not show any relationship with the proficiency writing post-test:

1) the function of reporting personal facts (inverse relationship);
2) the function of requesting general information;
3) the function of requesting opinions;
4) the range of language functions used;
5) the miscellaneous topic domain ('French topics', 'political topics', 'weather', and 'food');
6) the range of topic categories written about.

Two multiple regression equations were calculated to predict the holistic ranking and the results on the proficiency post-test. It was found that the best predictors for the holistic ranking of the dialogue journals were the total number of functions used and the total number of words written. The best predictor for the results on the proficiency writing post-test was the percentage of correct usage of tense/mood verbs.

Conclusions

Dialogue journals can create an individual tutorial relationship between student and teacher in which both academic and personal concerns may be discussed. The journals represent a concrete application of Vygotsky's theory (1962) that learning of functional human activities occurs first through the learner's cooperative participation in accomplishing tasks with a more experienced partner. What the learner can do with assistance today maybe done unaided in the future. By creating a dialogue setting, the teacher supports the student's emerging writing development and the acquisition of more complex reasoning skills. Several conclusions can be drawn from the results of this research.
Communication. Writing became a natural means of communication for these foreign language students because it originated in a real life, communicative context. Dialogue journal writing reduced the normal status and power asymmetry of student and teachers and allowed the students to engage in mutually constructed, continued conversations indicating co-membership status with the teacher based on shared interests. The dialogue journal was a completely open-ended writing experience. It represented an opportunity during which students could write freely about any topic, and a time to use writing to think through an issue or problem, without being constrained by the need for perfect form. Dialogue journals as a writing activity differed from daily personal journals or logs in that the teacher provided a response. The latter provided students with an ongoing model of writing of a more competent writer, not only on the level of words, phrases, and sentences, but also on the more sophisticated level of thought processes, organization of thoughts, and overall fluency and coherence of expression. Dialogue journal writing fostered an atmosphere that empowered both students and teacher, thus resulting in enhanced communication.

Positive Attitude. Dialogue journal communication showed the potential to affect positively student attitude toward writing in the foreign language. The dialogue journal interaction created a context of equality and power symmetry that led the learners and their teacher to trust each other. This condition of trust and mutual engagement enabled the student to become more open, less anxious, and willing to take risks.

Writing Improvement. Dialogue journals played a facilitating role in the development of the students' written language competence. Often the greatest barrier that students
face in becoming successful writers is gaining familiarity and relatively easy access to the whole process of producing ideas on paper. To learn how to write is not a matter of learners committing errors and teachers correcting them in various ways. It is rather a matter of continuous adjustment between the writer and the reader. This adjustment-in-interaction is crucial to language development, for it leads to noticing discrepancies between what is written and what is read, and to a resolution of these discrepancies. Based on this research, it can be concluded that, many students after three years of studying French in high school, can write at least at a level between Intermediate-Mid and Intermediate-High.

Characteristics of Good Language Communicators. Dialogue journals provided opportunities for the foreign language communicator to internalize an audience perspective. This is usually a major difficulty for all writers. Students may have been aided in developing a greater understanding of the importance of audience in their writing. The teacher actively responded with questions, comments, and elaborations, thus modeling how an audience thinks and reacts to written messages.

The journal's functional nature brought out the good language communicator's ability to present persuasive arguments and to offer evidence in their support. The dialogue journals actively demanded, and provided students with opportunities for higher order relational thinking. A good language communicator uses language appropriately in a wide range of contexts. This means that the writer knows how to use language in different situations: to inform, to evaluate, to apologize, to offer opinion, to thank, etc. Written dialogue lended itself naturally to the use of a wide variety of language
functions, from reporting personal facts and opinions to asking questions, complaining, giving excuses, and expressing other communicative needs and desires. This happened in the normal course of the conversation, as students and teacher got to know each other and increasingly shared information and ideas meaningful to them. Dialogue journals seemed to have helped good language communicators to develop into fluent writers who can write at length with few pauses, and with grammatical errors that do not hinder communication.

Dialogue journals allowed good language communicators to write about a variety of topics. Although students were allowed to write about personal topics, good language communicators also discussed non-personal topics. Depending on the topic and communicative purpose of the entry, they described, explained, narrated, complained, or argued, usually providing supporting details. The dialogue journals of good language communicators had the qualities of good conversation. Both the student and the teacher chose topics to discuss. Both contributed equally, making comments and offering observations and opinions, requesting and giving clarification, and asking and answering questions.

Assessment of Communicative Competence. The Multiple Regression Equation for predicting the results on the writing proficiency test indicated that the test showed a dangerous preoccupation with grammatical correctness. It seems that the test focused too heavily on specific grammatical structures and its global rating overemphasized grammatical accuracy at the expense of other communicative features. It appears that undue emphasis on grammatical correctness may have masked important strengths and
weaknesses in the functional and topical use of the language. The writing proficiency test is clearly insufficient for the assessment of communicative competence. On the surface, at least, the proficiency test assesses grammatical ability first rather than all aspect of actual language in use.

The holistic assessment of the dialogue journals appear to be the most sensitive to the students' actual communicative competence because it is sensitive not only to accuracy but also to functions and to content. Thus, the holistic rankings have the greatest face validity as a measure of communicative competence.

Implications

Implications For the Classroom

Student as Individuals. Every student is unique. No matter how much care is taken to place language students of similar proficiency together, the difference among individuals in the same class can be enormous. Being aware of and responding to those differences are two of the greatest challenges of classroom foreign language teaching. Dialogue journals offer teachers a powerful means of meeting those challenges. During the class, especially in those with more than twenty-five students, most teachers are hard pressed to monitor closely each student's abilities or progress. Dialogue journals can change that radically. They open a window on each student, allowing the teacher to follow each individual's written language production and comprehension as manifested in the dialogue. The writing in the dialogue journal provides teachers with extensive,
ongoing information about where each student stands, and about their strengths and weaknesses as students.

**Control and Empowerment.** Most approaches to syllabus construction, and most lesson plans, sequence tasks and activities in terms of the amount of control that is exercised: tightly controlled activities specify contributions and limit participation by providing detailed instructions; less controlled activities allow for a variety of contributions and for varying amounts of initiative and choice. A concern for some degree of balance and sequence of control is evident even in some of the most progressive recommendations of the communicative approach: activities in a lesson move from controlled to free, from pre-communicative to communicative, so that the teacher starts out with complete control (over who says what, when, to whom) and gradually relinquishes that control to allow for true communication only during some final portion of the lesson. Dialogue journals on the other hand allow for shared control from the beginning, rather than withholding shared control as an ultimate goal seldom reached.

Questions are an important tool of power and control. In the average classroom, the vast majority of questions are asked by the teacher, thus indicating the amount of asymmetry that exists in the average classroom. When control is delegated, particularly control over topic, the proportion of questions asked by learners can be expected to increase. Students need opportunities to ask questions, to be involved. By asking questions students acquire knowledge about themselves and about the world. Through questioning in the foreign language, windows open to the outside world and consequently to the students' own world.
Repair is also related to control. A teacher who rigidly maintains control over both topic and activity tends to correct students. These constant corrections interrupt the flow of discourse, and most importantly, they stop both the learners' interactive and cognitive work. When control is shared, repair occurs in a fashion similar to natural conversation.

Control can be shared by teacher and learners so that the discourse becomes less asymmetrical and more jointly planned. Planning then becomes a part of the interaction itself rather than being imposed from the outside, and learners are challenged to exercise their interactional competence. This naturally results in a reduction in emphasis on elicitation and recitation, creating more space for other, more productive interaction types. Through interaction, such as dialogue journals, the student is developing his own idea of the world, and learning to know himself. Thus, the world becomes cohesive. Writing in dialogue journals allows students to be involved in their own education. They are better able to understand the objectives, and through self reflection they acquire the power of self-control. Dewey (1938) regarded shared control and experience between learners and teachers as the foundation for education.

The plan is a cooperative enterprise, not a dictation. The teacher's suggestion is not a mold for a cast-iron result but a starting point to be developed into a plan through contributions from the experience of all engaged in the learning process. The development occurs through reciprocal give-and-take, the teacher taking but not being afraid to give. The essential point is that the purposes grow and take shape through the process of social intelligence. (Dewey, 1938, p. 65).

It is through reflective conversation with students that a teacher tries to solve problems. She can become more accountable to students and simultaneously assumes the role of researcher in the classroom. Students reflect both with the teacher and on their own.
Error Correction. One needs to realize that what is true for language acquisition, as we understand it from Krashen (1982), also applies to learning to write: monitoring student output while that output is in the process of developing may not only be unproductive, but may inhibit further development (Winterowd 1980, Pringle 1983). Thus, one needs to refrain from correcting texts the way most of us currently do. One should control our reflex-like reactions to surface-level concerns and give priority to meaning, for "by worrying about mistakes in writing before we have helped students with the more important problem of adequately representing meaning ... we may be teaching students to do the same" (Collins, 1981, p. 202). By reading primarily for error, instead of responding to the substance of students' writing, one create a situation in which genuine change even at the more superficial level is unlikely. Dialogue journal writing is a communicative activity where priority is given to meaning and communication.

Evaluation of Learner. The common way to evaluate learners' progress is through tests, quizzes and examinations. These are often institutionalized in the sense that schools and language institutes usually have their own sets of tests that are applied at specific intervals. In addition, many textbook series have their own batteries of progress or achievements tests. There is no doubt that such tests fulfill important functions in providing feedback to the teacher, the institution, and the learner in terms of how individual learners or groups of learners are doing in relation to a larger population. However, they are by and large inadequate in terms of the learners' actual performance and progress when interacting with peers and/or in target language settings, thus providing only a very partial indication of communicative competence. A learner's assessment should not be derived exclusively from standard tests, however useful and well constructed they may be. Standard tests provide feedback to the world at large rather than to the
learner. The classroom itself provides opportunities to let learners evaluate themselves and monitor their own progress.

Dialogue journal writing tells teachers more about what students know and don't know than more formal assignments designed specifically to find these things out. In fact, the personal, expressive language of journals reveals not only student knowledge, but how students construct that knowledge, and how they feel about what they have constructed. For teachers interested in both the product and process of learning, journals offer a comprehensive writing tool.

In the traditional system, students have developed a fear of failure. They respond to the school system by "turning off", or they learn to beat the system by optimizing the measures of performance, discovering how to pass tests, get grades, and move through the levels of the system, without thinking very much about the knowledge they are supposed to acquire. Good teachers should promote risk taking skills, and dialogue journals may foster a stress free atmosphere where students are encouraged to take risks.

The Place of Writing in the Classroom. The tendency to view writing as the least useful of the four language skills needs to be changed. Writing should not be sacrificed and teachers need to realize that writing is as important as the other skills. The obvious conclusion from this study is that students learn to express themselves in writing by writing at the communicative level. Students need to have ample opportunities to write. The teacher's first tasks in teaching writing is to deal with the affective aspects of writing. Unless that primary problem is attacked productively, the teacher will have greater difficulty teaching students how to write.
Implications for Curriculum Writing and Lesson Planning

Reflective Practitioner. This research was conducted with the aim of finding cause-effect relationships between certain actions and their outcomes. This required the use of various statistical procedures such as strong correlations, level of significance, and all other requirements of the scientific method. But as the teacher/researcher, I do not wish to neglect the social context of the interaction between my students and myself. I have shown that dialogue journals created an atmosphere where students developed a positive attitude toward writing in the foreign language. I wish to share now how this experience affected me as a teacher.

Dialogue writing helped me to grow both personally, and as a writer. In my relationships with my students it kept me alert; it made me more aware of the countless subtle differences among individuals, differences that I couldn't appreciate fully during class. It also taught me about myself, specifically about how I responded to those differences. Being able to reread previous entries was invaluable in that process. Sometimes, in retrospect, I thought that with a given student I had been too personal, or too political. The journals allowed me to change my approach, if need be. They were like a mirror that allowed me to look not only at the present, but also at the past.

Dialogue journal writing motivated and inspired me to teach. Writing in dialogue journals that year was the best part of my teaching. Beyond being compelling, the interaction was deeply rewarding. For me, the connection to the students as people was so powerful, the feeling so gratifying, that it gave whole new meaning to my daily work in teaching. It renewed a sense of value in my classroom work and strengthened the notion that I was there for personal growth as well as for the growth of my students.
At times, the day in class seemed difficult, and lesson planning endless, but when I sat down to do the journals, little else mattered. The relationships with my students was one of trust because power and control were shared. When these students would arrive in my classroom, I felt at ease, comfortable because I had learned to know and share their world.

**Lesson Planning.** Students' questions and their interest in various topics as expressed in the journals can provide input for planning future lessons. The journals became a permanent, ongoing record of each student's progress in nonassigned writing that can be reviewed throughout the year. The teacher can plan structure and vocabulary lessons around mistakes they find in students' journals.

Student entries can give a teacher remarkably consistent, and timely feedback on the effectiveness of a particular lesson. The feedback may be indirect, such as when students' writing reveals these concepts or linguistic forms they have mastered or are struggling with, or the feedback may be direct such as when students complain, question, or criticise a lesson. Either way, this information serves as a valuable aid to planning future lessons.

**Curriculum Writing.** Dialogue journal is an ideal medium both for practicing classroom reform through reflection and feedback, and for making broader curricular revisions. The dialogue journal has been used, in fact, by reconceptualist educators (Grumet, 1987; Albertini & Meath-Lang, 1986) as a method of evaluation and critical inquiry into curriculum. While dialogue journals are primarily, and appropriately, a teaching tool to promote fluency and communicative consciousness, they can also be seen as a source for reshaping foreign language curricula. The ongoing nature of the dialogue-relationship between teacher and student, and the reflective requirement of writing are powerful challenges. The discourse of these journals,
moreover, has the potential to become an ever-evolving, reconceived curriculum.

It is no accident that a review of current curriculum theory is peppered with the words "language", "dialogue", "meaning," "experience," "biography," "process," and "relationship." The dialogue journal is a powerful bridge between life experience and the classroom because it creates written documentation of both life-school and teacher-student relationship.

The dialogue journal places an absolute demand of close reading on the part of the teacher and disallows methodological "shortcuts." The teacher must have in mind, when she reads an entry, all that she has learned about the student in order to respond meaningfully in her own entry. The use of journals stresses the search for meaning rather than control of the subject matter or student.

Implications for Proficiency Writing Tests

The proficiency writing test which was used in this study appears to share some of the same weaknesses that others have attributed to the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (Savignon, 1985; Bachman & Savignon, 1986; Kramsch, 1986; Raffaldini, 1988). The O.P.I has been accused of being more a measure of grammatical competence than a total measure of communicative competence. Although there is no universal definition of what types of knowledge underlies communicative ability, most linguists since Hymes (1972) agree that grammatical competence alone cannot explain how speakers use language. The proficiency writing test provides limited information on discourse competence because the types of communicative functions and discourse roles are limited.

Dandonoli and Grant (1990) established and recognized the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines as a valid base for the development of the proficiency writing test. The weakness pointed in
the study most likely does not reside in the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines themselves but rather in the development of a valid writing proficiency test.

A communicative test has to meet some rather stringent criteria. It has to test for grammatical, discourse, and sociolinguistic competence as well as strategic competence. It has to be pragmatic in that it requires the learner to use language naturally for genuine communication and to relate to thoughts and feelings, in short, to put authentic language within a context. It should be direct, and it should test the learner in a variety of language functions. These are tall orders! Even experts find it difficult to meet these criteria, yet the classroom teacher must be sensitive to such principles.

Recommendations

Dialogue journal writing provides an opportunity for students to produce language in a communicative context. From the findings of this study and the implications that they suggest, additional research in the use of dialogue journals to promote foreign language acquisition seems justified. For example, to further validate text based analyses of communicative competence using a triangulation approach, studies need to be conducted incorporating other linguistic features, especially creativity, and other aspects of coherence, such as clause connectors, and cohesive ties.

Longitudinal studies of dialogue journals of foreign language students in terms of self-repair as it develops throughout the school year is an important concern in foreign language acquisition. In dialogue journals students do their own monitoring and repairing. How this self-monitoring and self-repair is developed is a major issue for investigation.
Analyzing dialogue journals can help researchers understand how repair helps the language development of learners.

Another interesting suggestion would involve case studies of students who received a high rating on the proficiency test and a low ranking on the holistic assessment of communicative competence and vice-versa. These case studies may help substantiate the findings of this research in terms of what constitutes communicative competence and how it should be evaluated.

As teachers, learners, teacher educators, and researchers, we assume that language development can and does occur in classrooms. At present, however, this is little more than an assumption, and it is necessary to gather hard evidence to substantiate it. I hope this research, shows that evidence can be found in the classroom itself, and particularly that the teacher can play a decisive role in the investigation which is crucial to the profession. By focusing on our own territory we, as teachers, can ensure that it commands the respect it deserves.
REFERENCES


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1. You are planning to take a trip. Make a list of the things you need. List up to five things in each category.

**Shopping List**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clothing:</th>
<th>Leisure/Hobbies:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>_________________________</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Toiletries:</th>
<th>Miscellaneous:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>_________________________</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2. Write a postcard to a friend telling him about school: your favorite course; your daily activities; what you like; what you do not like.
Appendix A

WRITING PROFICIENCY TEST

FRENCH

WRITING TEST BOOKLET

Write answers in French to the questions on the following pages.

Be sure to read to the end of the booklet. The test consists of four writing tasks.

Your name:__________________________________________

This test is being administered under a research grant from the U.S. Department of Education to the

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
6 Executive Boulevard
Yonkers, NY 10701
3. Write at least 4 paragraphs about one of the following topics:

- Describe the plot of a recent book or movie that you have read or seen.
- Describe a trip you have taken to another country.
- Compare your home town with where you now live.
4. Write an essay of at least 4 paragraphs on one of the following topics:

- Write an essay contrasting the merits of a highly structured educational system that includes an emphasis on required subjects and has a standard grading policy with those of a system that emphasizes individual choices and personalized programs and pass/fail grades only.

- In the most recent presidential election, fewer than 50% of registered U.S. voters cast ballots. Discuss factors that you believe contribute to this problem and make suggestions for correcting it.
Appendix B

ACTFL PROFICIENCY WRITING GUIDELINES

Novice-Low  Able to form some letters in an alphabetic system. In languages whose writing systems use syllabaries or characters, writer is able to both copy and produce the basic strokes. Can produce romanization of isolated characters, where applicable.

Novice-Mid  Able to copy or transcribe familiar words or phrases and reproduce some from memory. No practical communicative writing skills.

Novice-High  Able to write simple fixed expressions and limited memorized material and some recombinations thereof. Can supply information on simple forms and documents. Can write names, numbers, dates, own nationality, and other simple autobiographical information as well as some short phrases and simple lists. Can write all the symbols in an alphabetic or syllabic system or 50-100 characters or compounds in a character writing system. Spelling and representation of symbols (letters, syllables, characters) may be partially correct.

Intermediate-Low  Able to meet limited practical writing needs. Can write short messages, postcards, and take down simple notes, such as telephone messages. Can create statements or questions within the scope of limited language experience. Material produced consists of recombinations of learned vocabulary and structures into simple sentences on very familiar topics. Language is inadequate to express in writing anything but elementary needs. Frequent errors in grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and in formation of nonalphabetic symbols, but writing can be understood by natives used to the writing of nonnatives.

Intermediate-Mid  Able to meet a number of practical writing needs. Can write short, simple letters. Content involves personal preferences, daily routine, everyday events, and other topics grounded in personal experience. Can express present time or at least one other time frame or aspect consistently, e.g., nonpast, habitual, imperfective. Evidence of control of the syntax of non-complex sentences and basic inflectional morphology, such as declensions and conjugation. Writing tends to be a loose collection of sentences or sentence fragments on a given topic and provides little evidence of conscious organization. Can be understood by natives used to the writing of nonnatives.
Intermediate-High

Able to meet most practical writing needs and limited social demands. Can take notes in some detail on familiar topics and respond in writing to personal questions. Can write simple letters, brief synopses and paraphrases, summaries of biographical data, work and school experience. In those languages relying primarily on content words and time expressions to express time, tense, or aspects, some precision is displayed; where tense and/or aspect is expressed through verbal inflection, forms are produced rather consistently, but not always accurately. An ability to describe and narrate in paragraphs is emerging. Rarely uses basic cohesive elements, such as pronominal substitutions or synonyms in written discourse. Writing, though faulty, is generally comprehensible to natives used to the writing of nonnatives.

Advanced

Able to write routine social correspondence and join sentences in simple discourse of at least several paragraphs in length on familiar topics. Can write simple social correspondence, take notes, write cohesive summaries and resumes, as well as narratives and descriptions of a factual nature. Has sufficient writing vocabulary to express self simply with some circumlocution. May still make errors in punctuation, spelling, or the formation of nonalphabetic symbols. Good control of the morphology and the most frequently used syntactic structures, e.g., common word order patterns, coordination, subordination, but makes frequent errors in producing complex sentences. Uses a limited number of cohesive devices, such as pronouns, accurately. Writing may resemble literal translations from the native language, but a sense of organization (rhetorical structure) is emerging. Writing is understandable to native not used to the writing of nonnatives.

Advanced-Plus

Able to write about a variety of topics with significant precision and in detail. Can write most social and informal business correspondence. Can describe and narrate personal experiences fully but has difficulty supporting points of view in written discourse. Can write about the concrete aspects of topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence. Often shows remarkable fluency and ease of expression, but under time constraints and pressure writing may be inaccurate. Generally strong in either grammar or vocabulary, but not in both. Weakness and unevenness is one of the foregoing or in spelling or character writing formation may result in occasional miscommunication. Some misued of vocabulary may still be evident. Style may still be obviously foreign.
Superior

Able to express self effectively in most formal and informal and informal writing and practical, social and professional topics. Can write most types of correspondence, such as memos as well as social and business letters, and short research papers and statements of position in areas of special interest or in special fields. Good control of a full range of structures, spelling or nonalphabetic symbol production, and a wide general vocabulary allow the writer to hypothesize and present arguments or points of view accurately and effectively. An underlying organization, such as chronological ordering, logical ordering, cause and effect, comparison, and thematic development is strongly evident, although not thoroughly executed and/or not totally reflecting target language patterns. Although sensitive to differences in formal and informal style, still may not tailor writing precisely to a variety of purposes and/or readers. Errors in writing rarely disturb natives or cause miscommunication.
Appendix C

DIALOGUE JOURNAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Read these questions and put an X by one of the choices below each question. If you would like to say something about that question, please write it on the lines that say "comment".

1. Writing in my Dialogue Journal helped me learn French?
   ______ strongly agree ______ agree ______ undecided ______ strongly disagree
   Comment: ______________________________________________________________

2. I liked writing to the teacher?
   ______ strongly agree ______ agree ______ undecided ______ strongly disagree
   Comment: ______________________________________________________________

3. My French writing skills have improved as a consequence of writing in my dialogue journal?
   ______ strongly agree ______ agree ______ undecided ______ strongly disagree
   Comment: ______________________________________________________________

4. My French vocabulary has expanded as a consequence of writing in my dialogue journal?
   ______ strongly agree ______ agree ______ undecided ______ strongly disagree
   Comment: ______________________________________________________________

5. My French grammar skills have improved as a consequence of writing in my dialogue journal?
   ______ strongly agree ______ agree ______ undecided ______ strongly disagree
   Comment: ______________________________________________________________

6. My French speaking skills have improved as a consequence of writing in my dialogue journal?
   ______ strongly agree ______ agree ______ undecided ______ strongly disagree
   Comment: ______________________________________________________________
7. My French reading skills have improved as a consequence of writing in my dialogue journal?

___strongly agree ___agree ___undecided ___strongly disagree

Comment: _______________________________________________________________

8. I felt more comfortable (toward the end of the year) writing in my dialogue journal than when we first started?

___strongly agree ___agree ___undecided ___strongly disagree

Comment: __________________________________________________________________

9. My relationship with my French teacher has changed as a consequence of writing in my dialogue journal?

___strongly agree ___agree ___undecided ___strongly disagree

Comment: _______________________________________________________________

Read these questions and put an X by one of the choices below each question. If you would like to say something about that question, please write it on the lines that say "comment".

10. Do you think the teacher should have checked and corrected the grammar in your Dialogue Journal?

___Never ___occasionally ___sometimes ___often/usually ___always

Comment: _______________________________________________________________

11. Did you think the dialogue journals were too personal?

___Never ___occasionally ___sometimes ___often/usually ___always

Comment: _______________________________________________________________

12. Did you find it hard to understand the teacher’s responses?

___Never ___occasionally ___sometimes ___often/usually ___always

Comment: _______________________________________________________________
13. Did you use a dictionary when writing or reading responses?
   ____Never  ____occasionally  ____sometimes  ____often/usually  ____always
   Comment: _______________________________________________________________

14. Did you find it hard to find things to write about?
   ____Never  ____occasionally  ____sometimes  ____often/usually  ____always
   Comment: _______________________________________________________________

15. Did writing in French prevent you from writing what you wanted to say?
   ____Never  ____occasionally  ____sometimes  ____often/usually  ____always
   Comment: _______________________________________________________________

16. Would you do it all over again if you had the chance?
   ____Never  ____occasionally  ____sometimes  ____often/usually  ____always
   Comment: _______________________________________________________________

17. Did you plan what you were going to write beforehand, such as an outline?
   ____Never  ____occasionally  ____sometimes  ____often/usually  ____always
   Comment: _______________________________________________________________

18. Did you reread your entries to find grammatical errors?
   ____Never  ____occasionally  ____sometimes  ____often/usually  ____always
   Comment: _______________________________________________________________

19. Did you write English words when you did not know the vocabulary words in French?
   ____Never  ____occasionally  ____sometimes  ____often/usually  ____always
   Comment: _______________________________________________________________
20. Did you discuss this activity (writing in your Dialogue Journal) with other students?
   - Never   - occasionally   - sometimes   - often/usually   - always
   Comment: _______________________________________________________________

21. Did you consider this activity to be only another class assignment?
   - Never   - occasionally   - sometimes   - often/usually   - always
   Comment: _______________________________________________________________

22. Did you read the teacher's comments and questions more than once?
   - Never   - occasionally   - sometimes   - often/usually   - always
   Comment: _______________________________________________________________
IN YOUR OPINION

1. Which subjects have you enjoyed discussing the most?

2. Which subjects you did not want to discuss in your journals?

3. How much time did you spend writing each entry?

4. What is your general opinion concerning this activity?
Appendix D

PERMISSION LETTER

May 29, 1991

Dear Parents of Students in French III (third hour)

Students in French III (third hour) have been involved in writing dialogue journals with their French teacher since the beginning of the school year. This activity was designed for developing student abilities in using oral and written language to express their ideas and concerns.

I am currently writing my dissertation for my Doctorate Degree in Foreign Language Education at Louisiana State University. The purpose of my research is to demonstrate that even students who are still at the beginning stages of learning a foreign language can compose and express themselves in writing long before they have mastered its forms and structures. Through examples, I will show that in their journal entries students summarize information because it is impossible for them to tell their whole life story; they explain their point of view in order to help the reader understand the importance of the story; they write persuasive argument as they try to convince the reader of the impact of certain experiences in their lives. Another purpose of this research is to determine some of the contributing factors in Dialogue Journal Writing which differentiate the good language communicator learning a foreign language from the other students. This research will help foreign language teachers understand how the basic concept of functional, contextualized written interaction can fit into and influence other kinds of communication in the classroom (oral), and, perhaps change their misconception of writing as being a linear and separate skill.

If you have any further questions, please contact me at school or at home (769-1509).

Sincerely,

Lynn Baudrand
French Teacher

I grant permission for copies of my child dialogue journal entries to be used in research designed to improve the teaching of French as a foreign language. I understand that my child anonymity will be preserved.

Signature_________________________________________ Date_____________________

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Appendix E

STUDENTS' COMMENTS

1. Writing in my dialogue journal helped me learn French?

-This way conversational French was introduced. This is most helpful in today's world if traveling to French-speaking countries!
-It helped me learn how to word my thoughts better.
-It helped me learn new words and practice grammar.
-It helped me improve and use French I already know and I was able to figure out a lot of new stuff by context.
-I learned new words and expressions.
-I have a tendency to remember more vocabulary when I am writing because the topics pertain to me directly or indirectly.
-It gave me an opportunity to express what I learned in French.
-It helped me improve and use French I already know and I was able to figure out a lot of new stuff by context.
-I learned new words and expressions.
-I have a tendency to remember more vocabulary when I am writing because the topics pertain to me directly or indirectly.
-It gave me an opportunity to express what I learned in French.
-I think it was a really good activity. I think it improved my French communication skills a lot. It was good because it teaches and lets you use stuff you would commonly say. It is more useful than book French if I ever went to France or wanted to carry on a conversation, I think all French classes should write a journal.
-It helped me learn to write better logically.
-I think that it's a good new way for student-teacher communication, especially when learning a new language. The journal writing helps in improving the student's grammar and things without the discomfort that comes in grammar quizzes.
-It helped me learn to write better logically.
-I think that this help French students tremendously! it allows them to learn proper French but at the same time if they make a mistake in grammar, structure, etc., they are not penalized for it, like on a test. It also enables the student to receive the "one on one" attention they may need from the teacher to excel in French.
-I think it was a really good activity. I think it improved my French communication skills a lot. It was good because it teaches and lets you use stuff you would commonly say. It is more useful than book French if I ever went to France or wanted to carry on a conversation, I think all French classes should write a journal.
-It helped me learn to write better logically.
-I think that this help French students tremendously! it allows them to learn proper French but at the same time if they make a mistake in grammar, structure, etc., they are not penalized for it, like on a test. It also enables the student to receive the "one on one" attention they may need from the teacher to excel in French.
2. I liked writing to the teacher

- I have no objection in writing to the teacher, except one must watch what he or she says sometimes.
- I got to know the teacher better and she learned things about my life outside of class too.
- I thought it was very interesting. To me, it was like a diary, but instead, a response was given, along with advice.
- I learned a lot about my teacher and it was easier to write and communicate in the journal as well as in class.
- It gave me a chance to write to someone in French who is above my level and see their style of writing.
- Sometimes the discussion were quite interesting.
- It was fun and interesting. The student becomes closer to the teacher.
- I enjoyed hearing her responses.
- Yes, the teacher was very understanding, funny, and sympathetic towards all of my problems.
- It helped me to have a personal connection to her and we were able to know each other better.

3. My French writing skills have improved as a consequence of writing in my dialogue journal?

- I think it has helped me to express myself better in French where before I hesitated when writing.
- A lot more since French II, especially in grammar.
- By practicing writing, I got better.
- I feel I can communicate better now than before when I write down my ideas and descriptions.
- Considering what I could write at the beginning of the year, yes it helped me tons.

4. My French vocabulary has expanded as a consequence of writing in my dialogue journal?

- I used the dictionary to write some words but also I used the journal for words too.
- I did learn some new words, but not as many as what are given in lessons or in the workbooks.
- I try not to use a dictionary, but if I really can't simplify my words, it is better because I learn more vocabulary by looking it up.
-You learn new words everytime coming from the teacher entry.
-Everytime I looked something up in the dictionary, then wrote it down and talked about it, I remembered it more.
-I tried to use the words I learned in my journal.
-Because the words I didn't know I looked up, and the words I wanted to use I had to look up in a dictionary as well.
-Having to write about regular things in my life I had to learn new words in French.
-I used a lot of vocabulary I already knew.
-I used a dictionary often and I used many of the words over and over. They were useful words, not words like "sock" that I would seldom use.
-Many words that we didn't learn or have in a lesson I could learn from my journal.

5. My French grammar skills have improved as a consequence of writing in my dialogue journal?

- I am getting better in constructing my sentences and paragraphs.
- My grammar isn't that great but I improved enough to be able to get my point across. Writing in the journal makes you think more about your grammar.
- I improved in writing grammatically correct sentences.
- Not much because I didn't know if the grammar was correct.
- It served as an outlet for my French grammar skills.
- When I would write in my journal and would write something grammatically incorrect I could point it out and correct it, after sometime of writing.
- I try to write grammatically correct, but since no corrections are made, they haven't improved too much.
- It helped with verbs and adjectives, but the book taught me more basic grammar in class.

6. My French speaking skills have improved as a consequence of writing in my dialogue journal?

-The journals have helped me organize my thoughts and be able to put them down on paper or speak them orally.
- I am much better at writing than speaking. They are quite different from each other, so I haven't been able to improve my speaking abilities.
- I have always been able to express myself better on paper than orally in French, but because my vocabulary expanded I could speak it with more ease.
- I still have to think carefully about what I say.
- Only because I used sentences that I had written and tried to use them in speaking.
-Yes, they probably did a little bit.
-Because I see how things are put together correctly and I am able to combine them when speaking.
-It helped me learn words and grammar but not for pronunciation.
-My increase in vocabulary has helped my speaking but there is no improvement in pronunciation.

7. My French reading skills have improved as a consequence of writing in my dialogue journal?

-Having the journals made it necessary to improve reading skills just to understand what has been written.
-Reading my journal helped to improve my reading skills a lot.
-I can noticeably read things much more easily.
-I can now understand more when I read French.
-I think it really improved my reading skills, I can understand a lot more than before the journals when I read. It helped a lot in being able to figure out things from context.
-Whenever I read my teacher's comments or reply, I usually had to look up new words so I could fully understand.
-If anything, I can read better and faster than before. Improved my reading skills the most.
-Yes, because when you wrote things I didn't know I had to figure out what it meant.
-Reading what a French speaking person has written makes it easier to understand the textbook.
-After sometime of working in my journal, I was able to read everything written back to me without getting a dictionary or asking.
-The more you read French in the journal, the more you can recognize and comprehend the words.
-Reading French requires knowing many slang or French phrases. Since I don't write in that style and just say it literally, I haven't really improved.
-I did learn some how to read in context, but not as much as when we did the reading of the plays.
-I am now able to read more French especially difficult French.

8. I felt more comfortable (toward the end of the year) writing in my dialogue journal than when we first started?

-At first I found it difficult to write in my journal, now it is a part of my routine.
-I wasn't so tense about it at the end and the sentences tended to come more easily.
At the beginning, I was shy and read over for grammatical errors. Now, it's more like a diary than just telling boring things. I express my views of certain things and ask for advice. I don't worry about grammar or spelling.
-I am more confident about my writing skills because of my growth of vocabulary and better awareness of the grammar.
-I knew more words at the end.
-I could find more things to write about.
-Yes, I had more to say.
-Because, I didn't feel nervous about what to say after a while and it got easier to write.
-It got easier to express my ideas.
-At first, I never knew what to write about but at the end of the year I liked it and just didn't worry about it and wrote about what was going on in my life.
-I felt I knew the teacher better and that I could manipulate the language better.
-The more I wrote in the journal the more friendly we got.
-At first I didn't know what to write but as the year progressed I had a lot to write.
-I was kind of sad when it ended.
-Yes, because at first writing in the journal seemed pointless and a waste of time, but I believe it paid in the end.

9. My relationship with my French teacher has changed as a consequence of writing in my dialogue journal?

-Yes, because it helped me get to know my teacher better and form a closeness that regular classroom activities cannot give.
-I got to know her a little better than I would have.
-You become closer.
-Yes, I think you begin to regard each other as people with social lives.
-I think it is important for a teacher to know a little about the students' personalities.
-I can communicate better through the journal writings.
-My teacher is not only my teacher but someone to tell my problems and be my friend.
-Improved communication
-I learned more about the teacher and her more about me but I don't think it changed our relationship.
-We are given the opportunity to learn things about each other that wouldn't normally be said in class.
-I get along much better with her because she now understands my frustrations I have in class.
-I loved it. I have told my teacher almost everything in my personal life.
-It basically remained the same. Except for the fact that the teacher knew more about me and my interests, our relationship stayed the same.
-It makes you a better student.
-I have become a lot closer and have come to appreciate her; she has offered me some good advice and knows a lot about my personal life.
-The teacher did not become just someone teaching a foreign language, but a real person too.
-I feel like we were on a “one-to-one” basis instead of just a student-teacher relationship.

10. Do you think the teacher should have checked and corrected the grammar in your dialogue journal?

-Only if there was something extremely wrong with the way it was written or their use of grammar.
-I might not have been so free and open with sentences if I knew that it was going to be checked for grammar.
-I think this journal was to learn French, but more importantly to express your opinions and feelings. If something is obviously incorrect, then the teacher should correct it.
-Yes, but not take off or subtract points in the roll book. It should be like a progress grade and not count.
-When I first started writing in my journal, I wasn’t confident that she would understand what I wrote, but by the end of the year, I gained more confidence.
-Correcting the grammar makes a person uncomfortable. I would be less willing to write if I were corrected for everything.
-It helped you build up confidence in communicating by not having someone correct you.
-It would have helped to learn from previous mistakes sometimes.
-The point of the journals was not to be graded or corrected but merely to help us in feeling more comfortable about writing.
-Checking would only cause students to change to simple French and not truly express their ideas. Not fair! For students don’t know every French word, and grammar rule yet!
-I think if she would have corrected the papers sometimes, my grammar would have improved more, but I am glad that we weren’t graded.
-Only when the grammar is so bad the sentences becomes unclear.
-I was never sure if my grammar and vocabulary were correct so if they were wrong I couldn’t change them.
-For homework points occasionally.
-When something was really wrong or if the student asked for the correct way to do something then the teacher should correct it.
-It would have helped me if grammar was checked so that I could learn from my mistakes but I understand that it would have taken up a lot of time.
-The common mistakes need to be corrected so that the mistake won't be repeated.
-Not really graded grammar, but just corrected it.
-It would help the student improve their grammar.
-Sometimes because it help you advance further academically in French, but I felt more comfortable writing in it since I didn't need to pay attention to grammar.

11. Did you think the dialogue journals were too personal?

-It was fun you wrote about what you wanted and how personal the information was.
-I really didn't have any personal things to write about.
-I think the fact that it talks about your personal life is good because you can sort out your personal thoughts while having something to write about. If there was anything I didn't want to discuss I felt I could say so. Also, talking about personal things makes it more meaningful.
-I only wrote things I felt comfortable with, It felt like I was writing a note to a friend or a pen pal.
-No, they didn't have to be because you could write about impersonal subjects if you wanted.
-I never really wrote about anything personal so it never came up.
-These topics that we talked about, I talked about with other people.
-It depends if the student starts to develop a close relationship and open up about his/her personal life, it's up to them. If they feel the questions asked are too personal, then simply tell the teacher.
-I think it is up to the person to determine what they want to write, so it should not ever be a problem.
-I think that they are just right!

12. Did you find it hard to understand the teacher's responses?

-There was only one time where I didn't understand one sentence.
-It took time to get used to the different style of writing but it did get me aquainted with writing in French.
-It seems that she doesn't try to simplify it for us. Maybe that will help us learn, but sometimes I have no idea what is said.
-I would find myself looking in a dictionary to find out what a word was.
She was very clear about her responses. If I didn't understand it was not because of her not being clear, it was me not knowing what it meant. A dictionary or asking her about it usually cleared that up. I usually would try to figure it out or I asked what she had written. Most of the time I could figure it out by the context of the sentence. Not very hard to understand but I did have to look up a lot of the words but it helped broaden my vocabulary. Sometimes I would have to use a dictionary to look up a few words. but this improved my vocabulary a great deal and showed me how to word things properly.

When she used unfamiliar words.

Most of the time I understood everything.

I wasn't familiar with some French phrases and had to ask often.

13. Did you use a dictionary when writing or reading responses?

- If I have no idea (not even a single word) how to read or write it, then and only then will I use a dictionary.
- To express new things or ideas.
- When I was not sure of a word, I would use the dictionary or sometimes ask the teacher for a phrase.
- When I wasn't exactly sure about a word. When I was writing I used a dictionary, but never when I was reading.
- I rarely ever used one because I tried to use what I had learned in class.
- It mostly helped me when writing my responses.
- I feel this is good because I found myself knowing how to use verbs I've never heard of just being familiar with the endings: er, ir..
- I used a dictionary whenever I didn't know the words I needed or if there was something I didn't understand in the teacher's responses.
- In order to write words we hadn't learned.
- She always made herself understandable.
- I used a dictionary whenever I wrote responses, never when I read them.

14. Did you find it hard to find things to write about?

- I usually wrote about what I did, upcoming holidays, vacations, my friends, etc.
- There was always something going on.
- I found it hard to think of things to write about but then I'd just talk about my weekend or my friends or something.
- You never want to write anything too personal in your journal because, after all, this is your teacher, that cuts out alot of things.
- It was hard keeping things interesting and finding new things to talk about.
-If something interesting had happened to me than I didn't but if I hadn't done anything it was hard to think of something new to talk to the teacher about.
-Sometimes one is at a loss for words.
-When I couldn't think of anything it seemed like it would take forever to fill up one page. Most of the time, I found something to talk about.
-At the beginning, I just wrote about myself and my family. Then I talked about my personal life and I never ran out of things to say.
-It might be good to ask opinions on certain issues instead of just what happen day to day.

15. Did writing in French prevent you from writing what you wanted to say?

-I knew that some things were pure French phrases, but I tried to translate it literally.
-I couldn't express somethings that I could have in English.
-If I really had no idea of a phrase or how I would word it even after looking in the dictionary, I would turn to the most logical alternative for me and write something simpler.
-I used simpler French.
-I just didn't know the expressions or translations of the expressions.
-Many times I had so much to say but it was hard to express myself in French words.
-I usually wrote in simpler French because it was hard to find the words I exactly wanted to say or that had the exact meaning.
-If it was really complicated I would use a dictionary or talk about something else.
-Sometimes I couldn't write what I wanted so I wrote simpler French but a lot of times I just wrote the English and asked the teacher for the French.
-I had to simplify what I wanted to say sometimes.
-It was difficult to always say exactly what you meant.
-I only wrote simpler and I got the main idea across.
-I felt that sometimes the thing I wanted to say were too complicated to write.

16. Would you do it all over again if you had the chance?

-Definitely! it improved my French 100%.
-It was a lot of fun.
-Sometimes it was like a chore and got boring, but for the most part I'm glad we did them.
-It helped us much in this class as it would in any English class.
-The journal really improved my reading and writing skills.
-I thought the journal helped me a lot and definitely think all French classes should do it. I would definitely do it again.
-It seemed too much like extra homework to me. And at this school, who wants...
-Although sometimes I didn't have time to write in my journal I found it to be very helpful and I liked it.
-But I see its educational needs, and I like its values.  
-I really enjoyed it and even though it took time, I think it helped and it was kind of fun.
-It was fun.
-I wish I could continue it forever.  I need advice and opinions besides my parents.
-I believe it did help me a lot with French.

17. Did you plan what you were going to write beforehand, such as an outline?

-I wrote things as they came to mind.
-I felt it was more of a diary than a graded assignment that was checked for grammatical errors.
-Came fresh from my head.
-Aside from thinking about what I was going to write about, I never made an outline as such.
-I wrote what I felt like writing at the time.
-I just wrote whatever I thought of that I felt comfortable with.
-I wouldn't make an outline, but I would think about what I was going to write.
-I thought about my responses and subjects to discuss, but never actually made an outline.
-I just wrote like I was writing a note to a friend.
-I just wrote about what was on my mind or came to my mind.
-I felt that I didn't need an outline because it was an informal paper.

18. Did you reread your entries to find grammatical errors?

-I tried to correct the ones I knew.
-Because I knew she wasn’t going to correct them I didn’t reread my journal often to find mistakes.
-I wrote as proper as I could the first time, rereading wasn’t necessary for me!
-If I had time then I would reread but other than that, not really.
-Never thought there was a need to. Besides if the teacher responded to what I wrote, then they understood.
-Only at the beginning of the year.
-Mainly I wrote to get my thoughts in French down on the page.
19. Did you write English words when you did not know the vocabulary words in French?

- If I could not find the correct connotation in French.
- I tried not to write English at all. But I sometimes simplified the words or phrases.
- When I could not find them in the dictionary.
- Sometimes, if I was in a hurry in writing in my journal or was too lazy to look it up I did write the English words and put it in quotes.
- Only when we first started writing the journal.
- Only words I couldn’t find translations for.
- I tried to find the French words but sometimes I had to use English or just not say what I was going to say.
- I would look up the words but if they didn’t have it or it wasn’t exactly the same then I would write the English words.
- If it was English slang I would use English or if I couldn’t find the word in the dictionary.
- Most of the time I avoided writing English words.
- Sometimes I really wanted to say something so I went ahead and used the English word. Then my teacher would write back to me with the French word.

20. Did you discuss this activity (writing in your dialogue journal) with other students?

- Other students said it would be interesting to know the teacher personality.
- Yes, but only with other students in my French class.
- I talked about it with the other classes of French III, because we were your only class doing this.

21. Did you consider this activity to be only another class assignment?

- I thought of it as a year long assignment to help improve my French overall.
- It was more like a diary.
- I didn’t think of it as a class assignment but rather more something I enjoyed.
- I knew I had to do it but it wasn’t like other homework.
- I felt more comfortable doing the journal than other class assignment and I enjoyed it more.
- I considered an assignment because it counted as a grade.
- It was something I liked doing.
- At first I did, but that changed also.
22. Did you read the teacher's comments and questions more than once?

- I did this sometimes just so that I could have a complete answer to all the questions.
- I would have to go back and read them to make sure I understand them.
- Just to make sure I understood it correctly.
- I referred to it many times in writing my response.
- Mainly to read in context to understand what was meant.
- I wanted to make sure I understood and could answer as correctly as possible.
- I often did this to make sure I had answered all the questions that had been asked by the teacher.
- To make sure I completely understood it.
- I usually had to read them more than once to figure out what it said.
- If I didn't understand I would go over it again.
- When I was not able to comprehend what she had written then I would read it over again.
- I tried to make sure I understood what she wanted and to answer accordingly.
Lynn Baudrand-Aertker is a naturalized American who was born on October 2, 1952 in Morocco. She is married and is the mother of a daughter and a son. At the present time she teaches French (1, 4AP, and 5AP) at Baton Rouge Magnet High School.

She received a B.S., and M.Ed. in Education through the Department of Curriculum and Instruction from Louisiana State University. In the fall of 1992, she was awarded her Doctor of Philosophy.

She wrote and performed as teacher on twenty television episodes of "Jolie Louisiane," presented on public television and shown in public schools as a reenforcement of the French Language to first and second graders. She is a member of the French curriculum writing team for East Baton Rouge Parish and has presented many workshops on teaching foreign languages.
DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate:  Lynn Baudrand-Aertker

Major Field:  Education

Title of Dissertation:  Dialogue Journal Writing in a Foreign Language Classroom: Assessing Communitive Competence and Proficiency

Approved:

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Date of Examination:

November 2, 1992

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